

Gubernatorial Coattails in Mexican Congressional Elections

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Mexican congressional elections 1979–2009 are examined to determine if gubernatorial candidates have coattails helping candidates on the same ticket get elected to higher office and how the advent of democracy changed this. Analysis distinguishes rates at which gubernatorial votes transfer to congressional races from vote thresholds that gubernatorial candidates must exceed to help, rather than hinder, copartisans. Regression estimates reveal that state parties transferred, on average, 49% of their gubernatorial success to congressional candidates in a concurrent race since 1979 and 69% since 1997. Thresholds indicate that it is easier for the PAN and the left to gain from coattails than the PRI, but the difference shrunk with democracy. Presidential coattails, examined for reference, are shorter on average than gubernatorial ones. So local forces appear to move Mexican congressional campaigns and elections as much as national forces since at least 1979, raising questions about the relevance of federalism in developing nations.

Voting scholars have paid considerable attention to presidential coattail effects on congressional elections.¹ The term refers to the notion that the winner of the presidential race pulls fellow partisans to victory, as if grabbing his overcoat. Although the mechanism at work is still debated, there is evidence that the president's party wins systematically fewer votes in midterm elections in the United States (Jacobson 1997), Brazil, Chile, and El Salvador (Jones 1995); that early-term elections produce a milder slump in the president's party assembly seat share than late-term elections in ten countries, including Colombia, France, and the Philippines (Shugart 1995); and that party performance in congressional races in Mexico tends to reflect the electoral fortunes of presidential candidates in concurrent elections (Segovia 1979).

It is conceivable that a good gubernatorial candidate exerts a similar effect on copartisans running concurrently for the state's federal deputy seats. If so, an effect would be felt between offices that are formally not juxtaposed—neither hierarchically nor transactually—in systems that are both presidential and federal. Jones (1997) and Samuels (2000) have, in fact, detected such effect in Argentina and Brazil. Analysis reveals gubernatorial coattails to congressional candidates in Mexico as big as presidential coattails.

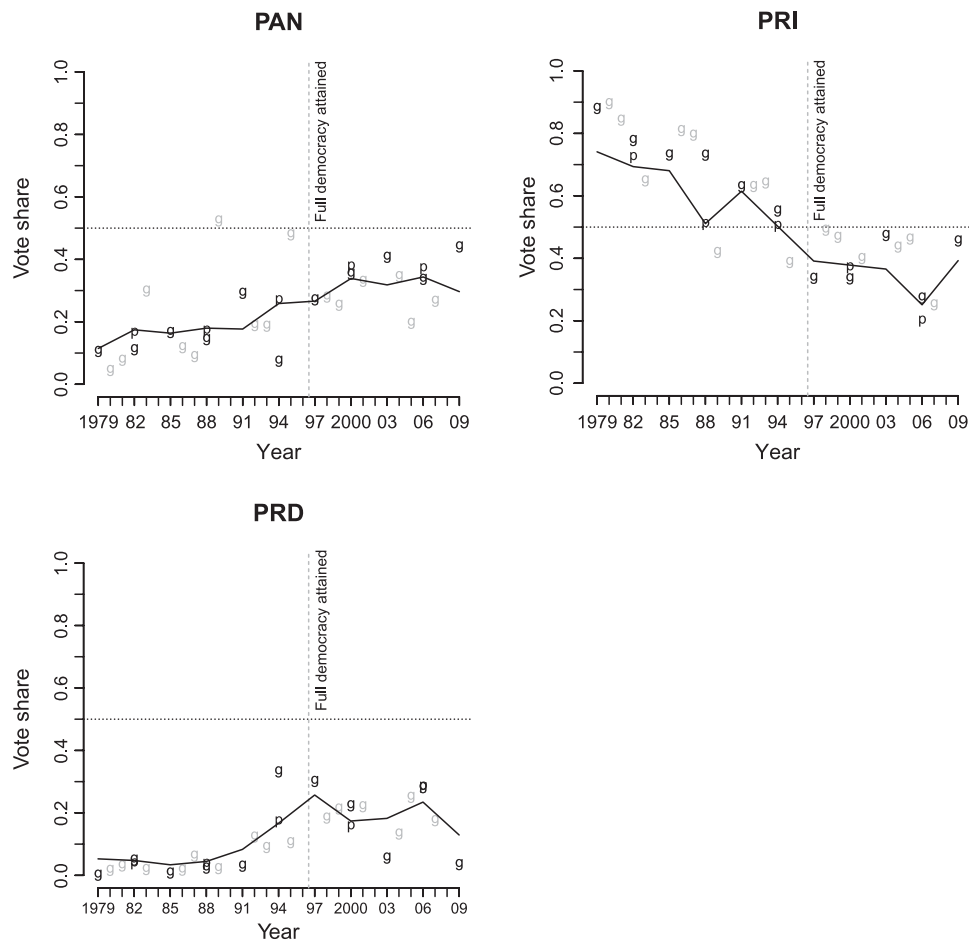
While they rose by 40% with democratization in 1997, they are substantial since 1979 at least.

Inspecting three decades of election returns makes the finding surprising. Figure 1 shows the vote share won by the formerly hegemonic Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the right-of-center National Action Party (PAN), and the left-of-center Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) in federal deputy, presidential, and gubernatorial elections. Close correspondence between presidential and deputy vote shares herald strong presidential coattails in congressional elections throughout the period. Gubernatorial yearly aggregate vote shares, however, follow the lines less neatly. Larger gaps strike the eye in both off years and, of direct relevance, federal election years. There are differences in time and across parties but, in general, lesser correspondence with deputy returns suggests weaker, or even nonexistent, gubernatorial coattails in congressional races. The article shows that relying on more disaggregated evidence exposes a very different story.

The argument starts by briefly discussing the voting model underlying coattail effects in congressional elections and how to measure party support for the Mexican case. On these foundations a regression model of presidential and gubernatorial coattail effects is built, estimating it with federal deputy election data

¹An online appendix with supplementary material is available at www.journals.cambridge.org/jop. Data and code to reproduce the numerical results in R (www.R-project.org) are available at <http://allman.rhon.itam.mx/~emagar> since August 2011.

FIGURE 1 Major Parties' Annual Vote Aggregates 1979–2009



Note: Lines connect parties' national vote shares in triennial federal deputy elections. Letters p and g indicate, respectively, the vote shares won nationwide in presidential and gubernatorial elections during each year. The darker letters indicate federal election years. Prepared with data described in footnote 4.

in the 1979–2009 and 1997–2009 periods for the three major parties. Simulations elucidate estimates next, distinguishing the rate of executive vote transfer to concurrent congressional races from voting thresholds that executive candidates must exceed in order to help, rather than hurt copartisans running for Congress. This dual standard to gauge coattails exposes similarities, but also sharp differences between the major parties. A discussion of the relevance of the findings for the comparative study of electoral systems, party system nationalization, and federalism is offered last.

Long- and Short-term Effects in Elections

The coattail perspective assumes that the outcome of any election is the product of long- and short-term

forces (Converse 1966). Long-term forces are encapsulated in voters' party identification. Decades of National Election Studies panel surveys in the United States confirm that party ID is a remarkably stable individual trait, analogous to religion. Ensuing research has shown that the attachment may increase or decrease over time, based on retrospective evaluations of government performance (Fiorina 1981). Key for the present argument, party ID is the best single predictor of how the citizen will vote in a given election. It follows that it is the distribution of party IDs in a district that determines parties' long-term strength when votes are pooled. This is the notion of a district's "normal vote."

Short-term forces are phenomena such as a candidate of exceptionally good (or bad) quality or the excellent (or dismal) performance of the incumbent party. They affect a party's vote in a given year

positively or negatively, but ultimately vanish, reverting the locality back to its normal vote. Presidential coattails belong in the category of short-term forces: a relatively good candidate for national executive office incites many voters to also support congressional candidates on the same ticket. Short-term forces are mediated to a large extent by party organization. All else constant, stronger machines have an advantage in getting out the constituency vote. But pulling this muscle requires considerable energy and resources, which political agents will expend only when reasonable returns are expected (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). When conditions are met, local organizations affect relative mobilization efforts, with turnout effects. The primary question this article wishes to answer is whether or not the appeal of a good candidate for executive office at the *state* level, who activates local party organizations, should be included among short-term electoral forces.

Sea change in relative party support at all levels in Mexico (see next segment) hint that partisan attachments over the last decades depart from the assumption of stability. Even so, the notion of normal vote should remain unaffected—what is crucial for the coattails argument is that party ID predicts voting at the individual level quite accurately, as abundant survey evidence in Mexico confirms (Moreno 2009). Analysis nonetheless relies on alternative model specifications to verify that the findings are not driven by a volatile party system.

From a historical perspective, presidential coattails in the United States seem to have progressively weakened (Campbell 1991; Ferejohn and Calvert 1984). By the mid-1980s, the district congressional vote premium was estimated at around one-third of the presidential vote. In other words, three more percentage points in the vote for president in a district translated into one extra point for his party's House candidate. But 50 years before, coattail estimates reached about half the presidential vote; and they were in the neighborhood of nine-tenths at the end of the nineteenth century. The substantial drop has spurred interest in its likely causes.

Regarding gubernatorial coattails, no record of direct estimations in the United States were found,² although Boyd (1986), Cox and Munger (1989), and Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) investigate effects on mobilization. Studies find that toss-up gubernatorial

elections increase turnout in concurrent congressional races—chasing crucial voters for such governor races spills over to other campaigns. And Ames uncovers similar “reverse” coattail effects of Brazilian mayors in the 1989 presidential race. Presidential candidates earned a systematic and significant vote premium in municipalities controlled by their party or one endorsing them. Local party organization became the mobilization vehicle aimed at “supralocal contests” (1994, 95).

But Jones (1997) and Samuels (2000) made direct estimations for Argentina and Brazil, respectively, measuring coattails in a different unit—the effective number of competitors instead of a vote premium. Both studies find that gubernatorial elections that concur with (in Argentina) or are closer to (in Brazil³) congressional elections have a reductive effect on the number of legislative parties. This suggests that parties' congressional vote shares tend to mirror the gubernatorial, despite sizeable differences in district magnitude.

For Mexico, Magar (2004) is a precursor of this article using 1979–2003 data; and Valdés (2009) is a result-confirming replication with data more disaggregated for midterms since 1997 in selected states. Some survey evidence hints to the existence of gubernatorial coattails. Becerra (2002) finds that respondents' incumbent governor thermometer scales in the state of Morelos correlate with presidential vote intentions in 2000. And Estrada (n.d.) that ticket-splitters in six states electing governor concurrent with the 2003 midterm were significantly younger, more educated, urban, and with higher income. This profile dovetails well the expectation that it should be the somewhat less “sophisticated” portion of the electorate that behaves in coattail fashion (cf. Campbell 1991). All this is suggestive that coattails from lower to higher office in concurrent elections may be present in Mexico as well.

Mexico is a splendid laboratory to study coattails. Midterm elections measure party performance without the potential effect of a concurrent presidential race. Election calendars vary considerably from state to state. Some elect governors when the nation votes for a president every six years; others do it at the midterm; and the majority does neither, electing governors in perfect disconnect with the federal calendar. Table 1 summarizes deputy vis-à-vis presidential and gubernatorial election timing in two periods

²Burns' (1999) study of five U.S. states found no significant gubernatorial coattail effects on senate elections. Failure to include states with non-concurrent congressional elections complicates coattails detection, as will be seen.

³Since 1994, all Brazilian first round gubernatorial elections concur with national congressional elections. Samuels (2000, 97) pools together electoral data for the 1945–64 and 1989–98 periods, therefore allowing to control for proximity à la Shugart. See Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006, 79) for a critique.

TABLE 1 Concurrency of Congressional, Presidential, and Gubernatorial Elections in Mexican States

		Congressional Race Concurrent with Presidential		Total
		No	Yes	
A. 1979–2009				
Congressional Race Concurrent with Gubernatorial	No	153 (80%)	150 (94%)	303 (86%)
	Yes	39 (20%)	10 (6%)	49 (14%)
	Total	192 (100%)	160 (100%)	352 (100%)
B. 1997–2009				
Congressional Race Concurrent with Gubernatorial	No	77 (80%)	57 (89%)	134 (84%)
	Yes	19 (20%)	7 (11%)	26 (16%)
	Total	96 (100%)	64 (100%)	160 (100%)

Note: Entries report the number of states with congressional races in each category. Eleven congressional elections in thirty-two states took place in the full period, for a grand total of 352 observations; and five in the same states since 1997, for a total of 160 races.

analyzed separately. If few gubernatorial concur with a presidential (only 10 did in the period, most since 2000), a governor elected concurrently with federal deputies but not a president is more common. This provides empirical leverage to estimate gubernatorial coattails while removing the presidential effect. Pooling four concurrence regimes data offers advantages, shown below, over analysis of some or all regimes separately. And Mexico's ban on immediate reelection makes it likelier that coattails flow from executive to congressional votes, not the other way round. Establishing whether the phenomena we observe are top-down or bottom-up coattails is thorny in the literature. Recent evidence points to a bottom-up relation. Single-term limits bring about relatively less recognizable candidates systematically and press parties to focus resources on the more prominent campaigns for executive office nationally and in each state, inducing congressional candidates to mimic slogans and messages from the better-funded campaigns (Estrada, n.d., 2). And gubernatorial campaigns are indeed better funded. In fiscal year 2003, when the midterm was held, national parties channeled about one-third of their generous public subsidies to state party chapters, money flowing systematically to more competitive states and, especially, to those with a concurrent gubernatorial race (Poiré, n.d.). Subnational influence in national policy is also well documented. Federal deputy state cohort behavior conforms to governor's preferences over fiscal matters (Langston 2010) and in roll calls more generally (Rosas and Langston 2011). As the PRI had to rely increasingly on opposition votes in Congress, non-PRI governors secured systematically larger increases in federal transfers in the annual budget than the rest (Díaz Cayeros 2006; Flamand 2006).

The present work also has limitations. A district-level analysis, instead of state-level, would give finer-grained estimations of coattails. But gubernatorial returns are not reported at federal district level and must therefore be reconstructed—at considerable cost. Matching municipal-level reports of both races does the trick partially, because large-city municipalities include several districts that need disaggregation. The municipality as unit was discarded because federal data is reported at that level only since 1997, and analysis since 1979 was sought. So was the section (a unit above the precinct but below the district) because many gubernatorial reports at that level are unavailable. In defense of the choice of a state-level analysis, Morgenstern (n.d.) has evidence that, despite significant variance in vote swings, there is a greater deal of similarity in same-state districts. This is probably why Valdés' (2009) findings with municipalities in a sample of states and years covered here are in line with those reported below. Coattail effects estimates are sizeable with both methods.

And the upper chamber is ignored despite representing states, just like governors. Gubernatorial coattails are likely determinants of senate votes: about half of PRI candidates for governor since 1989 have been former or sitting senators, and a bit shy of a quarter for other major parties (Langston n.d.). But five of seven senate races in the period coincided with a presidential, precluding separation of gubernatorial and presidential effects on a state's senate vote. And the remaining midterms of 1991 and 1997 are hardly comparable, since the latter also elected a list of 32 newly created national PR-senators. Congressional here therefore refers to deputies only, mirroring a bias in U.S. studies.

Mexican Congressional Elections

The dependent variable is the vote share that major parties won in each of Mexico's 31 states, plus the Federal District, in congressional elections since 1979.⁴ The time span allows inspection of coattails since back when the PRI's hegemony was robust. Figure 2 describes deputy elections at the state level over 11 triennia. Except in 1997, 2003, and 2009 the PAN's median congressional election return rose throughout the period. The PAN's interquartile ranges (the heavier lines), however, have remained fairly constant, a sign that the party has managed to grow nationwide. The PAN has won a majority of a state's congressional vote twice, in 2000 and 2006. These cases mark the T-edged top of the whisker.

Likewise, the PRD had increasing median returns, but only up to 1997. That year's midterm saw the best performance by the left in congressional races so far; it also won Mexico City's mayorship in the concurrent election. Except in 2006, when it was defeated narrowly in the presidential race, the PRD's interelection median return dropped afterwards. But what makes the PRD quite different from the PAN are increasingly mixed results in congressional elections, notable in the growing spread of its heavy lines and lighter whiskers. In fact, at the end of the larger whisker is a group of seven states only where the PRD has its best showings more or less regularly (it has governed five of them). The left has encountered more formidable obstacles to homogeneous growth across the federation than the right.

Because elections are zero-sum, the big loser in recent decades is the former ruling party. The 1979 midterm was, in fact, the last congressional election in which the PRI won an outright majority in each and every state, something it achieved routinely before. Its median return went from more than 75% that year, to around 40% in 1997—the first time the median fell below majority—where it has tended to remain. The push of the erstwhile “opposition parties” has been felt even in southern strong-

⁴Votes for write-in candidates (*no registrados*) and invalid votes (*votos nullos*) were subtracted from denominator to obtain vote shares. Left party labels were simplified, calling PRD (a label not appearing until 1989) the communists in 1979 and two socialists, PSUM in 1982 and 1985 and PMS in 1988. Since all parties in the previous sentence have, in fact, held the same official registration with the election authority, changing labels only, this simplification is not too unjust. Federal election returns are from Varela (2004) before 1991 and from IFE (2009) afterwards; state elections were downloaded from state election authorities' web pages by the author, completing missing data from Gómez (1991) and Valdés (2001).

holds where PRI used to command nearly 100% of the congressional vote until the mid-1980s. It now stands slightly above 50% in those states. The challenge began in a handful of states only, pulling bottom whiskers down, but as of 1991 it was national. In 2006, when its presidential candidate came third, the PRI managed to not win a majority of federal deputy votes in a single state.

The online appendix elaborates the method used to deal with recent, but frequent electoral coalitions. They are problematic for analysis because the coalition vote is reported jointly. Members' votes were apportioned by observing their relative weights in the last election the parties ran separately. To control for measurement error associated with this imperfect, but necessary imputation procedure, a dummy is included below.

A Model of Coattails

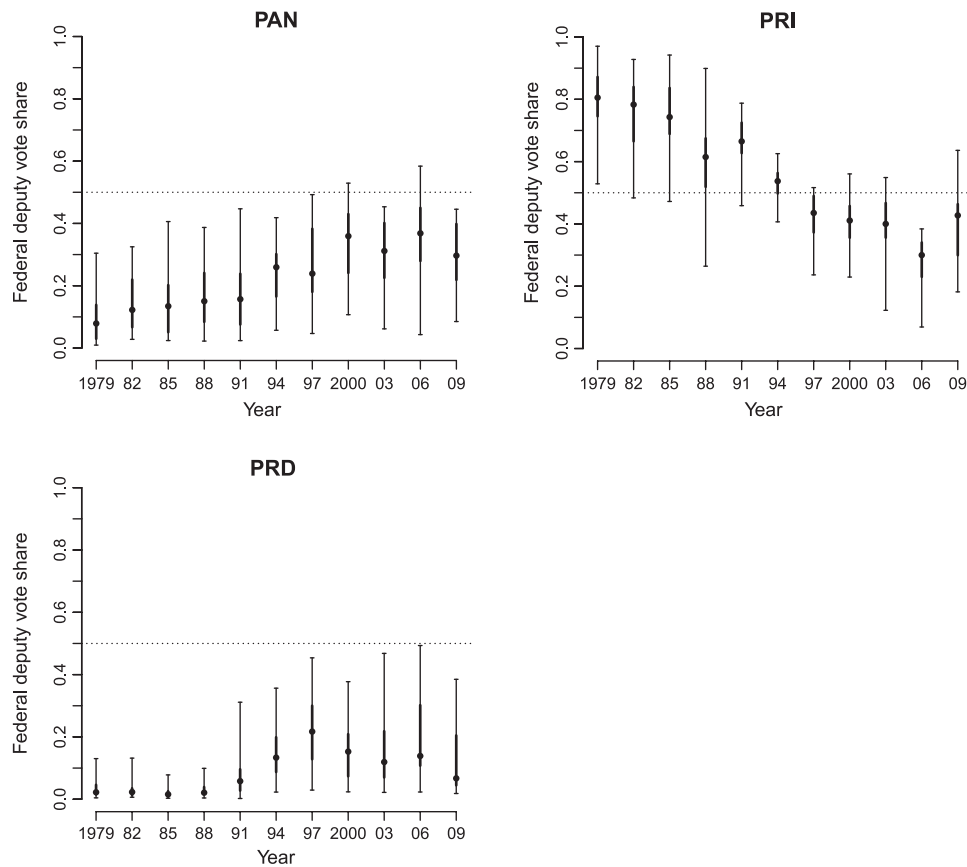
“If the presidential and congressional vote do not vary together, then meaningful coattail effects, however interpreted, do not exist”—Jacobson (1997, 129)

Estimating short-term coattails requires controlling for long-term effects first. The standard way of separating the party's normal vote in U.S. studies is by including the running average of its vote share in the constituency in a given number of previous elections (Campbell 1991 uses one previous election; Ferejohn and Calvert 1984 use three) among explanatory variables. Everything returns to normality once the effect of short-term forces vanishes, and normality is captured by this average vote.

The model estimates how much a party's fate in congressional elections is associated to that of its presidential and gubernatorial candidates in concurrent elections.⁵ This is done with linear regression

⁵One issue of substance is Mexico's multiparty system, which may render the notion of coattails different from the standard U.S. version. Coattails in two-party systems are defined as how much the margin of the winning candidate for executive office translates into additional votes and seats for his/her party in Congress. Coattails here are measures of the impact of the winner and the two losing candidates for executive office on their parties' in congressional races. In two-party systems someone's win is the other's loss; in a three-party system, someone's win it may take from one, the other, or both of the remainder parties. Estimating the model for each party separately, regardless of whether it won or lost, as Ferejohn and Calvert do for the United States, still works. Over-/underperformance in the executive race should translate into over-/underperformance in the deputy race. Coattail thresholds, discussed at length below, determine the borderline.

FIGURE 2 The Evolution of Congressional Voting in 32 States (the dependent variable)



Note: Each year reports, by party, the median state share of federal deputy votes (circles), the interquartile range (heavy lines), and the minimum to maximum range (light, T-ended lines).

on state-level observations. In the left side of the equation is *Dvote*, the vote share for federal deputies; separate equations are fitted for each major party. In the right side are measures of short- and long-term vote determinants, plus a constant and error term. The online appendix has descriptive statistics of the variables.

First appears *RecentDvote*, the average vote the party received in the last three federal deputy elections in the state, the indicator controlling for long-term forces in the state vote. To the extent that parties build territorial machines and remain strong where they were strong, it should get a positive and large coefficient estimate.

Next come indicators to capture the effect, if any, of voters' preferences for presidential and gubernatorial candidates on the concurrent congressional vote, the substantive interest. They include three dummies, *GovOnlyConcurs*, *PresOnlyConcurs*, and *Gov&PresConcur* taking value 1 when the deputy race concurred only with a gubernatorial, only with

a presidential, or with both races, respectively. The dummies match the cells in Table 1, estimating different intercepts for four concurrence regimes. The omitted regime, nonconcurrence, is the baseline against which intercept shifts are compared, the basis of coattail thresholds discussed below. It is then assumed, as Ferejohn and Calvert (1984) do, that a party's coattail effects are proportional to its strength in the concurrent executive election. Therefore, the party's gubernatorial and presidential state vote shares enter the right side of the equation in years when those races concurred with the congressional. Following Chubb (1988, 135), the gubernatorial vote share enters the equation in two alternative conditions. One, *Gvote|GovOnlyConcurs*, is for gubernatorial races concurrent with the congressional but not a presidential; the other, *Gvote|Gov&PresConcurs*, is for gubernatorial races concurrent with both. In years when the concurrence regime is unmet, either or both adopt a value of 0, indicating the absence of

a gubernatorial effect.⁶ Since separating both short-term forces when they operate simultaneously is difficult, the purpose of this duality is obtaining a separate estimate of gubernatorial effects when the presidential vote is not an intervening factor. Fortunately, Mexico's complex electoral calendar provides instances when the gubernatorial effect occurs without the presidential. Variables *Pvote|PresOnlyConcurs* and *Pvote|Gov&PresConcur* measure presidential effects likewise. To avoid confusing the absence of coattails that arises when executive offices are not at stake with the weakness of coattails that occur when mediocre executive candidates head the ticket, the dummies described at the top of this paragraph are included. If coattails are present, conditional variables should all have positive coefficients, their size (net of the coefficient of the appropriate dummy) indicating the magnitude of this effect.

Because they share the same origin—the state's voters—concurrent gubernatorial and presidential vote shares are highly correlated. Even so, the threat of multicollinearity is diminished by the fact that both executive races also concurred with a congressional election seven times since 1997, ten since 1979, few compared to the total observations (Table 1). The online appendix verifies that results are not driven by multicollinearity.

Electoral concurrence is construed here as a series of dichotomous categorizations—the congressional race concurs or not with a presidential, with a gubernatorial, or with both. But Shugart (1995, 329) has argued that the nonconcurrence category has, in fact, an element of continuous variation left aside by this approach: how much time has lapsed between elections for different offices. A nonconcurrent, but nonetheless relatively recent race for executive office might exert a diluted influence on a congressional race. The logic of delayed coattails is not fully clear: it is just as possible that, a few months into her term, a new governor is so unpopular that her endorsement diminishes the fortunes of her party's congressional candidates. So the question remains an empirical one. Controlling this delayed effect is unnecessary for the case of Mexican presidential coattails, since the lapse is either three years in midterms or zero years in presidential years—so the dichotomy suffices. But

adding a continuous timing measure for gubernatorial coattails, since governor races take place all along a six-year presidential cycle, would be of interest. This refinement was not undertaken due to missing returns for some nonconcurrent governor elections. In defense of the dichotomous version, it can be argued that, if the delayed effect in fact exists, then the absence of the timing control plays against detecting gubernatorial coattails, not in its favor.⁷

Two more dummies measure whether or not the party controls the state (*IncumbentGovernor*) or national (*IncumbentPresident*) executive. These are intended to capture a likely advantage that parties with an incumbent executive may have against challengers—echoing reports of governors as key players in the state's congressional campaigns, funneling money and campaign resources from state government offices (Langston n.d.; Poiré n.d.).

Also included in the right side is one indicator of another short-term force, the recent performance of the economy. Although the question of attribution for economic performance is a matter of debate, the pocket-book vote has been an attractive factor of retrospective judgement of incumbents in many voting models since Downs (1957). I follow the literature and include *Economy* in the right side of the equation. This regressor is the rate of growth in a state's economy in recent years, multiplied by +1 in case the party in question controls the governorship (state economic growth should favor of the governor's party) and by -1 in case the party does not control the governorship (when growth should disfavor it). The growth rate is the average annual change of the Gross State Product for the three years anteceding the congressional election.⁸ If the retrospective voting model holds, and governors are held accountable, this specification of *Economy* should obtain a positive coefficient for all parties.

One last dummy completes the main model. *PartyCoalesced* adopts a value of 1 for congressional elections where the party being analyzed ran in alliance with another party in the state, imputing votes as discussed above. It is intended to capture some of

⁷Consider a gubernatorial landslide only nine months before the midterm. Following Shugart, this boosts the party's performance in that midterm. My specification assumes that this effect is nil, overlooking the delayed portion in my estimate of gubernatorial coattails.

⁸*Economy* contains a good deal of measurement error because two different series had to be used: Alvarez (1981) and INEGI (using the latter's methodology; I thank Federico Estévez for sharing this series) provide figures for 1976–1993; INEGI (2005) for 1993–2002. The figure for 1993 is different in each, but its presence in both made it possible to consolidate the series into one of first-differences (growth) for the full period.

⁶This portion of the right side is identical to equation (7) in Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006, 69). Including the constitutive term *Gvote*, as is standard in conditional interactions, is unfeasible because perfect multicollinearity ensues: $Gvote|GovOnlyConcurs \cup Gvote|Gov\&PresConcur = Gvote$. The term *Gvote|NoConcurrence*, on the other hand, is unobserved. The online appendix elaborates.

the measurement error resulting from the imperfect method to disaggregate coalition votes into partisan components. If other estimates are unaffected by adding this control, we can be more confident that results are not an artifact of the imputation technique.

Alternative model specifications. Models 1 and 2 estimate the main specification with data spanning the 1997–2009 and 1979–2009 periods, respectively. They make assessment of continuity and change in Mexican elections possible by contrasting systematic effects in the long run to those when the party system has more or less stabilized, the counting of the votes has become more transparent, and the playing field is more level. Model 3 drops controls for gubernatorial effects in order to estimate presidential coattails alone in the long haul, an extension of model 2 in the spirit of Ferejohn and Calvert (1984). Since the literature seems to offer no measure of presidential coattails in Mexican congressional elections, it provides a baseline to evaluate the estimation in tandem with gubernatorial coattails.⁹

For a party system as changing as Mexico's—especially in the full 1979–2009 period—a sceptic will no doubt question the appropriateness of the return-to-the-mean approach, which presupposes a good deal of party system stability. Although the effect of continuous drop (PRI), steady surge (PAN), and volatility (PRD) in vote shares, seen in Figure 2, ought to be captured by the constant term, one last specification is estimated to check the robustness of long-term results. Model 4 offers an alternative method of controlling the normal vote, with explicit focus on *change*, similar to Magar (2004). Instead of relying on the recent vote averages, the recent trend of change is obtained by regressing the party's vote share in the five previous congressional races on a linear time variable, then using it to forecast the present vote share. So to obtain a party's forecast for year y , the equation $VoteShare_t = \gamma_0 + \gamma Year_t$ is fitted, with $t \in [y - 3, y - 6, y - 9, y - 12, y - 15]$ —the last five triennial congressional elections—and $Year_t$ indicating the years of those elections. The dependent variable in model 4 is the residual for year y , the difference between the observed share in y and the five-year linear trend forecast. A positive residual indicates a party that overperformed based on recent expectations; negative residuals indicate underperformance.

⁹Software to simulate federal deputy returns by Márquez and Aparicio (2010) offers a crude approximation. A counterfactual 2006 race where each party, in turn, is awarded a 10% raise in the presidential vote it received (with losses applied proportionally to all other parties) gives the PAN a 7% bonus in its federal deputy vote, 11% to the PRI, and 16% to the PRD. I thank the authors for computing these quantities.

Residuals for presidential and gubernatorial races are computed likewise, using three sexennial elections instead of five triennial. If coattail effects are present, overperforming in a state executive race will be associated with overperformance in that state's concurrent congressional race as well. This measure is less intuitive than vote shares, but may be more adequate for a mutable party system.¹⁰

Results of OLS estimation with panel-corrected standard errors (Beck and Katz 1995) appear in Table 2. The estimation for the democratic years includes 160 observations (32 states multiplied by five congressional elections); those for the full period include 352 observations (11 elections). All models explain a high portion of the variance in the dependent variable, as evidenced by determination coefficients: PAN's are above .80 determination for share models; PRI's above .76; PRD's above .67. Not too surprisingly, a fair portion of this high value is attributable to *RecentDvote* by itself, but not all: fitting model 1 dropping this variable reduces R^2 coefficients to .69 for the PAN, .68 for the PRI, and .58 for the PRD. Other variables contribute importantly to the explanation. The estimated effect of this explanatory variable, the standard measure of parties' normal vote, performs much as expected. All estimates for *RecentDvote* are large—in general, much larger than coefficient estimates obtained for the other independent variables. The PAN's, at .586, is largest: in the 1997–2009 period, it tended to do well where it had done well, and do bad where it had done bad (a coefficient of value 1 would indicate identical state vote shares in subsequent elections). The .418 estimate for the PRI, and .475 for the PRD, are also good signs that the standard normal vote control is appropriate. All are larger in the full period, evidence that inter-election swings grew with the advent of democracy.

More important is the statistical evidence of coattails, supporting the claim that both the presidential and the gubernatorial are sizeable. The estimate for $Pvote|PresOnlyConcurs$, in the case of the

¹⁰Alternative model specifications, controlling other factors putatively affecting the congressional vote, were attempted (some are reported in the online appendix). None significantly changed the results reported below. Among them was a fixed-state-effects version adopting a skeptic's perspective that there is nothing really systematic about congressional elections, and all the action is attributable to state idiosyncrasies. Coattail estimates were fundamentally unaffected in size and significance. Ferejohn and Calvert's (1984) direct estimation of coattails, an alternative and interesting method, offers a meager panorama since it analyzes only congressional elections concurring with both a presidential and a gubernatorial election, a combination that has the least observations in Table 1.

TABLE 2 Four Models of Coattail Effects on Congressional Elections

Variable	1997–2009		1979–2009					
	(1) Shares		(2) Shares		(3) Shares		(4) Residuals	
	$\hat{\beta}$	<i>p</i>	$\hat{\beta}$	<i>p</i>	$\hat{\beta}$	<i>p</i>	$\hat{\beta}$	<i>p</i>
Part A. PAN								
Constant	.135	.000	.084	.000	.074	.000	-.022	.004
<i>RecentDvote</i>	.586	.000	.671	.000	.787	.000		
<i>GovOnlyConcurs</i>	-.151	.005	-.057	.002			.017	.021
<i>PresOnlyConcurs</i>	-.097	.054	-.058	.011	-.047	.051	.042	.000
<i>Gov&PresConcur</i>	-.106	.102	-.063	.033			.038	.012
<i>Gvote GovOnlyConcurs</i>	.584	.000	.405	.000			.760	.000
<i>Gvote Gov&PresConcur</i>	.444	.043	.500	.002			.163	.325
<i>Pvote PresOnlyConcurs</i>	.446	.002	.421	.000	.341	.000	.875	.000
<i>Pvote Gov&PresConcur</i>	.018	.956	-.096	.638			.930	.000
<i>IncumbentGovernor</i>	.045	.021	.020	.155	.008	.583	.017	.123
<i>IncumbentPresident</i>	-.047	.004	-.025	.120	-.027	.128	.001	.926
<i>Economy</i>	-.145	.465	.204	.141	.206	.176	.110	.233
<i>PartyCoalesced</i>	.016	.416	-.001	.990	.007	.802	-.014	.382
N		160		352		352		352
R ²		.82		.84		.81		.58
Part B. PRI								
Constant	.187	.000	.092	.050	.062	.213	.017	.507
<i>RecentDvote</i>	.418	.000	.746	.000	.808	.000		
<i>GovOnlyConcurs</i>	-.288	.001	-.190	.000			-.019	.092
<i>PresOnlyConcurs</i>	-.249	.000	-.224	.000	-.199	.000	-.059	.005
<i>Gov&PresConcur</i>	-.235	.052	-.232	.001			-.045	.081
<i>Gvote GovOnlyConcurs</i>	.620	.002	.291	.000			.737	.000
<i>Gvote Gov&PresConcur</i>	.231	.478	.378	.270			.332	.185
<i>Pvote PresOnlyConcurs</i>	.640	.000	.315	.000	.270	.005	.839	.000
<i>Pvote Gov&PresConcur</i>	.362	.329	-.050	.876			.661	.013
<i>IncumbentGovernor</i>	.086	.000	.027	.168	.016	.449	.031	.062
<i>IncumbentPresident</i>	-.063	.006	-.033	.350	-.038	.298	-.014	.596
<i>Economy</i>	-.438	.005	.402	.090	.438	.087	.048	.815
<i>PartyCoalesced</i>	-.018	.132	.006	.801	.005	.834	-.003	.901
N		160		352		352		352
R ²		.76		.88		.87		.56
Part C. PRD								
Constant	.098	.005	.058	.005	.050	.022	-.010	.564
<i>RecentDvote</i>	.475	.019	.608	.000	.665	.000		
<i>GovOnlyConcurs</i>	-.125	.000	-.070	.000			.005	.670
<i>PresOnlyConcurs</i>	-.111	.039	-.045	.123	-.034	.304	.014	.555
<i>Gov&PresConcur</i>	-.104	.043	-.031	.424			.010	.718
<i>Gvote GovOnlyConcurs</i>	.878	.000	.785	.000			.927	.000
<i>Gvote Gov&PresConcur</i>	-.051	.901	.233	.474			.400	.371
<i>Pvote PresOnlyConcurs</i>	.488	.006	.577	.001	.530	.000	.815	.001
<i>Pvote Gov&PresConcur</i>	.408	.298	.242	.443			.472	.227
<i>IncumbentGovernor</i>	.102	.009	.084	.009	.077	.021	.024	.352
<i>Economy</i>	-.202	.608	-.059	.829	-.039	.904	-.040	.867
<i>PartyCoalesced</i>			-.058	.092	-.061	.147	-.001	.995
N		160		352		352		352
R ²		.67		.73		.67		.40

Note: Dependent variable (Dvote) in models 1, 2, and 3 is party's federal deputy vote share; in model 4 it is the residual of regressing recent previous elections on time to forecast present federal deputy vote share. Method of estimation is OLS, p-values computed with panel-corrected standard errors (Beck and Katz 1995), two-tailed tests. The PRD consistently coalesced in presidential election years only since 1997, so control is dropped due to collinearity.

PAN, is positive, as expected, reaching a value of .446. This confirms the presence of presidential coattails in Mexican congressional elections by one conventional standard (Ferejohn and Calvert 1984; Kramer 1971): holding other factors affecting PAN's performance in congressional races constant, a 2.2% increase in its vote for president translated into one extra percentage point in the concurrent federal deputies race statewide. The PRD's is slightly larger: a 2% increase in the left's presidential candidate vote sufficed to get the extra point in the state congressional. And presidential coattails for the PRI, with a coefficient estimate of .640, substantially exceed the other major parties' by half a magnitude: achieving the same bonus in the concurrent congressional election required a 1.6% increase in its vote for president.

These effects are significant in size and statistically at the .006 level or better for all parties. In contrast, estimates for *Pvote|Gov&PresConcur* fare badly. The coefficient is positive for the PRI and PRD, but only just so for the PAN; none, however, achieved statistical significance, so they are really indistinguishable from zero. A systematic presidential effect cannot be found when the congressional race also concurs with a gubernatorial.

And there is abundant statistical evidence in the regressions to claim confidently that gubernatorial coattails exist in Mexico and are sizeable as well—that, by the conventional standard, they are not any shorter than presidential ones. A gubernatorial candidate's effect on the concurrent federal deputies race is positive for the PRI and negative for the PRD when the races also concur with a presidential election: coefficient estimates for *Gvote|Gov&PresConcur* are .231 and $-.051$, respectively, none achieving statistical significance. The same effect is larger for the PAN, a statistically significant estimate of .444, nearly identical to its presidential effect. But gubernatorial effects acquire statistical significance at the .002 level or better for all major parties when concurrence is with midterm congressional elections. The isolation from the effect of a presidential race in such circumstances renders this the appropriate measure for gubernatorial coattails and, by hypothesis tests, the positive estimates are not a product of chance alone. The PAN's estimate of .584 for *Gvote|GovOnlyConcurs* is 30% larger in size than its presidential coattail. The PRI's estimate of .620 is only 4% smaller than the presidential effect. But at .878, the PRD gets a gubernatorial coattail estimate that is 80% larger than the presidential kind. Holding other factors in the model constant, five extra percentage points in the gubernatorial race gave the PAN, the PRI, and the

PRD a bonus of about 2.9, 3.1, and 4.4% more votes in the concurrent federal midterm. Considering the (major) party system as a whole, the average gubernatorial coattail (.69) is nearly 33% larger than the average presidential effect (.52). And from a statistical standpoint, the hypothesis that coefficients for *Pvote|PresOnlyConcurs* and *Gvote|Gov&GovOnlyConcurs* are equal cannot be rejected with confidence for any party.¹¹ By the conventional standard, gubernatorial and presidential coattails by party are about the same size; and parties are somewhat unlike one another—yet less heterogeneous than over the full period, as will be seen.

By another coattails standard, parties are quite more distinct. Coattail regression coefficients estimate the marginal influence of votes for executive candidates on congressional votes. But because the model allows intercept shifts for different concurrence regimes, voting *thresholds* must be exceeded by the executive candidate before coattails actually add a congressional vote bonus against the level expected in the absence of concurrence. Take PAN's gubernatorial effect in midterms as illustration: one extra point for the gubernatorial candidate adds .584 bonus points in the state's congressional race, but simultaneously the concurrence regime *GovOnlyConcurs* shifts the baseline congressional vote share down by $-.151$ compared to the nonconcurrent baseline. So unless the PAN wins a gubernatorial vote share of at least .26 (the minimum *Gvote* needed to offset the drop in the regression line), the net effect of the coattail on congressional races will, in fact, be *negative*. A reminder that coattails are double-edged swords: just like good candidates for executive office help co-partisans concurrently running for Congress, bad ones hurt them—an implication easily overlooked, yet crucial for the understanding of coattails. The PRD's threshold for presidential coattails, at .14, is about half the PAN's, yet both parties earned gains from concurrence in the democratic years more cheaply than the PRI, whose .46 threshold implies that it has mostly suffered rather than gained from concurrence. Since 1997, the party exceeded that threshold in two out of five gubernatorial contests only. Presidential coattail thresholds by party match the gubernatorial quite well for the PAN and PRI, but not the PRD: they are .22, .39, and .23, respectively.

Incumbency status exerted opposite forces at the national and subnational levels. Since the PRD never held the presidency in the period, variable *IncumbentPresident* was dropped from the equation. For the

¹¹The levels of the tests are .32 for the PAN, .40 for the PRI, and .16 for the PRD.

PAN and the PRI, however, tenant status at Los Pinos exerted a statistically insignificant drop of about -4.7 and -6.3 percentage points, respectively, on congressional votes compared to their opposition years, other factors constant. Having an *IncumbentGovernor*, however, exerted positive pulls for the PAN and the PRI of 4.5 and 8.6 points, respectively. And the PRD earned more than 10 extra points when it controlled the governor's office. All effects are significant statistically.

Estimates of retrospective judgements, in all likelihood due to the poor measurement of the *Economy* variable, produce results contrary to expectation for all three parties.¹² The PRI's $-.438$ coefficient has the largest absolute size and is the only significant one. In states governed by another party, and other factors held constant, a 5% three-year average increase in the GSP brought a 2% bonus in the PRI's congressional vote statewide; by variable construction, in PRI-governed states, a 5% decrease in the economy brought that party the same congressional bonus. And *PartyCoalesced*, intended to absorb some of the measurement error in voting figures due to electoral coalitions suggests, that the imputation method is about on target for the PAN and the PRI—coefficients are small an indistinguishable from zero. The PRD coalesced systematically in presidential years only since 1997, making this control collinear with the concurrence regime; it was dropped.

Comparing coattails with the full-period estimates (model 2) reveals two obvious regularities. In general, with democratization came a surge in coattails size. It was the PRI that experienced the most dramatic hike after 1997, at least doubling its sensitivity to gubernatorial (+113%) and presidential (+103%) effects compared to the full period. The PAN's gubernatorial coattail in recent years experienced a more modest, yet important rise (+44%), with virtually no change in the presidential. The PRD's presidential coattails shortened (-15%) but its gubernatorial lengthened (+12%) since 1997. And, importantly, coattails are far from small when pre-1997 data is included. The smallest estimate (the

PRI's .291 gubernatorial effects in isolation from a presidential race) is not far below present-day presidential coattails in the United States. Relative party dynamics are proof that the PRI, which used to command a unilateral advantage in party organization across the board—insulating it from short-term forces to a much larger extent than other parties when the early years are included—has faced a strong challenge with the advent of democracy. It is now more vulnerable to short-term effects than the PAN.

Coattail thresholds also changed importantly. The PAN, PRI, and PRD's gubernatorial thresholds in the full period stood at .14, .65, and .09, implying +85, -30 , and +55% changes since 1997, respectively. In same order, presidential thresholds stood at .14, .71, and .08, implying +55, -45 , and +190% post-1997 shifts. Democratization made the PRI somewhat less, and the others substantively more susceptible to experience the bitter side of contagion. The next segment illustrates thresholds more plainly.

The full period analysis offers other interesting contrasts. All parties, but especially the PRI, attest larger autoregressive effects in the full period. The model captures well the more volatile inter-election congressional field since 1997. *Economy* performs slightly better when the disastrous 1980s are included. And *PartyCoalesced* suggests that the coalition vote imputation method systematically underestimates the PRD's vote by about 6 points in the full period. More important is that sizeable and significant coattail effects, for both president and governor, are detected when this variable is included in the right side the equation.

And presidential coattail coefficients for PAN, PRI, and PRD lose -19 , -14 , and -9% in value, respectively, when regressors capturing gubernatorial effects are dropped in model 3. Thresholds change only slightly. But this argues that controlling gubernatorial coattails simultaneously offers an improved—and accentuated—estimate of presidential coattail effects. Including the concurrent race for governor variables, especially the *Gov&PresConcur* conditional, brings forth an increase in presidential coattails estimates, not the contrary. Gubernatorial and presidential coattails can not only be separated in a regression; joint control appear to be required to estimate each one without bias.

Results open an interesting perspective of how relatively vulnerable parties are to short- and long-term forces. The PRD's congressional vote has clearly been more dependent on short-term factors than the PAN—lower coattail thresholds and steeper slopes—which in turn has depended more on them than the

¹²Other *Economy* specifications, such as the rate of growth in the previous year or in the last three years, produced little change in the estimates. Given survey evidence that Mexican voters tend to credit themselves or the society for improvements, but blame the government for economic downfalls (Buendía 2000), the online appendix reports one seeking to illuminate on whom retrospective judgements about the economy fall—the president, the governor, both, or neither—interacting growth and incumbency dummies. The model is inconclusive about attribution, but suggests venues for future research: PRI presidents, but PRD governors, seem to be accountable for the state economy, although coefficients fail to reach significance at the .10 level; the PAN's results are significant but mixed.

PRI. The former hegemonic ruler has had, and retains, very strong local bases of support tying a much larger extent of its fortunes to the normal vote than the other two parties. The PRD stands at the opposite end in this respect. This set of results is in line with Morgenstern's (n.d.) measures of parties' relative localism in congressional elections, although coattails reveal them more different from each other.

Coattail results are robust to one last specification. Model 4 estimates coattails for the full period in a different metric. Using the residuals approach to control the normal vote reveals that the rate of transfer of over- or underperformance in the concurrent presidential election to the state's congressional races ranged from a low 82% for the PRD and a high 88% for the PAN. The PRI's middle spot, on par with the others, suggests that the residual approach internalizes its relatively more rapid change better than the other normal vote control. The estimated rate of transfer from a concurrent gubernatorial race is one-seventh smaller for the PAN and the PRI and one-seventh larger for the PRD. Thresholds for these models are all small, in the $-.05$ to $.05$ range. On average this other empirical approach to measure short-term effects confirms that gubernatorial coattails no smaller than presidential ones have characterized congressional elections in the last three decades.

All this is unexpected from, and indeed quite challenging for, the perspective of textbook Mexico, with its emphasis on a hierarchical juxtaposition of central (dominant) and state (subserving) governments (Cossío Villegas 1981; Domínguez 1999; González Casanova 1965; Mecham 1940; Rodríguez 1997). Even if important changes in how localism is expressed have taken place—from local *caudillos* in the past to variably competitive elections now—federalism has had important, yet unacknowledged effects since the days of the PRI's hegemony. A reestimation of the model with data ranging from 1979 to 1985 only, before the conditions supporting hegemony began to crumble, in fact produces coattail estimates not much different from those reported in Table 2.¹³ Federalism has been much less about window dressing, and more about lively local political influences in Mexico than has been recognized, echoing work on fiscal politics by Díaz Cayeros (2006).

¹³The only difference deserving a comment is a $-.62$, insignificant negative gubernatorial coattail for the PRD. It can be disregarded because it is the product of too few observations: between 1979 and 1985, the left nominated six candidates for governor only in concurrent elections, receiving seven-tenths of one percentage point on average.

Interpreting the Results

This segment develops simulations to offer a more eloquent interpretation of gubernatorial coattail results. The model specification controls four alternative concurrence regimes and does so with conditional variables and constitutive terms. Common regression coefficient tables don't allow to judge the effects of regime switching. Simulations do. The approach relies on Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) estimation, a convenient method to gauge the joint effect of several regression coefficients, to make predictions about coattails and their thresholds, and to reveal how precise inferences are (see Gelman and Hill 2007).¹⁴

Estimates for the 1997–2009 period, of more direct relevance today, were chosen for this exercise. The abstract scenario for prediction of gubernatorial coattail effects has the following features. In order to remove the simultaneous effect of a presidential race on deputy votes, the focus of attention is a state with a gubernatorial race concurrent with the midterm congressional election. Each party is assumed to have received its 1997–2009 median vote return in the previous congressional race: .26 for the PAN, .47 for the PRI, and .13 for the PRD. Neither the state's governor nor sitting president belong to the party analyzed. And the state's economy grew by 3% on average in the last three years, the median value for the period. What effect does the model predict that varying shares in the concurrent gubernatorial vote have on the party's congressional performance in this hypothetical state holding the features above constant?

Figure 3 gives the answer, revealing three quite distinct major parties in Mexico. Each plot in the figure reports the marginal effect of a unit change in the gubernatorial vote share on the party's federal deputy vote share statewide—the slope of the *Gvote* | *GovOnlyConcurs* regression coefficient—holding the rest of the scenario constant. Solid lines report the median of the posterior distribution of simulated gubernatorial coattails, flanked by the 50% and 95% intervals to convey estimate precision. Three things are noteworthy.

As seen above, parties are not too different since 1997 by the conventional standard. Considering

¹⁴The online appendix shows that MCMC estimates of model 1 are similar to those reported. Three chains were updated 5 thousand times each, preserving every tenth iteration from the second half as sample of $3 \times 250 = 750$ posterior simulations to derive the results discussed in this segment. Gelman and Hill's (2007) $\hat{R} \approx 1$, suggesting that the chains had converged towards a steady state. WinBUGS (www.mrc-bsu.cam.ac.uk/bugs) used for MCMC estimation.

point estimates of marginal effects only, a 45-degree line would indicate a one-to-one correspondence between votes in the two arenas—i.e., a coattail of value 1. Not far below, the PRD dons the longest gubernatorial coattails. The PAN and PRI's are shorter, but not by much. However when the 95% intervals are also taken into consideration, the task of discovering party differences becomes more challenging. The flattest line within the PRD's interval can easily fit in the intervals of both the PAN and the PRI. Using 1979–2009 estimates instead would make the PRI's congressional vote much less sensitive to gubernatorial effects, but it has lost its clear-cut distinctiveness since democratization.

By the other standard used in this article this is not quite so. Marginal effects do not consider the federal deputy vote share that parties would have received in the absence of a concurrent gubernatorial contest. A virtue of the research design pooling together observations from four concurrence regimes is that this counterfactual quantity can be estimated (cf. Chubb 1988). Repeating the simulation with variables *GovOnlyConcurs* and *Gvote|GovOnlyConcurs* set to zero, but in an otherwise identical scenario as before, does the comparative statics. Dotted horizontal lines in plots are federal deputy vote shares expected in such circumstances (reporting the median of the posterior without credible intervals for clarity). They report the party's average nonconcurrence congressional vote, net of short-term forces, an estimate of its normal vote in the hypothetical state. The PRI had a substantial mean normal vote of nearly .40. Despite a considerable drop in recent years—its normal vote would be above majority if model 2 were used instead of model 1—the PRI has had, and retains, relatively stronger ties to local electorates than the other parties. When considering evidence of a weakening PRI (Langston, n.d.; Morgenstern, n.d.), it is important to keep in mind that levels also matter: the PRI began from very high voting share levels, and seems to remain above the other parties in terms of ties to the partisan electorate in states. At the other end, the PRD had a nonconcurrence γ -intercept just above .15. The PAN is somewhere between, its mean normal vote at about .30.

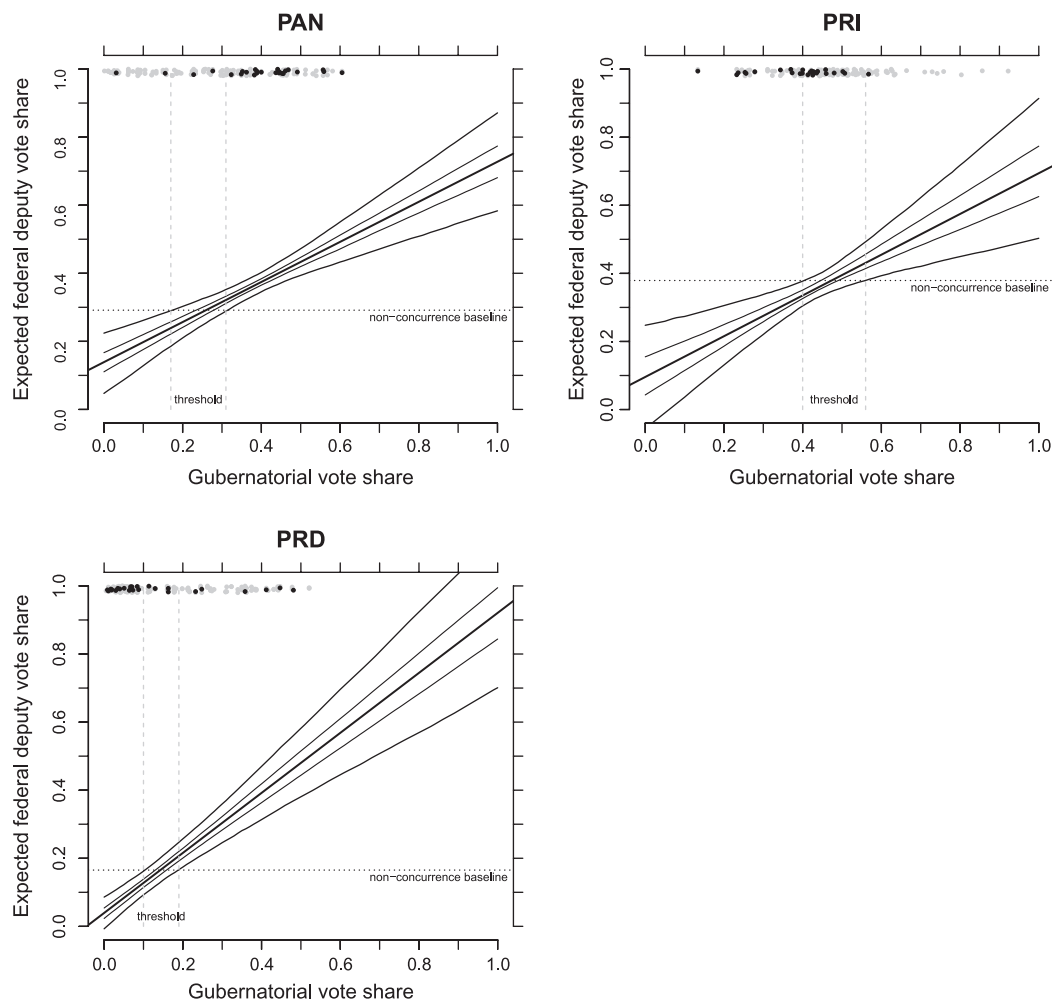
And coattail thresholds further accentuate party differences. The level of the x -axis where regression line and nonconcurrence baseline meet marks the level at which coattails start delivering net profits. This is the threshold that the gubernatorial vote must meet for the party to earn a congressional vote bonus compared to the absence of a gubernatorial contest. In the 1997–2009 period the PRD had the lowest such threshold at .15 ($\pm .05$ if the 95% interval of the

regression line is considered), PRI the highest at .48 ($\pm .08$), and PAN at .24 ($\pm .07$) was intermediate. When gubernatorial support fails to exceed the threshold, concurrence turns into a bitter experience for congressional candidates. Parties' actual gubernatorial vote shares in the period appear as darker points at the top of each graph (lighter points for nonconcurrent gubernatorial races) to verify their standing with respect to this all-important mark. The PRI was nearly on target but not quite, commonly just below the middle of the threshold range. To the contrary, it is plain that PAN exceeded its coattail threshold very systematically since 1997, gaining 5 to 20 percentage points for the state's congressional candidates vis-à-vis nonconcurrence. And the PRD's situation is surprising to a high degree. The left routinely failed to exceed the threshold in spite of its remarkably low level (with a handful of notable exceptions). Inability to produce good gubernatorial candidates combine with a very steep slope to seriously hurt the party's congressional slate. The left's average gubernatorial return in races concurrent with the midterm since 1997 is 7%. At that support level, the model's expected federal deputy return is 9% (± 4), 8 points below the nonconcurrence baseline. Had it nominated attractive candidates, as it in fact did for instance in the 1997 Sonora state gubernatorial race, boosting support to 23% instead, the expected deputy vote would surge to 22% (± 4), up 5 from the baseline. The PRD's actual deputy vote in Sonora was 27%.

All this informs well parties' interests in debates about reforming Mexico's profusion of dates in the electoral calendar. Until it can build more solid local bases, the PAN must argue in favor of having all elections concur as a way to win more votes in Congress. The PRD ought to be more cautious, at least until it can generate better candidates for subnational executive office. But the PRI should absolutely discourage concurrence to protect its relatively still stronger local bases from increased competition in executive elections. When the administration recently circulated the idea of sending a bill to Congress proposing a single concurrent election date through federal legislation, the explicit rationale was to save money. The truth may well have been more partisan.

The missing inference in all this discussion is how many seats these congressional vote bonuses can buy. Computing this is regrettably not straightforward. Whether or not a vote premium translates into a seat premium depends, first, on district margins: is the party a runner-up in many districts? and if so, is the vote premium enough to turn it into a winner? Second, seats in Mexico can also be won by

FIGURE 3 Gubernatorial Coattails in Congressional Elections 1997–2009



Note: Plots prepared with MCMC estimates of model 1 in Table 2. Panels report the median, 50%, and 95% intervals of the posterior distribution. The simulation scenario for each party has the following features: the last deputy vote share is set at the party's median value for the period; there is a concurrent gubernatorial but not presidential election; the party has no incumbent governor nor president; the state's economic performance set at the median value for the period; and no party coalesced in the congressional election. The non-concurrence baseline is the median of the posterior distribution when *GovOnlyConcurs* = 0 in the same scenario. Dots are the party's actual gubernatorial vote shares (*y*-jittered for visibility), heavier points for races concurrent with congressional elections.

proportional representation in the parallel system, depending on the state population vis-à-vis other states in the multimember PR district. Due to these complications, no attempt is made to compute this quantity of interest.

The Bigger Picture

The findings connect at least three prominent literatures in political science. One is the comparative study of electoral systems. In the search for cross-

national patterns, scholars in that field have naturally paid attention to national-level phenomena. Witnessing gubernatorial coattails in Mexican congressional elections adds to growing evidence that local forces shape national election outcomes to important degrees in Argentina, Brazil, and the United States (Ames 1994; Cox and Munger 1989; Jones 1997; Samuels 2000). National election studies overlooking sub-national elections and institutions are incomplete at best, biased at worst.

Another is the debate on party systems nationalization (Caramani 2004; Cox 1997; Jones and Mainwaring

2003). The relative success of national or regional parties depends on which level of government voters credit for outcomes. Regional parties in Canada, India, Great Britain, and the United States have thrived when the center of economic and political authority has gravitated towards lower levels of government (Chhibber and Kollman 2004). Gubernatorial coattails in Mexico since 1979 serve as reminder that local voting influences may fall dramatically when authority is extremely centralized, but do not collapse to zero. Future research into local party organization and its ties to national campaigns may unveil this puzzle.

The other is the comparative study of federal institutions. If ambitious office holders pay attention to others in proportion to how much they can determine their careers (Mayhew 1974), the discovery that Mexican federal legislators' electoral fortunes are decided, to an important degree, by *subnational* voters, mediated by gubernatorial candidates in a concurrent race, implies that governors and their constituents have systematic influence in *national* policy. This resonates well with studies of reviving federal arrangements in the context of the Mexican (Flamand 2006; Rosas and Langston 2011) and Latin American (Gibson 2004) democratization. As more and more subnational election data become available, the estimation of bottom-up coattails in national legislative races may in fact offer an indirect, yet relatively easy to obtain and compare, measure of local versus national influence in policy.

Extensions point to the study of turnout, candidate quality, and election calendars. It was noted above that the causal mechanism of coattails remains obscure. The approach has assumed that the crucial force behind is mobilization (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). If so, turnout should follow predictable patterns and therefore becomes an obvious variable of interest for future research. Likewise, candidate quality and election timing—two key treatments in the analysis—may be the subject of very interesting strategic considerations that are left aside (Engstrom and Kernell 2005; Jacobson and Kernell 1983). A handful of states in the period shifted local election timing, towards or away from concurrence with federal races. How much of these shifts is linked to coattails and other factors remains a mystery. Likewise, better candidates may have such considerations in mind when deciding whether or not to run for office. A more general approach to gubernatorial coattails will develop a theory where such features are endogenous and resolve related estimation complexities.

Conclusion

This article has shown that Mexican gubernatorial candidates from all major parties don electoral coattails that congressional candidates in the same ticket ride systematically in their quest for office. A successful, concurrent campaign for state executive office confers a significant vote bonus to copartisans running for federal deputy in the state. And gubernatorial coattails are not just present, they are large—between half (since 1979) and two-thirds (since 1997) of the success or failure of gubernatorial candidates has transferred to congressional candidates on the same ticket. And it has been shown that gubernatorial coattails are no recent phenomenon, associated with democratization. Local forces have shaped the national electoral arena systematically and to an important extent since at least 1979.

The evidence delivered also points to interparty and temporal differences of importance. Least sensitive to short-term forces—both national and local—has been the PRI, a party with solid presence in most congressional districts, whose machines toe the vote quite homogeneously from election to election, across the board. The party has nevertheless lost this relative edge in the last decade. Most sensitive is the PRD, still struggling to organize locally beyond a handful of states. The PAN, with a longer organizational history and tenure of federal executive office, stands between the other two. And coattail thresholds—levels of gubernatorial support that parties need to exceed to actually gain a congressional vote bonus compared to a non-concurrent race—further differentiate parties. PAN has mostly exceeded the threshold, but not the PRI and PRD.

All this should interest federalism students and electoral system and constitutional reformers. Where local officeholders are elected, attempts to modify the national party system must take the likely effect that subnational races will have on national ones into account.

Acknowledgments

My gratitude to Jorge Buendía, Federico Estévez, Guillermo Rosas, Matthew Shugart, and Jeffrey Weldon for critiques and suggestions; to Liliana Capetillo, Mauricio Fernández Duque, and Odette Maciel for research assistance; and to the Asociación Mexicana de Cultura A.C. and the Sistema Nacional de Investigadores for supporting parts of this research.

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