AMBITIOUS CAREER-SEEKERS: AN ANALYSIS OF CAREER DECISIONS AND DURATION IN LATIN AMERICA

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

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Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

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Felipe Botero Jaramillo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the course of writing my dissertation, I accrued many debts of gratitude. Alejandro Botero and Wade Owen laboriously and painstakingly helped me transcribe electoral records. Christine Rolka offered her programming knowledge to systematize my efforts to manually code the data, which saved me countless hours of work—and quite possibly from a serious case of repetitive stress injury! A pretty desperate cry for help, at the late stages of the dissertation, was graciously responded by Susana Rubinstein, Angélica Barón, Marum Echeverri, Catalina Salazar, and María Beatriz Peralta. Their help was essential to put together Chile data set. I was also fortunate enough to count on the superb research assistance provided by Santiago Olivella and Juanita Vásquez. Their help, support, and good sense of humor alleviated even the more banausic aspects of the data manipulation process.

I should also acknowledge the guidance and encouragement offered by Brian Crisp. Brian's continuous support allowed me to successfully finish this project. His criticisms were always apt, his suggestions fruitful, and his emails had the particular trait of implying an inordinate inverse ratio of amount of work required to number of words typed. I am also thankful to all the members of my committee, in particular to Bill Mishler for his good disposition to disentangle all sorts of red tape-laced quagmires. I also received incredible support at Universidad de Los Andes to finish the dissertation. Dean Carl Langebaek, the former department head, Ann Mason, and the current one, María Emma Wills were all tremendously supportive while at the same time offering incentives and providing formidable work conditions for me to finish my doctoral studies. My friend and colleague Juan Carlos Rodríguez endured my complains about data issues and bonhomously lent me his expertise to solve more than a few thorny problems. Stephan Kuster, Chris Cardona, and Mauricio Morales read drafts of different parts of the manuscript and provided valuable insights and comments.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my family. My parents and brothers and my family in law were a constant source of moral support. Of course, I am most indebted with Isabel Cristina, Manuela and Antonia. They were incredibly forgiving about my absences and most generous to put up with my long hours; they were loving and supportive. It is now up to me to make up for the time I shirked them of being a husband and father.

DEDICATION

To Isabel Cristina in recognition of her love.
To Antonia and Manuela, the greatest thing that has happened in my life.

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ABSTRACT

Most everybody is ambitious about their own careers. Most of us aspire to be promoted to positions with greater responsibilities and benefits and have a clear sense of what we mean by a "successful career." Politicians are no different, and there is no apparent reason why they should be. However, unlike what happens in other occupations, politicians are forced periodically—i.e. at the end of each term they serve—to make a decision about what to do with their careers. This decision is made under the uncertainty about their ability to continue their careers according to their plans. The possibility of electoral defeat spares no one in spite of all that politicians do to avoid being voted out of office. Thus, at the end of each term, politicians must ponder what they want to do with their careers or where they want to go next. Politicians inform their decisions with their beliefs about their performance in office—or their performance as challengers—and their assessments of the difficulty of winning office in the following election. This raises the question about why some politicians decide to stay in office. Concretely, why do some politicians decide to get reelected while others seek election in "higher" or even "lower" offices? And also, why are some politicians more successful in having lasting careers? I focus on the career decisions that politicians make routinely and in the durations of their careers by considering individual and district factors that explain why politicians decide to run for particular offices and the length of their tenures.

CHAPTER 1

Ambition and Reelection: Theoretical Considerations

Ambition lies at the heart of politics.

Ambition and Politics
Joseph A. Schlesinger

For analytic purposes, therefore, congressmen will be treated (. . .) as if they were single-minded reelection seekers.

Congress: The Electoral Connection
David R. Mayhew

1.1 Introduction: Where's the Career?

Most everybody is ambitious about their own careers. Most of us aspire to be promoted to positions with greater responsibilities and benefits and have a clear sense of what we mean by a "successful career." Politicians are no different, and there is no apparent reason why they should be. However, unlike what happens in other occupations, politicians are forced periodically—i.e. at the end of each term they serve—to make a decision about what to do with their careers. This decision is made under the uncertainty about their ability to continue their careers according to their plans. The possibility of electoral defeat spares no one in spite of all that politicians do to avoid being voted out of office. Thus, at the end of

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This topic is not new. The vast literature that stems from the U.S. case has conjured up—to use Mayhew's own words—a quite stylized version of the career politician. Politicians are characterized as ambitious individuals who desire to have long and successful careers (Schlesinger, 1966). Likewise, ambitious politicians are believed to be primarily concerned about their reelection because this is the prerequisite to achieve whatever their ultimate goals may be. Additionally, their behavior is described to be rationally oriented to attain precisely those goals (Mayhew, 1974). These elegant assumptions laid the foundations that allowed other scholars in the field to build on them to produce solid theories to account for the behavior of politicians and different dynamics of legislatures.[1] However, as parsimonious as these assumptions are, they do not travel automatically to settings different to the one from which they originated, namely the U.S. case (Morgenstern et al., 2002; Morgenstern and Nacif, 2002). In other words, theories of legislative behavior may

[1]The examples abound. For instance, see Black (1972), Brady et al. (1999), Cox and Katz (1996), Fiorina (1994), and Rohde (1979) for explanations growing out of Schlesinger's "ambition theory"; and Aldrich (1995), Ansolabehere et al. (2001), Arnold (1990), De Boef and Stimson (1995), Herrera and Yawn (1999), and Lipinski (2001) for works that build up on Mayhew's reelection-seeking legislators.

be found wanting when applied to cases where the legislative is not as institutionalized as the U.S. Congress, including Latin America.

As will be discussed later, there are important assumptions in the literature that do not necessarily hold in all Latin American cases. In particular, legislators do not appear to be "single-minded" reelection seekers. In fact, reelection rates vary widely in the region from countries, such as Mexico or Costa Rica, where immediate reelection to the legislature is constitutionally prohibited, to countries where a small proportion of sitting members of congress get reelected, such as Argentina or Brazil, and to countries where a majority of the congress is reelected, such as Chile. This variability in reelection rates challenges the ability of extant theories to account for the behavior of Latin American legislators.

It may also indicate that careers are erratic—or even nonexistent—given that politicians may only serve a few terms at best. If Latin American legislators are not primarily interested in getting reelected, how can we explain their behavior? What can be said about their "careers"? I shall argue that Latin American politicians are ambitious actors, who are concerned about their careers, and that we could apply rational actor models to explain their behavior. But, to analyze the careers of Latin American legislators, we need to adjust some assumptions made in the literature that do not particularly apply in the region.

Political careers are necessarily multipronged phenomena. Politicians consider a wide variety of issues when making career decisions, which may range from the intangible—including their charisma or the strength of their convictions—to the concrete—such as availability of campaign funds or the number of votes obtained in the last election. It would be tremendously difficult to map the career decision process in which politicians routinely engage in a complete and systematic fashion.

Instead, I focus on career decisions that politicians make routinely and in the durations of their careers. These are but two particular dimensions of political careers, yet these are dimensions that can be directly observed. Career trajectories can be traced from electoral records and as such they offer empirical evidence from which I am able to infer the decision calculi made by politicians about their careers and also the effects of those decisions on the duration of their careers.

Political careers are rich phenomena that are full of interesting anecdotes important to evaluate the decision making process in which politicians embark. It may be possible to track a few illustrative careers in depth through various means (participant observation, interviews, ethnography). However, such approach would have limited ability to generalize about what explains the particular career paths taken by politicians or why some careers are longer than others. The systematic approached followed in my research is depleted from the illustrative anecdotal evidence. But, the loss in detail is overly compensated by the ability to make generalizations. Besides the analysis of decisions and durations, the cases selected also allow me to offer insights about the effects that different institutional settings have on political careers.

Patterns of political careers in Latin America differ with respect to the career patterns that emerge from the literature inspired by the U.S. case. Schlesinger's and Mayhew's strong assumptions imply that careers ought to be linear in nature. That is, politicians would get elected into office, stay in the same office for a number of terms, and then eventually move up to higher office. This need not be the case in Latin America. For instance, in his analysis of the Brazilian case, Samuels (2003) suggests that holding a post in the National Congress is considered a "stepping stone" for a fruitful career aimed at coveted positions at the local level, such as

governor or major of a large city. This example illustrates that career paths may vary according to the particular attributes of their contexts. This does not imply that explanations about careers have to be *ad hoc* or on a case-by-case basis. It does imply, however, that great care is required to have the theory fit the cases. In fact, those particular attributes of the context can be known and, therefore, can be accounted for. Career paths need not mimic those of U.S. politicians, but being different does not imply that they cannot be explained using rational-actor models.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In section 1.2, I justify the substantive and theoretical importance of studying political careers. Section 1.3.1 elaborates the theoretical foundations needed to inquire about political careers paying particular attention to ambition theory and theories of incumbency advantage. Section 1.4 discusses the assumptions about the U.S. case that do not necessarily hold in the Latin American case and refines the theoretical framework needed to explain career patterns in the region. Based on these arguments, in section 1.5, I offer testable hypotheses about the factors that help explain careerism outside the U.S. Section 1.6 succinctly recaps the main ideas discussed in the chapter, and offers a description of the remaining chapters of the dissertation.

1.2 Career Politicians and the Quality of Democracy

The question about political careers is at the heart of the idea of democratic representation. In one of its most basic forms, political representation implies the desire of politicians to keep their jobs and the ability of the citizenry to decide whether to renew the mandate of their representatives (Manin, 1997; Mansbridge,

2003; Pitkin, 1967; Przeworski et al., 1999). In this sense, accountable politicians are supposed to act in the best interest of their constituents and are supposed to care for the consequences that their behavior in office has either for them or their parties. Politicians are keenly aware that elections are frequently repeated events and that citizens assess their performance when deciding for whom to vote. Therefore, the concern of politicians for their future provides citizens with mechanisms to hold them accountable; this is precisely what Mayhew aptly labelled "the electoral connection." Likewise, the concern of politicians for their future manifests itself through their desire to be reelected and to have prolonged careers. At least, this is what the stylized model of the career politician implies.

As Dahl (1989) pointedly explained it, contemporary, large-scale, democratic societies necessarily require discussions to be held, and decisions to be made without all parties involved being present. Thus, one of the defining features of democracy is the presence of elected officials at decision-making instances. Prerequisites that restrict who is elegible for office have long been abolished—e.g., restrictions based on gender, race, property ownership, or literacy. So, virtually any citizen may be elected into office. However, there are clear advantages for the quality of democracy when a society develops a professional class of individuals willing to devote themselves solely to the political activity.

In particular, political careers enhance the idea of democratic representation for two reasons. First, citizens are better served by career politicians. The electoral connection provides incentives for politicians to promote the interests of their constituents, or otherwise citizens would not reelect them. Second, senior legislators are more effective and are better able to represent the interests of their constituents while in office because of the expertise they gain after years of service. I now elabo-

rate on both counts.

The first count is not new, but it is a quite clear one. The connection with the electorate is instrumental for citizens to hold their representatives accountable. In fact, this may be the strongest option available to citizens to make their representatives see after their interests. Clearly, constituents may write letters to their representatives or voice their concerns at meetings with them or their party leaders. But, the vote is a powerful tool to reward responsive politicians and punish ineffective ones. If politicians are not interested in a long term career, this powerful tool becomes futile (Przeworski et al., 1999). Career politicians are desirable because they are more responsive to the demands of their constituents than ephemeral politicos serving single terms.[2] The literature reiterates that the behavior of politicians is largely driven by their career interests (Cain et al., 1987; Mayhew, 1974; Rae, 1967), and as a result politicians establish long-term relationships with their constituents because they know that their careers hinge on maintaining a loyal base of support. Citizens are better served by politicians over whom they may exert even a modicum of influence to have them respond to their needs. Thus, careerism enhances democratic representation because citizens may develop stronger bonds with career politicians and the latter need to be responsive to the needs of the former in order to further their careers.

Second, democratic representation is also enhanced when politicians are expe-

[2]The accountability link between citizens and politicians does not necessarily break in countries that ban reelection to the legislature, such as Costa Rica or Mexico. Costa Rican politicians are willing to visit their constituencies and do long hours of tedious case-work. This may seem counterintuitive because there is no apparent immediate gain in their doing so. However, by keeping their constituents happy and loyal to the *party*, Costa Rican deputies help the performance of the party at presidential elections. The party that secures the presidency wins access to the bureaucracy, which allows the party leadership to reward those hard-working and loyal rank-and-file members. Thus, it is in the best interest of politicians to put up with the case-work in order to further their own careers—which are closely intertwined with the fate of the party (Carey, 1996; Taylor, 1992). See also Camp (2002, 1995) and Smith (1979) for a description of the Mexican case.

rienced, effective legislators. Indeed, legislatures benefit when they are populated by career politicians. Legislatures become institutionalized which allows them to be more influential in the creation of policies. Furthermore, as seniority increases, legislators more actively sponsor bills and more efficiently secure their passage (Hibbing, 1991).

Career politicians help the legislature become a more institutionalized and professional body with a stable membership, internal division of labor, and universal rules (Polsby, 1968). That is, individuals who are willing to stay in office for the long haul are also interested in devising an internal structure for the legislature that helps them attain their career goals. Legislators respond better to the needs of their constituencies when the legislature has clear rules and an internal division of labor because they can allocate their time more effectively to both the production of public policy and to constituency service. A logic consequence that ensues from the division of labor is that legislators may become experts in narrow policy ranges (Krehbiel, 1991). This policy expertise no only allows legislators to produce better public policies but it also provides them with greater leverage to influence policy outcomes and enhances its ability to exert checks on the executive.

Additionally, seniority is correlated with a more efficient legislative behavior. In his longitudinal study of careers in the U.S. House, Hibbing (1991) offers convincing evidence of the relevant contributions to the legislative process made by senior members, which are disproportionate to the contributions made by novice members. As their tenures increase legislators become more active in legislative tasks including floor appearances—to speak and offer amendments—and bill sponsorship. Also, legislators tend to become more specialized and efficient. The enhanced legislative efficiency is not necessarily the result of the fact that senior members have

access to leading positions in the committee or party structure. The strong relationship between tenure and effectiveness holds even when controlling for leadership positions. Thus, careerism enhances democratic representation because it helps legislators become more effective at their jobs and it allows legislatures to become more professional and institutionalized.

In sum, given that legislatures play an important part in democratic societies—as the focus for discussion of diverging interests and decision making, career politicians enhance the quality of democracy because they strengthen legislatures. Career politicians eliminate the need to "reinvent the wheel" at the beginning of each legislative period because of the accumulated expertise of senior members. Voters can use the politicians' track records to hold them accountable by assessing whether their performance really responds to the needs of the community. By doing so, citizens send strong signals to politicians that their behavior in office will be scrutinized. Thus, career politicians adjust their behavior in office to satisfy their constituency in order to secure their careers.

Therefore, from a normative point of view it is relevant to study political careers because it offers insights about crucial aspects of democratic representation. On the one hand, the study of political careers helps assess the strength of the electoral connection and the extent to which citizens use their votes as means to keep their representatives in check. On the other hand, it sheds light into the internal structure of legislative organizations, and provides information about the effectiveness of legislative bodies that are populated by career politicians. Contemporary democratic institutions require professional politicians. Thus, it is important to study the factors that allow politicians to decide to continue their careers and also the factors that explain the duration of their careers.

1.3 Ambition and Reelection Revisited

Career politicians have to reconcile simultaneously their personal ambitions to have a successful career with the interests of the constituency to whom they owe their seat (Fiorina, 1977; Mayhew, 1974). As rational actors, politicians act strategically in order to keep their seat, or as the case may be, to move to a more coveted position. In their strategic calculations, politicians need to consider how the decisions they make affect the support they will get from their constituents in the following election. The study of political careers requires that we take a broad look at the behavior of politicians and that we consider them to be both agents who represent the interest of their constituencies as well as rational actors who care about their destinies and act accordingly.

The idea of "political careers" intersects two main bodies of literature. Namely, it is directly related to theories of legislative behavior and also to theories that explain incumbency advantage. Career politicians are clearly interested in getting reelected and their behavior in office is guided precisely by their ambition to have a long and successful career. On the other hand, career politicians need to become experts at winning elective office. In the following pages, I explore these literatures to identify their assumptions in order to adjust them to the Latin American case. I also infer from these theories what the archetypal career ought to look like. These exercises allows me to develop a framework for the analysis of career decisions and durations in Latin America.

1.3.1 Ambition Theory

This theory assumes that the structure of political opportunities available for politicians molds their ambitions. That is, the institutional arrangements of a particular

position affect the preferences of politicians to retire, stay, or move to higher office. Ambition theory assumes that the behavior of politicians is a response to the goals of their office (Schlesinger, 1991, 1966). Schlesinger's influential work elaborates the idea of ambition in several ways.

First, he contends that the desires and motives of individuals are shaped by the political opportunities available. Such opportunities are structurally determined in the sense that the political structure molds the preferences and choices of politicians. Second, given the relevance of the structure of political opportunities, politicians respond primarily to the immediate demands of the institutional arrangement in which they operate. Therefore, ambition theory explains political behavior from the ambitions of politicians. Third, Schlesinger categorizes the ambitions of politicians based on the "direction" they tend to follow. Politicians may exhibit discrete ambition when they want a particular office for a specified term and then withdraw from public office. Politicians exhibit static ambition when they seek a long career in a particular office, or they can have progressive ambition when they aspire to obtain an office that is more important to the one in which they currently serve.

Following Schlesinger, Black (1972) and Rohde (1979) formalized ambition theory and developed ways to empirically test it. Based on a decision calculus devised by Riker and Ordeshook (1973), Black defined the utility function of holding office as the difference between the benefits derived from being in office, accounting for the probability of electoral victory, and the costs associated with campaigning for and holding onto office. Formally, Black postulated the following utility function for office-seekers:

$$U(O_i) = (P_{io} \times B_{io}) - C_{io},$$

where $U(O_i)$ is the utility of an office for a given individual; P_{io} is the probability of attaining that office; B_{io} is the benefit associated with holding that office; and C_{io} are the costs incurred by the individual while running for that office. These studies of Black and Rohde are relevant not only because they both showed that politicians do in fact aspire to higher offices; their research also elaborated on the factors associated with the career decisions made by politicians. Their findings suggest that politicians take into consideration *individual factors* such as their electoral strength and seniority. Additionally, politicians take into consideration several aspects of the *electoral environment* of the prospective seat to assess their probability of winning. This assessment involves analyses of whether the incumbent is running, the "safety" of the seat in electoral terms, the relative size of the district, and a general sense of its levels of competition.

In short, ambition theory helps us explain the shapes of political careers because it allows us to model relatively simple utility functions about the decisions that politicians make as the end of their mandates approaches. These decision calculi include joint assessments of the value of holding office and the probability of attaining such office, on the one hand, and evaluations of the costs associated with seeking that particular office, regardless of whether the individual is seeking reelection or election to higher office, on the other hand. Typically, these assessments take into consideration personal features of the candidates as well as characteristics of the electoral arrangement in which they participate.[3] Therefore, these relatively simple calculi allow us to compare the expected utility associated to holding different offices. The

[3]Ambition theory has been also used to explain a wide array of phenomena including voluntary retirement (Jones, 1994; Kiewiet and Zeng, 1993), why some senators seek the presidency and other do not (Abramson et al., 1987), why weak challengers are not deterred from running for office (Banks and Kiewiet, 1989), the relationship between ambition and policy responsiveness (Maestas, 2000), and even membership in the Soviet Politburo (Ciboski, 1974).

comparison of the expected utility derived from holding different offices allows me to establish a hierarchy of the different offices available. Thus, it is possible to ascertain precisely what constitutes progressive, static, or regressive ambition. Moving to offices with higher expected utility would constitute a "progressive" move, seeking reelection implies static ambition, and moving to offices with lower expected utility amount to showing "regressive" ambition. In later chapters, I offer a rank-ordering of the different offices available for the cases under study. I assess the value each office by deriving the expected utility associated with holding that particular office.

1.3.2 Incumbency Advantage

Ambition theory elucidates aspects related to the calculations made by politicians about what they consider to be the best way to promote their careers. In other words, ambition theory informs us about the specific ways in which politicians try to further their careers. In turn, theories that explain incumbency advantage offer key insights about why incumbents are able to hold on to their seats. That is, once politicians decide where to run for office, incumbency advantage is helpful explaining why some contestants are more successful than others at winning office. Thus, from this literature I substantiate why some factors help me explain career decisions and durations.

The core assumption of the incumbency advantage literature is that holding office gives legislators an upper hand vis-à-vis their non-incumbent counterparts. In general, scholars in this field explain how different factors related to incumbency advantage affect electoral competition on different levels. Elections are by definition events whose results are uncertain because, in essence, all participants in an election have a positive probability of winning (Przeworski, 1991). However, the probability

of winning is not necessarily equal for all candidates. Incumbency advantage explains how the probabilities of winning or losing are not homogenously distributed among the participants in electoral races. That is, there are several factors that "bias" the probabilities in favor of some participants and against other ones. Some of these factors are particularly relevant to the study of political careers and as such, I discuss them briefly in what follows. These factors include the effects of seniority, partisanship, and electoral performance.

Politicians make their career decisions under uncertainty because the risk of electoral defeat is always present. However, the risk of defeat is not the same for everybody all the time. Incumbency advantage theory contends that senior legislators are better able to serve their constituents because they have access to better positions and greater access to resources that can benefit the district. As such, seniority creates an incentive for citizens to vote for incumbents because doing otherwise would put into office individuals with little ability to deliver goods to the district (King and Zeng, 2000; McKelvey and Reizman, 1992). Thus, seniority is a factor that strongly offsets the risk of losing an election. For instance, Finocchiaro and Lin (2000) show that the risk of electoral defeat for members of the U.S. Congress is at its highest point on the first term, it then gradually declines in subsequent terms and slightly rises after several terms to reflect "constituency fatigue." In other words, incumbents are more vulnerable to electoral defeat the first time they are up for reelection and their vulnerability decreases as they serve more terms. However, there is a saturation point after the 7th or 8th terms after which experience and long tenure actually work against incumbents and increase, albeit slightly, their chances of losing election. Their findings ratify the idea that incumbents have an edge over challengers. But they also show that incumbents are not completely invulnerable

because their advantage varies with their seniority.

The risk of electoral defeat also varies according to the party to which the politician belongs. According to Ansolabehere and Gerber (1997), U.S. House Democrats exhibit lower retirement rates than their Republicans counterparts. This incumbency advantage has produced legislative majorities favorable for Democrats. The authors model the decision to retire from office including factors such as the chance of winning reelection, the career opportunities outside the House, and whether the politician's party will be in the majority. The logic behind this last factor suggests that the chance of retirement increases if politicians have little hope that their electoral victory will move the party from the minority into the majority. Thus, politicians who are members of dominant parties have an advantage over politician of other parties in their ambition to have a durable career.

The electoral performance of politicians in a given election may also alter their probabilities of electoral defeat in the subsequent election. That is, if a politician has performed well—in terms of the votes obtained or the margin of victory—then her chances of defeat in the following election may decrease. Indeed, scholars have found an increase of the percentage of the vote obtained by incumbents across all levels of tenure and also that margin of victory increases as tenure increases (Alford and Hibbing, 1981; Dawes and Bacot, 1998).[4]

In section 1.5, I take these factors and formulate testable hypotheses about their relationship with the career decisions made by politicians and also how they affect the duration of careers.

[4]Incumbency advantage is not an exclusive feature of single-member districts. Cox and Morgenstern (1995) provide a method to compute incumbency advantage in multi-member districts to compare with measures of incumbency advantage in single-member districts. Their results show that in multi-member districts the incumbency advantage increases but at a slower rate than in single-member districts.

1.4 Latin America's Multifarious Political Careers

The cursory review of ambition and incumbency advantage theories provides an stylized version of the typical career pattern. These theories suggest that once a career politician overcomes the hurdle of getting elected for the first time, it is somewhat easier to get reelected repeatedly. Being in office increases the probability of reelection because incumbency reduces the costs of attaining and holding office. As costs decrease for incumbents, the expected benefit form office actually increases (Cox and Katz, 1996; Levitt and Wolfram, 1997). As a result, politicians have great incentives to stay in office for several terms. Incumbents build up public recognition over time and collect benefits from office at reduced costs to the point where the benefits from office approach the expected benefits from higher office. Given that greater notoriety increases their probability of winning office—even a higher one, politicians might decide to seek higher office.

This stylized model of the career politician owes its explanatory power to the rather parsimonious assumptions that support it. As mentioned, these assumptions pertain to the U.S. case, but do not necessarily hold for other cases. Borrowing from Morgenstern and Nacif (2002), I will discuss the basic assumptions from the U.S. case that require consideration before being "transported" to study careers in Latin America. I will also show how Samuels (2003) successfully uses ambition theory to explain career patterns in Brazil, paying particular attention to the way in which he adapts the assumptions of the canonical model to adjust the intricacies of his case of study.

According to Morgenstern and Nacif, there are at least four basic assumptions

from the models that explain congressional behavior in the U.S. that cannot be made in a more general model of legislative politics. The first assumption in the canonical model—and possibly the most important—is the reelection goal. As already discussed, the literature assumes that legislators worry particularly about their reelections because that goal antecedes any other ulterior objectives that politicians may have. That is, attaining her reelection is an instrumental goal for a legislator to achieve whatever it is that she *really* is pursuing. As already mentioned as well, Latin American legislators are not as keen on reelection as their American counterparts—at least not uniformly. Since reelection rates vary from very high to very low levels, it is important to consider that career paths may lead to posts outside the National Congress.

Second, the model takes for granted key characteristics that are only germane to the U.S. electoral system. Namely, the model assumes that politicians compete in single-member districts that use plurality rule and that there is no intra-party competition. Electoral systems in Latin America use Proportional Representation (PR) formulas in multi-member districts in which electoral competition among copartisans is quite prevalent. The fact that there is more electoral competition—both among and within parties—in PR, multi-member district systems than in plurality systems has implications for the type of relationship that politicians develop with their constituencies. In contrast with plurality systems, PR systems typically use districts that are bigger in terms of area and magnitude from which several representatives are chosen. The choice between plurality and PR systems implies a trade off between identifiability and representation (see for instance Grofman and Lijphart, 1986). In PR systems, it is not obvious for politicians where "home" is given that their home districts are shared with other incumbents, as Crisp and Desposato

(2004) aptly discuss. Thus, politicians may have a difficult time building a strong core of supporters in their districts to help them get reelected because voters are constantly disputed among a plethora of candidates—incumbents and challengers, competitors and co-partisans alike—competing to represent the district.

Third, career politicians are assumed to operate under a stable two-party system. Such configuration allows for the formation of a clear majority party that may monopolize policy making and use it to its advantage (Cox and McCubbins, 1993). For instance, as Ansolabehere and Gerber (1997) point out, the advantage enjoyed by the Democratic party has implied that its members have had longer careers on average. The partisan life in other countries is more volatile than in the U.S., with higher levels of inter and intra-party competition and conspicuous party-switching (Desposato, 2006). Those kinds of partisan structures hamper rather than promote careerism.

Fourth, the literature also assumes a given constitutional balance of power between the executive and the legislative branches. The alleged subordination of the legislative to the executive in so called third wave democracies could contribute to the varying levels of institutionalization and professionalization found in Latin American legislatures. Legislatures that are not institutionalized offer little incentives to their members to carve a long term career there and instead may motivate politicians to further their careers someplace else.

Samuels (2003) study of careers in Brazil nicely illustrates how the canonical model can be employed to understand the motivation of politicians to develop their careers away from the national congress. The extant literature on the Brazilian legislature suggests that politicians there do not focus their energies on building long careers on the Chamber of Deputies. Instead, Brazilian deputies are known for

the brevity of their service in office. Between 1945 and 1995, the average legislature was composed of 56% freshmen, 24% sophomores, 11% members with 2 terms served, 5% members with 3 terms served, and 4% members with 4 terms served (Samuels, 2003, p. 41). These data reveal that the vast majority of deputies served only one or two terms and then moved on. Samuels explores to where deputies move after their ephemeral service in the Chamber.

The few comparative studies on other cases focus on national-level careers thus largely ignoring positions in sub-national office as possible career moves.[5] Samuels' analysis of the Brazilian case elucidates that the opportunity structure faced by career politicians is not necessarily homogenous across countries. In a federal system, such as Brazil, governors or mayors of large cities may have access to significant resources making those positions desirable. Samuels studies the structure of political careers in Brazil using a cost-benefit analysis of holding different offices which allows him to compare how politicians perceive and rank different offices. Typically, the benefits derived from office include its emolument, different perquisites such as the size of the budget that the office controls, the ability to influence politics, franking privilege or airline tickets to visit the district, the potential for advancement, and so forth. Consideration of the probability of winning allows politicians to refine their assessment of the value of an office because their estimated probabilities of reaching a given post determines the expected utility from that post. Indeed, a cabinet position may be the most desirable post but only a handful of people actually become ministers. Hence, the expected utility of a national portfolio for any given politician is close to naught because the probability of actually serving in the cabinet are infinitesimally small. Finally, the costs of seeking elective office

[5]See for instance, Smith (1979) or Carey (1996) for analyses of the Mexican and Costa Rican cases, respectively.

can be estimated in monetary terms by considering campaign funds. Costs can also take into account other factors such as opportunity costs or greater accountability.[6] However, measuring such costs or the costs of attaining non-elective offices can be rather cumbersome.

The analysis of the Brazilian case rests on three key assumptions of ambition theory that allow Samuels to apply the theory to a context different to the one from which it originally emerged. First, politicians are assumed to be instrumentally rational with regards to their careers. Politicians make career choices based on a rational calculus of benefits, probabilities of attaining office and the costs incurred for seeking a particular office. It is expected that politicians choose the alternative with the greatest expected utility. Second, politicians are assumed to have "progressive" ambitions. That is, politicians seek more attractive office when the expected benefits from it outweigh the costs. Third, political careers are assumed to be hierarchical. In this sense, it is possible to rank order different political offices—within and outside of the legislature—according to how desirable they are for politicians (Samuels, 2003, p. 16). These assumptions subtly adjust ambition theory to explain the behavior of Brazilian politicians. In particular, the idea of "progression" is redefined such that the mayoralty of a mid-sized city is considered as a better ranked office than a congressional seat. Brazilian politicians do wish their careers to progress. Nevertheless, progress is not where the canonical career suggests it is.

Samuels makes an interesting contribution to both the understanding of career patterns in a developing democracy and to the strengthening of the theory itself. He

[6]Moving to higher office may imply a closer relationship with the electorate or may entail greater responsibilities that make the job more demanding. Increased workloads or responsibilities that may result from representing a larger constituency may be perceived as a burden of higher offices. Workloads and responsibilities may even be greater for politicians that move from the legislature to the executive—e.g. becoming mayor or governor—where they are directly responsible to the people and their tenure may be recalled.

outlines and makes explicit the underpinnings of ambition theory and adjusts them to the case being explained. By doing so, Samuels develops a solid and appropriate theoretical framework to understand Brazilian career patterns.[7] At the same time the explicative power of the theory is tested in a challenging setting. This is particularly useful for the present research project because it illustrates how to apply ambition theory to cases in which the legislature may not provide the incentives to develop long-lasting careers.

1.5 Hypotheses

As mentioned earlier, I focus on two separate dimensions of political careers, namely decisions and durations. Despite being different dimensions, I formulate the same hypotheses to explain why politicians make certain career decisions and also why some are more successful than others in furthering their careers. Even though I model these dimensions as separate ones, they are deeply intertwined with each other. Politicians make decisions about where to run because they believe that seeking election to a given office is the best way to further their careers given the information available to them at that particular point in time. They also believe that running for a particular office is the best way to further their careers, otherwise they would choose a different course of action. In other words, the duration of a career is related to the choices made by politicians at different electoral junctures. Politicians jointly ponder about having a long, successful career, and about the best way to achieve it. Thus, I assume that politicians make a single calculus—however complex it may be—about their careers based on their assessments they

[7] The careful way in which the theory is applied to the Brazilian case offers persuasive counterarguments of those critical of the use of rational choice theories to understand Latin American politics. For instance, see Weyland (2002).

have available of the expected utility they may derive from their choice. Therefore, given that the decision process is the same for both dimensions, I use the same set of explanatory variables to explain changes in career decisions and durations.

The discussion of the literature offered in sections 1.3 and 1.4 provides a framework for the analysis of these dimensions. The literature suggests that politicians calculate the expected utility of running from office based on their assessment of their personal characteristics and also on those of the electoral district in which they run for office. Nevertheless, these decisions are not taken in an institutional vacuum. Instead, the behavior of politicians is bounded and shaped by the institutional arrangements in which they operate.

As Carey and Shugart (1995) suggest, the electoral rules provide strong incentives for politicians to work on behalf of their own personal reputations or the reputation of the party to which they belong. Succinctly, electoral systems provide incentives for politicians to promote the reputation of their parties if party leaders control access to the party label, votes are polled at the party level, and citizens cast partisan votes. Naturally, the inverse conditions—no control, no pooling, votes at the sub-party level—provide incentives for politicians to care about their personal reputations. Additionally, district magnitude also affects the behavior of politicians, but its effect depends on whether the electoral system allows for intraparty competition; that is, whether leaders have control of the access to the party label or not. If there is no intraparty competition, the incentives for personal vote seeking behavior decrease as the magnitude gets larger. In contrast, if there is intraparty competition, the incentives for personal vote seeking behavior increase with magnitude because copartisans need to differentiate from one another—and from competitors from other parties (Carey and Shugart, 1995, 430). However, the effect of magni-

tude on personal vote seeking is mediated by the ratio of copartisan candidates to the number of seats available in the district (Crisp et al., 2007).

Different incentives from the electoral system produce different types of behavior from ambitious, reelection-seeking politicians. These incentives ought to affect the "career behavior" of politicians as well. The typical career patterns in a given country should respond to the degree to which party leaders are able to control the behavior of their rank and file members. That is, career patterns ought to be more dynamic in systems that promote personal vote seeking incentives because such systems encourage politicians to develop direct ties with their constituencies. Thus, politicians assess the overall utility of different offices for their career plans with little or no consideration of how their individual career decisions affect the performance of their parties. On the other hand, in systems that promote party reputations, the career decisions of politicians are constrained by the assessments of the party leaders about the performance of the party. That is, party leaders may affect the decision process of politicians by suggesting certain career moves or even dictating whom should run and where.

Therefore, I compare the Chilean and Colombian cases in order to assess the impact of different institutional settings on the career decisions and durations of individual politicians. In Carey and Shugart's (1995) very own ordering of electoral formulas Chile is ranked as a system in which party reputation "matters significantly" (p. 427), whereas Colombia is described as a "personal-list system" in which candidates "need not have received party endorsement to use the party label" (p. 429). Chile and Colombia are relevant cases to study because their electoral systems are placed at opposite ends of the spectrum of party vs. personal vote seeking incentives. Thus, the theoretical expectations suggest that careers in Chile should be

more coordinated by the parties, while careers in Colombia should be more dynamic and heterogeneous as parties have a lesser ability to coordinate the behavior of their rank and file members.

I now turn to the formulation of concrete hypotheses to explain differences in career decisions and durations.

1.5.1 Individual Factors

As mentioned, at the end of each term, politicians are forced to decide what they are going to do in the following election. They make this decision about the best way to further their careers based on all the information that they have available at that point in time. This is true for incumbents and challengers alike. Independently of whether someone has been in office during that period, as elections approach all politicians assess their chances of attaining office based on their personal experience and their evaluation of the competition levels in their districts.

As portrayed in the literature, seniority has an important impact on the ability of politicians to get reelected because it allows them to build a relationship with their constituents over time. Seniority is synonymous with experience and tends to be related effectiveness in the sense that senior legislators are expected to occupy leadership positions in committees and other high places in the legislature's organization. Legislators in these positions are better equipped to modify the legislative agenda and affect the policy outcomes. Additionally, senior politicians are more renowned in their districts which makes it easier for them to seek election in higher office. Thus, I hypothesize the following:

H1: *The greater the seniority of a politician, the greater the likelihood of seeking election to the same office or to a higher office.*

Additionally, past electoral performance may also affect the decisions that politicians make with regards to how to prolong their careers. Given that electoral defeat is an undesirable outcome, politicians consider their electoral strength when deciding whether to seek election in the same office, lower or higher office. Large margins of victory in the previous election suggest that candidates already have a strong base of support on which they can count for their next election, all else being equal. In contrast, small margins of victory imply that there are other candidates with considerable electoral support in the district that can complicate the likelihood of successes in future elections. As mentioned, incumbents and nonincumbents make similar assessments. For instance, if a politician failed miserably in the previous election, he may consider running for a lower office. Also, if a politician came close to winning but lost by a small margin, she may feel encouraged and confident to try again to get the post in the following election. Thus, the margin of victory is an useful indicator for a personal factor that helps explain career decisions.[8] This may be formalized as the following hypothesis:

H2: *As the margin of victory increases, the the likelihood of seeking election to the same office or to a higher office also increases.*

Regardless of how strong the electoral system encourages politicians to cultivate their personal reputations or those of their parties, party labels also play a role in the career decisions made by politicians. Membership to dominant parties provides an edge over politicians who are members of other parties. Thus, members of lesser known parties may face additional difficulties to fulfill their aspirations of reelection or higher office. This leads to the following hypothesis:

[8]The operationalization of this variable is discussed in later chapters. It suffices to mention here that the margin of victory for losing candidates is smaller than one, whereas it is greater or equal to one for the victorious candidates in the district.

H3: *Membership in dominant parties ought to be related with an increased likelihood of seeking election to the same office or to a higher office.*

Furthermore, there are additional factors that favor some individuals in detriment of others, including incumbency status and gender. In section 1.3.2, I discussed at length the reasons why incumbents enjoy an advantage over their nonincumbent counterparts, so I will not elaborate any further. However, the incumbency advantage works against women because the majority of incumbents are men. Thus, as incumbents are reelected, the possibilities for women to get elected decrease (Schwindt-Bayer, 2005). Thus, I formulate the last two hypotheses about personal factors:

H4: *Incumbent candidates ought to have an increased likelihood of seeking election to the same office or to a higher office as compared to nonincumbent candidates.*

H5: *Female candidates ought to have an smaller likelihood of seeking election to the same office or to a higher office as compared their male counterparts.*

1.5.2 District Factors

In their career decisions, politicians also consider their perceptions about the competition levels in their districts. As mentioned, elections are by definition uncertain events and the levels of competition are governed by a myriad of characteristics. Furthermore, there is no precise way to anticipate how competitive a race is going to be before election day. However, all politicians make their decisions under this uncertainty. That is, no one has privileged information that can use to their advantage. Nevertheless, politicians have different sources of information that informs

them of how tough competition may be in the following election. Prior electoral results are one such source that is public and readily available for anyone.

In general terms, the more competitive a particular election is, the more difficult it becomes to win a seat for incumbents and challengers alike. Now, there are several ways to account for the levels of competition of a given district. The degree of competitiveness of an electoral district is largely determined by the number of seats available and the number of candidates seeking to be elected to it. Thus, one can account for competition by considering the raw number of seats available (Carey and Shugart, 1995), or one may use a more nuanced measure, such as ratio of candidates to seats (Crisp et al., 2007). Thus, it may be that case that electoral competition decreases as the number of seats available in a given district increases because by definition the district allows a larger number of legislators to obtain seats. Or, it may be the case that competition decreases as the ratio of candidates to seats decreases because there are fewer disputants per seat available. As a result, the probability of being elected into office increases with the number of seats being allocated in the district. In turn, electoral competition increases as the number of candidates increase because the size of the population is a fixed and finite amount. When a fixed amount of votes has to be divided among a larger number of candidates, the chance of earning a seat decrease for all candidates homogeneously. Therefore, I formulate the following hypotheses:

H6: *As the levels of competition in the district increase, the likelihood seeking election to a different office increases.*

H6a: *As district magnitude increases, the likelihood of seeking election to the same office increases.*

H6b: *As the ratio of candidates to seats increases, the likelihood of seeking election to a different office increases.*

However, not all candidates are equally strong. That is, competition levels do not affect all candidates equally. Vote shares may be concentrated on a few candidates or may be distributed rather evenly across a large number of them. Thus, it is important to account for the different forms in which electoral competition may manifest in a given district. The extent to which a district is the bailiwick of one or few candidates may scare away other competitors, forcing them to seek election to a different office. Additionally, the electoral weight of different candidates may be assessed by measures such as the effective number of parties. Such measures weight each party (or candidate, as the case may be) by its size in terms of votes garnered or seats attained. In general, it can be asserted that the greater the competition levels in the district, the greater the likelihood that the politician retires or experiences electoral defeat. The following hypotheses account for different forms of competition in the districts:

H7: *As the district becomes dominated by one or few candidates, the likelihood seeking election to a different office increases.*

H8: *As the effective number of competitors increases, the likelihood of seeking election to a different office increases.*

1.6 Conclusion: The Road Ahead

In this chapter, I have discussed the general theoretical considerations with regards to the behavior of professional politicians. It does so by bringing together the seminal

works of Schlesinger and Mayhew on ambitious and reelection-seeking politicians, respectively, and discussing at length the behavioral implications of the theory. Then, I point out the restrictions of the basic assumptions in the model such that the model can be used to explain the behavior of politicians in other settings. This allows me to formulate hypotheses regarding factors that may explain careerism in Latin America, where politicians exhibit "dynamic" ambitions.

In the chapters that follow, I attempt to assess the claims made about careers decisions and durations. As mentioned, I will compare the Chilean and Colombian cases in order to test the hypotheses in institutional settings that provide opposite incentives for politicians with regards to their behavior. In chapters 2 and 3, I offer a descriptive account of what careers look like in Colombia an Chile. In those chapters, I assess the shape of political careers by using broad, original data sets that cover electoral results for a variety of elective offices in the 1958–2002 period for Colombia, and the 1989–2004 period for Chile. These chapters show that politicians are interested in prolonged careers but that the particular shape that career take vary in the two cases.

Chapters 4 and 5 offer statistical analyzes of the impact of personal and district factors on career decisions and durations. To do so, I provide rank orderings of elective offices by considering the benefits, difficulty of winning, and costs associated with different offices. The hierarchy of offices that emerges allows me to model the shape of the ambition that politicians exhibit. That is, I am able to ascertain whether a politician is moving to a higher or a lower office. I use multinomial logistic regression to evaluate the impact of individual and district factors in the decision of where to run for office. I use event history analysis to assess the effects of individual and district factors in the durations of political careers. Finally, chapter 6

summarizes the findings and offers concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2

Which Way is Up? The Shape of Political Careers in Colombia

2.1 Introduction: Careers Colombia Style

In the previous chapter, I made some assumptions about the behavior of politicians in Latin America that require verification. I asserted that Latin American politicians can be conceived as ambitious actors that are interested in their careers. I also suggested that the shape of the typical career pattern in each country depends on the particular hierarchy of offices and the institutional incentives that affect the behavior of politicians. In the following two chapters, I offer evidence that substantiates both claims. These chapters offer a broad descriptive account about the shape of careers in Colombia (current chapter) and Chile (chapter 3). The research questions that guide this chapter in particular are as follows. Are colombian politicians driven by reelection? How are careers affected by the setting in which they take place? Do the patterns of office seeking suggest a particular hierarchy of office?

To assess the shape of political careers in Colombia, I use a broad data set that covers electoral results for the Senate, House of Representatives, State Legislatures in Colombia from 1958 to 2002, as well as the electoral results of mayoral and

gubernatorial races that started to take place in 1988 and 1992, respectively. In general, I show that Colombian politicians are interested in developing their careers, and that careerism has become more entrenched over time. This shift towards longer careers evidences a process of institutionalization of the National Congress, at least with respect to what Polsby (1968) referred to as its "boundedness." The evidence offered here supports Mayhew's hypothesis that politicians to a large extent are reelection seekers. The evidence also seems supports Schlesinger's hypothesis that politicians are interested in static ambition—although there is also evidence that politicians seek election in higher and lower-level offices—but do not have long term careers mostly because high levels of electoral competition.

The study about careerism in Colombia—and the study of the Chilean case in the following chapter—helps elucidate the specificity of political careers in Latin America. Studies of careers in different countries in the region show that while the shape of careers vary from case to case, there is evidence that Latin American politicians can be conceived as ambitious actors.[1] However, the extant literature is scant and the evidence exiguous. Of the studies cited, only Camp (1995, 2002), Samuels (2003), and Smith (1979) use data that covers more than 3 electoral cycles. The other studies make inferences about careers with data that spans a decade at best, which is insufficient to assess long-term careers.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Colombian and Chilean cases are selected to evaluate the extent to which particular institutional settings provide different incentives that shape the behavior of politicians operating under those rules. It has

[1]This assertion is substantiated by the evidence presented in studies about different cases including Argentina (Jones et al., 2002), Brazil (Desposato, 2001; Samuels, 2003), Costa Rica (Carey, 1996; Taylor, 1992), Mexico (Camp, 1995, 2002; Smith, 1979), Uruguay (Altman and Chasquetti, 2005) and Venezuela (Carey, 1996). In turn, Benton (2007) inquires about the relationship between careers and patronage in the region.

long been established that the Colombian electoral system provides strong incentives for politicians to cultivate their personal reputations instead of those of their parties (Botero and Rennó, 2007; Carey and Shugart, 1995; Cox and Shugart, 1995), and that the personalism fostered by the electoral system was only exacerbated during the 1980s and 1990s (Botero and Rodríguez Raga, 2007; Crisp and Ingall, 2002; Crisp and Desposato, 2004; Ingall and Crisp, 2001; Rodríguez Raga, 1999). This implies that over time the routes available for politicians to develop their careers ceased to required close ties with the party structure. In other words, the electoral system effectively relaxed the barriers of entry to the system and opened the possibility of being elected into office to people that were not high in the party hierarchy or not part of it at all. Nevertheless, the functioning of the electoral system also generated a formidable disadvantage to careerism. As more and more people tried to get elected into office, the levels of inter and intra-party competition increased immensely. Higher levels of electoral competition implied smallers odds of winning elections, ceteris paribus.

Additionally, Colombia is a suitable case to study careerism because it has the longest democratic history of the region, which, of course, yields records that span several decades. Thus, the richness of the data available make Colombia a good case for the study of careers. Colombia's long democratic history provides a fertile setting in which political careers may thrive. However, the electoral systems fosters electoral competition, which hinders careerism. This chapter shows that Colombian politicians are interested in furthering their careers, but electoral competition constitutes a serious obstacle in their ability to do so. The remainder of the chapter describes meticulously the shape of political careers in Colombia and the setting in which they are built, and to do so it relies heavily in the graphical display of data

(Gelman et al., 2002; Kastellec and Leoni, 2007). The chapter is divided in three major sections. Section 2.2 describes general trends with regards to the setting in which careers are built. Section 2.3 describes the extent to which political careers are ingrained in Colombia by looking at reelection rates and office tenure. Section 2.4 offers concluding remarks.

2.2 Strong Parties and Competitive Districts: Breeding Grounds of Political Careers?

Colombia's democratic institutions go a long way. As mentioned, the country has been democratic for the most part since its was established as a Republic in the late nineteenth century. This study looks at careers beginning in 1958, the year that marks the return to democracy after a brief and rather benign authoritarian interlude. It should be briefly mentioned that democratic rule was probably at its weakest at that time. The dictatorship was actually seen as a way to pacify the brutal domestic strife that clashed members of the Liberal (PL) and Conservative (PC) parties and which had the country on the verge of a Civil War.[2] The restoration of democratic rule was accomplished through a peculiar arrangement between the quarrelling Liberals and Conservatives to share power in which both parties agreed to split the state apparatus punctiliously in half. For 16 years, the presidency was to be alternated between Liberals and Conservatives, Congress was to be divided between the two parties, and the same applied to the rest of the state's bureaucracy.[3] Nevertheless, this experience with a limited form of democracy served its purpose

[2]For an account of the *La Violencia* period see Guzmán et al. (1962).

[3]For an account of the *Frente Nacional* agreement see Dávila (2002), Gutiérrez (2007, chap. 2), and Hartlyn (1988).

well and helped democratic consolidation. It also impacted the way political careers were developed by changing the setting in which they took place. In this section, I describe the electoral milieu in terms of the dominance of traditional parties and the changing levels of electoral competition to characterize the environment in which political careers were built since 1958.

2.2.1 The Vanishing Dominance of the Traditional Parties

The traditional Conservative and Liberal parties—founded in the 1850s—have played a central role in Colombian politics. However, their dominance began to fade in 1991 with the adoption of a new Constitution.[4] Indeed, the drafters of the constitution had as one of their main goals to allow minority parties to participate in a system that was perceived as exclusionary (Botero, 1998; Orjuela, 2005). Incidentally, it is not difficult to see that such perception had factual basis, as depicted in figure 2.1.[5]

This figure shows the aggregate seat percentage that the Conservative and Liberal parties obtained in the Senate, House, State Legislatures, Governorships and Mayoralties.[6] During the *Frente Nacional*—which lasted from 1958 to 1974—both parties obtained 100% of the seats because it was constitutionally established that each party ought to receive a 50% share. After the agreement expired, beginning

[4] A thorough explanation of why this is the case is beyond the scope of this project, but those interested may refer to Gutiérrez (2007) or Pizarro (2007).

[5] Most of the graphs share some common features that are worth pointing out. Graphs illustrate changes over time which is actually measured in electoral years. When plotting multiple legislatures in the same graph, only national elections—typically occurring every four years—are labelled in order to avoid crowdedness on the *x-axis*. Local elections—typically occurring every two years—that do not coincide with national elections are indicated by tick marks on the *x–axis*. Also, some of the graphs include a horizontal line at 50% to aid visualization.

[6] Details about the data set are provided in chapter 4. It suffices to say here that the figures show data from all candidates running in Senate, House, State Legislature, and Governorship races. Data about Mayoral races is limited only to the those of the 32 state capitals.

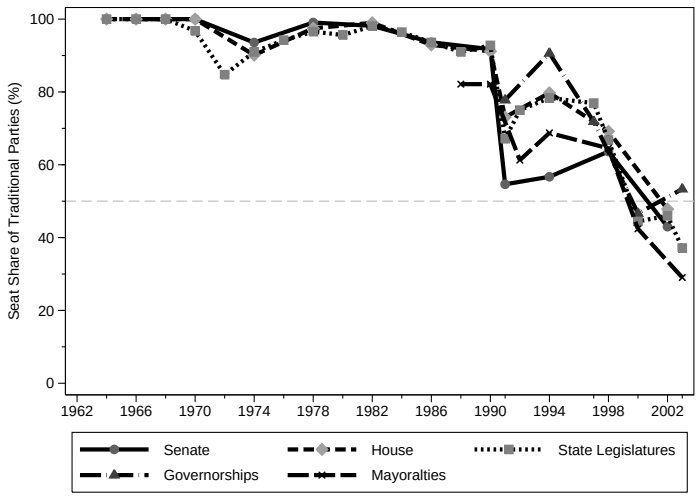

Figure 2.1: *This figure shows the evolution over time of the combined seat share of the Conservative and Liberal parties in the Senate, House, State Legislatures, Governorships and Mayoralties.*

with the 1974 election, traditional parties enjoyed an exorbitant advantage over other parties that had been excluded from the political arena for quite some time. Thus, up until 1990, traditional parties averaged about 95% of the seats in the provincial and national legislatures. However, beginning in 1991, their dominance experienced a precipitous drop, falling below the 50% mark in the early 2000s. This is also the case with the mayoral and gubernatorial elections, which first occurred in 1988 and 1992 respectively. In the first two such elections, the PL and PC summed between 80% and 90% of all mayoralties and governorships. But this edge of the traditional parties quickly faded, and the share of these seats plummeted as well.

As depicted, traditional parties face great challenges and have lost valuable terrain to competitors that have emerged on both sides of the political spectrum, but they still attain the lion's share of the seats in national and local elections. Then, successful political careers were to a large extent tied to the fate of PC and PL, but this is no longer the case as other parties began to populate the political arena

since the early 1990s. Only recently could careers thrive outside traditional parties. The odds are high, though, that a politician with a career longer than 10 years—or 3 national electoral cycles—is a member of a traditional party or was one at some earlier time.

This figure—and following ones as well—reveal important trends in political competition in Colombia's recent history. As mentioned, the *Frente Nacional* era is characterized by the fact that competition was limited to the PC and PL exclusively. No other parties were allowed to participate in elections. After this agreement expired in 1974, democratic competition increased slightly as new parties entered in the political arena. However, PC and PL enjoyed an advantage over third parties as a direct result the *Frente Nacional* and also because they had been the major political actors for almost a century by then. The overwhelming dominance of the traditional parties actually became a liability by the 1980s because the public opinion began to perceive democratic competition as limited and the party system as exclusionary. Popular discontent lead to the election of a Constitutional Assembly in late 1990 to reform the constitution. The new constitution—ratified on 1991—significantly lowered the entry barriers for minority parties hoping to grant them access to decision making bodies (Dávila, 2002). But, at the same time the traditional parties had fragmented dramatically and the new, relaxed rules allowed politicians to break away from the traditional parties and form smaller parties—most of them individual electoral vehicles. As a result of this process, electoral competition surged in the post 1991 era.

2.2.2 The Inordinate Increase in Electoral Competition

Electoral competition within parties ensued as a natural consequence to the *Frente Nacional* arrangement. Given that the number of seats per party was fixed, internal factions appeared in each party and competed against each other for the seats allotted to the party. In effect, each party fielded multiple lists in the same district. Typically, the official party list was pitted against lists of splinter factions. The electoral system had no provisions against a single party running multiple lists in a given district, and this actually made sense during the *Frente Nacional* era. It made less sense after the agreement ended, but it nonetheless became a pervasive feature of the electoral system. In fact, it actually became a conscious electoral strategy, and parties—in particular the PL—ran with a myriad of lists in a district in an attempt simultaneously maximize the number of winning candidates while it tried to minimize the amount of votes that would get them elected. Politicians did so by exploiting the possibility of obtaining enough votes to be elected by the "larger remainders" instead of the electoral quotas.[7] There was an enormous amount of wasted votes. Votes were squandered on lists with no chance of winning. Also, votes were lost on winning lists that surpassed the minimum winning vote share, but did not obtained enough votes to elect more than one candidate. As a result, most "lists" were in effect personal electoral vehicles. Eventually, the functioning of the electoral system actually resembled a Single Non-transferable Vote system (Cox and Shugart, 1995).

The pervasiveness of multiple party lists implied that electoral competition in-

[7]Colombia used the Hare system of simple quota and largest remainders version of Proportional Representation (PR) (Taagepera and Shugart, 1989). In 2003, the electoral system was substantially changed to a D'Hondt system explicitly requiring parties to run with only one list per district. For an explanation of the reform and its impact see Botero and Rodríguez Raga (2007) and Rodríguez Raga and Botero (2006).

creased over time because politicians competed against opponents form other parties and their own party as well. However, higher levels of electoral competition indicate that political careers are attractive because there are more individuals trying to get elected into office. If virtually anyone who runs for office gets elected, the value of that office depreciates. Instead, when people try to win a seat and only a few are able to do it, those scant seats available become quite valuable. Figure 2.2 shows precisely how the value of political office has significantly appreciated over time.

Overall, the value of holding office has constantly increased over time for either the State Legislatures or a post in Congress, as indicated by the continuous decrease in the percentage of candidates that win elections. Mayoral and gubernatorial elections seem to have been quite contested since their inception. Three periods can be identified in figure 2.2. In the first—i.e. *Frente Nacional*—elections the percentage of all candidates that win drops rather quickly from very high values to about 60% for the Sate Legislatures and about 50% in Congress. In a second period, 1974–1990, the percentage stabilizes at about 50–60% depending on the post. Finally, after 1991, competition increases again at a fast pace as the number of candidates running for office increases substantially while the number of available seats in those offices remains constant. Competition levels in gubernatorial and mayoral races fit with the patterns of competition of the post 1991 period. That is, about 20–30% of candidates in these races are able to secure seats, which implies that mayoral and gubernatorial posts are quite valuable. These data provide evidence that holding office has become more desirable over time because the number of people running for office has constantly increased.

However, the percentage of winning candidates is a quite coarse way of assessing the levels of electoral competition because it gives a system-wide aggregate measure

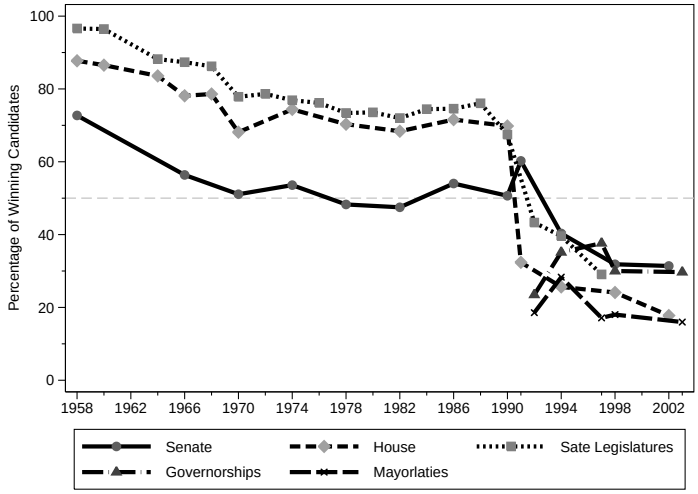

Figure 2.2: *This figure depicts the change of the percentage of all candidates that won seats in the Senate, House, State Legislatures, Governorships and Mayoralties The general trend is downward suggesting that the value of holding office increases over time.*

of competition. As suggested, the degree of competitiveness is largely determined by the number of seats available and the number of candidates seeking to be elected. Then, the level of competition in the district can also be gauged by looking at the ratio of candidates to available seats (figure 2.3), or also by weighting candidates according to their vote or seat shares (figure 2.4). Figure 2.3 plots the average ratio of candidates to seats across all of the districts for a given office in a given year. Overall, the figure shows that electoral competition was quite tame up until 1991, with about 2–3 candidates per seat. But, from 1991 on the number of candidates disputing seats increases significantly in all offices.

The ratio of candidates to seats offers important information about how crowded the district is. But, not all candidates are equally strong. So, it is not necessarily the case that the chance of attaining office decreases homogeneously for all candidates as the number of candidates increases. In the extreme case in which two powerful

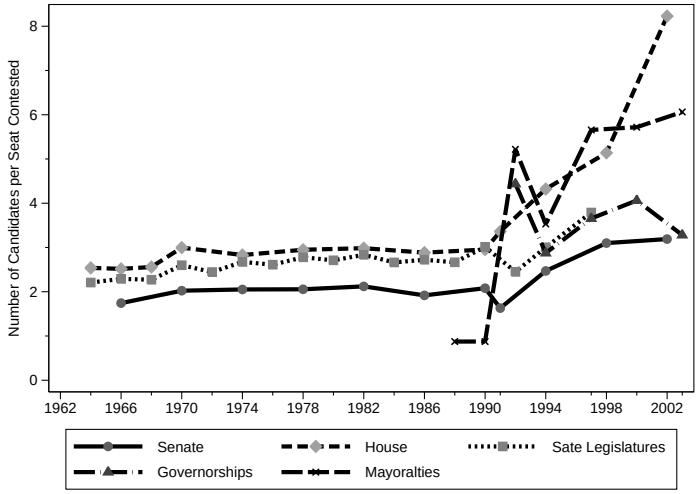

Figure 2.3: *This figure plots the change in the ratio of candidates to available seats as a complementary measure of electoral competition in the districts. As depicted, competition levels in all offices increase sharply after the 1991 constitutional change which relaxed the entry barriers in the party system.*

candidates amass 99% of the vote, it is not that relevant whether the remaining 1% goes to a one or ten candidates. As long as these two hypothetical key players remain as electorally strong, the levels of competition will not vary in that particular district regardless of the number of candidates running for office.[8] Given that vote shares may be concentrated on a few candidates, a better measure of competition should account for the strength of the competitors. Precisely, the effective number of parties (N_p) accounts for this problem because it weights each party (or candidate, as the case may be) by its size in terms of votes garnered or seats attained.[9] The different panels in figure 2.4 show the changing values of the effective number of

[8]Let us examine this extreme example. In the first case there are three parties with vote percentages 49.5, 49.5, and 1. The resulting effective number of parties (N) in that district is $N = 2.0401$. In the second case there are twelve parties with vote percentages 49.5, 49.5, and the remaining 10 parties each with 0.1, which results in $N = 2.0405$. The difference only becomes noticeable in the fourth decimal, which implies that the second district has an additional one-thousandth of a party compared to the first district. In other words electoral competition is virtually the same in both.

[9]For a discussion of different ways to count parties see (Taagepera and Shugart, 1989, 77–91).

parties and lists over time.

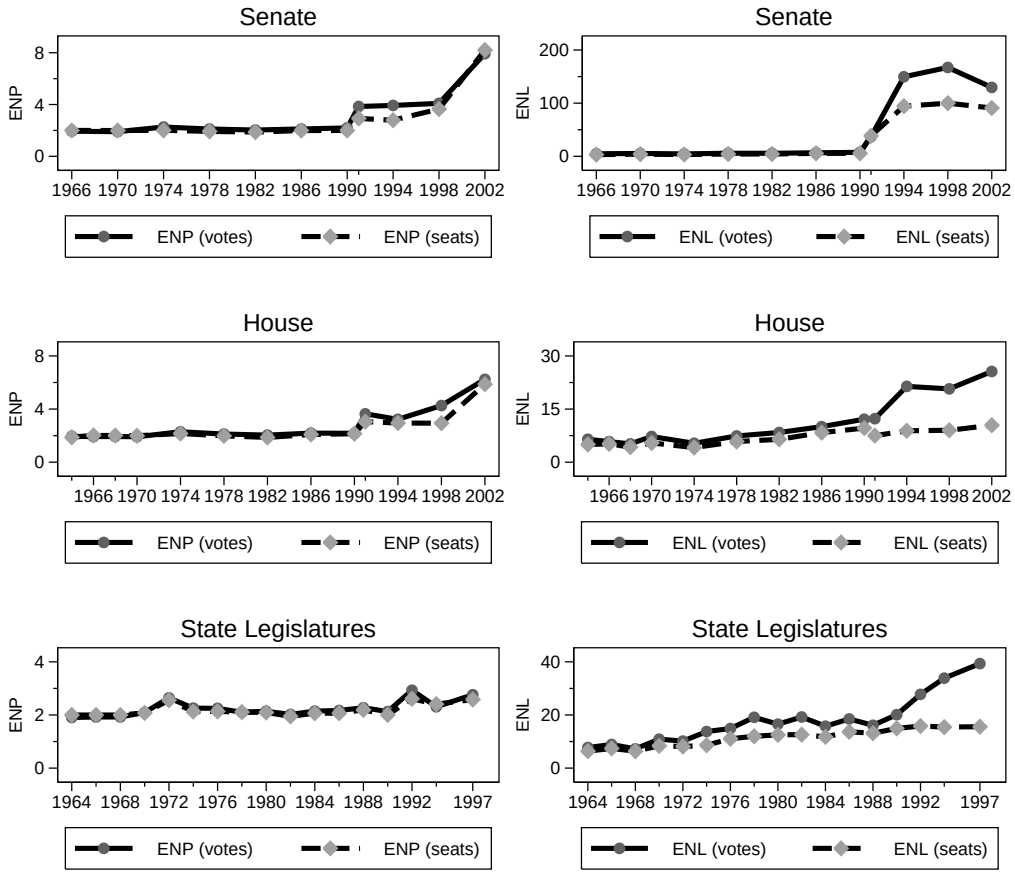

Figure 2.4: *These figures depict the evolution of the average effective number of parties (left) and lists (right) in the Senate (top), House (middle), and State Legislatures (bottom). Each panel plots the effective number of parties and lists calculated according to the vote and list share obtained by each party or list. Note that the scale of the* y-axis *varies greatly between and among offices.*

Indeed, N_p is a rather common and relatively straightforward measure which requieres no further explanation here (see Laakso and Taagepera, 1979). However, due to the inordinate increase of intra-party competition, N_p underestimates party fragmentation (Steiner et al., 2007). Now, N_p is calculated after the elections take place, or after the new representative body is elected, and to do so the votes/seats

of a party are summed. In the Colombian case, this ex-post aggregation artificially assumes that parties are cohesive or that their votes/seats can be automatically pooled. Furthermore, analysts oftentimes also aggregate in the party share the votes/seats obtained by splinter movements that did not run under the same party banner but are closely tied to it.[10] But one does not need to artificially aggregate the votes of a party. Instead, one can calculate the effective number of lists (N_l), which provides a more realistic way to account for party fragmentation and to more accurately describe party fragmentation and electoral competition (Rodríguez Raga, 2002).

Figure 2.4 compares the evolution of N_p and N_l for the Senate, House, and State Legislatures and depicts the average N_p and N_l for all districts of the respective legislature. In terms of N_p, the left-hand side of figure 2.4 shows that the number of relevant parties competing in elections remained quite stable around two parties until 1990. After 1991, N_p increases substantially in the Senate (a four-fold increase) and the House (a three-fold increase) and only slightly in the State Legislatures. That is, the party system was composed largely of two main parties until 1990 and the it became a multi-party system. The right-hand side of the figure tells a different story. As such, N_l reveals that competition levels have constantly increased and that the number of relevant party factions—i.e. lists—kept increasing until 1990 and then that number soared in the 1990s. The average district magnitude was about 5 in the Senate and about 10 in the House. Until 1990, average values of N_l steadily increased from about 5 lists to about 7 lists in the Senate and from

[10]The *Nuevo Liberalismo* (NL) is a case in point. In the late 1970's a prominent leader of PL, who had been elected to congress under the PL banner, caused a schism within the party and formed a dissident movement opposing the clientelistic practices of the PL. After allegedly costing the PL the 1982 presidential election by splitting the liberal vote, the NL dissolved and its leaders returned to the PL. Because of its close ties with the PL, the votes (seats) of NL are often grouped with the PL when computing the ENP.

6 to 12 in the House. In 1991, the Senate began to be elected in a single at-large district ($M = 100$) which is why the top-right panel shows such a dramatic spike. Nonetheless, competition did in fact increase in the Senate. In terms of votes (solid line), N_l shows that there were about 140–150 "relevant" lists, or lists that obtained a significant share of the vote compared to other lists also competing. In terms of seats (dashed line), N_l is about 50 in the 1991 election and quickly reaches about 100 in the 1994–2002 elections. This means that virtually all seats for the Senate were obtained by different lists. In effect, only very few lists—about 2–3 in each election—elected somebody else other than the top candidate. In the House (middle-right panel) and the State Legislatures (bottom-right panel), competition levels show a similar pattern. They steadily increase until 1990 and then they surge after 1991. The post 1991 surge is not as dramatic as in the Senate, but N_l is still considerably higher than the average district magnitude—about three times its size for the House and twice its size for the State Legislatures.

These data show that the increase in electoral competition provides further evidence of the increasing value of holding office. The count of effective parties and lists suggests that over time more people are interested in running for office and that parties and (generally, one-man) lists obtain a smaller percentage of votes and seats. Such high levels of competition indicate that holding political office was something that appealed to an increasing number of people. However, high levels of competition may actually be a negative factor for developing careers, particularly in PR, multi-member districts. Contrary to single-member districts, in multi-member ones incumbents compete against other incumbents as well as challengers, and furthermore, incumbents and challengers of the same party in addition to those from other parties. To what extent does increased levels of competition curtail the ability

of politicians to develop political careers? The next section addresses this question.

2.3 The Extent of Office Tenure

The previous section described the setting in which politicians have built their careers. It showed that membership to the traditional parties has become less important over time for the development of a political career. At the same time, it showed that holding political office has become more attractive because competition levels have steadily increased. This, of course, raises the question about the potential negative impact that competition levels may have on careerism. If there is a large number of people disputing each available seat, is it more difficult for incumbents to stay in office? To answer this question, I look at reelection rates and at the patterns of office tenure.

2.3.1 Reelection Rates

Figures 2.5–2.7 plot the different career moves made by incumbents in the Senate, House, and State Legislatures. Given that the constitution does not allow for the immediate reelection of governors and mayors, it makes no sense to analyze their reelection rates or office tenure. However, the posts of governors and mayors are included in the analysis as potential career moves for incumbent legislators and state deputies. The figures compare the percentage of incumbents that attempt a career move with the percentage that succeed at it. Incumbents in the Senate only have as possible career moves reelection and election in lower office. Incumbents in the House can move to higher office, seek reelection, or seek election in lower office. Incumbents in the State Legislatures can either seek reelection or attempt election to

higher office. Given that reelection attempts are the more frequent career move, all graphs indicate the percentage of incumbents seeking reelection with a solid line and the percentage that win reelection with a dashed line in order to aid visualization and to help comparisons.

As depicted in figure 2.5, reelection rates in the Senate have remained relatively stable for the past four decades, albeit they exhibit a modest increase at least up until 1990. The post-1991 seemed to have a bit of a negative impact. Overall, about 60% of senators sought their reelection and about 50% were successful on their attempts. The 10% difference between attempt and success may suggest that competition levels take a toll in the ability of senators to get reelected. Interestingly, this difference is virtually inexistent when senators sought to be elected at a lower level office. Until 1990, about 10% of incumbent senators sought and won election to either the House or a State Legislature. After 1991, this career move all but disappears. Now, while a reelection rate of about 50% is not very high, it still indicates that a significant amount of senators exhibit static ambitions. Furthermore, an additional 10% seeks lower office which implies that in aggregate about 60% are successful at prolonging their careers—and that 70% are interested in them, if one takes in consideration the 10% that lose their reelection bids.

Reelection rates in the House of Representatives are quite similar to those in the Senate, as shown in figure 2.6. They remain stable at about 50% until 1991, and then they drop about 20 percentage points. It is not surprising that reelection rates drop after 1991 because this is precisely when competition levels increase dramatically. The figure also shows that the percentage of representatives that seek election in the Senate averages about 15% but only about 10% do win. An additional 8% seeks election in the State Legislatures, of which about 7% succeed. In all, about 80%

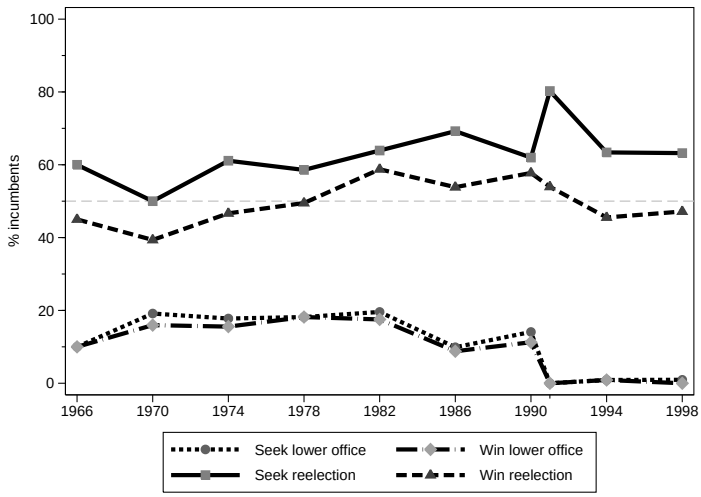

Figure 2.5: *This figure compares the percentage of incumbent senators that sought consecutive reelection with those who actually won it. It also shows the percentage of incumbents who sought and the percentage that won election in lower-level office.*

incumbent representatives are interested in furthering their careers at any give time, but only about 65% are successful in their attempted career moves.

Unlike what happens in the National Congress, reelection rates in the State Legislatures show a very interesting pattern that reflect the interaction between local an national politics. Elections to the State Legislatures were held every two years until 1991 when they were changed to a three-year period. Elections to the House were held every two years until 1970, but afterwards the House—and the Senate—were elected every four years. In other words, the elections to the State Legislatures were interspersed with the Congressional elections such that they were concurrent in one cycle and non-concurrent in the following one. As shown in figure 2.7, reelection rates were very high on those non-concurrent elections with about 90% of incumbents seeking and about 70% effectively winning their reelection. On the other hand, on those elections that were concurrent with Congressional elections, the percentage of provincial deputies that sought reelection dropped to about 55%

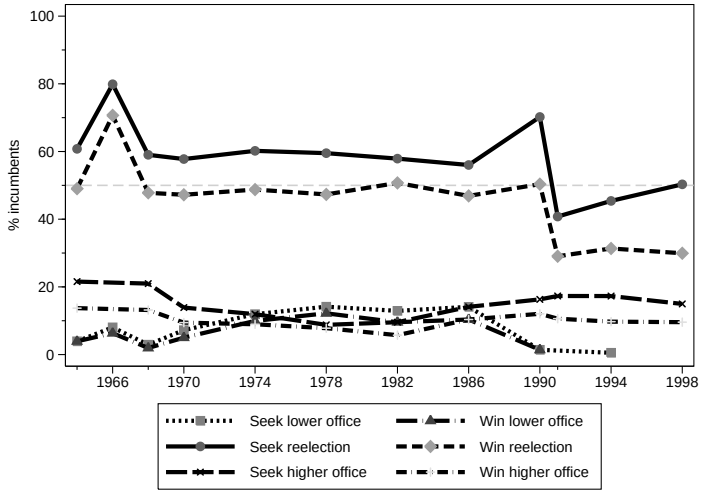

Figure 2.6: *This figure compares the percentage of incumbent House Representatives that sought consecutive reelection with those who actually won it. It also shows the percentage of incumbents who sought and the percentage that won election in upper and lower-level office.*

and the percentage that won fell to about 45%. Presumably, those deputies that fled the State Legislatures sought election in higher office. In concurrent elections, the percentage of deputies that attempted to be elected in Congress averaged about 23.5% and the percentage that won was about 20%.

These data present evidence about the connection between local and national politics. The data suggest that deputies stay in office as long as there is no opportunity to move up. In those non-concurrent elections almost all deputies run for another period in the Legislature. When they have the chance to run for higher office, a significant number of deputies attempts to get elected in Congress. This suggests that deputies use their passage through the Provincial Legislatures as a route to get into Congress. Until 1991, deputies, representatives, and senators were elected in the same exact electoral districts—after 1991 only the Senate district changed, as mentioned in section 2.1. Therefore, a deputy could become prominent and well

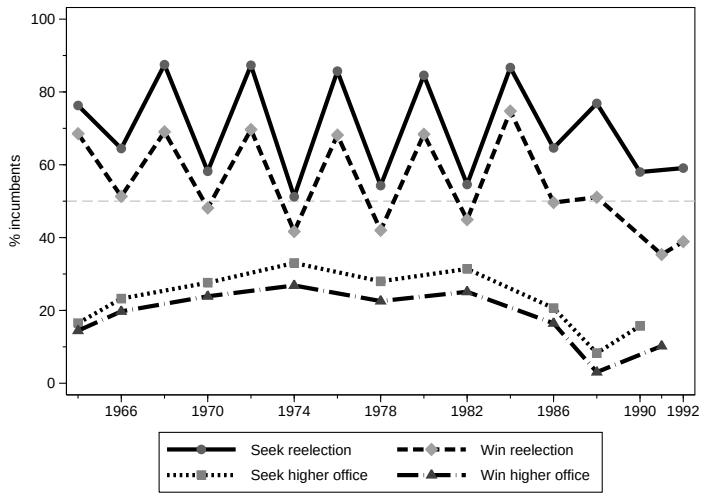

Figure 2.7: *This figure compares the percentage of incumbent provincial deputies that sought consecutive reelection with those who actually won it. It also shows the percentage of incumbents who sought and the percentage that won election in upper-level office.*

known in the district and then attempt to be elected to Congress to represent the same district.

2.3.2 Office Tenure

Reelection rates tell only part of the story. Section 2.3.1 showed that, overall, politicians are interested to a large extent in continuing in their current office or moving to higher office, and to a lesser degree, they also consider moving to lower-level office. In sum, the evidence suggest that politicians value their careers and wish to remain in office, at least in the short term. But careerism implies long-term careers, and reelection rates—attempts and successes—only provide snap-shots about what politicians decide about their careers in the immediate future. The desire to stay in office should be reflected in office tenure such that over time legislatures should be populated by senior politicians. This section describes the patterns of office-holding

over time.[11] The evidence shows that while seniority has indeed increased over time, it is not a particularly prominent feature in Colombia. The average percentage of freshmen ranges from 50 to 70%, but the higher the office, the more senior members it houses.

Figure 2.8 shows tenure patterns in the Senate, which is the legislature in which politicians hold office for longer periods. The accumulation of senior senators grew constantly until 1986, when the Senate was composed of 40% freshmen and 60% senior legislators. In the following two elections the percentage of experienced senators contracted to about 40% and in the last two elections it increased again to about 50%. So, on average, about half of the Senate membership has been composed by senior legislators. Long-term retention does not appear to be a prominent feature in the Senate.

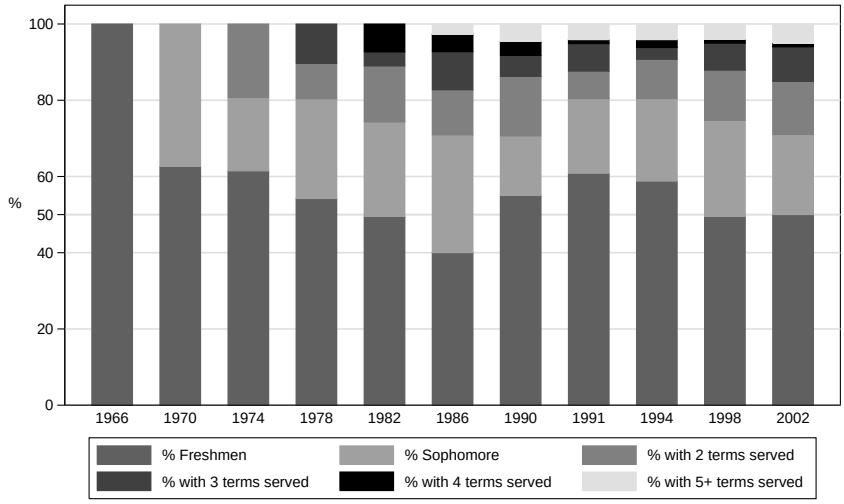

Figure 2.8: *This figure shows the composition of the Senate according to the seniority of its members. It lists the percentage of senators at the beginning of each term broken down by the number of terms previously served.*

[11] Due to the ban on immediate reelection, office tenure cannot include data about governorships and mayoralties.

In turn, figure 2.9 shows office tenure patterns in the House of Representatives. As implied, the proportion of senior legislators in the House is smaller than that of the Senate. The percentage of senior representatives increased moderately until 1990 when it was composed of about a third senior members and two thirds freshmen. In the post-1991 period the percentage of senior members seems to have stabilized at about 35%. The 1991 race requires a brief explanation.

The constitution was reformed by a Constitutional Assembly that was popularly elected in late 1990, barely a couple of months after a new Congress had been inaugurated. The Constitutional Assembly revoked the 1990 Congress and called for new elections in 1991 to be held under the provisions of the new constitution. Most of the members of congress that were elected in 1990 ran again in 1991. Representatives were more successful than senators in their reelection bids probably because the new constitution did not altered the way they were elected. Instead, the Senate changed from department-wide districts to a single nation-wide district. However, senators learned quickly that they did not in fact needed to change their old electoral strategies because the votes from their home districts sufficed to obtain a seat (Botero, 1998). The high levels of competition may explain why after 1991 fewer senior representatives were able to return to their seats.

Patterns of office tenure in the State Legislatures suggest that deputies do not show strong interest in static ambition. Even though the percentage of senior members has constantly—albeit moderately—increased over time, about 70% of their members are freshman and only about 10% have served two terms or more, as portrayed in figure 2.10. However, this evidence is not inconsistent with the idea of long-term political careers. Instead, as shown in figure 2.7, deputies actively seek election in higher office. As a result, their passage through Provincial Legislatures

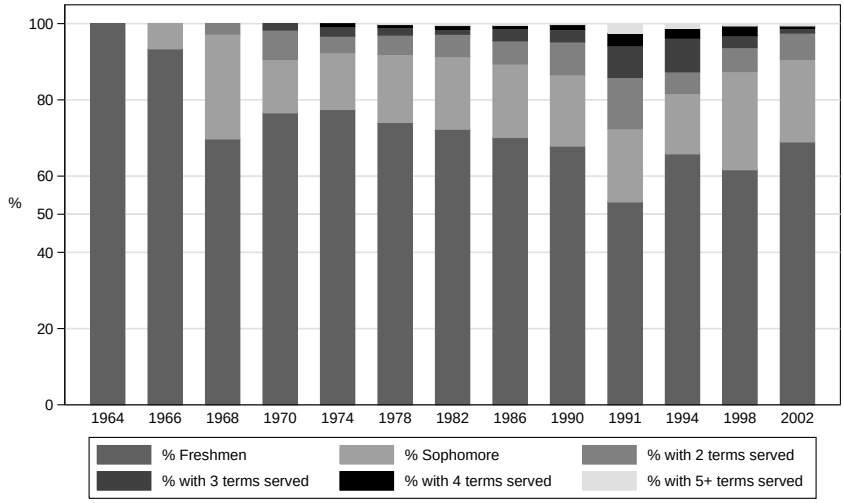

Figure 2.9: *This figure shows the composition of the House of Representatives according to the seniority of its members. It lists the percentage of representatives at the beginning of each term broken down by the number of terms previously served.*

may be consider as a stepping-stone for a career in Congress. Politicians may use election at the local level as a way to get experience and recognition among their constituents before attempting to move to more coveted positions.

The evidence presented supports Mayhew's hypothesis about politicians as single-minded reelection seekers. Section 2.3.1 offers compelling evidence about the extent to which politicians attempt to be reelected. About 60% of members of Congress seek their reelection and an additional 10–20% seek election in either lower or higher office. Similarly, nearly all provincial legislators seek reelection in those elections that do not coincide with congressional elections and about 55% seek reelection in concurrent elections, but while the reelection rate decreases, the rate of progressive ambition increases in concurrent elections suggesting that state legislators are attempting to obtain a congressional seat. On the other hand, the data on office tenure provides only moderate support to Schlesinger's static ambition hypothesis. On average, senior members on the senate represent about 46% of its

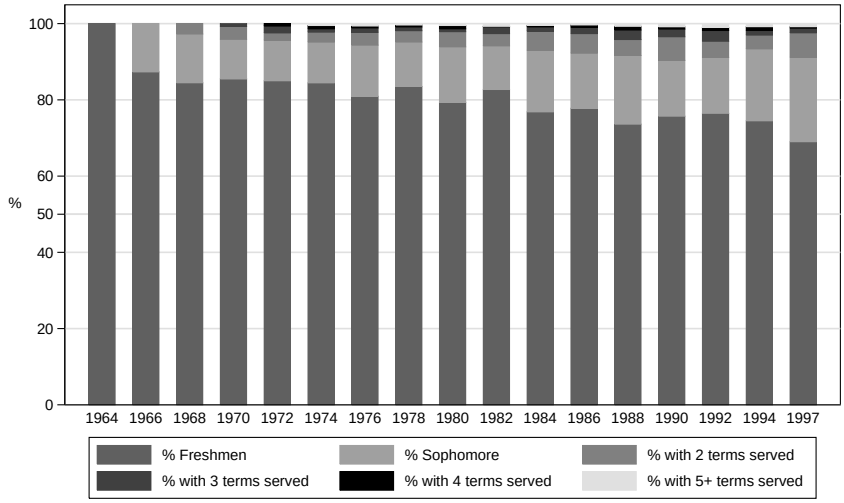

Figure 2.10: *This figure shows the composition of the State Legislatures according to the seniority of its members. It lists the percentage of provincial deputies at the beginning of each term broken down by the number of terms previously served.*

membership, about 29% of the House membership, and about 21% of the membership in the State Legislatures. That is, more than half the members of these bodies are freshmen at any given point in time. Overall, seniority membership increased slowly until 1991, but afterwards the trend was disrupted due to the high levels of electoral competition. Nevertheless, the patterns of office tenure show that the higher the office, the longer the tenure. This seems to suggest that politicians who get elected in the Provincial Legislatures or the House seek to move up to higher office after serving a couple of terms in their current position. This may explain why these legislatures are populated mainly by freshmen and sophomores and only a small percentage of their members are politicians who have stayed in office for two terms or more.

2.4 Conclusions

This chapter presented evidence that illustrated the shape of political careers in Colombia. In general, the evidence offered supports the idea that politicians in Colombia do want to stay in office, but that their efforts are truncated by the inordinately high levels of electoral competition.

The data shows that the percentage of politicians willing to further their careers at any given time is about 60–70%. The bulk of all incumbents, about 50%, try—with different success rates—to get reelected. An additional 10-20% of all incumbents seek election in another office different to the one they currently hold, and particularly a higher one. however, the data shows that politicians are less successful at staying in office beyond a third term. The explanation offered for their relatively short tenures has to do with the levels of electoral competition. Seniority in office increases moderately until about 1991 when the percentage of freshmen in the legislatures increases. However, as section 2.2.2 shows, the levels of electoral competition increased only slightly until 1990, and after 1991 competition levels soar. Although higher levels of competition negatively affect the ability of politicians to develop longer careers, it does not necessarily threatens the idea of careerism. Instead, increased competition is a sign that holding office has appreciated over time. Before 1991, the political system was rather exclusionary and the traditional parties dominated the political arena. The 1991 constitution relaxed the entry barriers, which made the party system explode. As more parties competed for office, incumbents had a tougher time holding on to their seats.

Furthermore, it should be noted that careers exhibit quite dynamic patterns. While the majority of politicians attempt election in the same office as the one for which they ran in the previous term, a considerable proportion of politicians also

try to move up to higher office and—to a lesser degree—move down to lower office. It appears that politicians consider different possibilities to further their careers and choose the one that they believe would allow them to continue in politics. That is, seeking election in lower-level office may be a safe career move for someone who believes that attempting reelection would lead to electoral defeat. The factors that explain career decisions are subject of detailed scrutiny in chapters 4 and 5

The data also suggest a hierarchy of offices. The Senate appears to be the more coveted elective post for politicians to hold. In this legislature reelection rates are higher than in the House—but not higher than the State Legislatures—and office tenure is longer than that of other offices. The House of Representatives appears to be less attractive than the Senate, as implied by its lower reelection rates and shorter tenures. While the Provincial Legislatures present the higher reelection rates, its office tenure is the shortest. This implies that deputies transit through the Legislatures in order to obtain the experience and recognition necessary to dispute a seat in the National Congress. This behavior is clearly illustrated by the highly varying reelection rates, which are low in electoral years that coincide with congressional elections and very high in off-years. The following chapter offers a similar analysis that describes the shape of political careers in Chile.

CHAPTER 3

Repeated Reelection: The Shape of Political Careers in Chile

3.1 Introduction: career patterns in Chile

This chapter describes the patterns of political careers in Chile since its return to democratic rule (1989–2005). The goal of this description is to inquire about the extent to which the behavior of Chilean politicians is motivated by the desire to get reelected. It also investigates about the shape of careers and how those are affected by the levels of electoral competition. The evidence suggests that politicians are indeed interested in their careers. But the career patterns that emerge diverge from those observed in the Colombian case. Chilean politicians are not as interested in seeking election in offices different to the one they hold. It would appear that they value reelection over other types of career moves.

In these almost two decades, Chile has had five national elections and four local elections which provide ample opportunity for politicians to develop their careers, as it has actually been the case. Reelection rates average about 50% for the entire period in the Senate, House, and Local Councils. Tenure patterns also show a decline in the percentage of freshmen sitting in office after each election. This percentage

is particularly low in the House of representatives where it averages about 34% in the elections following the return to democracy in 1989. The Chilean transition has proceeded without setbacks which has allowed for a rather quick institutionalization of democratic and representative processes including its party system (Angell, 2003; Scully, 1995; Torcal and Mainwaring, 2002) and electoral competition (Mardones, 2006; Siavelis, 1997a; Zucco, 2007). However, there are those who persuasively argue that Chile's party system is weaker and more fragmented that others may suggest (Altman, 2007, 2004; Luna, 2004). Nevertheless, despite the questions about the institutionalization of the party system or the qualms about the neutrality of the electoral system, Chile's remarkable democratic stability has allowed politicians to develop their political careers, as described in this chapter.

The description of Chilean careers follows the structure of the descriptive chapter about Colombian career patterns. Thus, section 3.2 offers a general description of the electoral and party systems in Chile followed by a characterization of the levels of electoral competition. Section 3.3 studies the degree to which politicians have been able to build their careers. To do so, this section analyzes the reelection rates and the patterns of office tenure. Finally, section 3.4 sums up the chapter and offers conclusions.

3.2 Parties, coalitions, and competition

Political careers do not appear in the vacuum, but are instead directly affected by the environment in which they are developed. In particular, the party and electoral systems determine the career patterns that emerge in a given country. In the Chilean case, before handing over power into civilian hands, the outgoing military carefully crafted the electoral rules in order to protect its interests once

democracy was reinstituted. It has been suggested that the electoral system was designed to benefit the parties on the right (Scully, 1995; Siavelis, 1997a,b). Others have suggested that the electoral system not only benefits the right—which it clearly does—, but that in the same sense the electoral rules also benefit the parties on the left (Zucco, 2007). According to Zucco, the electoral system actually favors the two largest parties (or coalitions) at the expense of other participants in the electoral arena. What is remarkable about the Chilean case is that the political coalitions of the left and the right have proved to be extremely stable. However, given the peculiarities of the binomial system electoral competition is starker within the coalitions than between them. This is the setting in which Chilean careers are forged. A detailed description of this setting begins with a brief discussion of the electoral system. This discussion provides the basis for a description of the party system and the structure of electoral competition in Chile.

3.2.1 The electoral system

The binomial system

The binomial system derives its name from the use of two-member districts ($M = 2$) for the election of *senadores* and *diputados*. The Senate is composed of 38 members elected in 19 districts to serve eight-year terms. The terms of senators are staggered such that half of the seats are up for election every four years.[1] The House of Representatives is composed of 120 members elected in 60 districts to serve four-year terms. Parties and independent candidates are allowed to form coalitions, but parties or coalitions may only field a maximum of two candidates per electoral

[1]Up until a constitutional reform in 2005, nine senators were appointed by various mechanisms. Currently, all senators are directly elected by popular vote.

district. Votes are cast for open lists, which are pooled at the list level. The first candidate to be awarded a seat is the one who has the highest number of votes in list with the highest number of votes in the district. A list may win a second seat only in the event that it obtains more than twice the votes of the list that was the second most voted in the district.[2]

The municipal electoral system

In addition to the National Congress, Chileans popularly elect mayors and members of the Local Councils.[3] Mayors and *consejeros* are elected at the municipal level. The size of the council is determined according to the population in each *comuna*. Currently, municipalities may elect six, eight or 10 members of council. The average magnitude is $\bar{M} = 6.21$, given that the population in the municipalities ranges from 306 to 173,593 inhabitants, with mean about 23,000 (Altman, 2004). The election of the Local Councils is similar to that of Congress. Parties may form coalitions and votes at pooled at the list level, but there are no restrictions on the number of candidates that each list may nominate—as long as it does not exceed the number of seats available. The distribution of seats is done according to the D'Hondt formula.

The election of mayors was reformed in 2004. Beginning that year, the election of mayors was separated from the election of council members, so that mayors are elected by a simple majority of the vote with no threshold and no run-off. Prior to 2004, the candidate to the council that obtained the most votes in the list with the most votes in district would automatically become mayor. This reform was

[2]Further analysis of the binomial system may be found in Altman (2004, 2007), Carey and Siavelis (2005), Navia (2004), Rahat and Sznajder (1998), and Zucco (2007) among others.

[3]The state-level administration is not directly elected. Governors are directly appointed by the president and the members of the Regional Councils are elected by members of the Local Councils through an electoral college.

introduced, among other things, because council seats were perceived as consolation prizes for losing mayoral candidates (Mardones, 2006).

3.2.2 *Alianza* and *Concertación*'s dominance

The return to democracy in Chile meant the rapid establishment of *Alianza* and *Concertación* as the biggest political forces. Given the requirements of the binomial system, parties across the political spectrum quickly realized that joining forces was the best strategy. The emerging coalitions of the left and right resulted particularly stable and have been able secure almost all the congressional seats and the seats in the Local Councils, as depicted in figure 3.1.

This figure plots the combined seat share of the rightist *Alianza* and the leftist *Concertación* coalitions. Even though the parties belonging to the coalitions have changed over time—with small parties joining a coalition in one election and then running separately in the following—, the core component members have remained the same in all elections. *Concertación* has grouped the Christian Democratic, Socialist, Party for Democracy, and Radical Social Democratic parties. In turn, *Alianza* has grouped the National Renovation and the Independent Democratic Union. While the seat share of these coalitions has mildly oscillated between 95–100% in the House and the Local Councils, their combined seat share in the Senate only took a value different than 100% in 2005, when the so-called "institutional" senators were removed and all seats were subject to popular vote.

As figure 3.1 reveals, political careers outside the two major political coalitions are nearly impossible. These are broad coalitions that encompass several parties. Thus, there are different opportunities and channels available for politicians to develop their careers. Nevertheless, the composition of the political arena is unlikely

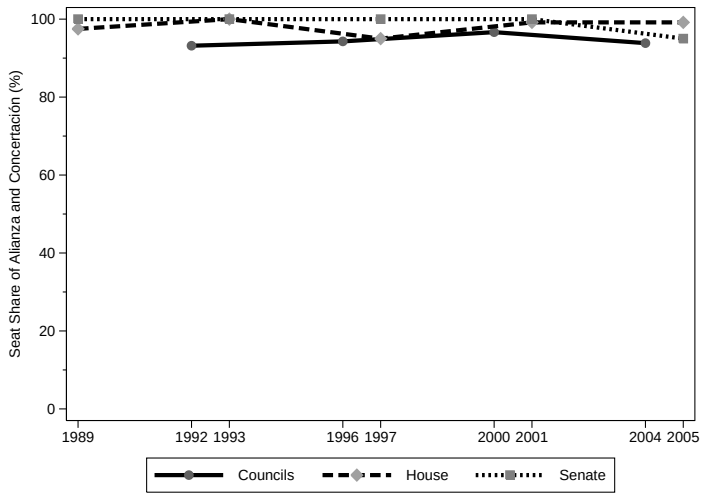

Figure 3.1: *This figure shows the evolution over time of the combined seat share of the* Alianza *and* Concertación *coalitions in the local Councils, the House, and the Senate.*

to change in the foreseeable future and *Alianza* and *Concertación* will remain as the key players in the Chilean political landscape. Therefore, individuals willing to pursue a long career need to link themselves with the parties in either of these coalitions.

3.2.3 Electoral competition

The binomial system affects electoral competition in Chile in important ways. First, the binomial system in effect reduces the number of actors because it forces parties to form coalitions. As has been the case, only the two major coalitions have succeeded in obtaining meaningful and sustained representation the national and local legislatures. In fact, in all of the elections since 1989, only one senator (out of about 114 total elected senators; or about 0.8%), 11 *diputados* (out of about 600; 1.8%), and 466 *concejeros* (out of about 8,400; 5.5%) have been elected from lists different to those of *Concertación* or *Alianza*.

Second, competition is also reduced because of the internal strategic decisions made within each of the coalitions. Since list running for congressional seats are required to field two candidates at the most, the parties that make up the coalition cannot run candidates in all districts—especially *Concertación* given that it is typically composed by four parties. Thus, coalitions need to reach internal agreements about which parties nominate candidates in the different districts. This problem is ameliorated in local elections because coalitions may nominate as many candidates as there are seats available. The result of this restrictions is that electoral competition is reduced in national elections compared to local ones.

Third, the binomial system makes elections highly predictable. As mentioned, the electoral system requires a party to double the votes of the second most voted party in order to secure the second seat in the district. This is a stern requirement that is seldom met because, among other things, typically more than two coalitions run in every district (Altman, 2007). If there are only two coalitions running, a coalition that obtains $66.\bar{6}\% + 1$ of the district vote would ensure both seats. Inversely, a coalition need only get $33.\bar{3}\% + 1$ of the votes to secure 50% of the seats in the district. But this is the case if there are *only two* coalitions running in the district, which is usually not the case. As a result, it is rather easy for anyone to accurately predict that each of the big coalitions would obtain a seat in a given district.

Despite the different limitations to electoral competition, political offices appear to be quite desirable from the perspective of the politicians seeking election. Figure 3.2 shows the important surplus of people seeking political office compared to those who actually manage to win seats. Overall, about a third of all candidates win elections, but the percentage varies by office. Local Council seats appear to be the easier to obtain given that on average about 38% of the candidates won their

electoral bids. In the Senate and the House the average percentage of candidates winning seats was 33% and 30%, respectively. The mayoral seats seem to be harder to get given that in 2004—the first direct election of mayors, and only one so far—about 28% of candidates won.

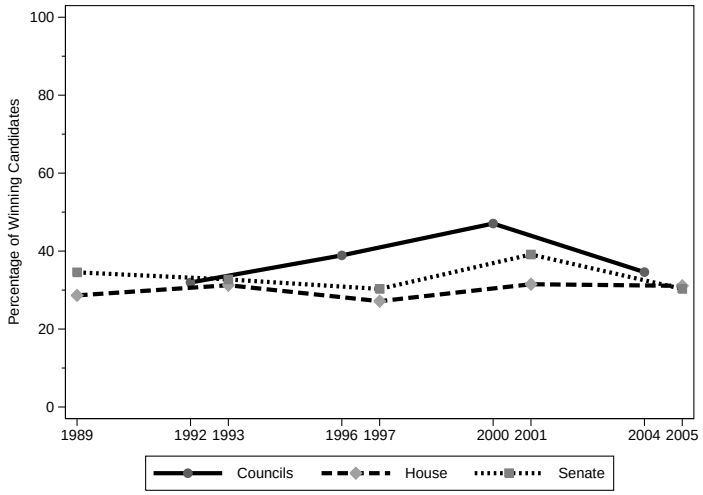

Figure 3.2: *This figure depicts the change of the percentage of all candidates that won seats in the Local Councils, the House, or the Senate in Chile.*

The value of office has remained constant over time. This indicates that there is a considerable number of people interested in political office, which speaks about the desire of Chilean politicians to have careers.

However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the percentage of winning candidates is too rough a measure to assess the levels of electoral competition. While it provides some information about the levels of competition, it illustrates better how desirable are political offices. A more detailed account of the levels of electoral competition is obtained by looking at the ratio of candidates to seats available and the effective number of parties and coalitions.

Figure 3.3 depicts the ratio of candidates to seats available for the different

elective posts in Chile. This figure complements the information offered by figure 3.2 in the sense that competition levels have remained relatively stable over the different elections. On average, there are between 2.7 and 3.3 candidates per seat in the different offices. The ratio is higher for the House of Representatives and lower for the Local Councils.

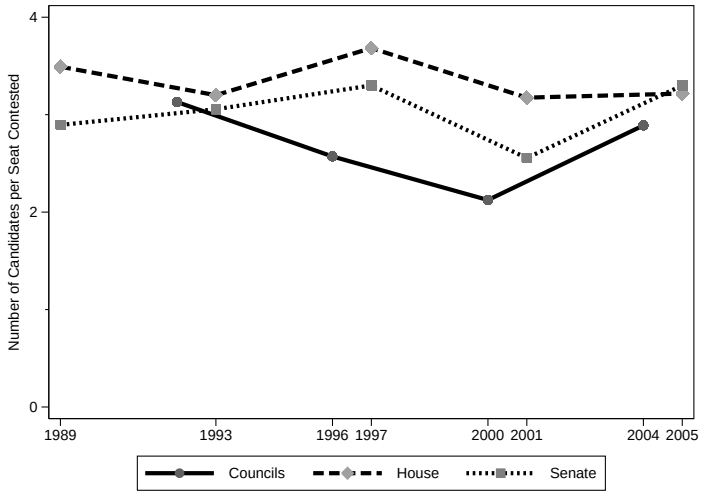

Figure 3.3: *This figure plots the change in the ratio of candidates to available seats as a complementary measure of electoral competition in the districts. As depicted, competition levels in all offices have remained relatively stable over the years.*

In turn, the different panels in figure 3.4 plot the evolution of the effective number of coalitions (N_c) and parties (N_p) over time and by office. The effects of the binomial system on the levels of electoral competition become evident in figure 3.4. Given that parties are encouraged to coalesce into two large coalitions, in congressional elections $N_c \approx 2$ when measured with the percentage of votes and $N_c \equiv 2$ when measured with the percentage of seats. In local elections, $N_c \equiv 2$ when measured with the percentage of seats, but $N_c \approx 2.8$ when measured with votes. In other words, in congressional elections *Alianza* and *Concertación* fill up the electoral arena. In local elections, there seems to be some space for another coalition in addition to the two

dominant ones but only in terms of the votes obtained by these coalitions. In terms of the seats they receive, the aggregate effective number of coalitions in the Local Councils is two. If one were to stop the analysis there, the immediate conclusion would be that the Chilean system is a stable two-party system. However, N_c conceals the underlying party fragmentation that becomes apparent by looking at N_p.

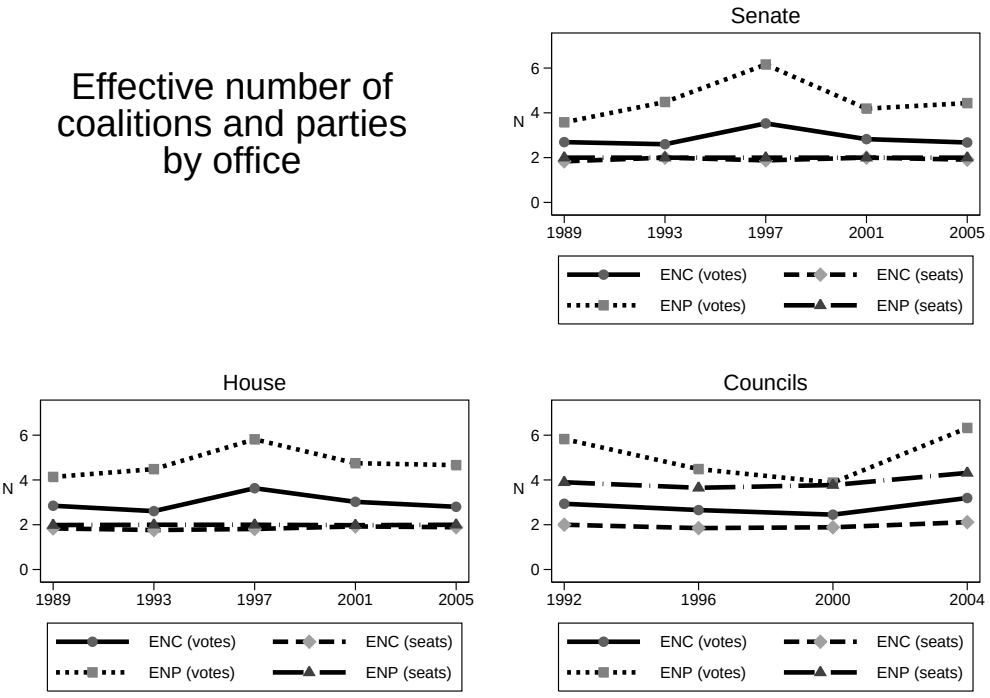

Figure 3.4: *These figures depict the evolution of the effective number of coalitions and parties in the Senate, House, and Local Councils in Chile. Each panel plots the effective number of coalitions and parties calculated according to the vote and seat share obtained by each party or list.*

Indeed, the effective number of parties reveals that the Chilean party system is more fragmented than expected given the effects of the binomial system. This is particularly the case for the Local Councils which are, as discussed, elections that are more representative because the electoral system imposes fewer restrictions on

competition. As a result, for all local elections $\bar{N}_{p(\text{seats})} = 3.9$ and $\bar{N}_{p(\text{votes})} = 5.1$. In congressional elections N_p is still approximately two when measured with seats, but $\bar{N}_{p(\text{votes})} = 4.7$ in the House and $\bar{N}_{p(\text{votes})} = 4.5$ in the Senate. Then, these numbers reveal that the party system in Chile may be as fragmented as the Brazilian or Colombian systems (Altman and Luna, 2007), but also that the electoral system forces parties to realign themselves within the coalitions on the left or the right of the political spectrum (Magar et al., 1998).

3.3 The extent of office tenure

The previous section described the setting in which Chilean politicians have built their careers. It showed that membership to the either of the two major coalitions is essential for the development of a political career. At the same time, it showed that holding political office has been attractive since the country returned to democracy. In this section, I look at reelection rates and the patterns office tenure that emerge after almost two decades of democratic life in Chile.

3.3.1 Reelection rates

Figures 3.5–3.7 plot the different career moves made by incumbents in the Senate, House, and Local Councils. These graphs compare the percentage of incumbents that attempt a career move with the percentage that succeed at it. Incumbents in the Senate only have as possible career moves reelection and election in lower office—House or Local Councils. Incumbents in the House can move to higher office, seek reelection, or seek election in lower office. Incumbents in the State Legislatures can either seek reelection or attempt election to higher office—be that the House or

the Senate. Given that reelection attempts are the more frequent career move, all graphs indicate the percentage of incumbents seeking reelection with a solid line and the percentage that win reelection with a dashed line in order to aid visualization and to help comparisons.

As depicted in figure 3.5, reelection rates in the Senate have varied significantly over the course of the newest democratic period. However, the numbers in this figure need to be interpreted cautiously because the total number of senators whose period had expired is very low. The Chilean Senate is a small chamber with a total of 38 seats and senators serve eight-year terms. Furthermore, terms are staggered so that about half the seats are up for election every four years. Thus, there were 38 seats available in 1989 (the first post-Pinochet election), but only 18 seats available in 1993 and 2001 and 20 seats available in 1997 and 2005.

On average, in the 1989–2001 period about 50% of incumbent senators sought their reelections ($N = 32$) and about 36% actually won their reelection bids ($N = 25$). Additionally, about 30% sought election in lower-level office but none succeeded. Now, this 30% actually corresponds to a total of six individuals whom at different times tried to be elected either to the House or as mayors. Albeit it is a theoretical possibility, no incumbent senator has at any time attempted to be elected as *consejero*.

Figure 3.6 reveals that reelection rates in the House are higher and more stable than those of the Senate. In the first two democratic elections, reelection rates seem to be declining and then they stabilize after 1997. On average, 70% of incumbent *diputados* sought to return to their post but only 56% were able to do so. This gap between the rate of individuals seeking reelection and the rate that succeeds evidences that electoral competition takes a toll on the intentions of career politi-

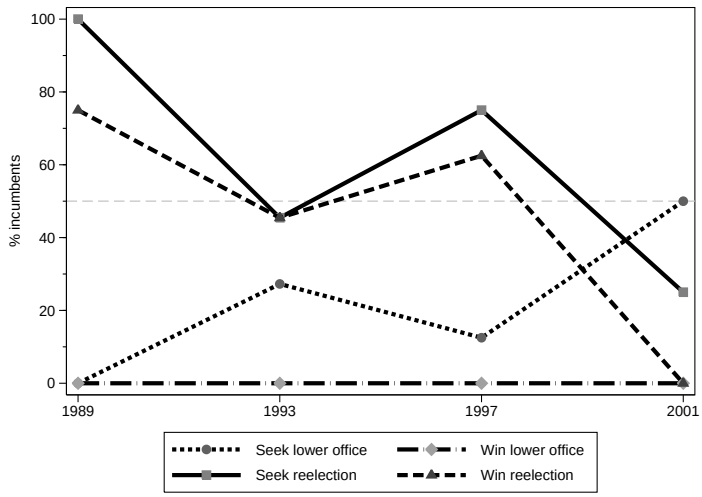

Figure 3.5: *This figure compares the percentage of incumbent senators that sought consecutive reelection with those who actually won it. It also shows the percentage of incumbents who sought and the percentage that won election in lower-level office. This percentages are computed for small samples, as the number of seats available in each election is low.*

cians. Nevertheless, about 5% of *diputados* seek election in the Senate and most of them succeed. An additional 5.5% seek election to lower office, but those attempts are mostly unsuccessful. Thus, taking into account all career moves, about 80% of House incumbents are interested in continuing in political office and about 62% are successful in their attempts.

Reelection rates in the Local Councils behave similarly to those of the House. These rates decline in the first democratic elections. On average, 80% of incumbent *consejeros* attempted to keep their seats, but only 57% managed to seat in for an additional term. The gap between attempt and success is considerably larger than in the House, which supports the idea that local elections are more competed than congressional ones because the absence of restrictions on the number of candidates that parties may nominate. Additionally, about 8% of council members seek election to higher office and yet about 5.3% are able to move up in the career ladder. Thus,

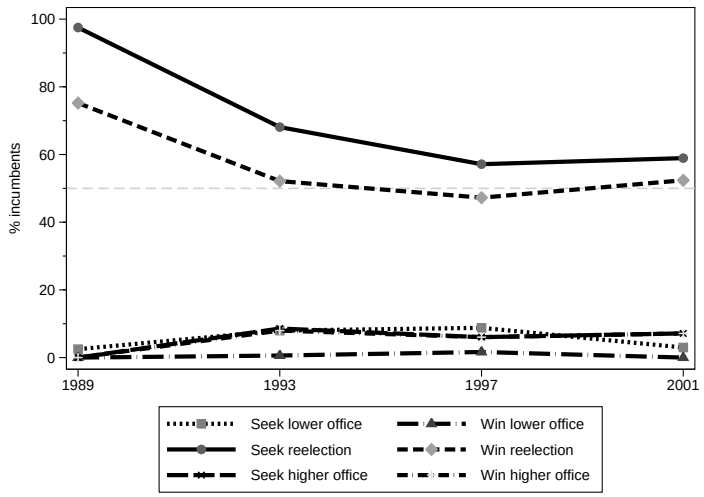

Figure 3.6: *This figure compares the percentage of incumbent House Representatives that sought consecutive reelection with those who actually won it. It also shows the percentage of incumbents who sought and the percentage that won election in upper and lower-level office, i.e. the Senate or Local Councils.*

overall 88% of incumbent *consejeros* seek to further their careers and about 63% are able to stay in office in the following term.

3.3.2 Office tenure

Reelection rates tell only part of the story. Section 3.3.1 showed that, overall, politicians are interested to a large extent in continuing in their current office or moving to higher office, and—to a lesser degree—they also consider moving to lower-level office. In sum, the evidence suggest that politicians value their careers and wish to remain in office, at least in the short term. But careerism implies long-term careers, and reelection rates—attempts and successes—only provide snap-shots about what politicians decide about their careers in the immediate future. The desire to stay in office should be reflected in office tenure such that over time legislatures should be populated by senior politicians. This section describes the patterns of

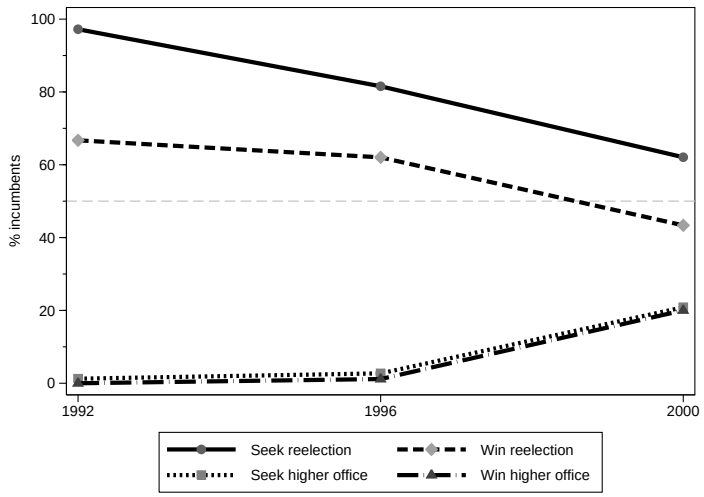

Figure 3.7: *This figure compares the percentage of incumbent Local Council members that sought consecutive reelection with those who actually won it. It also shows the percentage of incumbents who sought and the percentage that won election in upper-level office, i.e. the House or the Senate.*

office-holding over time. The evidence shows that seniority is a particular trait of Chilean politics, especially in the House of Representatives.

Figure 3.8 shows the tenure pattern is the Senate. The percentage of freshmen members in the Senate averages about 44% in the recent democratic period (excluding the 1989–1993 Senate in which all members were freshmen). In other words, the Chilean Senate seems to be a chamber in which a little more than half its members have had previous experience. However, the turnover rate implies that a considerable amount of its members is renewed in every election.

On the other hand, the House of Representatives seems to be the place where Chilean politicians develop their careers, as figure 3.9 depicts. The percentage of freshmen members has continuously decreased over the course of the five elections since the return to democracy and seems to have stabilized at about 30%. The overall percentage of freshmen members, excluding the first House, is about 34%,

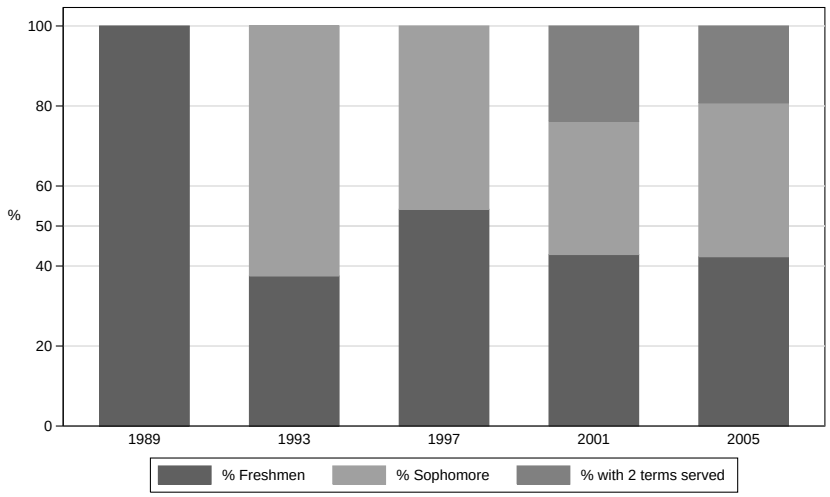

Figure 3.8: *This figure shows the composition of the Chilean Senate according to the seniority of its members. It lists the percentage of Senators at the beginning of each term broken down by the number of terms previously served.*

roughly 10% less than the average of freshmen members in the Senate. Concomitantly, the percentage of senior and more experienced *diputados* has also increased over time. As a result of the most recent election in 2005, the House was conformed such that about half of its members were serving their third, fourth, or fifth terms. The remaining half was composed of freshmen (about 35%) and sophomores (about 20%). The evidence clearly shows that Chilean representatives are interested in staying in the House over extended periods of time.

The patterns of office tenure in the Local Councils show moderate evidence of careerism. As portrayed in figure 3.10, the percentage of freshmen declined in 1996 and 2000, dropping to about 50% and 40% respectively, and it averaged a little over 50% for the democratic period. Additionally, as a result of the 2004 election, about 40% of *consejeros* were serving their second, third, or fourth terms, which indicate further the desire to stay in office. However, the percentage of freshmen members of Local Councils soared in 2004 to a little more than 60%. One possible explanation

Figure 3.9: *This figure shows the composition of the Chilean House of Representatives according to the seniority of its members. It lists the percentage of Representatives at the beginning of each term broken down by the number of terms previously served.*

for this change has to do with the election of mayors.

As described, during 1989–2000 the post of mayor was given to the council candidate who obtained the highest vote share in the respective *comuna*. Thus, local elections were both a race to the Local Council itself but also offered the chance of winning a more coveted prize: municipal mayor. But in 2004, the elections of mayors and council members were separated as two different elections—i.e. citizens would cast two different votes, one for council members and another for majors, as opposed to a single vote for both offices. Thus, it is possible that a sizable number of incumbent *consejeros* decided to try their luck and attempted to run for mayors. However, the results of future elections are necessary to assess the validity of this claim.

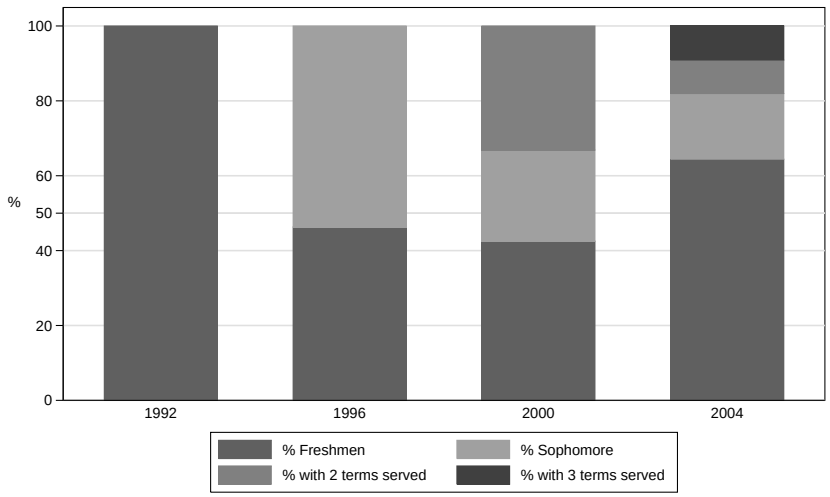

Figure 3.10: *This figure shows the composition of the Chilean Local Councils according to the seniority of its members. It lists the percentage of Provincial Deputies at the beginning of each term broken down by the number of terms previously served.*

3.4 Conclusions

This chapter presented evidence that illustrated the shape of political careers in Chile. In general, the evidence offered supports the idea that Chilean politicians do want to stay in office over extended periods of time, in particular in the House of Representatives.

The evidence suggests that elective offices are quite valuable and sough after. Only about a third of all candidates for all offices are successful at getting elected. And once elected a vast majority of politicians seek to continue holding their offices and a small percentage seek to either move to higher or lower office. Reelection rates are higher in the House than in the Senate, which suggests that the House of Representatives appears to be a place where politicians develop their careers by getting reelected repeatedly. Reelection rates in the House are grater than in other offices, and the number of experienced members is also greater than in other offices.

Thus representatives appear to value their seats and are also interested in staying in the House over time.

The patterns of office tenure in the Local Councils also reveal some interest in careerism, although static ambition appears to be the typical career move. There is a small percentage of *consejeros* who have sought election to higher office—i.e. national Congress—but progressive ambition has been masked by the electoral rules. Indeed, local elections were simultaneously elections for the Local Councils and Mayoralties. Thus, candidates had the double possibility of getting elected to the councils or becoming mayors.

These patterns of office tenure and reelection rates offer mild evidence of a hierarchy of offices. It appears that local posts may be a good starting point for a political career, and quite an important number of politicians seem interested in being elected to the councils or as mayors. A small percentage shows interest in seeking higher office. It may be the case that careers may either follow a "local-track" or a "national-track". Local careers would be those of politicians that aspire to become town mayors and to do so get experience and recognition in the councils. National careers would then entail a progressive move towards Congress. The fact that nationally oriented careers are not as pervasive may have to do with the sheer difficulty of obtaining a seat in Congress. First, there are only 120 seats available in the House (two per district) compared to about 2,100 seats in the Councils (roughly six per district). Additionally, the median incumbent obtained her seat in the Councils with 794 votes ($\sigma = 4,651$) whereas the median House incumbent obtained her seat with 30,210 votes ($\sigma = 16,778$). House districts subsume several *comunas*. Thus, local politicians that want to make a progressive move towards Congress need to become renowned not only in their municipalities but in the whole

province.

Once in Congress, politicians are inclined to stay in office. Only a minority of *diputados*—about 5%—seeks election in the Senate and almost all are successful in moving up.

The career pattern that emerges in Chile is one in which politicians value their current posts and are willing to stay in office over long periods of time. Only after a while, some of them entertain the possibility of moving to higher office.

CHAPTER 4

Should I Stay or Should I Go? Analyzing Political Careers in Colombia

4.1 Introduction: the Analysis of Political Careers

What explains the shapes of political careers? Why do politicians choose to stay in office, seek higher or even lower office? What explains the duration of their careers? These are the questions that motivate this chapter. Previous chapters have built up the theoretical expectations about career decisions and durations and tested the underlying assumptions of the theory in the Latin American case. Additionally, I offered preliminary evidence about the the extent to which Colombian and Chilean politicians are interested their careers. In the following two chapters, I analyze in detail the effects of individual and district-level variables on politicians' decisions about where to seek reelection in the following cycle. I also study the impact of said variables on the length of careers.

This chapter focuses on the Colombian case; chapter 5 analyzes data from Chile.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. In order to provide some context for the analysis, section 4.2 summarizes the hypotheses proposed in chapter 1. Section 4.3 describes the data used in the analysis of careerism in Colombia, while section 4.4 carefully explores the hierarchy of offices. This succinct description elucidates what constitutes moving "up" or "down" in terms of career paths in Colombia. Once the hypotheses and the data are discussed, I analyze the data. Section 4.5 studies the factors that explain why politicians make career decisions about where they will run for office in the following electoral cycle based on their experience and the conditions of electoral competition in their districts. In section 4.6, I entertain office tenure. Since the idea of political careers implies the consideration of the *time* politicians stay in office, I employ event history analysis to explain the different factors that affect the hazard rate of the occurrence of different career events—namely static, progressive, or "dynamic" ambition, or retirement. The chapter is closed with some concluding remarks offered in section 4.7.

4.2 A Summary of Hypotheses

I argue that the study of political careers entails inquiring about two separate but closely related dimensions. On the one hand, political careers imply that politicians make decisions about how to continue their careers. At the end of each term, politicians use the information that they have available to decide where to run for office in the following election. That is, they make a decision about their future based on what they know about themselves and what they know about the district in which they intend to run for office. Those decisions are informed among other things by the experience and seniority they have accrued as legislators (or elected politicians), their own past electoral performance and that of their party, and the

intensity of electoral competition in their district in the previous election.

On the other hand, political careers imply the ability of politicians to overcome the different obstacles they face in order to be able to survive in the political arena. That is, the idea of a political career implies continuity over time. I argue that the durability of a politician's career is also related to the personal and district-level factors that explain why a politician chooses to run for reelection or to seek alternative office.

Table 4.1 presents information on how different independent variables affect careerism and summarizes the hypotheses formulated on chapter 1. In general a positive effect on careerism means that increases in the values taken by a given independent variable are expected to be related to an increase in the likelihood that a politician seeks reelection or election to higher office. Similarly, a negative effect on careerism implies that increases in values taken by a given independent variable are expected to be related to an increase in the likelihood that the politician seeks election in lower-level office or retires from politics altogether. Section 4.5.2 describes in detail the operationalization of these variables.

4.3 The Data Set: Electoral Results in Colombia 1958–2002

To analyze the patterns of political careers in Colombia, I first collected historical records of electoral results which were coded and systematized in machine-readable format. Those separate records (different years and offices) were concatenated such that the trajectories of individual politicians could be traced in time. The result of this exercise is an original and comprehensive data set with electoral results for the

Table 4.1: Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis No.	**Independent variable**	**Expected effect on careerism**
	Individual level factors	
1	Seniority	positive
2	Margin of victory	positive
3	Membership in dominant party	positive
4	Incumbent status	positive
5	Gender (female)	negative
	District level factors	
6	District competition	negative
6 a	District magnitude	negative
6 b	Candidates/seats ratio	negative
7	District dominance (bailiwick)	negative
8	Effective number of competitors	negative

Senate (1958–2002), the House of Representatives (1958–2002), State Legislatures (1958–1997), Governorships of all 32 *departamentos*—i.e. states—(1991–2003), and Mayoralties of all state capitals and the Capital District (1988–2003). [1]

The year 1958 was, of course, a "natural" starting point for this study because it marked the return to democratic rule following a 3–year authoritarian interlude and

[1] I purposefully did not collect information on mayoral elections in all of the approximately 1,120 municipalities for substantive and logistical reasons. On the one hand, municipalities vary widely in terms of population sizes from remote hamlets with a couple hundred dwellers to urban metropolis of several million inhabitants. These conspicuous differences would have made it quite difficult—if not impossible—to assess the value of holding the office of mayor as a whole. Limiting the sample to state capitals does not entirely eliminate this problem, but it at least significantly reduces the magnitude of the task. On the other hand, the collection of electoral records for the 7 mayoral races in 1,120 municipalities with an average of 4–5 candidates per race seemed like a gargantuan undertaking that wouldn't necessarily yield valuable information in terms of career paths due to the relative novelty of mayoral elections. The choice of state capitals is also justifiable for political and demographical reasons. Given the centralized nature of the state in Colombia, capital cities are always the major cities in their states. So, at the local level the mayoralty of the state capital is a well regarded prize and a coveted office whose office-holders may be catapulted later to higher, national office. Demographically, the selection of state capitals is akin to selecting the largest or most important cities. While it is the case that some state capitals are less populated than some non-capitals in other states, the office of the mayor on those non-capitals may not be as important stepping stones towards a national post as a state capital.

the vicious partisan violence of the 1940s–1950s. The data set contains information on all the candidates that participated in the elections for the mentioned institutions. Elections to the Senate were held every four years for the entire period. Elections to the House were held every two years in the 1958–1970 period and then every four years thereafter, concurrently with the Senate elections. A constitutional reform in 1991 revoked the Congress elected in 1990 and called for new legislative elections in 1991. Elections for the State Legislatures were held every two years between 1958 and 1994, and every three years thereafter. Also as a result of constitutional reforms, mayors were first elected in 1988 and governors in 1991. Unfortunately, it was not at all possible to find records for the 1962 elections. This is a serious difficulty for the statistical models because it makes the series incomplete, which affects all the variables that are based on the assumption of consecutiveness of elections. As a result, some of the analysis use 1964 as the starting point.

As expected, several individuals appear multiple times in the data as they attempted to attain office more than once. In fact, there are actually 17,998 unique individuals in the data set and a grand total of 29,916 observations. The vast majority of these are individuals attempting to be elected in the State Legislatures. There are 18,751 observations for individuals participating on elections to the State Legislatures (62.7%); 894 observations of individuals running for mayor (3%); 586 observations in gubernatorial elections (2%); 7,166 observations in House elections(23.9%); and 2,519 individuals on Senate elections (8.4%).

4.4 Moving Up, Moving Down. A Hierarchy of Political Office in Colombia

A brief description of the different offices available to politicians is in order before getting into the details of why politicians may attempt "progressive" or "regressive" moves in terms of career decisions.[2] Colombia is a presidential system in which, despite several efforts at decentralization, power is heavily concentrated in the hands of the president. There are elective offices available in the executive and legislative branches but none in the judiciary. Currently, elective offices include president and vice president (1 each), senator (102 total; 100 seats in a single nation-wide district and 2 seats set aside for ethnic minorities), House Representative (161 total; all elected in state-wide districts of varying magnitude ranging 2–18, $\bar{M} = 5$), governor (32 total), municipal mayor (1,120 approximately total), provincial legislator (502 total; all elected in state-wide districts of varying magnitude ranging 11–42, $\bar{M} = 16$), and city council members (12,000 approximately total; all elected in municipal-wide districts of varying magnitude ranging 7–21). Furthermore, there are countless other appointed posts at the national and local levels, such as minister, judge, diplomat, etc., to mention but a few posts in the state bureaucracy.

I exclude from my analysis the office of the president and vice president. While it is the case that all Colombian presidents have served in different elective offices prior to being elected chief executives, the presidency is not a goal for most politicians. Adding that level to the data may obfuscate the analysis without necessarily contributing much to the explanation of career decisions and durations.

Politicians may appraise the value of holding any particular office with a rela-

[2]This section roughly follows Samuels (2003, 16–26).

tively straightforward cost-benefit calculus. Thus, to ascertain the value of office, politicians need to consider the utility they will derive from holding it, the probability of actually getting it, and the costs incurred in attempting to secure it.[3] In the remainder of this section I discuss the costs, benefits, and chances of attaining political office. To compare the value of different offices, I use current figures in terms of salaries and campaign caps for heuristic purposes.[4] Nevertheless, I assume that the differences in those figures among offices have persisted over time. An important point must also be mentioned here. The value of political office should also include an estimation of how holding a particular office fits in the prospects of a career in the long term. As such, governorships and mayoralties should be valued differently than other posts in the local or national legislatures because immediate reelection to these posts is not allowed. State legislators and members of congress are allowed to be reelected indefinitely. In other words, being elected in a mayoralty or a governorship may be quite valuable to some politicians, but the value of those posts is limited by the fact that individuals can only be incumbents in those offices for one term (they need to sit out during one term before attempting election to the same post again). Thus, while these offices may look great in a politician's *curriculum vitæ*, their contribution to a political *career* is limited.

[3]This is equivalent to the utility function of holding office discussed in chapter 1. See Black (1972) and Rohde (1979).

[4]All figures are given in 2008 U.S. dollars. The current exchange rate is about $2,000 Colombian pesos for US $1.

4.4.1 The Value of Office

Congressional seats

There is currently no distinction in terms of compensation between senators and representatives in Colombia. The monthly emoluments that members of congress receive are about $9,000. This sum includes the salary, health benefits, and living expenses. This is a good pay considering that it is almost 40 times the minimum wage, and it is a competitive salary compared to those of the private sector. Additionally, members of congress enjoy an important number of office perquisites. They are allotted an airline ticket every week. Representatives are given airline tickets to visit their home districts; senators are allowed to travel to any domestic destination of their choice. (As expected, most senators choose to visit their home districts (Crisp and Desposato, 2004).) They also receive a substantive budget of about $10,000 to hire their staff. Furthermore, members of congress have access to a considerable amount of political resources. Even though they cannot amend the budget proposed by the executive, they actively lobby the executive in order to secure pork-barrel projects in their home districts (Mejía et al., 2007). From their vantage point, members of congress are also able to influence local politics in their states. Mayors and Governors have them lobby the executive to secure projects, and in return, legislators get to influence the appointment of posts in the local bureaucracy or the decision of whom gets the contracts to build the roads, schools, or other local projects. In sum, congressional seats are prestigious and quite valuable.

Governorships

Salaries of governors depend on the category to which their *departamento* belongs. These categories depend on the size of their populations and their revenues. The

State Legislature sets the salary of the governor according to the limits decreed by the president for each state category. Thus, the salaries earned by governors range between $3,200 and $4,500 monthly including wages and expenses, depending on the category of their state. Governors have access to important resources. They submit the budget to the State Legislatures which confers them considerable say in the projects that get funded. Furthermore, governors appoint the heads of a number of public offices—such as hospitals, schools and universities, or public utilities—and state owned enterprizes—such as local distilleries and lotteries. Therefore, governorships are attractive offices but their value depends highly on the resources that each department has. In other words, there is considerable variation among states in terms of their revenues, natural resources, development, etc. Thus, richer states are naturally more attractive than states that lag behind.

Mayoralties

Just like governors, the compensation that mayors receive depends on the categorization of the municipality, which also depends on population size and revenues. Municipal councils determine the salary of the mayor, which may not exceed the limits decreed by the president. Those limits range between $1,100 and $4,500 per month including wages and expenses, depending on the category of their municipality. In terms of the resources to which they have access, mayors submit the budget to the Municipal council and also have appointment powers at the municipal level. However, there is great variation among municipalities in terms of their level of development. Being mayor of a developed capital city—e.g. Bogotá or Medellín—may be more important than being governor of a mostly rural, underdeveloped state. However, on average, the salaries and resources allotted to mayors are smaller than

those given to governors.

State Legislature seats

State Legislatures are not as valuable as other offices in terms of compensation or functions. *Diputados* may earn between $3,900 and $6,500 per month, and the salary range varies with the category to which the *departamento* belongs. However, State Legislatures meet only for six months every year. In terms of their functions, State legislatures are defined as administrative bodies and as such they produce "ordinances" to regulate and administer diverse affairs in the states. Diputados have the ability to define taxes, authorize the governor to enter into contracts or acquire loans, and even temporarily delegate to the governor some of the functions of the legislature. State legislatures also have the power to regulate health and education policies, public works, tourism, the environment, and to redraw municipal boundaries. However, in budgetary matters, structure of the local government, and projects of economic and social development, the initiative rests solely with the governors.

4.4.2 The Chance of Attaining Office

As described in chapter 2, levels of electoral competition are relatively stark for all elective posts and have increased significantly in the past two decades. As show in figure 2.2, the percentage of candidates that win a seat have decreased over time. Historically, the Senate had the lowest percentage of winning candidates followed by the House and the State Legislatures, with the exception of the post-1991 elections. In the post-1991 period, competition appears higher for the House and Mayoral posts with about 20% candidates winning office, while about 30% candidates win

office in the Senate, Governorships, and State legislatures.

However, the likelihood of attaining office depends on a number of factors including electoral rules and district sizes. Congressional and State Legislature posts are elected in PR, multi-member districts of varying magnitude. The Senate is elected in an at-large, nation-wide district of magnitude $M = 100$. House seats are disputed in state-level districts of average magnitude $\bar{M} = 5$, and State Legislatures are elected in state wide districts of average magnitude $\bar{M} = 16$. On the other hand, mayoralties and governorships are elected in plurality races in single member districts equivalent to the municipality or state, respectively. District magnitude affects the number of votes required to win a seat, as figure 4.1 depicts. This figure presents box plots of the amount of votes obtained by the winning candidates discriminated by the type of office. The boxes combine the distribution of the votes for all of elections, thus offering the historical average.[5] As depicted, incumbent officers became elected with a very different average amount of votes. The median vote for winning candidates was about 87,000 for governor seats; 44,500 in the Senate; 26,500 in the House; 25,500 for mayor seats; and 11,000 in State Legislatures.

The figure sorts the different offices according to the median vote of the winning candidates. This ordering provides elements for the construction of a ranking of different offices as it illustrates the level of difficulty in attaining seats. The information provided by this graph may be complemented with the information provided by figure 2.3 which depicted the number of candidates per seat available. While the median vote needed to secure a governorship is almost twice the median vote for a senate seat, the amount of candidates disputing each of these posts is about the same. However, competition for governorships appears to be more stark because

[5]The box plots are displayed without the outside values—those below the 25th or above the 75th percentile—to avoid cluttering.

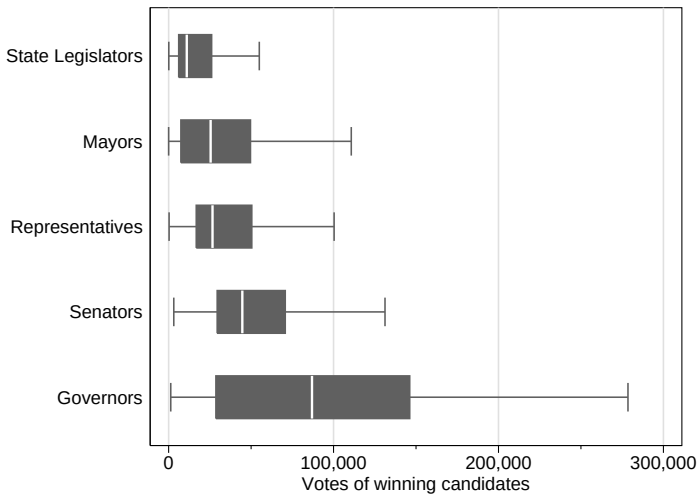

Figure 4.1: *This figure depicts the amount of votes received by the winning candidates in the different elective offices. The boxes are sorted in ascending order according to the median vote and are displayed without outside values—those below the 25th or above the 75th percentile—to avoid cluttering. The box plots show the historical distribution of the vote for winning candidates over the 1958–2002 period. The line in the box depicts the median vote; the whiskers extend to the 25th and 75th percentiles.*

there are fewer seats available, and the district is smaller. The ordering of the other offices according to how difficult it is to attain them conforms to the expectations.

However, as mentioned earlier, governors and mayors may not get reelected unless they step out of office for one term. Thus, governorships and mayoralties have a limited value in terms of how much those offices contribute to the career of a politician. Serving as governor or mayor may then be considered as a transitory post in the larger scheme of a political career. Serving there may confer politicians with notoriety and reputation to seek other posts in the national realm. Those posts cannot be career goals per se, but rather means to a lasting career developed elsewhere.

4.4.3 The Costs of Office

Computing the cost of attaining political office can be quite cumbersome. There are some costs that can be measured directly, but there are many others for which is difficult to assign a values, such as opportunity costs. Nevertheless, the costs of campaigning should give sufficient information to compare the costs of attaining different offices. I use here the legal campaign expenditure caps as the yardstick to compare the costs of running for office.

Candidates to the Senate are allowed to spend in their campaigns a maximum of $225,000, while candidates to the House may spend a maximum of $177,000. The legal caps for governorships, mayoralties, and State Legislatures vary according to the population in the respective district. Expenditures for governorships may not exceed $618,000 in the more populous states, and $206,000 in the least populous ones. Expenditures for mayoralties may not exceed $494,500 in the more populous

municipalities, and $21,500 in the least populous ones.[6] Expenditures for State Legislatures may not exceed $73,500 in the more populous states, and $42,500 in the least populous ones.[7]

4.4.4 A Ranking of Political Office

The picture that emerges here suggests a hierarchy of political office that places the national congress at its pinnacle. While there is little distinction in compensation or functions between senators and representatives, there is an intangible prestige in senatorial seats that lower chamber seats seem to lack. The chances of getting seat in the Senate are somewhat smaller than the chances of getting a House seat, and the costs of Senate seats are higher, as revealed by the legal campaign expenditure caps.

Gubernatorial and Mayoral seats come third and fourth in the ranking of offices. While campaigns for these seats appear to be more expensive than congressional campaigns, seats in the national legislature offer grater possibilities to further political careers. Governors and Mayors are not allowed to be reelected. While these offices contribute good experience and reputation for politicians, they cannot be conceived as ends in themselves but as means to a fruitful career that is continued some place else.

State Legislatures are at the bottom of the career ladder. Legislatures are equipped with few functions that allow them to influence the way states are run and have limited access to the states' political resources. Furthermore, these are part-time

[6]This excludes Bogotá where mayoral candidates are allowed to spend up to $618,000 on their races.

[7]As a reference, according to Samuels (2003) the declared campaign expenditures in the U.S. in 1986 were $3,200,000 for the Senate, $397,000 for the Lower Chamber, and $62,000 for State Legislatures.

positions given that Provincial Legislatures only meet during 6 months every year.

4.5 "If I go there will be trouble"? Studying Career Decisions

In its simplest form, the career choices for politicians can be conceived as the decision to continue or to terminate their participation in politics. Then, the question is about how, when, and why politicians decide to *voluntarily* continue or terminate their careers. Nevertheless, careers can be continued or terminated in more ways than one. As discussed, in institutionalized settings, such as the US Congress (Hibbing, 1988; Polsby, 1968), careers are usually described as having a linear nature as ambitious politicians seek to "move up" to "higher" office once they are comfortable and experienced in their current one (Schlesinger, 1966). In other settings, politicians adjust the utility functions of holding office such that the hierarchy of offices is more flexible and does not necessarily point to the top echelons of the national legislature. Samuels (2003), for instance, uses the term "dynamic ambition" to refer to the particular patterns that political careers present in Brazil. As Samuels points out, the Federal Congress is just a stepping stone to a more advantageous career in State politics for Brazilian politicians. Politicians there often use the Federal Congress to gain visibility in local politics in order to improve their chances of election at more coveted offices such as governor or mayor of an important city.

4.5.1 Ambition: The Dependent Variable

At the end of each electoral cycle, politicians must decide what to do in the following election. They make that decision based on the information available to them at

that point in time. Theoretically, there are four options available for them: run for office at a lower level, run for the same office, run for office at a higher level, or retire. Therefore, I use this information to construct the dependent variable capture precisely the choices made by politicians with regards to their careers. The DV is coded as the decision made by politicians on time t_i about where to run for office on t_{i+1}. It is assumed that politicians make this decision based on the information available to them on t_i with regards to their own political experience and the conditions of electoral competition in their districts. The variable is coded as "0" if the politician decides to retire—i.e. the individual is no longer observed in the data. It is coded as "1" if the individual seeks election to a lower-level office. It is coded as "2" if the politician tries to get elected to the same office. It is coded as "3" if the politician runs for higher office.

The DV is coded prospectively. That is, the value assigned to the DV on t_i depends on where is the individual observed on t_{i+1}. The value of the DV on an individual's first observation corresponds to the type of ambition that that particular individual exhibits on her second observation; the value of the DV on her second observation depends on where she is observed for a third time, and so on. For example, individual n is first observed as running for office k on t_i, and all the information about n on t_i is recorded—e.g. the amount of votes, whether she won a seat, her party, competition levels in the district, etc. The value of the DV for n on t_i is recorded depending on where is she observed on t_{i+1}. If she is observed on t_{i+1} running for lower office $(k-1)$, the DV records a "1". If she is observed on t_{i+1} running for the same office (k), the DV records a "2". If she is observed on t_{i+1} running for higher office $(k+1)$, the DV records a "3". If she is no longer observed in the data, the DV records a "0". The coding scheme of the DV is summarized in

table 5.1.

Table 4.2: Coding Scheme of Dependent Variable for individual n on t_i

Type of ambition	**Office to which n attempts election on t_{i+1}**	**Value of DV on t_i**
Regressive	$k-1$	1
Static	k	2
Progressive	$k+1$	3
Retire	not observed	0

NOTE: On t_i, n is observed running for office k.

This coding scheme is particularly pertinent because it resembles the decision making process that individual politicians undergo when deciding how to continue their careers. That is, individuals use all the information they have available about themselves and their district to inform their decision of the best way to continue their political career. Consider an individual that is pondering whether to seek higher office on t_{i+1}. To decide if it is worth the risk, she may consult the electoral records to get an idea of how tough was the competition in the past election for the office she now covets. This is far from perfect information, but it provides a rough approximation at what competition will look like in the following election. In addition to this, she is well aware of her past electoral strength and has an estimate of how she may perform in the following election. These data—among other—enter in her decision calculus and allow her to ascertain how likely she is at succeeding in winning higher office. Likewise, she uses information about her past performance and the last electoral race to decide if she is likely to win a seat in the same office she ran for previously; or whether it is better to seek lower office. In either case, it is assumed that holding office, any office, is preferable than electoral defeat.

For instance, if an individual appears a first time and loses and on the following

term she runs again for the same office, she is coded as showing static ambition. As a result, the unit of analysis is the individual attempt at getting elected to a given office.

4.5.2 Model Specification and Independent Variables

The observations in the data set are the individual attempts at getting elected to different offices and each individual appears as many times as she ran for office. Repeated observations of the same individual cannot be assumed to be independent from one another. Thus, the statistical models are estimated with the standard errors clustered on the individual, to account for the lack of independence that results from multiple observations of the same person.[8] Taking in consideration the individual and district specific variables discussed earlier, the model to explain career choice made by politician i based on her electoral strength in district j can be written as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}(\textit{Career Choice})_i &= \beta_1(\textit{Duration})_i + \beta_2(\textit{Margin})_i + \beta_3(\textit{Traditional Parties})_i + \\ &\quad \beta_4(\textit{Female})_i + \beta_5(\textit{Incumbent})_i + \beta_6(\textit{Suplente})_i + \\ &\quad \beta_7(\textit{Dominance})_j + \beta_8(\textit{Magnitude})_j + \beta_9(\textit{Candidates per seat})_j + \\ &\quad \beta_{10}(N_p)_j + \beta_{11}(N_l)_j + \varepsilon_{ij}\end{aligned}$$

The first six independent variables correspond to the characteristics of the individuals presented in hypotheses 1–5, and are operationalized as follows. *Duration*

[8] Technically speaking, the standard errors are calculated with the Huber-White sandwich variance estimator. For further details see Rogers (1993).

refers to the accumulated consecutive number of terms that the individual has served in the same office up to t_i. *Vote margin* describes the margin of victory over the party list that won a seat in the district with the lowest amount of votes. To calculate it, the number of votes received by list i are divided by number of votes of the list with the lowest votes that still won a seat in the same district (Crisp and Desposato, 2004). *Traditional Parties* is a dichotomous variable to indicate whether the candidate belonged to either of the two traditional parties (Conservative and Liberal) at t_i; it is coded "1" for members of traditional parties and "0" otherwise. *Female* is also a dichotomous variable to indicate whether the gender of the candidate; it is coded "1" for females and "0" for males. *Incumbent* is dichotomous variable to indicate whether the individual was an incumbent officer at t_i; it is coded "1" for incumbents and "0" otherwise. Suplente is a dichotomous variable to indicate whether the individual was listed as a substitute on electoral slate; it is coded "1" for *suplentes* and "0" for *titulares*.[9]

Variables 7–11 identify the characteristics germane to the levels of competition in the districts and are operationalized as follows. *Dominance* refers to the degree to which the district is dominated by a few powerful politicians. It is calculated as the sum of all the candidates' squared vote percentages in a given district. High dominance scores indicate that the district is dominated by a few candidates; lower scores indicate that the votes in the district are distributed among several candidates (Ames, 1995; Crisp and Desposato, 2004). *Magnitude* is the number of seats available at a given electoral district. This variable serves both as a proxy for population size and as a proxy for the level of electoral competition. *Candidates per*

[9]Before 1991, electoral slates had two columns, one for principales and one for suplentes, and multiple rows. The suplentes only took office in case that the principal in their row resigned, retired, fell ill or for whatever other reason could not stay in office.

seat is a more nuanced measure of electoral competition as it provides information about how crowded districts are. It is calculated as the ratio of candidates running to seats available in a given district (Crisp et al., 2007). The effective number of parties, N_p, is also refined measure of electoral competition. It is calculated with the formula $N = 1/\Sigma p_i^2$, where p_i is the percentage of the vote for party i in the district (Laakso and Taagepera, 1979). Similarly, The effective number of lists, N_l, is an even more refined measure of electoral competition that takes into account levels of inter and intra-party competition. It is calculated with the same formula as N_p, but instead it uses the percentage of the vote for list i in the district (Rodríguez Raga, 2002).

4.5.3 Analysis of Career Decisions

The phenomenon of interest here—namely, career decisions—is measured with an unordered qualitative variable. As described, politicians must decide whether to run for reelection, higher office, lower office, or not at all. These categories are mutually exclusive and the coding scheme of the variable is arbitrary in the sense that the quantitative difference between the variable codes is meaningless. Given that the model specifies an unordered categorical response variable, I use a discrete-choice model to estimate the underlying parameters β_1–β_{11} (Long and Freese, 2006; Powers and Xie, 2000). In particular, the analysis is performed using a multinomial logit model (MNLM). The MNLM is commonly used in social science research because it is a straightforward generalization of the binomial logit model. As a result, its interpretation is not as cumbersome as that of other non-linear models.[10] Table 4.3

[10]I estimate the MNLM using Stata's `mlogit` command. For post-estimation analysis, I use the `spost` suite of commands, developed by Long and Freese (2006), which are readily available at `http://www.indiana.edu/~jslsoc/spost.htm`

shows the results of the model.

The MNLM estimates $k-1$ models, where k is the number of categories in the response variable. As such, the model uses the omitted category as the reference against which the model parameters are estimated. In this case, the omitted category is retiring from office. Thus, the interpretation of the multinomial logit coefficients implies that for a one-unit change in the explanatory variables, there is an increase in β units of the log-odds that an observation is in the comparison category rather than in the omitted one. Then, positive coefficients imply increased odds that the observation is in the comparison category, holding all other covariates constant. Needless to say, the log-odds, or logit, metric has a far from intuitive interpretation. These coefficients can be converted into other metrics that are easier to interpret, such as odd ratios which can be obtained by taking the antilog of the coefficient—i.e. e^{β_k}.

However, the interpretation can be easily grasped if done graphically (Kastellec and Leoni, 2007). The model coefficients can be used to compute predicted probabilities which, in turn, can be plotted against different covariates. This graphical method allows to readily visualize changes in the probabilities of different career decisions while the covariates of interest span their ranges. Figure 4.2 depicts the changes in the probabilities of different career decisions for changes in the values of the subset individual-level covariates. In turn, figure 4.3 depicts the changes in the probabilities for the different categories of the dependent variable when the district-level variables span their range.

Table 4.3: A Multinomial Logit Model of Career Decisions in Colombia

	Regressive ambition	Static ambition	Progressive ambition
Individual Factors			
Seniority	**0.32**	**0.36**	**0.25**
	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.04)
Vote Margin	**–0.07**	**–0.01**	**0.01**
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Traditional Parties	0.00	**0.21**	0.08
	(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.07)
Incumbent	**–0.49**	**0.92**	**0.95**
	(0.11)	(0.05)	(0.08)
Female	**–0.45**	**–0.33**	**–0.25**
	(0.16)	(0.06)	(0.10)
Suplente	–0.05	**–0.76**	**–1.65**
	(0.10)	(0.04)	(0.07)
District Factors			
District Magnitude	**–0.03**	**0.01**	**0.01**
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Candidates per Seat	**–0.29**	**–0.08**	–0.01
	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)
District Dominance	**7.39**	–0.39	**–3.62**
	(0.43)	(0.24)	(0.42)
N_l (votes)	0.04	**–0.30**	**–0.19**
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
N_p (votes)	**0.02**	**–0.00**	**–0.02**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Constant	**–2.42**	**–0.70**	**–1.55**
	(0.16)	(0.10)	(0.12)
Log likelihood	–26138.9		
χ^2	4055.0		
N	28435		

The table reports multinomial logit coefficients with their respective robust standard errors in parentheses underneath. Coefficients that are statistically significant appear in **boldface**. The omitted category is "retire from office".

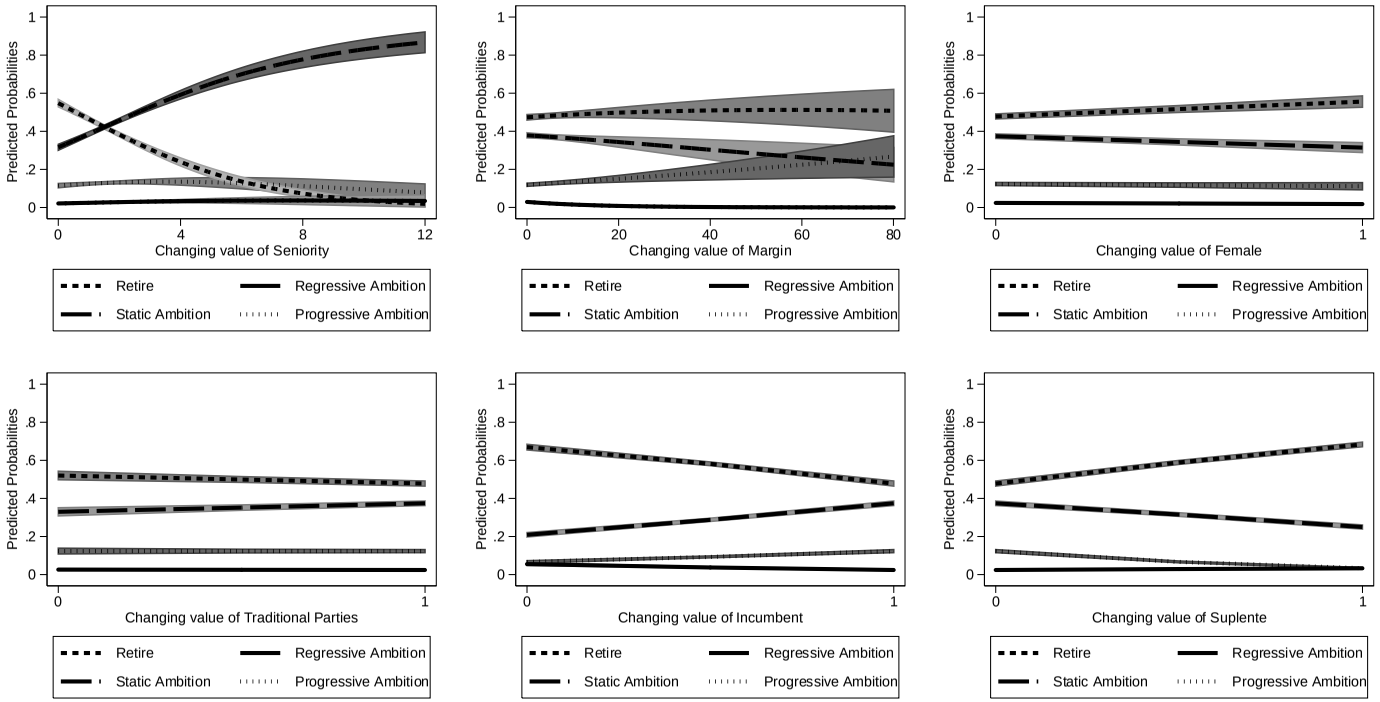

Figure 4.2: *This figure depicts the changes in the predicted probabilities associated with changes in the values taken by the individual-level covariates. These probabilities are computed based on the parameter estimates reported in the multinomial logit model shown in table 4.3. The dark lines show the predicted probabilities and the shaded areas represent the 95% confidence intervals about the respective probabilities.*

As can be inferred from figure 4.2, different characteristics of the individuals themselves greatly affect their political career decisions. The top left panel of this figure shows that more senior incumbents tend to seek reelection more and retire less. Indeed, as individuals accumulate repeated terms in office, the model estimates that the probability of running for the same office increases at an increasing rate—i.e. non-linearly—from about 0.3 at the onset of a politician's career and climbs to about 0.86 by the twelfth consecutive term in office. Similarly, the model estimates that the probability of retiring decreases at a decreasing rate as duration increases. It falls from 0.54 to almost 0 by the tenth reelection in the same office. The predicted probabilities for regressive or progressive ambition do not seem to be affected by the duration of a politician's career. This suggests that once in office, incumbents seem to prefer to stay in office over extensive periods of time.

The top middle panel of the figure shows the effect of politicians' vote margins on their career choices. As expected, the model estimates that positive changes in the vote margin are related to an increase in the probabilities of seeking higher office and, concomitantly, a decrease in the probabilities of seeking reelection. The model suggests that the probability of progressive ambition increases from about 0.1 to 0.26 and that the probability of static ambition decreases from 0.37 to about 0.2 as vote margin spans across its range. Also, the model estimates that the probabilities of retiring and regressive ambition are but slightly affected by changes in vote margins. These results suggest that once politicians secure the support of a significant number of people in the district, they feel confident enough to attempt to move up in the political ladder.

The top right panel shows the effects of being female in career decisions. The biggest effects appear in the probabilities of retiring and seeking reelection. The

model estimates the probability of retiring for males (i.e. `female` = 0) to be 0.47 and the probability of retiring for females to be 0.55, all else constant. Similarly, the predicted probability of static ambition for males is 0.37 while that of females is 0.31, all else constant. The probabilities of progressive and ambition seem unaffected by the gender of the candidate. In sum, the model suggests that females have higher probabilities of retiring and lower probabilities of seeking reelection.

The bottom left panel shows that membership in the traditional parties has very little effect in the career decisions made by politicians. The probabilities of progressive or regressive ambition appear to be unrelated this covariate. The predicted probabilities of static ambition and retiring vary slightly for members of traditional parties (0.37 and 0.52 respectively) compared to those of members of other parties (0.32 and 0.47 respectively).

In contrast, the bottom middle panel indicates that incumbency does have a large impact in what politicians decide to do with their careers. The model estimates that the probability of retiring for non-incumbents is 0.47 and for incumbents is 0.67. Likewise, the predicted probability of static ambition is 0.2 for non-incumbents and 0.37 for incumbents. The predicted probability of progressive ambition is 0.06 for non-incumbents and 0.12 for incumbents. In other words, the model suggests that incumbents are less tempted to retire and more avid to get reelected or seek higher office than non-incumbents.

Similarly, the bottom right panel suggests that being *suplente* implies higher probabilities of retiring and lower probabilities of static or progressive ambition. These predicted probabilities for *suplentes* are about 0.7, 0.24, and 0.03 respectively. The same probabilities for *titulares* are about 0.47, 0.37, and 0.12, respectively.

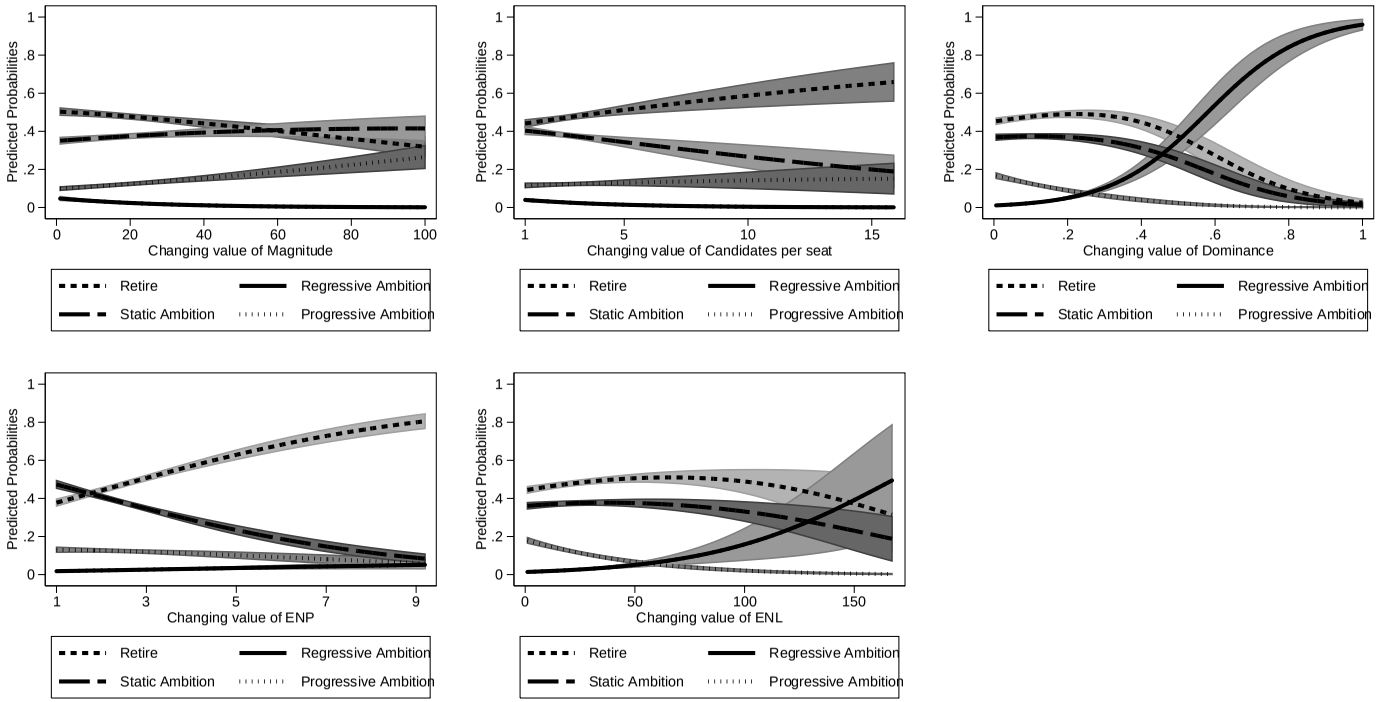

Figure 4.3: *This figure depicts the changes in the predicted probabilities associated with changes in the values taken by the district-level covariates. These probabilities are computed based on the parameter estimates reported in the multinomial logit model shown in table 4.3. The dark lines show the predicted probabilities and the shaded areas represent the 95% confidence intervals about the respective probabilities.*

District-level variables also affect the decisions made by politicians with regards to their careers in important ways . In general, it can be inferred from figure 4.3 that greater levels of competition in the district encourage politicians to seek lower office. The top left panel shows the effects of district magnitude on career decisions. The model estimates that the probability of retiring drops from 0.5 to about 0.3 as the magnitude spans its range. Concomitantly, the predicted probabilities of static and progressive ambition increase form 0.35 to 0.41 and from about 0.1 to 0.26. The predicted probability of regressive ambition does not appear to be affected by the magnitude of the district. Thus, in larger districts, politicians see an opportunity to further their careers either by attempting reelection or by seeking higher office because larger districts have more seats available. So, it appears that magnitude may ease the effects of high competition levels.

The top middle panel shows the effects of the changes of the ratio of candidates to seats on career decisions. Overall, it can be deduced that politicians tend to retire more and seek reelection in a lesser degree as the district becomes more crowded in the sense that there are more individuals disputing a fixed amount of seats. The predicted probability of retiring increases from about 0.44 to about 0.65 as the ratio of candidates to seats spans across its range. Likewise, the model estimates that the probability of seeking reelection drops from about 0.4 to about 0.18. The predicted probabilities of progressive and regressive ambition do not appear to be affected by the number of candidates per seat.

The top left panel in the figure depicts the changes in the predicted probabilities as the value of district dominance spans its range. Recall that dominance is a measure of the quality of competition in a given district. Higher levels of dominance indicate that only one or perhaps a few candidates amass the majority of

the district vote; in contrast, lower levels indicate that the vote is spread among several competitors in the district. The model suggests that as a district becomes more dominated, the predicted probability of regressive ambition increases at an increasing rate, changing form 0 to almost 1. That is, when the votes in the district are more evenly distributed (`dominance` = 0), the predicted probability of regressive ambition is virtually naught. But when a single candidate obtains 100% of the vote in the district, the model predicts that politicians will seek lower office almost certainly. In turn, the predicted probabilities of retiring and static ambition both exhibit a similar non-linear pattern. As dominance increases from zero to about 0.4, the predicted probability of retiring increases very slightly, while the predicted probability of static ambition appears unaffected. But, as dominance spans the remainder of its range, the predicted probabilities of retiring and static ambition decrease at a decreasing rate. The probability of retiring decreases from about 0.5 to about 0.02, and the predicted probabilities of static ambition drop from about 0.37 to about 0.01 as dominance moves from none to complete district dominance. The model also estimates that the probability of progressive ambition drops from 0.16 to almost zero as dominance increases. Given that the probability of regressive ambition increases so fast and reaches such high values, it is not surprising that the probability of retiring decreases as dominance increases. This suggests that politicians would rather seek lower office that retire when the district becomes somebody else's bailiwick.

The bottom right panel shows the effects of the effective number of parties on the probabilities of choosing different career paths. As N_p increases, the model estimates that the probability of retiring increases and the probability of static ambition decreased, and these are marked changes. The predicted probability of

retiring surges from 0.37 to about 0.8, while the predicted probability of static ambition drops precipitously from about 0.47 to almost naught as N_p varies. The predicted probability of progressive ambition drops from about 0.13 to about 0.05. This information complements the evidence that suggests that politicians evaluate the competition levels in their district and decide to seek lower office or retiring when the conditions are adverse.

Finally, the bottom middle panel shows the changes in the predicted probabilities of different career decisions as the effective number of lists in the district vary about its range. These changes all exhibit a non-linear pattern. The model estimates the greater change to be in the probability of regressive ambition which increases from almost 0 to about 0.5 as N_l goes up from 1 to about 167 lists. The probability of progressive ambition drops rapidly as N_l increases form about 0.13 and reaches almost 0 when there are about 100 effective lists in the district. The probabilities of static ambition and retiring show a parabolic pattern, first increasing and then decreasing. As N_l moves from its lower to its upper extreme, these probabilities start at about 0.36 and 0.44 respectively, increase slightly to peak at 0.37 and 0.51, and then drop to a probability of about 0.18 for static ambition and 0.31 for retiring. It should be noted that the point of inflection in these curves seems to occur when N_l is about 100. In fact, this only happens in the post-1991 Senate given that the district magnitude then is 100 seats. So, in effect, this panel shows the deleterious effects in careerism—i.e. higher probabilities of regressive ambition and retiring; lower probabilities of static and progressive ambitions—of the high competition levels of the Senate.

4.6 "And if I stay it will be double"? Studying Career Durations

The previous section was concerned with the factors that explain the decisions that politicians make with regards to their careers. However, one thing is what politicians plan to do with their careers and another different one is the degree to which they are able to obtain the goals they set for themselves. And, in fact, some politicians are more more successful at staying in office over long periods of time than some of their counterparts. This section attempts to explain why this is the case. Given that the *duration* of the career is the variable being explained, I use event history models to explain variations in career tenures. In this type of statistical models the dependent variable is defined as the time elapsed between the moment an individual enters the risk set until it experiences an event. Therefore, event history models are particularly suitable to the study of processes in which time is of central importance (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 1997, 2004). Indeed, political careers can be thought as event history processes in which multiple events may occur because individuals have several options available to them at the end of each term. These are, of course, mutually exclusive choices because the electoral rules do not allow politicians to run for—let alone hold—more than one office simultaneously. Therefore, the objective of this section is to elucidate what factors—at the individual or district levels—help explain differences in career durations.

4.6.1 The Cox proportional hazards model

In event history analysis, individuals are observed over a period of time during which they are at risk of experiencing some event. As such, the hazard function is

a crucial component of this type of models because it provides information on the likelihood that a particular event occurs. These models may or may not specify the underlying shape of the hazard function, although, as I explain below, it is much preferable to leave it unspecified. The main drawback of parametric models is that, as a researcher, one needs strong theoretical reasons to suspect that the time-dependence of the hazard rate follows a particular pattern. If that is the case, one simply specifies the distribution function of the hazard rate and estimates the parameters.[11] But even then, the actual time-dependence of the data may not conform to what the theory predicts which may result in models that fit the data poorly.

For instance, the canonical career that emerges from the literature on ambition and reelection, reviewed in chapter 1, seems to suggest that the duration-dependence of careers in the U.S. decreases monotonically. The theory suggests that politicians are strongly encouraged to seek their reelections and incumbents enjoy an advantage over challengers. Thus, for incumbents, the hazard rate of career termination appears to be decreasing as duration increases. In fact, Finocchiaro and Lin (2000) show that the hazard function of career termination in the House may actually be described by a parabola. The hazard rate decreases as incumbents get reelected for some terms, but beyond the eleventh or twelfth terms it increases again implying a higher probability of career termination. This increase late in the career is explained by two factors. On the one hand, after several terms in office, politicians approach their retirement age. On the other hand, the constituency may experience "fatigue" and therefore it may be inclined to give a challenging candidate a chance.

[11]The most common distribution functions used to parameterize the hazard function in event history models include the exponential, Weibull, log-normal, log-logistic, and Gompertz functions. For a thorough discussion of different parametric models and their differences see Blossfeld et al. (2007) or Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (2004).

Nevertheless, the theory should dictate the functional form adopted by the hazard rate and researchers need to specify the model accordingly. Thus, if a researcher is informed by the canonical career formulation, the use of an Weibull model may be justified because in this parameterization the baseline hazard rate is characterized as monotonic. If the researcher is convinced that the hazard rate is nonlinear, the use of a log-normal or a log-logistic model is supported because these are nonmonotonic distributions. Once the researcher—based on the theoretical expectations at hand—decides which functional form is more adequate, the models can be estimated, tested, and compared to assess how well they fit the data.

For the Latin American case, there are not strong theoretical expectations with regards of the shape of the hazard function. At best, we know that politicians exhibit "dynamic" ambitions (Samuels, 2003). That is, career decisions include seeking lower-office, appointed posts, and the like. Under such circumstances, the use of parametric models is restrictive given that the *true* shape of the hazard rate is unknown. One may estimate several models to see which one fits the data better, but that would mean imposing restrictions on the data that are not motivated by the theory. This problem is solved by the Cox model.

The Cox proportional hazards model overcomes the drawbacks of parametric models because it does not specify the particular shape that characterizes the duration-dependence in the data. Despite this, the Cox model can estimate the baseline hazard function (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones, 2004; Cox, 1972). In the Cox model, the hazard rate for the ith individual is given by

$$h_i(t|\mathbf{x}_i) = h_0(t)\exp(\beta'\mathbf{x}_i), \tag{4.1}$$

where $h_0(t)$ is the baseline hazard function and $\beta'\mathbf{x}_i$ are the covariates and regression parameters.

The advantage of the Cox model is that it makes no assumptions about the baseline hazard. In fact, it is not parameterized and it is left unspecified, so it really does not matter what one might believe about the shape of the hazard over time. However, the model assumes that regardless of its shape, the hazard function is the same for all of the subjects in the data.

The Cox model does not have an intercept because it is subsumed in the hazard rate. Following Cleves et al. (2004), if an intercept term were added to the model, the hazard rate would then be expressed as

$$h_i(t|\mathbf{x}_i) = h_0(t)\exp(\beta_0 + \beta_k\mathbf{x}_i), \tag{4.2}$$

which can be rearranged as

$$h_i(t|\mathbf{x}_i) = \{h_0(t)\exp(\beta_0)\}\exp(\beta_k\mathbf{x}_i). \tag{4.3}$$

The resulting term $\{h_0(t)\exp(\beta_0)\}$ would be the new baseline hazard. The value of β_0 is irrelevant because no assumption is made of the the shape of the baseline hazard. Thus, β_0 simply changes the definition of $h_0(t)$, which is unspecified nonetheless.

4.6.2 Analysis of Career Durations

In order to analyze career durations, I estimate a Cox proportional hazards model on the same set of covariates used to explain career decisions in section 4.5.3. Here, however, I am interested in the factors that explain the duration of political careers. As such, the dependent variable is the duration of the careers themselves.

Event history analysis implies necessarily that the subjects are observed as time passes, and that during such time they are at risk of experiencing some event of interest. In this case, the event of interest is the career path. As discussed, politicians must decide whether to run again for the same office, run for a higher office, run for a lower office, or quit politics. Notice that politicians make this decision regardless of incumbency status. That is, winning and losing candidates alike use the information they have about themselves and the district to decide which office to seek in the following term.

Given that these model deal with the *event histories* of the subjects under study, individuals must have a *history* to enter in the data set. That is, individuals need to be observed repeatedly in order to enter in the risk set, otherwise they will be dropped from the analysis. This is actually the case with a large number of the individuals in my data. Of the 29,916 observations in the data, 18,227 only appear once and therefore are not included in the risk set. As a result, there are 11,689 observations of 5,773 unique subjects remaining in the data analyzed.

Now, the ensuing structure of data is rather complicated. The analysis is not restricted to incumbents that get elected repeatedly and consecutively for two reasons. Doing so would (1) reduce the sample even further, but more importantly, (2) political careers in Colombia are quite dynamic: incumbents sit out for a couple of terms and then reappear, losing candidates try to move up or down in the follo-

wing term or a few terms later, etc. Indeed, individual and district-level factors affect the duration of careers and the ways in which they are pursued. Therefore, the individuals that enter in the data are "at risk" of continuing (or terminating) their careers in different ways: they may exhibit regressive, static, or progressive ambitions. Because of this, I estimate a competing risks Cox model to take into account the particular ways in which careers are continued. In the competing risks framework, the coefficients are estimated for the type-specific hazards. This allows comparisons of the effects of the covariates in the different risks. For instance, the risk of seeking higher office may be higher for non-incumbents while the risk of static ambition may be higher for incumbents. Table 4.4 shows the results of the models. The different columns of the table show the estimates for the type-specific hazards: retiring, regressive ambition, static ambition, and progressive ambition.

The coefficients produced by the Cox model provide information about the hazard rate. Thus, positive coefficients imply that the hazard rate increases as the covariate increases, and negative coefficients imply that the hazard rate decreases as the covariate increases. In other words, positive coefficients are associated with shorter survival times while negative coefficients are associated with longer duration times. Cox coefficients express the change in the log hazard that the subject experiences a particular event for a one unit change in the value of the covariate. Coefficients can be exponentiated to be reexpressed in terms that are easier to interpret.

The first column in table 4.4 shows the coefficients for the model in which the observations are at risk of retiring. In all, there were 5,708 observations of individuals that decided not to run in the following term. Most of the individual and district factors are statistically significant to explain why carees end. The model predicts

Table 4.4: Cox Competing Risks Models of Political Careers

	Retire	Regressive Ambition	Static Ambition	Progressive Ambition
Individual Factors				
Seniority	**0.11**	**0.11**	**0.29**	**0.15**
	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.01)	(0.03)
Vote Margin	0.00	–0.02	–0.00	–0.00
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Traditional Parties	**–0.08**	–0.03	0.07	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.10)	(0.06)	(0.09)
Incumbent	**–0.52**	**–0.58**	**0.63**	**0.52**
	(0.04)	(0.12)	(0.05)	(0.09)
Female	**0.12**	0.05	–0.01	**0.23**
	(0.05)	(0.15)	(0.07)	(0.11)
Suplente	**0.40**	**0.51**	**–0.35**	**–1.27**
	(0.04)	(0.11)	(0.04)	(0.11)
District Factors				
District Magnitude	**0.00**	**–0.01**	**0.00**	–0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Candidates per Seat	**0.08**	**–0.10**	0.03	**0.14**
	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)
District Dominance	**–0.61**	**1.69**	**–1.38**	**–0.99**
	(0.14)	(0.26)	(0.18)	(0.30)
N_l (votes)	**–0.00**	–0.00	–0.00	**–0.01**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
N_p (votes)	–0.00	–0.05	**–0.27**	**–0.15**
	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.04)
Log likelihood	–44111.7	–6032.3	–30512.1	–9338.6
χ^2	314.0	108.2	1671.6	425.4
N	11661 (5708)	11661 (787)	11661 (3957)	11661 (1209)

The table reports Cox coefficients with their respective standard errors in parentheses. Coefficients that are statistically significant appear in **boldface**. Each column gives the event-specific estimates. The number of events for each k risk is given in parentheses beside the number of observations included in each of the models.

that the hazard rate of retiring increases by 11% for each consecutive reelection of an incumbent ($\exp(0.10) = 1.11$). This is a counterintuitive result because experience incumbent are supposed be more interested in staying in office or moving to a higher one. Members of traditional parties have a smaller hazard of retiring since the model predicts a decrease of 9% in the hazard of retiring compared to that of members of other parties ($\exp(-0.08) = 0.92$). As expected, the hazard of retiring for incumbents decreases by about 40% compared to non-incumbents ($\exp(-0.52) = 0.59$). The estimated hazard of retiring for females is $\exp(0.12) = 1.13$ that of males. That is, females have a higher risk of retiring from office than males. The model also predicts that *suplentes* have almost a 50% higher chance of retiring compared to *titulares* ($\exp(0.4) = 1.48$).

In terms of the district factors, levels of competition affect the duration of careers in different ways. A ten-unit increment in the district magnitude is associated with a meager 2.8% increase in the risk of retiring from politics ($\exp(0.003) \times 10 = 1.028$). That is, the district magnitude would have to increase by 10 seats—a rather large and unusual increment—in order for the risk of retirement to increase by almost 3%, which is a weak effect. In contrast, the number of candidates per seat has a stronger impact on the hazard of retirement. For each additional candidate per seat in the district, the model estimates an increase of about 8% in the hazard of retirement ($\exp(0.08) = 1.08$). Now, crowdedness seems to affect the duration of careers differently than how strong those contenders are. As the district dominance increases by 0.1 units, the model predicts a decrease in the risk of retiring of about 6% ($\exp(-0.61) \times 0.1 = 0.94$). Recall that the values of district dominance range from 0 to 1, and that `dominance` $= 1$ means that all the votes in the district are concentrated by a single candidate. Likewise, as the effective number of lists

increase by one unit, the model estimates that the risk of retirement decreases by 1% ($\exp(-0.001) = 0.99$). This suggests that district crowdedness motivates politicians to end their careers prematurely while politicians appear willing to continue their careers even as they face increased competition—in the sense that votes go to strong actors.

Column 2 shows the coefficients for the model in which the event is defined as the risk of seeking lower office, of which there are 787 observations. Most individual and district factors are statistically significant affect the risk of seeking lower office. The model predicts that risk to increase with every consecutive term served in office by about 11% ($\exp(0.1) = 1.11$). This is counterintuitive because experienced incumbents should have a smaller hazard of regressive ambition. The other statistically significant coefficients conform to the theoretical expectations. For instance, the model estimates that the hazard rate of seeking lower office decreases by about 45% for incumbents compared to non-incumbents ($\exp(-0.58) = 0.55$). Likewise, the risk of seeking lower office is greater for *suplentes* than it is for *titulares*. The model estimates the risk of seeking lower office for *suplentes* to be about 66% greater ($\exp(0.51) = 1.66$). In terms of the characteristics of the districts, the model predicts that the risk of seeking lower office decreases by about 7% ($\exp(-.0.006) \times 10 = 0.93$) as the magnitude of the district increases by 10 units. Similarly, the model shows that the estimated risk of seeking lower office decreases by about 10% for each additional competitor per seat available ($\exp(-0.10) = 0.90$). This implies that district crowdedness is negatively related with regressive ambition. In turn, as the district dominance increases by 0.1 units, the model estimates that the hazard of seeking lower office increases by about 18% ($\exp(1.69) = 1.18$). That is, as the district becomes dominated, politicians are strongly motivated to seek lower office.

In turn, column 3 shows the coefficients for the model in which the event is defined as seeking election in the same office. There are 3,692 occurrences of this event in the data. In terms of the individual-level factors, the model fids statistical support to the coefficients of seniority, incumbency and *suplente* status. The estimated hazard of static ambition increases as seniority increases. The model predicts an increase of 33% in hazard of static ambition as seniority increases by one term ($\exp(0.29) = 1.33$). Incumbents also have an increased hazard of static ambition, as the model estimates the risk of seeking reelection to be about 88% greater for incumbents ($\exp(0.63) = 1.88$). The hazard rate decreases in the case of *suplentes*. The estimated risk of static ambition is about 30% lower for suplentes ($\exp(-0.35) = 0.70$). In terms of the district factors, the model reveals that as the district magnitude increases by 10 units, the estimated risk of seeking reelection increases by about 2% ($\exp(0.002) = 1.02$). Also, the model estimates the hazard of seeking reelection to drop by about 13% as the dominance in the district increases by 0.1 units ($\exp(-1.38) \times 0.1 = 0.87$). That is, as the competition increase because votes are concentrated in a few candidates, politicians are less inclined to run again in the same district. Similarly, as the number of competitors increase, politicians feel that they can fare better not running for the same office: as the effective number of parties increases by one unit, the hazard of static ambition decreases by about 24% ($\exp(-0.27) = 0.76$).

Finally, column 4 shows the results of the model in which the event is defined as seeking higher office. There are 1,214 observations of this event. The estimated hazard of progressive ambition increases as seniority increases. The model predicts it to be 16% higher for each consecutive term served in office ($\exp(0.15) = 1.16$). That is, experienced incumbents are more prone to seek higher office. The model

suggests that incumbency is positively related to progressive ambition as it shows the hazard of progressive ambition for incumbents to be $\exp(0.52) = 1.68$ that of non-incumbents. Females are also more prone to seek higher office as the model predicts the hazard to be 26% larger compared to males ($\exp(0.23) = 1.26$), all else constant. Also, *suplentes* do not seem to continue their careers by seeking higher office. The model predicts the hazard rate for suplentes to be $\exp(-1.27) = 0.28$ that of *titulares*. In terms of the district variables, the number of candidates per seat in the district has a substantive impact on the hazard of progressive ambition. As the candidates per seat increases by one unit, the predicted hazard rate increases by 14% ($\exp(0.14) = 1.14$). That is, as the district becomes more crowded, there is an increase in the probability that politicians would seek election in higher office. Furthermore, the model estimates the hazard of progressive ambition to decrease by about 10% as dominance increases by 0.1 unit ($\exp(-0.99 \times 0.1) = 0.90$). Similarly, the hazard of progressive ambition decreases by 2% as the effective number of lists increases by one unit ($\exp(-0.01 \times 0.1) = 0.98$). Finally, as the effective number of parties increases by one unit, the hazard of progressive ambition decreases by about 15% ($\exp(-0.15) = 0.85$).

To further illustrate the differences between the different types of risks estimated in the Cox model, I computed the baseline hazard estimates and graphed them in figure 4.4. All baseline hazards seem to increase over time but they do so at different rates. The risk of retirement is considerably higher than any of the other career-furthering alternatives. That is, as time passes politicians face higher risks of retiring from politics. It is also interesting to see that the risks of static ambition in greater than the risk of progressive and regressive ambition. As time passes, politicians appear more inclined to seek election to the same office rather than seek either

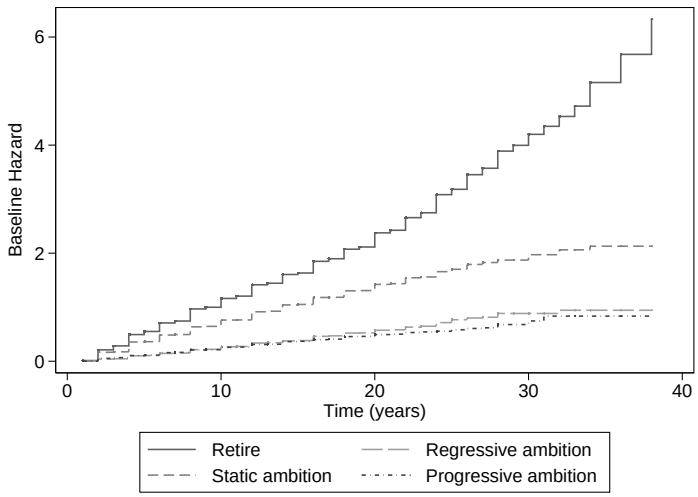

Figure 4.4: *This figure graphs the estimated baseline hazard rates from the Cox competing risks model shown in table 4.4. Each of the lines depicts the baseline hazard rate associated with each of the event-specific risks*

higher office or lower office. These two hazard rates are almost indistinguishable from one another.

4.7 Conclusions

In this chapter, I considered two central dimensions of political careers. I elaborated on the factors that influence the decisions made by politicians with regards to how they may continue their careers. I also analyzed various factors that explain differences in the duration of political careers. I used the same sets of factors to explain both decisions and durations: individual and district-level factors.

The evidence showed that the factors that defined personal characteristics of the candidates seemed to help explain career decisions and durations. In terms of career decisions, the expected probability of seeking reelection increased with every term served in office. Also, the predicted probability of progressive ambition increased

(and the probability of reelection decreased) as the margin of victory increased. These results suggest that politicians take into account their political experience when making the decision of how to further their careers. Other descriptive factors showed that, all else constant, incumbents, males, and members of traditional parties had higher predicted probabilities of static or progressive ambitions than challenger candidates, females, and members of other parties.

In terms of career durations, the evidence was somewhat ambiguous with regards to the explicative power of personal factors. The effect of the number of terms served (`seniority`) seems contradictory when explaining the risk of retirement or regressive ambition. The Cox model showed that the hazard rate for these events increased as duration increased. In turn, the hazard rates for static and progressive ambition also increase as duration increases, suggesting that more experienced incumbents have higher rates of continuing their careers either getting reelected or seeking higher office. Incumbency was a factor that offered evidence consistent with the theoretical expectations given that the hazard rates for retirement and regressive ambition decreased while those for static and progressive ambition increased. In other words, incumbents had lower hazards of retiring or seeking lower office but had higher hazards of continuing their careers in the same office or in a higher one.

The evidence also showed how the competition levels in the districts also affect career decisions and durations. Competition levels may change in different ways and therefore affect careers in differently. For instance competition may be stark in a district because it is somebody's bailiwick, because districts are crowded and have a great number of competitors per each of the seats available, because there are several parties competing for votes, or because there are several lists from the same party—along with lists from rival parties—competing for the district vote. The

evidence shows that as the district becomes more dominated the estimated hazard of regressive ambition increases. That is, politicians would rather seek lower office than to challenge a powerful candidate that dominates over a district. Similarly, as the district becomes more crowded, the predicted risk of seeking lower office decreases, which implies that politicians seem to prefer lower office than an electoral race in a crowded district. Similarly, higher levels of inter-party competition imply that politicians would avoid seeking reelection or election in higher office, while higher levels of intra-party competition imply that politicians would avoid retirement and seeking higher office.

The evidence also provides interesting insights about the effects of district factors on career durations. The Cox model suggests that the hazard rates of retirement, static, and progressive ambition decrease as dominance increases, and the hazard rate of regressive ambition increases as dominance increase. These results are consistent with the idea of careers: as competition increases politicians seek lower office, and do not seek election to the same office or to higher office. Also as competition increases, politicians opt less for retirement. This last result is particularly interesting because it shows that even in adverse scenarios, career politicians are interested in furthering their careers. The model also showed that the hazard rates of static and progressive ambition decrease as the effective number of parties increases. In other words, as the district becomes saturated with more parties, politicians are not motivated to seek election in the same office or in higher ones.

CHAPTER 5

Old *Señores*. Political Careers in Chile

5.1 Introduction: the Analysis of Chilean Political Careers

What explains the shapes of political careers? Why do politicians choose to stay in office or seek higher office? What explains the duration of their careers? To what extent the party system molds the career decisions of politicians? This chapter follows up the inquiry about careerism in Latin America. The analysis focuses on the Chilean case, which differs from the Colombian case mainly with regards to the party system. While Chilean parties are strong and cohesive, colombian parties are weak and fragmented. comparison of these two cases allows me to make inferences about the influence that parties exert on how politicians make decisions with regards to their careers.

In the presence of strong parties, politicians are accountable to party leaders and make decisions about their careers limited by the constrains that the party may impose on them. For instance, party leaders may request individuals to run in

particular districts or for particular offices. If the choice were entirely up to them, politicians may not feel inclined to oblige with the party's directions because they believed that the competition in the suggested district was stark or because they preferred to run for higher office. However, politicians comply because thy know it is in their best interest to follow the party directives and that loyalty is a requirement to a long career with the party.

The argument presented in this chapter is similar to the one presented in the previous one. Here, I inquire about the shapes of political careers in Chile by explaining career decisions and career durations. I analyze the effects of personal and district factors on the career decisions made by Chilean politicians and the impact that these factors have on the duration of their careers. Thus, the structure of this chapter resembles the structure of the previous chapter. Table 4.1 summarizes the hypotheses presented in chapter 1 and tested here with data from the Chilean case. Section 5.2 describes the original data set compiled for the purpose of analysis. Section 5.3 presents a ranking of political office in Chile in order to further assess career patterns. Section 5.4 analyzes the factors that influence the different career decisions made by Chilean politicians taking into account their individual characteristics and those of the districts in which they participate. Section 5.5 studies office tenure from an event history perspective. There, I assess how those individual and district-level factors affect the amount of time that politicians are able to stay in office comparing the possibility of different "risks", including moving to lower office, getting reelected, moving to higher office, or retiring altogether. Section 5.6 concludes.

5.2 The Data Set: Electoral Results in Democratic Chile, 1989–2005

The Chilean data set is analogous to the Colombia one. I obtained historical records of electoral results and concatenated the results from different years and offices in a single file. This makes it possible to trace career trajectories of different individuals. As a result, I was able to produce an original and comprehensive data set with electoral results for Senate and House of Representatives (1989–2005), and Municipal Councils and Mayoralties (1992–2004).

Just like in the Colombian case, the period studied begins with the year that marks the return to democracy after an authoritarian regime. Thus, in the Chilean case the study begins in 1989, the year in which the Pinochet regime handed power into civilian hands. The data set contains information on all the candidates that participated in the elections for the mentioned institutions. Senators are elected to serve eight-year terms, but their terms are staggered such that half of the seats are up for election every four years. *Diputados* are elected to serve four-year terms and House elections are held concurrently with those of the Senate. Local elections have a peculiarity worth mentioning. Members of Local Councils and Mayors are elected to serve four year-terms. However, in the 1992–2000 elections the races for *concejeros* and mayors were collapsed into the same election. As such, the council candidate with the highest vote share automatically became the municipal mayor and the remaining winning candidates formed the Council. Beginning in 2004, the two elections were separated to have candidates specifically running for mayor and candidates running for the councils.

As expected, several individuals appear multiple times in the data as they at-

tempted to attain office more than once. In fact, there are actually 17,522 unique individuals in the data set and a grand total of 26,259 observations. The vast majority of these are individuals attempting to be elected in the Local Councils. There are 22,669 observations for individuals participating on elections to the Local Councils (86.3%); 1,235 observations of individuals running for mayor (4.7%); 2,012 observations in House elections (7.6%); and 343 individuals on Senate elections (1.3%).

5.3 Moving Up, Moving Down. A Hierarchy of Political Office in Chile

In this section, I offer a brief description of the different elective offices available to Chilean politicians. I then establish a ranking of those political offices in order to substantiate what is considered to be "higher" or "lower" office.

Currently, the number of elective offices in Chile is rather limited. Elective offices include president, senator (38 seats; all elected in state-wide districts of fixed magnitude, $M = 2$), House Representative (120 seats; all elected in sub-state districts of fixed magnitude, $M = 2$), Mayors (345 approximately total), and Local Council members (2,100 approximately total)[1].

Politicians may appraise the value of holding any particular office with a relatively straightforward cost-benefit calculus. Thus, to ascertain the value of office politicians need to consider the utility they will derive from holding it, the proba-

[1]The number of council members vary according to the population in each of the about 345 municipalities, which may elect 6, 8 or 10 council members. According to Altman (2004), the population in the *comunas* varies from 306 to 173,593 inhabitants, with mean about 23,000. Thus, the average magnitude works out to be about 6.2.

bility of actually getting it, and the costs incurred in attempting to secure it.[2] In the remainder of this section I discuss the costs, benefits, and chances of attaining political office. I use current figures in terms of salaries and campaign caps for heuristic purposes.[3] But, I assume that the differences in those figures between offices have persisted over time.

5.3.1 The Value of Office

Congressional seats

There is a slight difference in the compensations received by Senators and Representatives in Chile, as reported by the National Congress.[4] Senators receive a monthly salary of about $8,800 after taxes and social security monies are withheld. In turn, Representatives earn a monthly sum of about $8,000. As is the case with many legislatures, members of Congress receive significant resources as office perquisites. However, Senators are entitled to a larger sum than Representatives. Senators receive a monthly amount of about $18,000 to cover a variety of expenses including housing, transportation, administrative assistants, franking, office supplies, staffers, and even an allotment for cellular phone use. Representatives are assigned about $11,000 monthly to pay for transportation, housing, meals, administrative assistants, and rents.

In addition to the direct benefits derived from serving in office, members of Congress are well reputed and influential in local politics. They endorse candidates

[2]This is equivalent to the utility function of holding office discussed in chapter 1. See Black (1972) and Rohde (1979).

[3]All figures are given in 2008 U.S. dollars. The current exchange rate is about $500 Chilean pesos for US $1.

[4]These data were obtained from the "Transparency and Control" section of the web sites of the Chilean Senate and House of Representatives at `http://www.senado.cl/` and `http://www.camara.cl/`, respectively.

for mayor and Local Councils and actively participate in their state affairs. Thus, in general congressional seats are prestigious and quite valuable. But, senatorial seats seem to offer greater benefits than seats in the House.

Local Posts

The salaries of Mayors and members of Local Councils depend on the category to which their municipality belongs, which depends—in turn—on population size and revenues.[5] On average, a mayor in Chile may earn a monthly salary of about $4,500, with the lowest paid mayors earning $2,700 and the highest paid ones earning $6,300. The pay of the council members is defined in *Unidades Tributarias Mensuales* (Monthly Tax Units, UTM), such that council members may earn between six and 12 UTMs according to what a supermajority (2/3) of the council determines every year. However, *concejeros* only earn that sum if they assist to the totality of the sessions for the month. Their pay is prorated according to the number of sessions that the member actually attends. As of January 2008, one UTM was worth about $70, which implies that *concejeros* may earn between $420 and $840 per month, provided that their attendance record is flawless.

Mayors exert a great influence in their municipalities and control substantial resources as they are in charge of the municipal finances and assets, which allows them to authorize contracts that guarantee the provision of different goods and services. Mayors have important direct and indirect appointment powers, which include the direct appointment of their staff. Additionally, the mayor suggests to the Council the internal organization of the entire municipality.

[5]The compensation of local authorities is established in Law 18,695, which regulates local governments. The salaries of mayors and council members were adjusted in 2005 by Law 20,033. These documents are available through the web site of the Chilean Library of Congress at `http://www.bcn.cl/`.

In turn, Local Councils do not exert as much influence over their municipalities as the the mayors do. Their functions are germane to the oversight and control of how the mayor governs the municipality and administers its resources. Local Councils also serve as a consultive body and a gatekeeper because mayors need the approval of the councils on its municipal development plan and the budget.

5.3.2 The Chance of Attaining Office

Chapter 3 described the levels of electoral competition, which are useful here to establish the degree of difficulty that politicians face when trying to be elected to the different offices.

As depicted in figure 3.2, levels of electoral competition are relatively high and about two thirds of candidates fail in their attempts to get elected. The lowest average percentage of winning candidates is that of the House, where only about 30% of candidates actually obtain seats. The percentage in the Senate is slightly higher, reaching about 33%. Races for the Local Councils are somewhat less competed in the sense that about 38% of all candidates are able to get elected. The mayoral election of 2004—the first direct and separate election so far—showed high levels of competition given that about 28% of all the candidates managed to get elected. So, with the exception of the Local Councils, all other elective posts are relatively difficult to get.

However, district sizes differ markedly for the different offices. This implies that the amount of votes need to secure a seat vary from office to office making it more difficult to obtain those seats for which a greater amount of votes is required. Figure 5.1 presents box plots of the amount of votes obtained by the winning candidates discriminated by the type of office. The boxes combine the distribution

of the votes for all of elections, thus offering the historical average. In the case of mayoral races, the figure only depicts the 2004 race given that it is the first election for which candidates ran separately from candidates to the Local Councils. As depicted, elected officers won their seats with a very different average amount of votes. In the electoral races under study, incumbent senators won their seats with a median of about 72,000 votes; incumbent representatives won their seats with a median of about 32,000 votes; mayors attained theirs with a median of about 4,000 votes; and council members did so with a median vote of little than 800 votes.

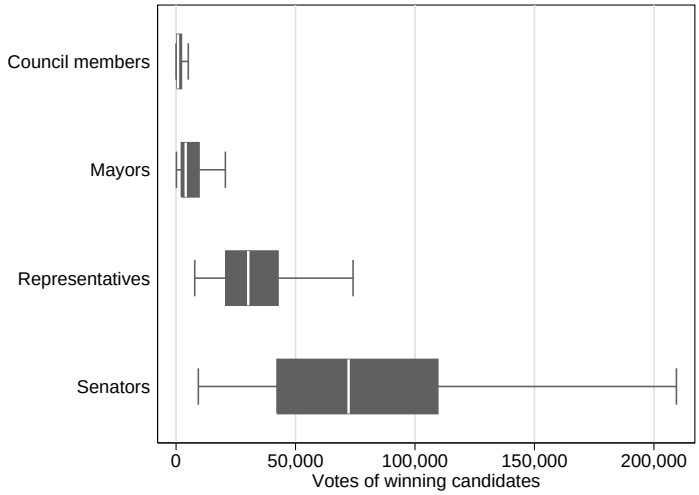

Figure 5.1: *This figure depicts the amount of votes received by the winning candidates in the different elective offices. The boxes are sorted in ascending order according to the median vote and are displayed without the outside values—those below the 25th or above the 75th percentile—to avoid cluttering. The box plots show the historical distribution of the vote for winning candidates over the 1989–2005 period. In the case of mayoral races, the figure only plots the results of the 2004 election given that it was the first election that took place separately from council races. The line in the box depicts the median vote; the whiskers extend to the 25th and 75th percentiles.*

It is possible to establish a rank ordering of elective office in Chile based on the information available about varying competition levels and varying amount of votes needed for different posts. These data offer a good approximation at how

difficult it is to obtain different seats. Thus, these offices could be ranked in the following order from the most difficult to attain to the least difficult: Senate, House, Mayoralty, Local Councils.

5.3.3 The Costs of Office

As discussed, the cost of office can be quite complex to assess given the multiplicity of factors that could be incorporated in its calculus. One way to overcome this difficulty is by looking at a variable that, while incomplete in the assessment of the cost of attaining office, may be compared across offices. Indeed, such variable is the cost of campaigning for different offices.

The costs of campaigning are strictly regulated in Chile.[6] Campaigns for different offices are assigned a maximum number of units that can be spent; the value of one unit being adjusted prior to each election. As of December 2007, the value one unit was about $40. Currently, senatorial campaigns are allotted a maximum 3,000 units (about $120,000), campaigns for House seats are allotted 1,500 units ($60,000), mayoral campaigns are allowed to spend maximum 120 units ($4,800), and Council campaigns are allowed 60 units ($2,400). Thus, by law, a senatorial campaign may be as much as twice as costly as a campaign for a House seat. The House campaign may be 12.5 times as expensive as a mayoral campaign. And, a mayoral race may be twice as costly as a campaign for the Local Councils. In effect, the law establishes the ranking of office according to its costs.

[6]See Law 20,053, available through the web site of the Chilean Library of Congress at `http://www.bcn.cl/`.

5.3.4 A Ranking of Political Office

Just like in the Colombian case, the evidence suggests a hierarchy of political office in which the National Congress appears at the top. The Senate seems like the top office considering that senatorial seats offer greater compensations and perks, and the most difficult and costly to obtain. Posts in the House of Representatives offer a slightly lower compensation than those of the Senate, but are significantly easier to obtain and substantially less expensive than Senate seats.

The post of mayor comes in third place and that of *concejero* are at the bottom of the career ladder. Compensation for mayors is substantially greater than that of council members. Likewise, mayoral seats are more difficult and costly to obtain, according to the number of votes obtained by winning candidates and the spending caps established by the law.

5.4 Reaching the Zenith. Career Decisions in Chile

As discussed in the previous chapter, the decisions made by politicians are one of the central dimensions in the study of political careers. Politicians must decide periodically whether to continue or terminate their careers. If they decide to continue, there are additional decisions to be made about how precisely to continue their participation in politics. This section inquires into the different factors that may affect the career decisions of Chilean politicos. For the sake of exposition, and at the risk of being repetitive, parts of chapter 4 are reproduced here.

5.4.1 Ambition: The Dependent Variable

At the end of each electoral cycle, politicians must decide what to do in the following election. They make that decision based on the information available to them at that point in time. Theoretically, there are four options available for them: run for office at a lower level, run for the same office, run for office at a higher level, or retire. Therefore, I use this information to construct the dependent variable capture precisely the choices made by politicians with regards to their careers. The DV is coded as the decision made by politicians on time t_i about where to run for office on t_{i+1}. It is assumed that politicians make this decision based on the information available to them on t_i with regards to their own political experience and the conditions of electoral competition in their districts. The variable is coded as "0" if the politician decides to retire—i.e. the individual is no longer observed in the data. It is coded as "1" if the individual seeks election to a lower-level office. It is coded as "2" if the politician tries to get elected to the same office. It is coded as "3" if the politician runs for higher office.

The DV is coded prospectively. That is, the value assigned to the DV on t_i depends on where is the individual observed on t_{i+1}. The value of the DV on an individual's first observation corresponds to the type of ambition that that particular individual exhibits on her second observation; the value of the DV on her second observation depends on where she is observed for a third time, and so on. For example, individual n is first observed as running for office k on t_i, and all the information about n on t_i is recorded—e.g. the amount of votes, whether she won a seat, her party, competition levels in the district, etc. The value of the DV for n on t_i is recorded depending on where is she observed on t_{i+1}. If she is observed on t_{i+1} running for lower office $(k-1)$, the DV records a "1". If she is observed on

t_{i+1} running for the same office (k), the DV records a "2". If she is observed on t_{i+1} running for higher office ($k+1$), the DV records a "3". If she is no longer observed in the data, the DV records a "0". The coding scheme of the DV is summarized in table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Coding Scheme of Dependent Variable for individual n on t_i

Type of ambition	**Office to which n attempts election on t_{i+1}**	**Value of DV on t_i**
Regressive	$k-1$	1
Static	k	2
Progressive	$k+1$	3
Retire	not observed	0

NOTE: On t_i, n is observed running for office k.

This coding scheme is particularly pertinent because it resembles the decision making process that individual politicians undergo when deciding how to continue their careers. That is, individuals use all the information they have available about themselves and their district to inform their decision of the best way to continue their political career. Consider an individual that is pondering whether to seek higher office on t_{i+1}. To decide if it is worth the risk, she may consult the electoral records to get an idea of how tough was the competition in the past election for the office she now covets. This is far from perfect information, but it provides a rough approximation at what competition will look like in the following election. In addition to this, she is well aware of her past electoral strength and has an estimate of how she may perform in the following election. These data—among other—enter in her decision calculus and allow her to ascertain how likely she is at succeeding in winning higher office. Likewise, she uses information about her past performance and the last electoral race to decide if she is likely to win a seat in the same office

she ran for previously; or whether it is better to seek lower office. In either case, it is assumed that holding office, any office, is preferable than electoral defeat.

For instance, if an individual appears a first time and loses and on the following term she runs again for the same office, she is coded as showing static ambition. As a result, the unit of analysis is the individual attempt at getting elected to a given office.

5.4.2 Model Specification and Independent Variables

Just as in the Colombian case, the observations in the data set are the individual attempts at getting elected to different offices and each individual appears as many times as she ran for office. Since repeated observations of the same individual cannot be assumed to be independent from one another, the statistical models are estimated with the standard errors clustered on the individual, to account for the lack of independence that results from multiple observations of the same person (Rogers, 1993). the model estimated in this chapter is almost identical to the one estimated in chapter 4. It differs from it because it excludes the *suplente* variable, which does not apply to the Chilean case, and also in the treatment of parties and coalitions. Details are provided below. Thus, the model to explain career choice made by politician i based on her electoral strength in district j can be written as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}(Career\ Choice)_i &= \beta_1(Duration)_i + \beta_2(Margin)_i + \beta_3(Alianza)_i + \\ &\beta_4(Concertación)_i + \beta_5(Female)_i + \beta_6(Dominance)_j + \\ &\beta_7(Magnitude)_j + \beta_8(Candidates\ per\ seat)_j + \beta_9(N_c)_j +\end{aligned}$$

$$\beta_{10}(N_p)_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

The first five independent variables correspond to the characteristics of the individuals presented in hypotheses 1–5, and are operationalized as follows. *Duration* refers to the accumulated consecutive number of terms that the individual has served in the same office up to t_i. *Vote margin* describes the margin of victory over the party list that won a seat in the district with the lowest amount of votes. To calculate it, the number of votes received by list i are divided by number of votes of the list with the lowest votes that still won a seat in the same district (Crisp and Desposato, 2004). *Alianza* and *Concertación* are a pair of dichotomous variable to indicate whether the candidate belonged to one of the two dominant coalitions at t_i. These variables are included separately because the great majority of Chilean politicians belong to either of them. I include both to see if there are differences between members of these two coalitions. The variables are coded "1" for members of the respective coalition and "0" otherwise. *Female* is also a dichotomous variable to indicate whether the gender of the candidate; it is coded "1" for females and "0" for males. *Incumbent* is dichotomous variable to indicate whether the individual was an incumbent officer at t_i; it is coded "1" for incumbents and "0" otherwise.

Variables 6–10 identify the characteristics germane to the levels of competition in the districts and are operationalized as follows. *Dominance* refers to the degree to which the district is dominated by a few powerful politicians. It is calculated as the sum of all the candidates' squared vote percentages in a given district. High dominance scores indicate that the district is dominated by a few candidates; lower scores indicate that the votes in the district are distributed among several candidates (Ames, 1995; Crisp and Desposato, 2004). *Magnitude* is the number of seats

available at a given electoral district. This variable serves both as a proxy for population size and as a proxy for the level of electoral competition. *Candidates per seat* is a more nuanced measure of electoral competition as it provides information about how crowded districts are. It is calculated as the ratio of candidates running to seats available in a given district (Crisp et al., 2007). The effective number of coalitions, N_c, is also refined measure of electoral competition. It is calculated with the formula $N = 1/\Sigma c_i^2$, where c_i is the percentage of the vote for coalition i in the district (Laakso and Taagepera, 1979). Similarly, The effective number of parties, N_p, is an even more refined measure of electoral competition that takes into account levels of competition controlling the moderating effect of coalitions on the number of relevant actors. It is calculated with the same formula as N_c, but instead it uses the percentage of the vote for party i in the district (Altman, 2004, 2007).

5.4.3 Local to National. Analysis of Career Decisions

The phenomenon of interest here—namely, career decisions—is measured with an unordered qualitative variable. As described, politicians must decide whether to run for reelection, higher office, lower office, or not at all. These categories are mutually exclusive and the coding scheme of the variable is arbitrary in the sense that the quantitative difference between the variable codes is meaningless. Given that the model specifies an unordered categorical response variable, I use a discrete-choice model to estimate the underlying parameters β_1–β_{10} (Long and Freese, 2006; Powers and Xie, 2000). In particular, the analysis is performed using a multinomial logit model (MNLM). The MNLM is commonly used in social science research because it is a straightforward generalization of the binomial logit model. As a result, its

interpretation is not as cumbersome as that of other non-linear models.[7] Table 5.2 shows the results of the model.

The MNLM estimates $k-1$ models, where k is the number of categories in the response variable. As such, the model uses the omitted category as the reference against which the model parameters are estimated. In this case, the omitted category is retiring from office. Thus, the interpretation of the multinomial logit coefficients implies that for a one-unit change in the explanatory variables, there is an increase in β units of the log-odds that an observation is in the comparison category rather than in the omitted one. Then, positive coefficients imply increased odds that the observation is in the comparison category, holding all other covariates constant. Needless to say, the log-odds, or logit, metric has a far from intuitive interpretation. These coefficients can be converted into other metrics that are easier to interpret, such as odd ratios which can be obtained by taking the antilog of the coefficient—i.e. e^{β_k}.

However, the interpretation can be easily grasped if done graphically (Kastellec and Leoni, 2007). The model coefficients can be used to compute predicted probabilities which, in turn, can be plotted against different covariates. This graphical method allows to readily visualize changes in the probabilities of different career decisions while the covariates of interest span their ranges. Figure 5.2 depicts the changes in the probabilities of different career decisions for changes in the values of the subset individual-level covariates. In turn, figure 5.3 depicts the changes in the probabilities for the different categories of the dependent variable when the district-level variables span their range.

[7] I estimate the MNLM using Stata's `mlogit` command. For post-estimation analysis, I use the `spost` suite of commands, developed by Long and Freese (2006), which are readily available at `http://www.indiana.edu/~jslsoc/spost.htm`

Table 5.2: A Multinomial Logit Model of Career Decisions in Chile

	Regressive ambition	Static ambition	Progressive ambition
Individual factors			
Seniority	–0.08	**–0.23**	**0.66**
	(0.15)	(0.02)	(0.04)
Vote Margin	0.19	**0.41**	**0.76**
	(0.16)	(0.08)	(0.11)
Alianza	**–1.01**	**–0.24**	**–1.49**
	(0.16)	(0.05)	(0.09)
Concertación	**–1.27**	**–0.19**	**–1.60**
	(0.19)	(0.05)	(0.09)
Incumbent	**–1.77**	**1.94**	**1.78**
	(0.30)	(0.04)	(0.07)
Female	–0.28	**–0.36**	**–0.24**
	(0.16)	(0.04)	(0.09)
District factors			
District Magnitude	**–1.43**	**0.23**	**0.33**
	(0.05)	(0.01)	(0.03)
Candidates per seat	**–0.47**	**–0.11**	**–0.39**
	(0.08)	(0.03)	(0.07)
District Dominance	**9.69**	**6.07**	**5.64**
	(1.00)	(0.80)	(1.73)
N_c (votes)	**–0.54**	**–0.24**	–0.14
	(0.10)	(0.04)	(0.09)
N_p (votes)	**0.85**	**–0.14**	**–0.25**
	(0.06)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Constant	**0.70**	**–1.17**	**–1.97**
	(0.33)	(0.12)	(0.25)
Log likelihood	–17854.5		
χ^2	13365.8		
N	26259		

The table reports multinomial logit coefficients with their respective robust standard errors in parentheses underneath. Coefficients that are statistically significant appear in **boldface**. The omitted category is "retire from office".

Figure 5.2 shows the impact of different characteristics of the individuals themselves on their political career decisions. Interestingly, this figure reveals that none of the individual factors has any impact on the probability of seeking lower office, and that said probability is indistinguishable from zero. In other words, Chilean politicians do not appear to be at all interested in seeking lower office.

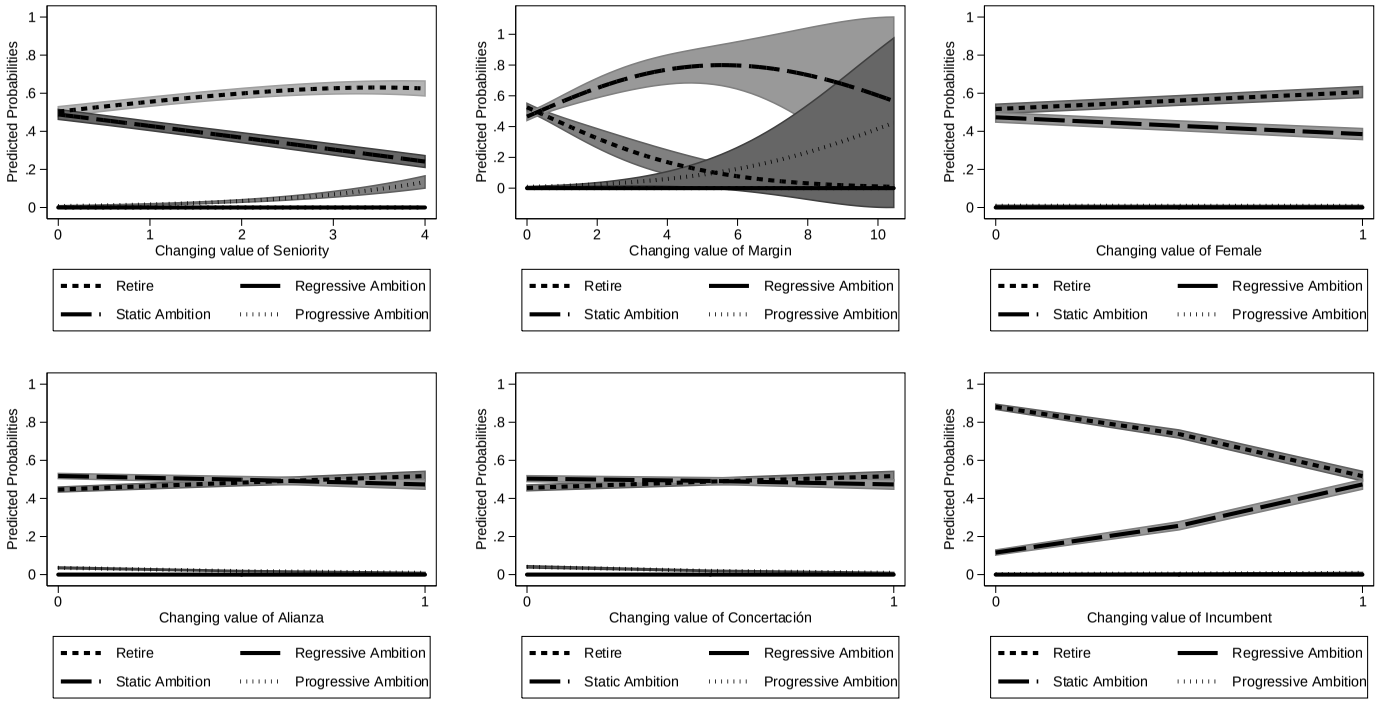

Figure 5.2: *This figure depicts the changes in the predicted probabilities associated with changes in the values taken by the individual-level covariates. These probabilities are computed based on the parameter estimates reported in the multinomial logit model shown in table 5.2. The dark lines show the predicted probabilities and the shaded areas represent the 95% confidence intervals about the respective probabilities.*

The top left panel of this figure shows the effect of seniority on career decisions. Overall, as seniority increases, the probabilities of seeking higher office and retiring both increase slightly. The predicted probability of static ambition steadily declines while that of progressive ambition increases at an increasing rate. The model estimates de probability of reelection to be 0.48 for freshmen politicians, but it declines and reaches only 0.24 for those serving their fourth consecutive term in office. Similarly, the predicted probability of seeking higher office increases from virtually naught for freshmen to about .13 for seasoned politicians with over 4 terms served. The predicted probability of retirement first increases and then decreases. The model estimates an initial probability of 0.50 for freshmen, it then peaks at about 0.63 when the politician has accumulated three consecutive terms and drops timidly to 0.62 by the fourth consecutive term. This suggests that Chilean politicians are mildly inclined to seek higher office.

The top middle panel shows the effect that the electoral strength of candidates has on their career decisions. The electoral strength is measured with the margin of victory over the last candidate to win a seat in the district. The story that emerges from this panel is that greater margins of victory seem related to higher probabilities of progressive ambition and reelection. The predicted probability of retirement decreases non-linearly over the entire range from 0.52 to virtually zero. This indicates that the model estimates a very high probability of retirement for those candidates that barely made the cut ($\texttt{margin} \sim 1$) or lost ($\texttt{margin} < 1$), but that probability decreases and reaches almost zero at the maximum value taken by taken by the margin of victory. While margin increases, the predicted probabilities of staying in office and seeking higher office begin to increase as well. The predicted probability of reelection has a parabolic shape. It starts off at about 0.46, then

it increases and reaches a peak at about 0.80, when `margin` = 5.5, and then it declines until it reaches 0.56 as margin reaches its maximum value. In turn, the probability of seeking higher office greatly increases from almost naught to about 0.42. Substantively, this evidence suggests that as their margins of victory begin to increase, politicians decide to get reelected and consider seeking higher office.

The top right panel shows the effects of being female in career decisions. Overall, the model shows that females have a higher probability of retirement and a lower probability of seeking reelection than their male counterparts. The probability of progressive ambition does not appear to be affected by this variable. The model estimates a probability of retiring of 0.60 for females while it is 0.51 for males. Similarly, the predicted probability of static ambition is about 10 percentage points smaller for females than males. It is about 0.38 for females while it is of about 0.47 for males. That is, the model suggests that females decide to retire more and to get reelected less than their male counterparts.

The bottom left and middle panels shows the effects on career decisions of belonging in either of the two dominant coalitions—*Alianza* or *Concertación*. Membership in these coalitions has a minor impact on the different career choices and the effect of being in *Alianza* is virtually the same than the effect of being a member of *Concertación*, as there do not appear to be major differences between the predicted probabilities depicted in these two panels. The magnitude of the effect is not that great as the probabilities of retirement and static ambition change about 7% and 4%, respectively. However, the direction of the effects is in the opposite way expected. The model estimates that the probability of retirement is lower for members of the dominant coalitions, about 0.51 for members of both coalitions, compared to that of other candidates, estimated at about 0.45. The predicted probability of seeking

reelection is about 0.47 for members of either *Alianza* or *Concertación*, compared to 0.50 for members of other coalitions. A possible explanation for these counterintuitive results may have to do with the discipline exerted by the partisan structure. It is the case that *Alianza* and *Concertación* dominate the electoral arena and that from a career perspective it is better to belong to either one than being a member of a third party. However, membership to these coalitions may come with strings attached in terms of the ability of individuals to decide where to run in the following election. Therefore, it may be the case that it is easier for members of smaller parties and coalitions to decide freely what to do with their careers whereas members of the big coalitions need to consult those decisions with the party leadership. But this is an assertion than requires empirical verification through interviews with Chilean politicians, something that lies beyond the scope of my current research.

Finally, the bottom right panel of figure 5.2 shows the impact on career decision of being an incumbent. The biggest effects of incumbency are on the probabilities of deciding to retire and to be reelected in the same office, and the changes in the probabilities for retirement and reelection are quite dramatic. The model estimates that the probability of retiring for an incumbent is 0.51, whereas it is 0.88 for candidates who are not sitting in office. Similarly, the probability of deciding to seek (re)election in the same office in the following period is 0.47 for incumbents and only 0.11 for nonincumbents.

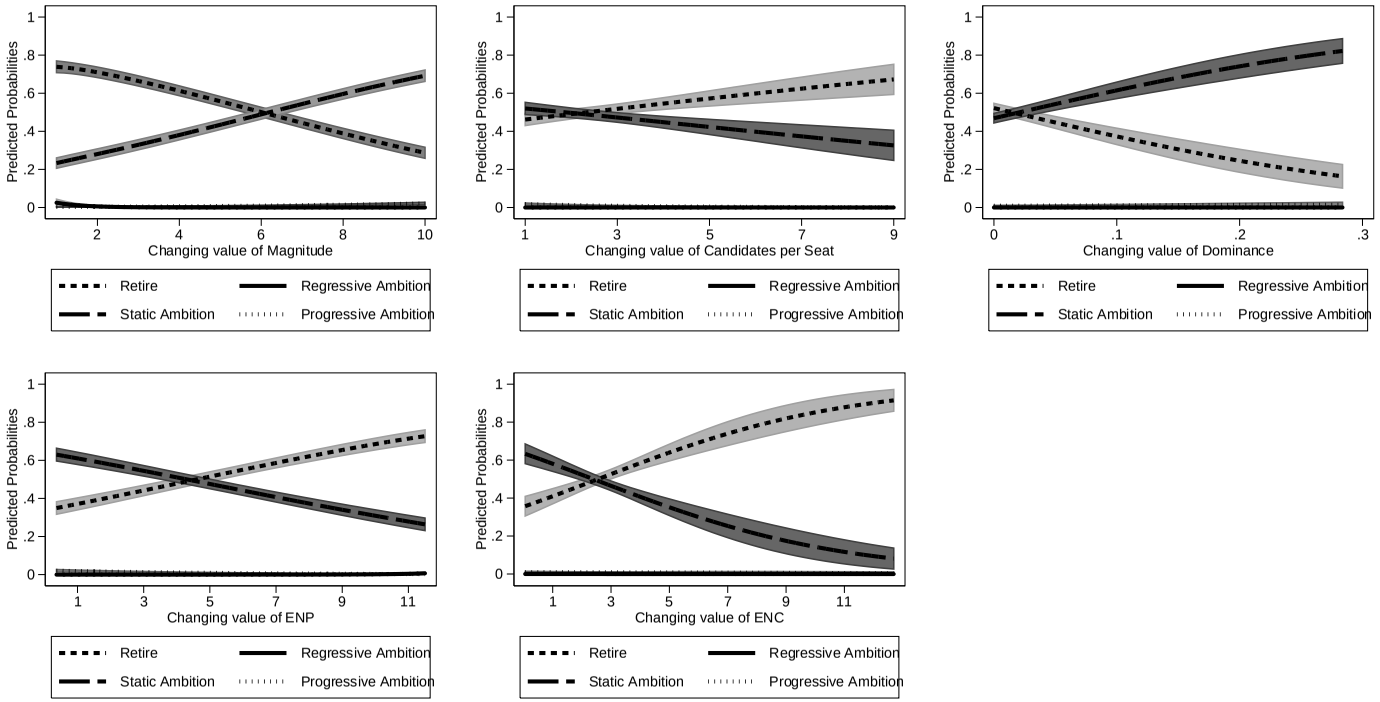

Figure 5.3: *This figure depicts the changes in the predicted probabilities associated with changes in the values taken by the district-level covariates. These probabilities are computed based on the parameter estimates reported in the multinomial logit model shown in table 5.2. The dark lines show the predicted probabilities and the shaded areas represent the 95% confidence intervals about the respective probabilities.*

In turn, the context in which Chilean politicians compete for office impacts in important ways the decisions they make about their careers, as shown in figure 5.3. The overall story that emerges from this figure is that competition levels deters politicians from furthering their careers. Moreover, districts with larger magnitudes—those of the Local Councils—seem to offer a more appropriate setting to develop a career. Overall, district-level factors appear to be unrelated with the decisions to seek higher or lower office, but instead have significant impact over the decision to seek election to the same post or retiring.

The top left panel depicts the effects of district magnitude on the career decisions of politicians. Here , the electoral system needs to be taken into account. District size is fixed at $M = 2$ for the National Congress, and only varies—form 3 to 10—for the elections to the Local Councils. Thus, it can be inferred that the model predicts a probability of seeking reelection to be about 0.27 and the probability of retiring to be about 0.71 for politicians running in congressional elections. Now, for people competing in elections for Local Councils, the graph shows that as the magnitude increases, the probability of static ambition increases up to about 0.69, while the probability of retirement decreases to 0.28. That is, the probability that politicians seek reelection increases and the probability of retirement decreases as magnitude increases. But this only applies to candidates running for Local Councils, as magnitude does not change in congressional elections.

The top middle panel shows the effects of competition on career decisions, as measured by the number of candidates running per seat available in the district. In general, the figure shows that as the district becomes more saturated with candidates, politicians are less inclined to seek their election to the same office as the previous term, and are more inclined to retire. The model predicts the probability

of static ambition to steadily decrease from about 0.52 to about 0.32 as the number of candidates per seat span across its range. Similarly, the predicted probability of retirement increases from about 0.46 to about 0.67.

The top right panel also offers an interesting story about the effect of district dominance and career decisions. The theoretical expectation suggests that candidates try to avoid districts that are dominated by a few candidates because it is more difficult to obtain votes in them—i.e. they are already dominated and their votes captured. The figure here shows that the probability of static ambition increases as dominance increases, which may seem contradictory. However, elections to the Chilean Congress are, by definition, *dominated* as a consequence of the binomial system used. As discussed, the binomial system forces candidates to group in two large coalitions (Magar et al., 1998; Zucco, 2007). Thus, it is not surprising that politicians decide to seek election in the same office as the previous term despite the high levels of dominance because most politicians belong to the coalitions that are already dominating the district. The model estimates that the probability of static ambition increases from .46 to .82 as dominance spans its range. At the same time—an for similar reasons—the predicted probability of retirement decreases steadily from 0.52 to 0.16 over the range of district dominance.

The bottom panels illustrate the effects of electoral competition on career decisions by taking into account the effective number of parties (bottom right) and coalitions (bottom middle). The impact of these variables is rather similar, although more pronounced in the case of the effective number of coalitions. As competition increases, the predicted probability of retirement increases and the predicted probability of static ambition decreases, and both do so markedly. The model estimates that the probability of retirement reaches 0.91 and 0.72 as the effective number of

coalitions and parties reach their maximum values, respectively. Similarly, the model estimates predicted probabilities of static ambition to decrease to 0.08 and 0.26 when the effective number of coalitions and parties reach their maximum observed values, respectively.

5.5 Seniors First. Career Durations in Chile

The previous section explained the extent to which different individual and district-level factors affect the decisions that politicians make about how to continue their careers. However, career duration in itself is a separate dimension worth exploring. In this chapter, I analyze for how those individual and district factors affect the length of political careers in Chile. As explained in chapter 3, I use event history models to analyze the duration of political careers. The details of the model are discussed at length on chapter 3, so I refer the reader to that chapter for a justification and basic description of the model.[8] For the sake of clarity, and at the risk of being repetitive, I will replicate some of the language used to introduce the models in chapter 3.

Event history analysis implies that the subjects are observed as time passes, and that during such time they are at risk of experiencing some event of interest. In this case, the event of interest is the career path. Politicians must decide whether to run again for the same office, run for a higher office, run for a lower office, or quit politics. Notice that politicians make this decision regardless of incumbency status. That is, winning and losing candidates alike use the *current information* they have about themselves and the district to decide which office to seek in the

[8]For a more thorough and complete treatment of these models, the reader may consult Blossfeld et al. (2007), Box-Steffensmeier and Jones (1997, 2004), or Cleves et al. (2004).

following term. For instance, a candidate that lost the bid for office k in t_i might decide to try again to get elected in the same office in t_{i+1}, or that it may be in her best interest to run for a lower office $(k-1)$ in t_{i+1}. In other words, the decision of where to run in the following term is a function of the information available to the individual in the current term:

$$Ambition_{t_{i+1}} = f(P_{t_i}, D_{t_i}),$$

where $Ambition_{t_{i+1}}$ represents the individual's career decision in t_{i+1} and P_{t_i} and D_{t_i} represent the individual's and district factors of the individual at t_i.

Given that these model deal with the *event histories* of the subjects under study, individuals must have a *history* to enter in the data set. That is, individuals need to be observed repeatedly in order to enter in the risk set, otherwise they will be dropped from the analysis. This is actually the case with a large number of the individuals in my data. Of the 26,259 observations in the data, 17,522 only appear once and therefore are not included in the risk set. As a result, there are 8,737 observations of 5,260 unique subjects remaining in the data analyzed.

Now, the ensuing structure of data takes into account the election attempts of winning and losing candidates alike. Electoral defeat is an important component of a political career in Latin America and does not necessarily imply career termination, as is the case in the U.S. (Jones, 1994). Therefore, the individuals that enter in the data are "at risk" of continuing (or terminating) their careers in different ways. They may exhibit regressive, static, or progressive ambitions, or they may leave politics altogether. Because of this, I estimate a competing risks Cox model to take into account the particular ways in which careers are continued. In the competing risks framework, the coefficients are estimated for the type-specific hazards. This

allows comparisons of the effects of the covariates in the different risks. For instance, the risk of seeking higher office may be higher for non-incumbents while the risk of static ambition may be higher for incumbents. Table 5.3 shows the results of the models. The different columns of the table show the estimates for the type-specific hazards: retiring, regressive ambition, static ambition, and progressive ambition.

The coefficients produced by the Cox model provide information about the hazard rate. Thus, positive coefficients imply that the hazard rate increases as the covariate increases, and negative coefficients imply that the hazard rate decreases as the covariate increases. In other words, positive coefficients are associated with shorter survival times while negative coefficients are associated with longer duration times. Cox coefficients express the change in the log hazard that the subject experiences a particular event for a one unit change in the value of the covariate. Coefficients can be exponentiated to be reexpressed in terms that are easier to interpret.

The first column in table 5.3 shows the Cox coefficients for the model in which the risk is defined as retiring from office. Overall, there are 5,260 observations of individuals that retire from politics—i.e. individuals no longer observed in the data. Most of the variables reported in the model are statistically significant. I discuss them briefly here. The model predicts that the hazard rate of retiring decreases by about 5% for each consecutive reelection of an incumbent ($\exp(-0.04) = 0.95$). That is, as seniority increases, the model estimates that the individual is about 5% less likely to retire from office that an incumbent that is one term less senior. Similarly, as the margin of victory increases by one unit, the model estimates that the hazard of retirement decreases by about 20% ($exp(-0.2) = 0.81$). That is, as candidates win their seats more comfortably, they feel lees inclined to retire

Table 5.3: Cox Competing Risks Model of Political Careers in Chile

	Retire	Regressive Ambition	Static Ambition	Progressive Ambition
Individual factors				
Seniority	**–0.04**	0.16	**0.13**	**0.36**
	(0.02)	(0.18)	(0.04)	(0.06)
Vote Margin	**–0.20**	–0.40	**0.28**	**0.32**
	(0.06)	(0.34)	(0.04)	(0.06)
Alianza	0.06	**–1.25**	**–0.20**	**–1.25**
	(0.04)	(0.26)	(0.07)	(0.12)
Concertación	**0.10**	**–1.37**	**–0.25**	**–1.34**
	(0.04)	(0.31)	(0.07)	(0.12)
Incumbent	**–0.38**	**–2.40**	**1.00**	**1.02**
	(0.03)	(0.49)	(0.06)	(0.11)
Female	**0.17**	**–0.58**	**–0.12**	**–0.05**
	(0.04)	(0.23)	(0.06)	(0.11)
District factors				
District Magnitude	**–0.03**	**–1.33**	**0.09**	**0.18**
	(0.01)	(0.09)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Candidates per Seat	**0.09**	**–0.41**	**–0.12**	**–0.33**
	(0.02)	(0.12)	(0.04)	(0.07)
District Dominance	**–0.50**	3.00	–4.65	**6.71**
	(1.66)	(6.82)	(6.95)	(3.23)
N_p (votes)	**0.05**	**0.88**	**–0.12**	**–0.17**
	(0.01)	(0.08)	(0.02)	(0.03)
N_c (votes)	–0.03	**–0.81**	**–0.10**	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.17)	(0.04)	(0.08)
Log likelihood	–41553.8	–1223.2	–20619.9	–5836.0
χ^2	360.1	908.8	903.2	460.5
N	8737 (5260)	8737 (204)	8737 (2522)	8737 (751)

The table reports Cox coefficients with their respective standard errors in parentheses. Coefficients that are statistically significant appear in **boldface**. Each column gives the event-specific estimates. The number of events for each k risk is given in parentheses beside the number of observations included in each of the models.

from office. According to the model, members of *Concertación* are more prone to retire from office. Their hazard rate of retirement is about $exp(0.09) = 1.10$ that of candidates in other coalitions. Being a member of *Alianza* appears to bear no relationship with the hazard of retirement. Additionally, the model estimates that incumbents have smaller hazards of retirement while females have greater ones. These hazards are 32% lower for incumbents ($\exp(-0.38) = 0.68$) than that for nonincumbents, and 19% greater for females $\exp(0.17) = 1.19$ than for males.

In terms of district variables, the model estimates that the hazard of retirement increases by about 3% ($\exp(0.03) = 1.03$) for each additional seat available in a given district. That is, as the magnitude in the district increases, the predicted hazard increases. District magnitude may be acting here as a proxy for electoral competition in the district. As there are more seats available, there are more people going after them. This finding suggests that greater magnitude has a deleterious effect of careerism as people would retire slightly more than in smaller districts. Concomitantly, the hazard of retirement increases as the number of candidates per seat increase. It changes by about 9% for each additional candidate per seat available ($\exp(0.09) = 1.09$). Finally, the model predicts that the hazard of retirement increases slightly as the effective number of parties in the district increases ($\exp(0.05) = 1.05$).

Column 2 of table 5.3 reports the coefficients of the model that defines regressive ambition as the risk experienced by politicians. Only 204 occurrences of individuals seeking election in lower-level office are registered, which additionally shows that Chilean politicians rarely consider running for lower-level office. The model offers statistical support for most of the variables. In terms of individual-level factors, the model estimates that membership in either of the dominant coalitions has a

large impact on the hazard of seeking lower office. These hazards are about 72% ($\exp(-1.25) = 0.28$) and 75% ($\exp(-1.37) = 0.25$) lower for members of *Alianza* and *Concertación*, respectively, than for politicians in other coalitions. Similarly, the predicted hazard of regressive ambition for incumbents and females is lower than it is for nonincumbents and males, respectively. The model estimates the hazard of regressive ambition to be 91% lower for incumbents ($\exp(-2.39) = 0.09$) and 44% lower for females ($\exp(-0.57) = 0.56$).

With regards to district-factors, the model estimates that the hazard of seeking lower office decreases as magnitude increases; the model predicts a drop of about 74% per one-unit increment in magnitude ($\exp(-1.33) = 0.26$). However, magnitude magnitude only varies in the electoral districts of Local Councils. So, magnitude acts as a sort of dummy variable implying that the hazard rate of seeking lower office is greater for politicians running for other posts different than Congress. Now, theoretically, it is not possible for candidates to the councils to seek lower office given that there are not any other posts further down the career ladder. In other words, this result implies that members of congress do not have a high hazard of regressive ambition. In turn, the model estimates that the hazard of seeking election in lower-level office decreases by about 44% as the number of candidates per seat increase by one unit ($\exp(-0.41) = 0.66$). Although, this may seem counterintuitive it really reflects the fact that regressive ambition is not a common career move.

The third column of table 5.3 presents the results of the model estimated with static ambition as the risk. There are 2,522 instances in the data of individuals that attempt to be elected to the same office as the one they attempted in the previous term. With the exception of district dominance, all remaining variables passed the statistical significance threshold ($\alpha = 0.05$). Let us analyze the results

of the individual-level factors. The predicted hazard rate of reelection increases by about 13% with every additional consecutive term served ($\exp(0.12) = 1.13$). That is, as incumbents accrue seniority the likelihood that they attempt to be reelected increases. The model estimates that the hazard of reelection increases by about 30% for each one-unit increment in the margin of victory ($\exp(0.27) = 1.31$), implying that people that win their seats with ample margins feel comfortable enough to seek their reelection. The model estimates that the hazard of reelection decreases by about 19% ($\exp(-0.19) = 0.81$) and 23% ($\exp(-0.25) = 0.77$) for members of the *Alianza* and *Concertación*, respectively. Given that a vast majority of those elected belong in either of these coalitions, this result is not that surprising. It simply suggests that politicians in these coalitions oftentimes do not seek their reelection. In turn, for incumbents, the model predicts that the hazard rate of reelection increases by 172% ($\exp(1.00) = 2.72$) as compared with nonincumbents.

In terms of the district variables, the model estimates that a one-unit increase in the district magnitude is related to a 9% increase in the rate of reelection ($\exp(0.08) = 1.09$). As discussed, this suggests that people in the Local Councils are more keen about staying in office repeatedly. As expected, a one-unit increase in the number of candidates per seat implies a decrease of about 11% in the hazard of reelection ($\exp(-0.11) = 0.89$). As dominance increases by 0.1 units, the model estimates a 38% drop in the hazard of reelection ($\exp(-4.65 \times 0.1) = 0.62$). Likewise, the model estimates that the hazard of reelection decreases as the effective number of coalitions and parties increases by an order of about 10% in each case. The model seems to robustly suggest that increased competition, however measured, reduces the likelihood that a politician runs for the same office as the previous term. This implies that higher levels of competition severely curtails careerism as it is related

with lower hazards of reelection. In the face of stern competition levels, Chilean politicians seem inclined to not seek election in the same post as the previous term.

Finally, the last column of table 5.3 presents the results of the estimation of the model that defines progressive ambition as the risk experienced by individuals. There are in total 751 occurrences of politicians attempting to move to higher office, which are not a great amount. This suggests that seeking higher office is not a common option in the repertoire of the decisions of career politicians in Chile. As can be appreciated in the table, with the exception the effective number of coalitions, all other variables are statistically significant. In terms of the individual factors it is worth pointing out the effects of seniority and incumbency. The model estimates the hazard rate of progressive ambition to increase by about 43% for each additional consecutive term served ($\exp(0.36) = 1.43$). That is, as politicians become more senior, the likelihood that they attempt to move up the career ladder increases substantially. Incumbency, in turn, increases the predicted hazard rate by a whopping 178% ($\exp(1.02) = 2.78$).

The district variables relay a similar story. As competition increases, the predicted hazard of progressive ambition decreases by amounts that range from 17%—for one-unit increases in the effective number of coalitions—to about 29% for a one-unit increase in the number of candidates available. The model also estimates that the hazard of progressive ambition increases by about 95% for each 0.1 unit increment in the district dominance ($\exp(6.70 \times 0.1) = 1.95$). While this seems counterintuitive, the result is not surprising. As mentioned, the binomial electoral system makes the vote in congressional districts to be highly dominated as the two dominant coalitions amass almost all the votes in the district. Thus, increases in the dominance may offer incentives for candidates at the local level to seek higher office.

To complement the results presented so far, figure 5.4 compares the hazard rates for the different career risks faced by politicians. This figure helps to elucidate further the interpretation of the results from the competing risks Cox model. As depicted, all of the hazard rates increase over time, but they do so at different rates. The hazard of regressive ambition appear to increases more than the other hazards.

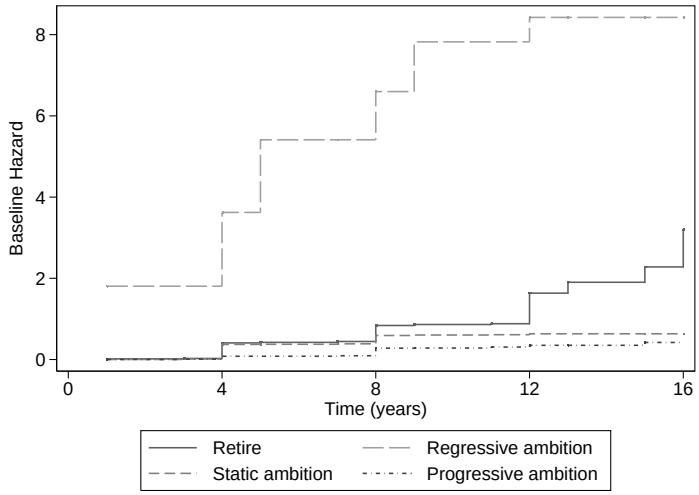

Figure 5.4: *This figure graphs the estimated baseline hazard rates from the Cox competing risks model shown in table 5.3 for the Chilean case. Each of the lines depicts the baseline hazard rate associated with each of the event-specific risks*

In turn, the hazard of retirement tells an interesting story. It starts off very low and it increases slightly after the first and second elections. After the third election, it increases at a higher rate than in the previous occasions and keeps increasing quite rapidly. This suggests that retirement appeared to be an unlikely option for politicians in the first couple of post-authoritarian elections, after which more and more politicians seem to have retired. Of course, this is not surprising given the recent democratic transition in Chile. The longest possible career in Chile has four consecutive terms because there have been four democratic elections since 1989. According to my records, 13 *diputados* have been continuously reelected since 1989.

However, it should be expected that the risk of retirement further increases over the next years.

Finally, the hazards of static and progressive ambition also provide interesting evidence about the shape of political careers in Chile. After the first election, the hazard of reelection increases slightly more rapidly than that of seeking higher office. That is, after an initial attempt, individuals seem more likely to seek election in the same office as before rather than seeking higher office.

5.6 Conclusions

This chapter used data from the Chilean case to analyze career decisions and durations, which are key dimensions of political careers. The analysis offers an interesting picture about the shapes that political careers take on Chile. Both sets of variables—those pertaining to the individuals and those related to the district in which they ran—contribute to elucidate how politicians decide what to do with their careers and the length of careers themselves.

In terms of career decisions, the MNLM reports that the expected probability of progressive ambition increased as duration and the margin of victory increased. The expected probability of seeking reelection increased as district magnitude increased and for incumbents. This suggests that incumbents seek to get reelected but that once they have accumulated several consecutive terms served, they attempt to move up to higher office. Also, all else constant, males had smaller predicted probabilities of retirement. As expected, increased levels of electoral competition—measured with the number of candidates per seat and the effective number of coalitions and parties—had a deleterious effect on the decisions of politicians to continue in politics. As competition increased, the predicted probabilities of retirement soared while

those of static ambition plummeted.

In terms of career durations, the Cox models suggest that increased seniority and incumbency are positively related with longer careers as these variables increase the risks that politicians seek reelection or higher office. At the same time, the predicted risk of retirement is higher for females than it is for males. The effects of the district-level factors are consistent with those of the MNLM in that competition appear to be negatively correlated with career length. The risk of retirement appears to increase as the number of candidates per seat and the effective number of parties increase. Finally, overall as competition increases, the risks of seeking election to the same office or to a higher one decrease.

It can be suggested that Chilean politicians covet higher office and that the "typical" career path that emerges is one in which politicians strive to climb the career ladder spending several terms in each of the steps leading to the top. Thus, political offices in Chile appear to be populated by old *señores*.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion: Political Careers in Latin America

6.1 On Careers and Careerism: What We have Learned

This dissertation began with two questions regarding political careers in Latin America: why do politicians decide to get reelected while others seek election in "higher" or even "lower" offices? And, why are some politicians more successful in having lasting careers? These are important questions derived from ambition theory and theories of legislative behavior. Ultimately, the answers to these questions offer insights about the rational behavior of Latin American politicians and a temporal perspective about the way that politicians shape their careers.

However, the questions about career decisions and durations actually assume that politicians in the region are motivated by the reelection goal. As noted in chapter 1, the extant literature assumes that politicians are "single-minded reelection seekers." But, this is an assumption that needs to be adjusted before it can be used to explain the behavior of politicians in the region. The assumption that politicians desire to be

reelected lies at the core of rational models of legislative behavior because it implies that politicians are interested in remaining in politics over time. It is precisely the desire of politicians to stay in office what allows their behavior to be characterized with rational actor models. Data from the U.S. case fit the theory nicely. Indeed, it is the case that U.S. politicians have a strong drive to stay in the same office for extended periods of time, only to eventually seek higher office.

Career paths in Latin America appear to be more diverse, which is why "reelection" is a strict assumption that does not necessarily hold there. However, varying reelection rates does not imply that politicians in the region are not interested in long term careers. Quite the contrary, the evidence offered here reveals that a vast majority of politicians in Chile and Colombia are interested in continuing their careers term after term. However, they have a wider arrange of options with which to do so, particularly in the Colombian case. In addition to seeking their reelection or election to higher office, politicians also attempt to get elected in lower-level office or other posts such as mayoralties or governorships. Thus, the data presented in previous chapters substantiates the fact that Latin American politicians are interested in having long, sustained political careers. They do so by seeking election in different posts at the national and sub-national levels; in the legislative and executive branches. I believe this to be one of the most important contributions of this dissertation. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with Samuels' idea of "dynamic" ambitions in his study of the Brazilian case (Samuels, 2003). Politicians do want to have careers; the career paths in the region include a wider variety of posts and shorter office tenure.

In addition to the assessment of the extent to which politicians are concerned about their careers, the evidence presented allows for a relatively simple way to rank

order the different political offices available. This is necessary in order to ascertain whether politicians exhibit progressive or regressive ambitions when they decide to seek "unorthodox" elective offices.

The value of each office can be obtained by a comparison of information about holding office that is relatively easy to find. This exercise is based in a straightforward cost-benefit analysis. The costs of attaining office may be quantified by comparing data on campaign expenditures. The benefits of office may be assessed by considering salaries, benefits, and perquisites particular to different offices. And, the probability of winning office can be calculated by looking at competition levels and the average amount of votes required to get into office. While incomplete, consideration of these data makes it possible to generate a hierarchy of elective offices. Such a hierarchy is required to determine precisely how politicians decide to further their careers. Incidentally, both in Chile and Colombia, the most valued offices happened to be seats in the National Congress. But, this does not need so for other cases; Samuels already shows that, in Brazil, governorships are far more valuable than posts in Congress.

Overall, the empirical evidence presented here conformed with the hypotheses formulated in the sense that personal characteristics of the candidates are related with a higher propensity to attempt to be elected in the same office or to higher office. Concomitantly, districts with high levels of electoral competition discourage politicians from furthering their careers. There are differences between political careers in Chile and Colombia, but in general it is the case the strong candidates seek reelection more often—and are more successful—and tough districts are deleterious for careers.

Indeed, the evidence showed that seniority, margin of victory, incumbency, and

membership in dominant parties were all positively related to the decision to seek reelection or to seek election to higher office. Likewise, there was a positive association between being male and seeking reelection or higher office. These are characteristics that describe different traits of individual politicians which help explain their behavior. For instance, senior legislators are expected to either continue serving in their current office or attempt election to a higher one. This kind of evidence suggests that politicians are invested in their careers; serving in office is a good predictor of the career decision that a politician is likely to make. Similarly, candidates that are electorally strong are likely to continue in office. Once politicians have obtained the support of a large number of voters in the district, they are unlikely to retire. Instead, being electorally comfortable encourages politicians to keep their current posts. Politicians appear to take advantage of their strengths in order to prolong their careers.

The evidence also suggested a connection between the decisions made by politicians and the duration of their careers. As mentioned, the duration of a career is related to the decisions made by politicians about the best way fulfill their career goals—*having* a long career being one of the most important. The duration models showed that seniority is related with longer careers in the sense that more experienced legislators are likelier to attempt to be reelected or to seek higher office.

These models also reveal differences between the shapes of careers in Colombia and Chile. In the case of Colombia, seniority is also related with retiring from office or seeking lower office. In the Chilean case, seniority is negatively related with retiring. This shows that Colombian politicians have more dynamic careers in the sense that they also entertain the option of moving to lower office, which is something that does not appear to happen in Chile. Furthermore, senior politicians

in Colombia also consider the possibility of retiring from politics, while this is not the case in Chile. The reason that explains this difference is the age of democracy in both countries. While democracy has been in place in Colombia since the late 1950s, Chile only returned to democracy in the early 1990s. Therefore, the most senior politicians in Chile have only been in office for less than 20 years. Retirement rates in the Chilean Congress ought to increase in the near future, though.

The evidence presented here also conforms to the hypotheses formulated with regards of the negative effects of electoral competition on political careers. Competition takes different forms and, thus, affects careers in different ways. Competition in a district may be tough because the votes in district are dominated by a strong candidate, or the district may be crowded by a high number of candidates or parties disputing the few seats available in the district. The statistical models included measures for several forms of electoral competition. Overall, the data shows that as competition increases—in its different forms, politicians feel less inclined run for the same office or for higher office. Politicians recognize that their chances may not be the best in a district with increased competition, and as a result they seem to prefer seeking lower office.

6.2 The Unobserved Effects of Party Structure

A large component of this dissertation was to produce descriptive inferences about the extent of political careers and careerism in Latin America. Chapters 2 and 3 were mostly devoted to that end. Another important component of this project—chiefly chapters 4 and 5—made inferences about the career decisions made by politicians and the effects of those decisions on the duration of political careers. While not directly measured, the effects of party structures on careers can also be assessed.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to directly observe the effects of party organization in the decision making process of individual politicians because the data employed included only historical records of electoral results. There were no reliable sources of data with which to incorporate measures of party strength or discipline that covered the time frame studied. Nevertheless, the research design used is supposed to tease out the behavioral differences between politicians in the two cases that can be attributed to differences in the party system. Thus, the cases were selected according to a criterion that sought to maximize the difference in terms of party structure.

On the one hand, Colombia has been characterized in the literature as a country whose party system is weak. Parties have little control over the use of the party label, multiple party lists compete against one another and against other parties, and votes are not pooled at the party label. That is, votes for defeated lists are wasted because they do not count towards the party vote; votes for winning lists are also wasted because remaining votes—after all seats have been allocated to it—cannot help other lists complete the necessary quota for a seat.[1] As a result, party leaders have little influence over the behavior of their rank and file members. Party leaders are, therefore, powerless to coordinate how the party votes in Congress or to make decisions about campaign strategies beneficial for the party—such as avoiding that strong candidates face each other on the same district. Individual candidates make campaign decisions about which office to seek and in which district to run.

On the other hand, Chilean parties are recognized as stable and cohesive.[2] Both

[1]This was the scenario before 2003 when the electoral system was profoundly modified with the intention to promote party cohesiveness (Botero and Rodríguez Raga, 2007; Rodríguez Raga and Botero, 2006).

[2]For a critical assessment of the strength of Chilean parties see Altman (2007) or Montes et al. (2000).

electorally and in the legislature, Chilean parties coordinate and coalesce under the two major and ideologically opposite coalitions. Because of the nature of the electoral system, members of the same coalition need to reach agreements before the elections with regards to which candidates are nominated in which districts. Similarly, coalition leaders meet regularly during congressional sessions to plan the strategy of the *bancada* and to define the agenda that they will pursue. Chilean politicians are aware that their careers hinge on the fate of their coalition and are thus admit that their discipline and loyalty responds to a "moral obligation" to support the coalition rather than to the "imminence of explicit sanctions" to those who defect (Carey, 2002, p. 251).

These differences in the ability of party leaders in both countries to influence the behavior of their rank and file members result in differences in the shapes of political careers that emerge from the two cases. Careers in Colombia appear to be more diverse in terms of the options that politicians use to develop them. Given that they do not have to answer to the party, politicians cultivate their careers directly with their constituents. This personal relationship with a group of voters—articulated mainly through the pork barrel—allows Colombian politicians to choose with greater freedom which office to seek. Districts from different offices greatly overlap, so moving back and forth between a House seat and a seat in the State Legislatures does not entail changing the district. Running for the Senate implies a change in district because senators are elected in a single, nation-wide district. However, it has been demonstrated that senators concentrate their votes in their department of origin (Botero, 1998; Crisp and Desposato, 2004). In this sense, Colombian politicians appear to have greater flexibility to respond to changes in competition levels in their districts. As competition gets tougher, Colombian politicians consider moving

to lower office as an attempt to continue in politics and avoid detrimental electoral defeat.

In turn, Chilean politicians appear to be more bounded and restricted in terms of the choices they are able to make with respects to their careers. As a result, their careers seem to be less "dynamic" than those of their Colombian counterparts. As depicted, careers in Chile follow a more "linear" course in which election to the same office over time is the norm. While politicians do seek higher office, this is not a very common career move. Politicians respond to the requirement of party leaders who are the ones which decide the electoral strategy that is most beneficial for the *coalition*. Thus, the party strategy may conflict with the strategies of individual politicians with regards to their career goals. Yet, Chilean politicians understand their duties toward the party and are willing to comply with the directives of the leadership.

Thus, it appears that the different party structures—and different electoral systems—shape how careers are developed. In Colombia, the electoral system offers little incentives for politicians to cultivate the reputation of their parties. Party leaders lack the tools that Chilean party leaders have at their disposal to coordinate the behavior of their members: ideological cohesion, sanctions for defectors, or the conviction of politicians that they have duties toward the party—i.e. any sense of "moral obligation." In turn, the electoral system in Chile encourages politicians to work for the reputation of their party instead of their own personal reputations. Party leaders control access to the party label which gives them authority over rank and file members and allows them to coordinate the electoral strategy of the party. Therefore, party leaders may make decisions with regards to the posts that politicians are allowed to seek or districts in which to run for office.

In either case, with the help of parties or despite the weakness of the party structure, those who enter into politics seem to be motivated to develop a career. Despite their own personal handicaps or the difficulty of electoral competition in their districts, they seem to be ambitious career-seekers and willing to fight for it over the long haul.

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