Incumbency advantage upon removal of single-term limits: Mexican municipal elections

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October 10, 2020

Abstract

En route

1   Introduction

En route

2   Reform, consequences

2014 reform surprising removal of term limits. Adopted in 1934, cornerstone of partisan centralization of power under the PRI. Removed immediate reelection at all levels.

PAN placed removal among its requests, as was standard. Unlike the past, when left and PRI would veto, it was adopted along other changes.

Federal deputies can reelect for up to four consecutive three-year terms, senators for two consecutive six-year terms. Fearing that members of Congress might gain too much independence from party leaders, reformers retained some control: incumbents must be renominated by the same party in whose ticket they originally ran. Elaborate.

Kick-off in the 2021 mid-term election.

At subnational level, reformers left some discretion to state legislatures. State law-makers: either 2-, 3-, or 4-term limits. For municipal officers single- or 2-term limits. Two states only retained single-term limits for municipal presidents, Hidalgo and Veracruz. Unelected municipal officers in Oaxaca's *usos y costumbres* Party clause mandatory. Variable election calendars: incumbents on the ballot progressively.
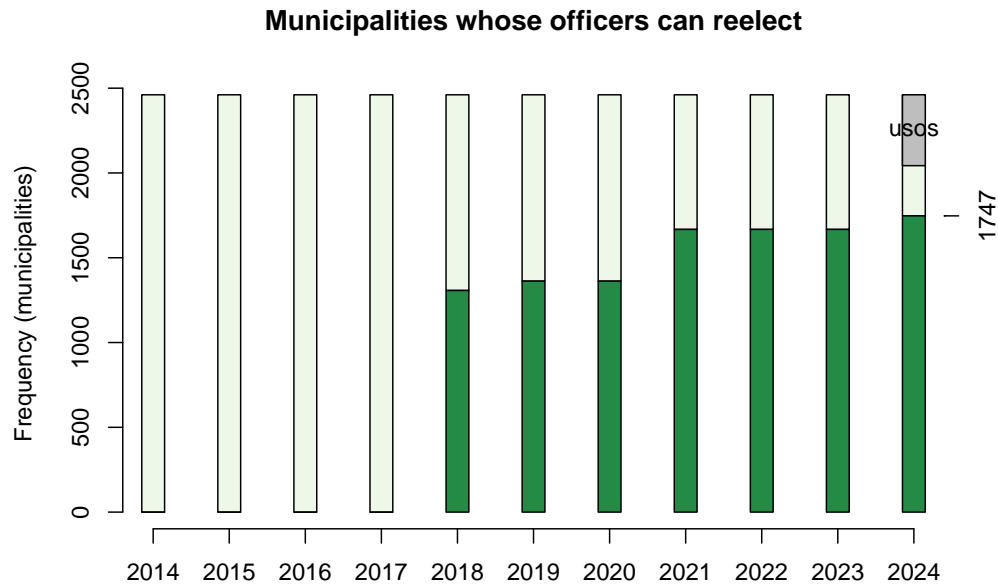
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Members of Congress can be reelected for up to 12 consecutive years. With 3-year terms,

Term limits sever the personalized electoral connection, collective reputation only without the personal element.

See Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina (1987) for argumentation.

Figure 1: Municipalities with extended horizons. Dark green indicates the frequency of municipal governments whose officers can reelect once for another consecutive term. Gray portion corresponds to indigenous municipalities who appoint municipal officers by means other than elections.

Municipalities whose officers can reelect

3 A hypothesis perhaps

Hypothesis 1: Presidents are more likely to fast-track bills when the committee chair with jurisdiction over the bill belongs to the president's party than otherwise.

Table 1: Success and failure with and without incumbent running

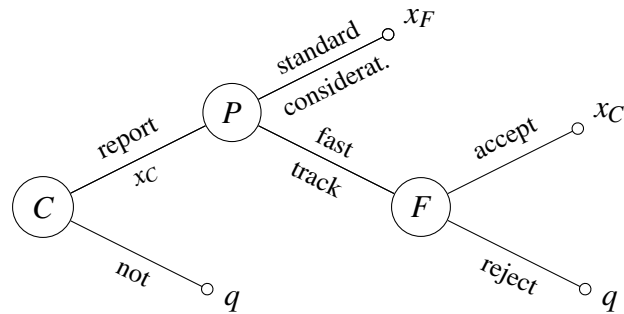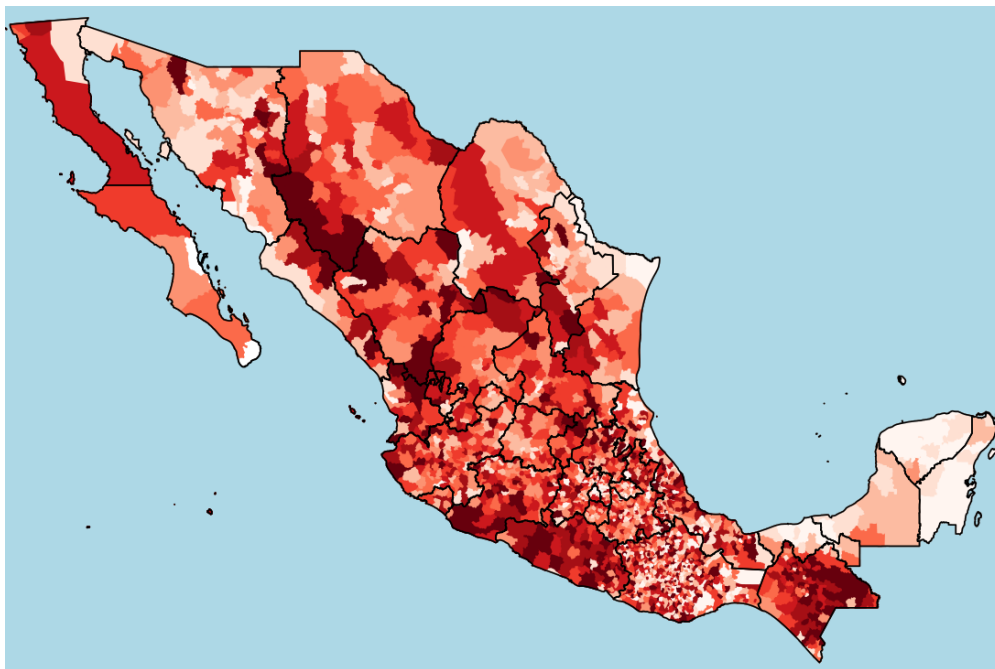| In party	incumbent on the ballot				open seat			
	%won	%lost	sum	(N)	%won	%lost	sum	(N)
PAN	66	34	100	(121)	39	61	100	(1663)
PRI	49	51	100	(219)	50	50	100	(3546)
PRD	55	45	100	(88)	39	61	100	(1082)
Morena	100	0	100	(8)	88	12	100	(18)
Other	45	55	100	(99)	25	75	100	(631)
Total	54	46	100	(535)	44	56	100	(6940)

Figure 2: The president rules game

Figure 3: Population-weigthed altitude deviations in municipalities

4   Incumbents running v. open seats

In party	incumbent on the ballot				open seat, party			
	won	lost	sum	(N)	won	lost	sum	(N)
left	58	42	100	(96)	39	61	100	(1100)

Table 2

	Dependent variable:		
	Residual		
	PAN	PRI	Left
	(1)	(2)	(3)
vote share (lagged)	−0.187***	−0.035***	−0.339***
	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.013)
party incumbent	0.224***	0.171***	0.165***
	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.018)
other-party incumbent	−0.021**	−0.011	0.005
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.010)
party open seat	0.162***	0.124***	0.130***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)
governor	−0.009*	0.028***	0.008
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.006)
population (10k)	0.002	0.002**	0.006***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
elevation (pop. weigthed)	−0.003	−0.00005	−0.031***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
sd.elev	−0.143***	−0.038	−0.080**
	(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.035)
post reform	0.085***	−0.156***	0.047***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)
elev x sd.elev	0.105***	−0.017	0.085***
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.025)
Intercept	−0.041***	−0.036***	−0.062***
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.004)
Observations	8,314	8,314	8,314
R^2	0.213	0.293	0.183
Residual Std. Error (df = 8303)	0.163	0.152	0.169
F Statistic (df = 10; 8303)	225.2***	344.3***	185.6***

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

5 Regression model

6 Discussion

Acknowledgements

References

Cain, Bruce E., John A. Ferejohn and Morris P. Fiorina. 1987. *The personal vote: constituency service and electoral independence*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.