

# Empowering Women? Gender Quotas and Women's Political Careers

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**Yann Kerevel**, Louisiana State University

Women's representation in executive office continues to lag behind that of their female peers in legislatures, and several studies find women face an executive glass ceiling. One way to shatter this executive glass ceiling is through the adoption of legislative gender quotas. However, scholars know little about how legislative quotas affect women's access to executive office. Previous research has been unable to determine whether once elected through quotas, women advance to executive office at similar rates to men. Using data on the future career paths of nearly 2,000 Mexican legislators, I find women face a glass ceiling in winning nomination to executive office. Using career data before and after quota implementation, and exploiting lax enforcement in the district component of the mixed electoral system, I find quotas have done little to increase the advancement of women into executive office, although they have increased opportunities for women in other legislative positions.

Women's representation in executive office continues to lag behind that of their female peers in legislatures, and several studies find women face a glass ceiling in advancing their political careers into executive office (Folke and Rickne 2016; Jalalzai 2013; Reynolds 1999). One way scholars have proposed to shatter this executive glass ceiling is through the adoption of legislative gender quotas (Dahlerup 2007; Kittilson 2005; O'Brien and Rickne 2016). However, scholars know little about how legislative quotas may improve women's access to executive office. While several studies find correlations between women's legislative representation and their presence in executive office (Barnes and O'Brien 2018; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Krook and O'Brien 2012; Thames and Williams 2013), the causal mechanism is unclear. One study finds quotas help advance women into municipal executive office (O'Brien and Rickne 2016). In contrast, others argue quotas do little to shatter the executive glass ceiling, and women will not be nominated for positions beyond quota requirements (Davidson-Schmich 2010; Folke and Rickne 2016; Verge 2010; Zetterberg 2018).

We do not know if quotas lead to the election of women who can use their legislative experience to advance into executive

office, nor do we know how quotas have reshaped women's career opportunities. Previous work has not addressed this gap in the literature because of a lack of data tracing the careers of comparable men and women in quota systems. Several studies have suggested the need for these data to understand the long-term impact of gender quotas (Bhavnani 2009; Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005), although recent research is limited to analyzing careers within a single institution with quotas (O'Brien and Rickne 2016) and sex differences in prior careers after quota adoption (Franceschet and Piscopo 2014).

This study examines differences in the future careers of male and female Mexican federal deputies who held office from 1997 to 2009. I examine whether female deputies face an executive glass ceiling and the effect quotas have on the glass ceiling's continued presence. Mexico is an ideal case to address the long-term influence of gender quotas for several reasons. First, and most importantly, political career data allow for a comparison of how men and women develop their careers after being elected to the federal legislature. Second, legislative, but not executive, quotas allow for an examination of how women fare in competing for executive office. Third, Mexico's federal structure, with a bicameral legislature, unicameral state legislatures, and directly elected governors, mayors, and city councilors, provides

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Yann Kerevel (ykerev1@lsu.edu) is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, 240 Stubbs Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

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numerous opportunities for term-limited deputies. Fourth, mandatory quotas were introduced in 2003, which allows for comparisons of career opportunities before and after quota adoption. Fifth, the lack of strict compliance with the quota law in the mixed electoral system's single-member district (SMD) tier allows for a comparison between women likely elected without the help of quotas and those elected due to quotas.

Additionally, single-term limits in place for all levels of office in Mexico provide the opportunity to observe multiple career choices over a short amount of time. The ban on reelection may advantage women, as previous studies find the lack of incumbency breaks down some important barriers to women's access to power (Funk and Taylor-Robinson 2014; Kerevel and Atkeson 2013). Since there are no incumbents running for office, women do not have to run against a large number of male incumbents as in many other countries. This more level playing field makes it harder to find evidence of an executive glass ceiling.

The present study is the first to trace the future careers of male and female legislators elected under a gender quota regime over multiple career stages. These data provide evidence of whether women continue to face a glass ceiling in advancing their political careers. Evidence of a glass ceiling would suggest gender quotas will continue to be necessary, and other measures may need to be adopted to break down continuing barriers to women's empowerment. In contrast, if elected women are as successful as men in the pursuit of executive office, gender quotas could be phased out over time as women's political presence increases.

This study finds evidence of an executive glass ceiling in women's political careers. The adoption of quotas has not helped most women break through the executive glass ceiling, although women least likely to have benefited from gender quotas are now more likely to win executive nominations. Gender quotas have expanded opportunities for women in other elected offices where quotas are used but have reduced women's ability to obtain party leadership positions. In sum, an executive glass ceiling existed before the adoption of quotas, and legislative quotas have done little to break through it.

### THE EXECUTIVE GLASS CEILING IN WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAREERS

Many studies find increasing the number of women in parliament increases women's representation elsewhere. For example, as women's legislative representation increases, countries are more likely to have female executives and more women on high courts (Jalalzai 2013; Reynolds 1999; Thames and Williams 2013). Other work finds more women legislators are correlated with more women in cabinets (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2005).

The correlation between women's legislative and executive representation may be due to several factors, although prior studies are largely silent on the mechanisms that link women's representation across institutions. The connection may be due to cultural changes within society that lead to increases in women's representation across institutions, a role model effect whereby the presence of women in legislatures encourages other women to run for executive office, the involvement of female legislators in the recruitment of female candidates for other offices, or women entering legislative office who then use their experience to run for executive office (Norris and Inglehart 2001; Thames and Williams 2013; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007). This study can speak to this last possibility: whether women legislators are able to use their office to win executive nominations, or if they are disadvantaged relative to men in advancing to executive office.<sup>1</sup>

There are reasons to be skeptical that women can capitalize on their political experience to win nominations to executive positions in the same way as men. For example, while Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2005, 2009) find a correlation between increasing female legislative representation and female cabinet representation, they also find female cabinet ministers are less likely to have previous legislative experience compared to men. Zetterberg (2018) finds in Mexico that increasing women's legislative representation over time has not led to a corresponding increase in female mayors, governors, or cabinet ministers. More troubling, several studies find women in office are marginalized and face barriers to advancement into leadership positions compared to men. For example, within party organizations, women have a harder time achieving positions of leadership despite their numerical representation (O'Brien 2015; Verge and de la Fuente 2014). Within legislatures, women are marginalized in the agenda-setting process and are less likely to serve as powerful committee chairs (Barnes 2016; Heath, Schwindt-Bayer, and Taylor-Robinson 2005).

If women continue to face barriers within legislatures and in advancing to leadership positions, a glass ceiling may exist. Folke and Rickne (2016, 568) define a glass ceiling as "a specific pattern of career disadvantages that can explain the lack of women in top positions." These authors suggest a glass ceiling is apparent when there are greater differences between men and women in holding higher offices, rather than lower offices, the probability of advancing to higher office is lower for women than for men, and these differences increase over the course of one's career as one moves to more prestigious positions (see also Cotter et al. 2001).

1. Women legislators may also be motivated to run for executive office because of these other explanations, but these data do not allow me to speak to the relative contribution of each factor.

If a glass ceiling exists, women may find it harder to advance to executive office compared to men. Female legislators may still be able to develop successful political careers in similar roles, such as seeking reelection, winning nomination to other legislative offices, or receiving some type of political appointment. However, women may be less likely than men to secure executive nominations to elected positions or appointments to important cabinet posts. The introduction of gender quotas is unlikely to shatter this glass ceiling given the numerous ways women are marginalized once elected and the general lack of executive quotas.

**H1. *Glass ceiling***—Women legislators will be nominated to future executive office at lower rates than men.

### THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF QUOTAS ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAREERS

In contrast, gender quotas may serve to empower women and increase their opportunities in executive office. Some scholars suggest legislative quotas may increase women's access to executive office (O'Brien and Rickne 2016). Legislative quotas increase women's access to the political arena. Over time, elected women may be empowered to break down other barriers to women's political inclusion (Dahlerup 2007; Kittilson 2005). Gender quotas not only provide more opportunities for women to enter the candidate pool for legislative office, but once elected, the experience women gain in parliaments may increase the pool of women politicians for executive office or other types of leadership within political parties (O'Brien and Rickne 2016).

However, prior research has not considered how women in a gender quota regime advance their careers after being elected. One recent study considers advancement to leadership positions within municipal parties where gender quotas are used and finds quotas helped advance women into municipal leadership (O'Brien and Rickne 2016). Yet, this study is limited by the focus on advancement within a single institution. As legislative gender quotas are the most common form of quota, little work has examined how legislators advance their careers beyond the legislatures to which they were elected.

Ultimately, for gender quotas to empower women requires that elected women are able to develop political careers beyond the legislature and into executive positions in cabinets, municipalities, or as governors of subnational units. This ability to advance one's career is particularly important in Latin America where careers are complex and involve numerous transitions between municipal, regional, and national positions throughout one's career. In federal and unitary countries, many politicians use the national legislature to launch careers at the subnational level (Chasqueti and Micozzi 2014; Kerevel 2015;

Langston 2010; Micozzi 2014; Samuels 2003). Across Latin America, it is rare for politicians to develop long legislative careers. Therefore, if increasing the supply of female politicians through quotas is sufficient to empower women, one should observe an increase in the renomination of women to future legislative office after the introduction of quotas and an increase in the nomination of women to future executive office as the result of an increase in the pool of qualified female candidates.

**H2. *Quota empowerment effects***—The introduction of quotas will increase the nomination of women legislators to legislative office and to executive office, compared to women legislators before the adoption of quotas.

### THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF QUOTAS ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAREERS

There are several reasons to doubt the empowering effects of quotas. While quotas are successful at increasing the number of elected women, once in office quotas may do little to help women advance to leadership positions within legislatures or to more powerful positions outside (Heath et al. 2005). If the adoption of quotas has little effect on shattering the executive glass ceiling, one might expect women's future careers to be concentrated in political positions where gender quotas are used (Zetterberg 2018). Once a pool of female candidates is identified to comply with the quota mandate, political parties resistant to expanding opportunities for women may be more likely to rely on a smaller pool of women to continue to fill candidacies mandated by quotas. Observationally, one is likely to see more incumbent women advancing to other legislative positions where quotas are used relative to men. Male incumbents do not face the executive glass ceiling nor the same resistance among party elites to receive future nominations. Men's expanded opportunities in executive office compared to women, along with a larger pool of nonincumbent male politicians, may lead one to observe that male incumbents are less likely than women to secure future nominations to legislative positions. Thus, the adoption of gender quotas will expand opportunities for women in legislatures, while maintaining the executive glass ceiling.

**H3a. *Quota glass ceiling effects***—After introducing quotas, women will be nominated to future legislative office at higher rates than women before quotas, while women legislators will continue to be less likely than men to be nominated for executive office.

Gender quotas may also create more explicit negative effects on women's political careers. O'Brien and Rickne (2016) suggest quotas may produce a "trade-off effect" whereby

quotas increase opportunities for women's nomination to positions with quotas while the nomination of qualified women to other positions decreases. The glass ceiling argument suggests quotas will have little impact on women's access to executive office; the trade-off effect suggests women's gains in legislative office will come at the expense of access to executive office.

Consistent with a trade-off effect, there is growing evidence that the adoption of quotas has created backlash against female candidates (Clayton 2015; Kerevel and Atkeson 2017; Verge and de la Fuente 2014). Not only are men generally less supportive of gender quotas (Barnes and Córdova 2016), but male party elites may resent the reduced number of opportunities for men that quotas require (Krook 2015). Party elites may respond to quotas by reducing women's opportunities in other arenas or even discriminate against female candidates by providing them with less funding for campaigns and less advertising coverage compared to men, which creates an unequal playing field during elections (Zepeda 2016).

**H3b. Quota trade-off effects**—After introducing quotas, women will be nominated to future legislative office at higher rates than women before quotas, while women will be less likely to be nominated for executive office compared to women before quotas.

### ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Newly elected women may enter office with different qualifications compared to men, which may influence future career options. Moreover, quotas may increase the male-female experience gap. While recent studies do find some differences in the backgrounds of men and women, these differences are minor, and there is no evidence women elected under quotas are less qualified (Baltrunaite et al. 2014; Franceschet and Piscopo 2014; Schwindt-Bayer 2011).

For evidence in favor of each hypothesis, differences in the future careers of men and women must be apparent after accounting for relevant political experience. The glass ceiling implies sex-based discrimination. Therefore, the existence of a glass ceiling suggests that as women accumulate political experience, they will continue to be disadvantaged compared to similarly qualified men. Below, I account for differences in experience.

In addition to accounting for qualifications, men and women may also have different political ambitions (Fox and Lawless 2014; Schwindt-Bayer 2011). If women are less interested in pursuing future executive office compared to men, then the same patterns expected by the glass ceiling hypothesis would still be apparent, although not because political parties refuse to nominate them, but because women either do

not seek out these opportunities or turn down nominations. To explore differences in ambition, I draw on surveys that asked Mexican legislators which position they would like after their term in the Chamber of Deputies has ended.

### GENDER QUOTAS AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAREERS IN MEXICO

In Mexico, women have increased their presence in legislative office over the last decade because of quotas but are less visible in executive office (Kerevel and Atkeson 2015). A handful of women have run for president in Mexico under a variety of small parties, but not until 2012 did a major party nominate a woman. Among the seven women elected as governors since 1979, only five have been directly elected. Women are also underrepresented in mayoral office. In 1986, 2.9% of municipalities were governed by women, increasing to 3.8% by 2006 and 7% by 2014 (Vázquez García 2010; Zetterberg 2018). Women's presence in presidential cabinets has also declined since quota adoption (Zetterberg 2018).

Available evidence suggests the primary roadblock women face in reaching political office is being nominated. There is no strong evidence to suggest there is a lack of qualified female candidates, a lack of political interest among women in becoming candidates, or that voters are biased against women (Hinojosa 2012). Instead, the primary reasons women fail to get nominated are that they are less likely to self-nominate relative to men, less likely to have the necessary resources to launch a primary campaign, and less likely to belong to male-dominated political recruitment networks. However, when women compete in candidate selection processes, they are as likely as men to gain nomination (Hinojosa 2012; Huerta García and Magar Meurs 2006).

The numerous ways in which all parties evaded compliance with the quota law further suggests Mexico's parties were primarily responsible for the limited number of female candidates. Voluntary party quotas emerged in Mexico during the 1990s in the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) but were not enforced and were ineffective (Hinojosa 2012). In 1996, a 30% legislated gender quota was adopted, although it only recommended parties nominate women and provided no placement mandates on the proportional representation (PR) lists and no sanctions for noncompliance (Baldez 2004). No parties complied with the quota in the 1997 elections (Huerta García and Magar Meurs 2006), and the 3% increase in the number of women from 1994 to 1997 was much smaller than the 6% increase from 1991 to 1994 (Piscopo 2016). There were increases in female PR candidates, from 18% in 1994 to 29% in 1997 and 37% in 2000 (Huerta García and Magar Meurs 2006). However, without placement mandates, most of



these women lost. The increase in female PR candidates from 1997 to 2000 did not lead to more women being elected in 2000 compared to 1997.

Effective gender quotas for federal deputy and senate races were adopted in 2002. This 30% quota included placement mandates for PR lists and strong enforcement mechanisms for noncompliance. However, there were three ways in which parties evaded the quota (Hinojosa and Piscopo 2013). First, in Mexico's electoral system, parties were able to avoid the quota in SMD races if a primary was used to nominate candidates.<sup>2</sup> However, electoral authorities did not regulate primaries, did not oversee internal selection processes, and took parties at their word in describing how candidates were selected. In 2003, the National Action Party (PAN) and PRI told electoral authorities they chose a majority of their candidates in primaries, although a study of these primaries suggests most only had a single candidate, and elections may never have been held (Huerta García and Magar Meurs 2006). Given the primary exception and lack of regulation, the quota largely did not apply to SMD candidates, except where parties directly designated their candidates. Where parties designated their candidates, which the PRD did for most candidates in 2003 and the PRI did for all candidates in 2006, the quota did apply. However, since parties could choose their selection process by district, and the Federal Electoral Institute could not verify the nature of the process, parties only had to nominate women where they chose to with little pressure to comply with the quota in SMDs. This primary exception to the quota law was eliminated before the 2012 elections. However, the resistance of the parties to nominating more women in SMDs confirms prior work that suggests higher district magnitude is more conducive to increasing women's representation (Matland and Studlar 1996).

A second way parties evaded the spirit of the quota was to nominate women in unwinnable seats. Even though parties could avoid the quota in SMD races, there was still an increase in the number of women competing in districts among major parties, from 120 women in 2000 to 232 in 2003. Yet, the increase only led to the election of an additional 13 women in 2003 and no change in the number of women candidates or winners from 2003 to 2006. While women had higher margins of victory than men in 1994 and 1997, and similar margins of victory in 2000, the large increase in female SMD candidates in unwinnable races saw a decline in women's electoral performance relative to men. In addition, the parties nominated more

men to the top two positions on the PR lists, leaving the third position to a woman. While parties overcomplied with the gender quota on the PR lists, most women above the minimum were concentrated at the bottom of the list (Huerta García and Magar Meurs 2006).

Finally, parties exploited the alternate system as a way to nominate women but elect men. All legislative candidates run with an alternate, and if elected, the alternate may take the legislator's place if they resign or leave office. Before 2003, parties increased the number of female alternates as a way to nominally comply with the 1996 law and internal party quotas. However, after the 2002 quota law, female candidates would renounce their candidacy after candidate substitutions were prohibited but before the election, leading the male alternate to take the woman's place. Similarly, several parties pressured newly elected women to renounce their seats to be replaced by male alternates, leading to a scandal in 2009 when 16 women resigned. The exploitation of the alternate system ended in 2012 with the electoral courts mandating same-sex candidate pairs (Huerta García and Magar Meurs 2006; Piscopo 2016).

While many party leaders have adopted strategies to limit the gender quota's effectiveness, women activists have successfully pushed for the expansion of the quota and the elimination of various loopholes. In 2008, the quota was increased to 40%, and in 2014, gender parity was adopted for all state and federal legislative candidates. In the Chamber of Deputies nearly 43% of seats were held by women in the 2015–18 term. In 2012, 33% of elected senators were women. Most Mexican states did not adopt gender quotas until 2002 or 2003, while various quota laws exist for city council seats (Reynoso and D'Angelo 2006; Vázquez García 2010).

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

To test each hypothesis, I use future career data on nearly 2,000 Mexican federal deputies who served between 1997 and 2009. I examine the first and second future career moves through 2012. Because of the time frame, a number of deputies do not have a second position and are coded as missing when I analyze this later career stage. These data come from official candidate lists, congressional biographies, newspapers, websites maintained by candidates and public officials, and several published sources on Mexican political careers (see Kerevel 2015).

## Dependent variable

Because of wide variation in the future careers of Mexican deputies, it is necessary to reduce the number of categories of future positions in order to create a dependent variable. The most common position federal deputies seek after leaving is nomination to mayoral office (17%), followed closely by nomination as state deputy (13%). However, if federal

2. Mexico uses mixed electoral rules for all levels of office. In the Chamber of Deputies, 200 out of 500 seats are elected by PR. In the Senate, 32 of 128 seats are allocated by PR. All state legislatures also use mixed rules, and many city councilors are also elected by PR.

deputies leave office during a general election year, 20%–23% of them seek senate nominations. Thus, many deputies pursue legislative careers, although they are more likely to seek state legislative nominations in midterm election years and senate nominations in general election years. Smaller numbers seek a governorship (7%) or a city council position (2%) or are appointed to a governor's cabinet (4%), to a president's cabinet (0.5%), as a state party leader (3%), as a national party leader (1%), or to another state or federal bureaucratic position (19%). The remainder obtain positions in parties, social movements, unions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, or as congressional staff.

The primary outcomes of interest are nominations to legislative and executive office.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the dependent variable captures ballot access for elected legislative and executive office and appointment to unelected executive office. I operationalize the dependent variable using six categories that simplify the wide variation in future career paths while still examining outcomes of theoretical interest: (1) ballot access for state legislature/city council (deputy), (2) ballot access for Senate (senator), (3) ballot access for mayor/governor (executive nom.), (4) appointment to cabinet or party leadership (executive appt.), (5) other bureaucratic appointment (bureaucracy), and (6) other office (other).<sup>4</sup> In the appendix, available online, I explain in detail why these offices are combined in order to estimate statistical models. Combining offices largely does not influence the results, although I show in the appendix the findings regarding executive appointments vary slightly when cabinet and party leadership positions are analyzed separately. For the second position, I collapse state legislative and senate ballot access into a single legislative category, along with renomination as federal deputy (legislator in figs. 1B–1D). Since the dependent variable is categorical, I use multinomial logistic regression.

The ability to test each hypothesis on the second future position of federal deputies is limited. Here, I limit the analysis of this later stage in a deputy's future career to hypothesis 1, as the smaller sample size, the need to analyze smaller subgroups of deputies, and the still relatively small number of women make it difficult to test hypotheses 2 and 3.

### Independent variables

The key independent variables are sex, experience, and party ID. To measure past experience, I include two dichotomous

variables for legislative and executive experience, since there are very few deputies with more than one term of prior experience.<sup>5</sup> I also include a variable to measure chamber leadership experience, as holding a position of power within the legislature may help advance one's career. Deputies who served as committee chairs, president of the chamber's Governing Board, or caucus leader are coded as one, and backbenchers are coded as zero. I also control for party ID. The PRD is the primary left party, and one might expect fewer sex differences in the future career opportunities in this party compared to the more right-leaning PAN and the centrist PRI. In the appendix, I explore the interactive effect of sex and party ID.

I interact each experience variable with sex to identify any differential effects, since experience varies by sex among federal deputies. The median number of prior legislative terms held by federal deputies is zero for both men and women, although men have somewhat more experience. In all, 45.4% of men have some legislative experience, compared to 36.3% of women ( $p < .05$ , two-tailed  $t$ -test). Male deputies also have more prior executive experience compared to women, with 42.1% of men having prior executive experience, compared to 18.9% of women ( $p < .05$ , two-tailed  $t$ -test). There are minor differences in congressional leadership experience, with 9.4% of women having served as committee chairs, president of the Governing Board (*mesa directiva*), or as caucus leader, compared to 12.6% of men ( $p < .11$ , two-tailed  $t$ -test).

Identifying the effect of gender quotas, separate from sex, is not simple. Formally, Mexico's gender quotas are sex neutral, stating that no one sex can hold more than 70% of seats for a 30% quota. However, since mandatory quotas were not implemented until 2003, I compare future careers of deputies before and after 2003. While the comparison before and after 2003 is not perfect because of the presence of voluntary quotas before 2003, there is little evidence to suggest these earlier quota laws were effective, altered candidate selection processes, or led to the election of women to the chamber before 2003 who would not have been elected absent quotas. If I find changes in the career paths of women after 2003, these changes may be the result of quotas. However, patterns in career paths observable in both periods would suggest these patterns are because of candidate sex and not the quotas specifically.

The second difficulty in distinguishing between quota and sex effects is in separating "quota women" from women who

3. In the appendix, I also show candidate sex has little influence on electoral success.

4. Party leadership positions include president and secretary general. Other offices include municipal bureaucracy, other party positions, congressional staff, deputies known to have competed for ballot access but failed,

and positions in unions, NGOs, social movements, or the private sector. Deputies who died, retired, or were banned from office are excluded.

5. For legislative experience, the deputy had served as a state deputy, federal deputy, or senator in the past. For executive experience, the deputy had served as mayor, governor, party leader, or cabinet member at the state or federal level.

would have been nominated without quotas. The pre- and post-2003 comparison partially addresses this difficulty by comparing “nonquota” women elected before 2003 to a mix of quota and nonquota women elected after 2003. I also take advantage of the lax enforcement of gender quotas in the SMD seats of Mexico’s mixed system. After 2003, most quota women are likely to have been elected by PR, while women elected in SMDs were likely to have won regardless of quotas. Nevertheless, comparing the careers of PR and SMD women after 2003 risks confusing candidate selection (quota) effects with electoral system effects. The strategy I use is to first compare career paths between PR and SMD deputies before and after 2003. I then compare career paths within each tier of the electoral system. If I find quota (PR) women have different career paths than nonquota (SMD) women, this difference could be the result of quotas or the electoral system. If I then find career paths between quota (PR) women and PR men are different, this result might suggest gender quotas influence women’s future career paths. However, if I find career paths between PR women and men are similar, the electoral system, and not quotas, is likely responsible for any differences.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, when explaining the effects of sex on a deputy’s second position after leaving the chamber, it is very important to consider how their first position may have influenced later career choices. Unfortunately, it is not possible to account for all possible initial career choices on a deputy’s second position because of a number of deputies dropping out of the data, since they had not finished serving in their first position, and the number of female deputies available for analysis is smaller. Because of data limitations, I include one categorical variable that measures (1) deputies who gained ballot access, but lost their first election, (2) deputies who gained ballot access and won their election, and (3) all other deputies.<sup>7</sup> In the test of hypothesis 1, I complement the multivariate model with bivariate analysis to further explore evidence of a glass ceiling.

In the appendix, I explore alternative modeling strategies. The results are robust to a different specification of the dependent variable where I do not combine offices and robust to the inclusion of additional controls. Additional controls are not included here, since it is possible to control for too many variables in looking for evidence of a glass ceiling, which may obscure mechanisms of discrimination (Cotter et al. 2001). I also show the results are robust to the inclusion of alternates who served in the Chamber of Deputies and the use of state

fixed effects to account for state variation in career opportunities. Finally, I show the results are robust to the use of matching, although matching in this case presents its own set of problems as it excludes the more powerful men and compares women to weaker male deputies.

## RESULTS

I first examine trends in the future careers of male and female legislators before turning to quota effects. Figure 1 presents the marginal effect of sex on future nomination to executive and legislative office and other appointed positions. These results are based on multinomial logit models that control for legislative, executive, and congressional leadership experience, and party ID (see the appendix for models). Figure 1A predicts the marginal effect of sex on the first future position, while figures 1B–1D predict the marginal effect of sex on the second future position while accounting for what happened immediately after leaving the chamber.

I find women have a 0.06 decreased probability of being nominated for a future mayoral or gubernatorial position and a 0.05 increased probability of being nominated for a future senate position compared to men (fig. 1A). The effects are positive but not significant for state legislative races. However, some sex differences in future career opportunities disappear at the next stage of a legislator’s career. For the 56.6% of deputies who initially move into positions in the bureaucracy or in parties, there are no significant sex differences in legislative and executive ballot access (fig. 1B). Among these deputies, few gain nomination to future executive office. In all, 17.3% were able to secure nomination to legislative office, but only 3.4% were nominated for executive office and 4.6% were appointed to a cabinet or party leadership position.

For federal deputies who obtained ballot access after leaving the chamber, electoral performance differentially shapes future career opportunities in executive office. Female deputies who gain ballot access and lose an election have a 0.06 decreased probability of gaining a future nomination to executive office compared to men (fig. 1C). Since the model used to generate figure 1C combines deputies who lost their first election and those who were appointed to an executive position in order to estimate the model, I separate these two categories and engage in some descriptive analysis to clarify these second-stage career trends. Of the 43 women who lost, none were subsequently nominated for mayoral or gubernatorial office, compared to 6% of men. Among the 17 women appointed to a cabinet or party leadership position, only one subsequently gained ballot access to an executive position, compared to 11.6% of men.

Overall, among the 17.7% of deputies nominated for elected office who lost, subsequent career opportunities in elected office are very similar to the majority of deputies who

6. In the appendix, I show the results are robust to excluding SMD deputies from parties that designated most candidates.

7. I combine deputies with appointed executive positions and with ballot access that lost. This decision was made to estimate the model, since there were no women who lost a race and then were granted ballot access for executive office. I describe in the text how this affects the results.

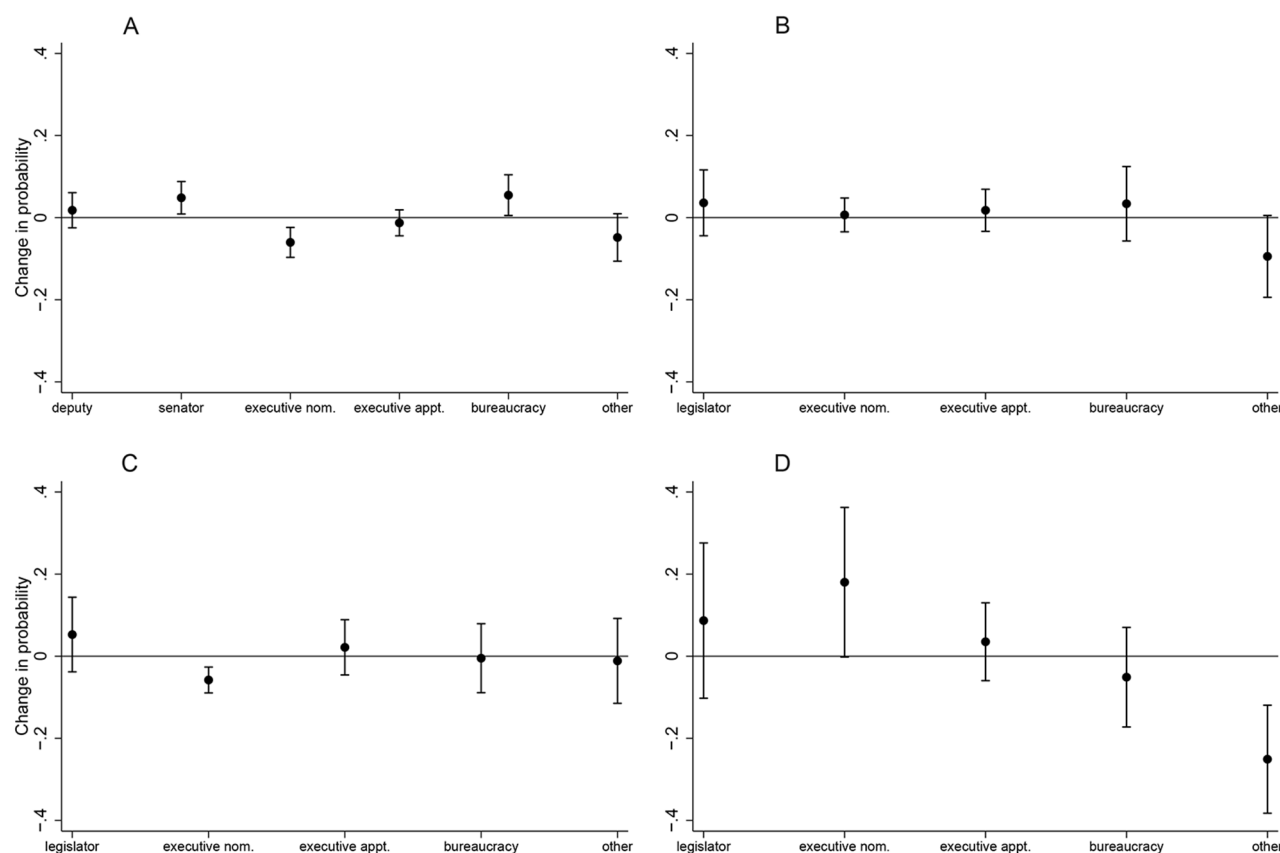


Figure 1. Influence of sex on the future career paths of federal deputies, 1997–2009. A, First future position; B, second future position, other first office; C, second future position, lost first election; D, second future position, won first election. Each chart examines the change in probability of women obtaining each type of office relative to men. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

did not get nominated. Among this group of deputies, 19.1% were nominated for legislative office, 4.8% were nominated for executive office, and 4.8% were appointed to cabinet or party leadership positions. In contrast, among the 8.7% of deputies appointed to an executive position, 18.5% were nominated to legislative office, 10.7% were nominated to executive office, and 8.7% were appointed to another cabinet or party leadership position. These results suggest deputies initially appointed to an executive position have a better chance of moving to a future executive position, although women are less likely than men to be able to use this appointment to then win nomination for mayor or governor. In addition, losing an election harms a female deputy's future chances of winning nomination to executive office, more so than for men.

In contrast, among the 17% of former deputies who win elections after leaving the chamber, women have a 0.18 increased probability of gaining ballot access to executive office relative to men (fig. 1D,  $p < .06$ ). Deputies who win elections after leaving the chamber are more likely to gain ballot access, with 31.7% of these deputies nominated for legislative positions and 17.3% nominated for executive positions. Among these deputies, women do very well relative to men. In all,

41.4% of women win legislative nominations (compared to 30.1% of men), 31% of women win executive nominations (compared to 15% of men), and 6.9% of women are appointed to cabinet or party leadership positions (compared to 3.5% of men;  $\chi^2 = 10.8$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Results from figure 1 are consistent with hypothesis 1, which suggests there is a glass ceiling blocking access to executive office among female legislators. Initially, women are less likely to be selected as candidates for executive positions. For most deputies who are not initially nominated for a future elected position, the chance of being nominated later in their career for executive office is low for both men and women. However, women have even fewer chances of being nominated for future executive positions if they lose their first postchamber election or if they are appointed to an executive position. Parallel findings in Chile also reveal that nonincumbent women have a harder time being renominated compared to men (Shair-Rosenfield and Hinojosa 2014). Nevertheless, I also find the glass ceiling can be shattered by a small percentage of women who can secure future nomination and win elections. The importance of women demonstrating they can win elections echoes previous findings (Bhavnani 2009). However, in the



Mexican case studied here it appears women are held to a higher standard than men, since they had already demonstrated they could win a seat in the Chamber of Deputies and face fewer electoral opportunities if they lose.

Figure 1 examines the effect of sex but does not speak to the effect of gender quotas. Figures 2A and 2B replicate the model used in figure 1A but compare the effects of sex on future career paths for deputies elected in 1997 and 2000, the period before mandatory quotas, to deputies elected in 2003 and 2006. I find in both the prequota and quota periods, women are less likely to secure future nominations to mayoral or gubernatorial office, while it is only after mandatory quotas are implemented in 2003 that women gain an advantage in securing future nominations to legislative office. However, after the introduction of quotas, women are less likely than men to be appointed to executive positions. In the appendix, I show this result is owing to a decrease in women's probability of obtaining party leadership positions after 2003.

These results provide stronger support for the glass ceiling effect of quotas (hypothesis 3a) rather than the empowerment

effect (hypothesis 2), since quotas increase opportunities for women in offices with quotas but do very little to improve women's nomination to executive office. The disadvantage women faced in securing future executive nominations before the adoption of quotas is still apparent after quotas are adopted, which suggests the executive glass ceiling is not explained by gender quotas. Comparing the results from figures 2A and 2B also provides evidence of quota trade-off effects (hypothesis 3b). While quotas have not altered women's nomination to elected executive positions, they do appear to have reduced chances for women's appointment to party leadership positions compared to the prequota period. These results are also consistent with the idea that political parties are responsible for imposing barriers to women's access to executive positions.

While figure 2 suggests gender quotas have not affected the ability of women to secure nominations to executive office, it is still possible the women most likely to benefit from legislative gender quotas are disadvantaged relative to men in securing ballot access for executive positions. To gain some

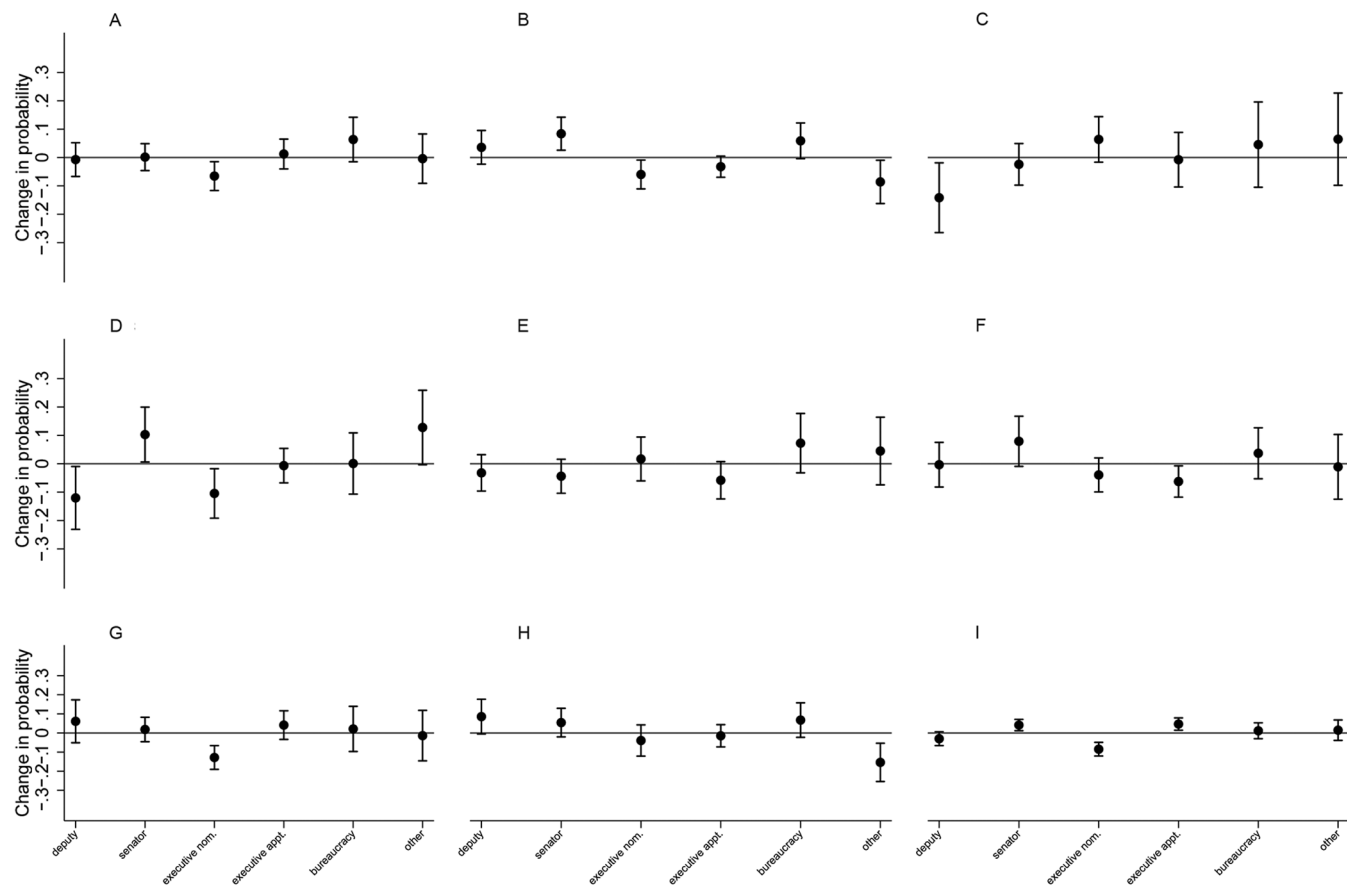


Figure 2. Effects of gender quotas on women's future career paths, 1997–2009. A, Before quotas, 1997–2003; B, mandatory quotas, 2003–9; C, single-member district (SMD) vs. proportional representation (PR) women, 1997–2003; D, SMD vs. PR women, 2003–9; E, PR men vs. PR women, 1997–2003; F, PR men vs. PR women, 2003–9; G, SMD men vs. SMD women, 1997–2003; H, SMD men vs. SMD women, 2003–9; I, SMD vs. PR men, 1997–2009. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

leverage on this issue, I compare the future career paths of SMD deputies to PR deputies before and after the introduction of mandatory quotas. Figures 2C and 2D compare the future careers of SMD women to PR women. I find after introducing quotas, female PR legislators are less likely to obtain future executive nominations and more likely to be nominated to the Senate compared to SMD female legislators (fig. 2D). Before mandatory quotas, these differences in career paths among women were not apparent (fig. 2C).

Since much of the increase in women because of quotas was through the PR tier, it is possible the differences found in figure 2D may be explained by the electoral system and not necessarily quotas. To explore this possibility, I compare the future career paths of PR women to PR men in figures 2E and 2F. I find no differences in ballot access to executive office between PR men and women before and after 2003, while PR women gain a slight advantage in senate ballot access after quota implementation. In addition, I find among men that PR men are less likely to be nominated for executive office and more likely to be nominated for the Senate, compared to SMD men, which is not influenced by the introduction of gender quotas (fig. 2I).

In sum, these findings suggest PR deputies are less likely to be considered as candidates for executive office while they are more likely to be nominated for senate seats. These results can likely be explained by the differing nature of candidate selection across the two electoral tiers, with stronger input from local and state party elites in SMD races and national party elites in the PR lists, such that PR deputies are less well connected to political networks from which local and state executive candidates are drawn (Freidenberg 2013; Hinojosa 2012; Wuhs 2008). The results also suggest gender quotas are more successful at increasing the number of elected women who are less likely to be considered as potential candidates for executive positions, not because of quotas but because they were selected by a group of party elites in charge of filling PR lists who are less involved in candidate selection at the local and state level.

Gender quotas also appear to have reduced opportunities for PR women in winning executive appointments relative to PR men, as seen in figures 2E and 2F. I show in the appendix this result is limited to party leadership positions. This finding provides some limited support for the quota trade-off effects of hypothesis 3b and reinforces similar findings in figures 2A and 2B.

In contrast, gender quotas have a positive effect on the political opportunities for women who were likely to have reached office without quotas. In figures 2G and 2H, I compare the future career paths of SMD men and women. I find that before mandatory quotas, SMD women were less likely than men to be nominated for executive office, although this difference disappears once quotas are enforced. I also find that

SMD women have increased opportunities to be nominated for state legislative office after mandatory quotas are adopted relative to SMD men. The results provide the strongest support for hypothesized quota empowerment effects, as these women may be considered as potential executive candidates among local and state party leaders. However, the results also suggest the women who appear to be empowered are women who would have likely won office without the presence of quotas.

### Alternative explanations

Differences in prior experience may shape where federal deputies pursue future careers (Langston and Aparicio 2011). To account for experience, I run three multinomial logistic regressions that include an interaction term between sex and each experience variable (see the appendix). The marginal effects of sex in all three models are presented in figure 3. Among deputies with prior legislative experience, women are still less likely to win nomination to executive office compared to men, as seen in figure 3A. Women are less likely to have prior executive experience than men, and in figure 3B it appears that among deputies with prior executive experience, future career paths for male and female deputies are similar. However, women with executive experience have a 0.07 decreased probability of obtaining a future executive nomination relative to men. This negative effect is similar to the 0.06 decreased probability of obtaining an executive nomination among women with legislative experience. Since few women possess executive experience, the uncertainty surrounding the estimated effect is larger, but prior executive experience may not necessarily improve women's chances of being nominated for future executive office compared to men.

In contrast, women who obtain leadership experience within the chamber are as likely as men to secure future executive nominations, as seen in figure 3C. Women without leadership experience have a 0.06 decreased probability of winning future executive nomination ( $p < .001$ ), compared to 0.03 for women with leadership experience ( $p < .47$ ).

While there are no significant sex differences in serving as caucus leader, president of the Governing Board, or as committee chair, larger proportions of men hold all of these positions. It is possible the combination of leadership positions is masking a gendered division of power. For example, female deputies are less likely to serve as chairs of the more powerful committees (i.e., Governance, Budget, Treasury, Justice, Public Security, Rules, and Constitutional Issues). Among the most powerful leadership positions (caucus leader, president of the Governing Board, or chair of a powerful committee), I find no women secured future nomination to executive office, compared to 8.2% of men. The small number of observations precludes the estimation of a statistical model, but

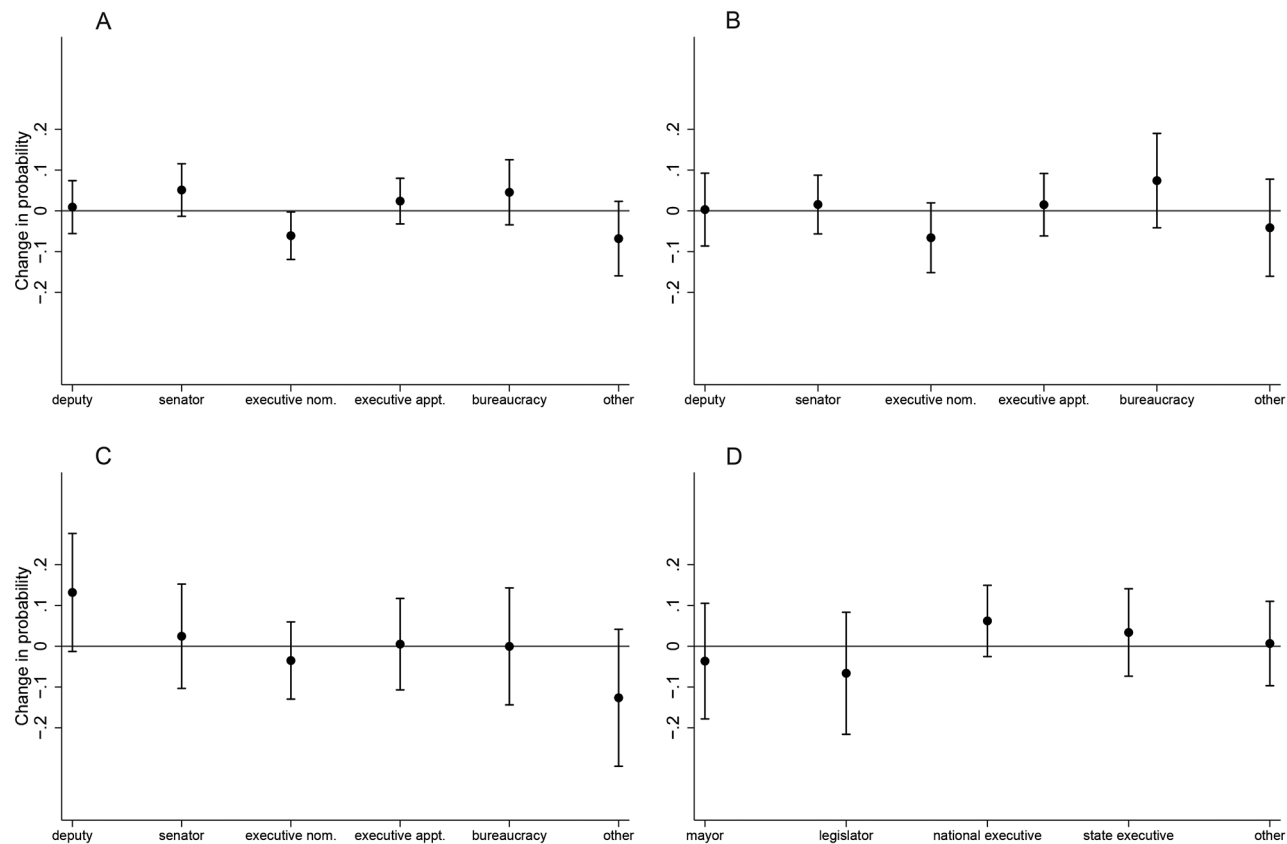


Figure 3. Influence of experience and preferences on the future career paths of female deputies. A, Deputies with legislative experience; B, deputies with executive experience; C, deputies with congressional leadership experience; D, preferences for next position, Parliamentary Elites of Latin America Survey, 2006–12. Each chart represents the change in probability of obtaining each position relative to men. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

these results tentatively suggest women may not benefit in the same way as men after serving in powerful leadership positions. Nevertheless, obtaining a committee chair position on less powerful committees still erases significant sex differences in the future career paths of deputies.

In sum, a deputy's past experience has little effect on women's future nomination to executive office. The glass ceiling for women in winning future executive nominations is not being reinforced by differences in qualifications between men and women. However, obtaining a leadership position within the chamber does help reduce the disadvantage women face in future executive nominations. Given the small number of deputies with past executive experience and with leadership positions, these findings are tentative, and more work needs to be conducted on how past experience and leadership experience acquired as a legislator influences future careers.

Alternatively, many of the career differences found in the above analysis may be the result of different preferences between male and female legislators in Mexico. While the data to address this question are limited, I draw on two surveys of Mexican federal deputies who served from 2006 to 2012 that

asked what position they would like after leaving the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>8</sup> In figure 3D, I run a multinomial logistic regression that predicts responses on the basis of a deputy's sex and a dummy for the survey year. The dependent variable has five categories: (1) mayor, (2) legislator, (3) a position in the national executive branch, (4) a position in a state executive branch, and (5) other. I find few differences between men and women across each of the possible future positions. While women are slightly less likely than men to want to serve as mayor, the results are not statistically significant nor are they different from the results for serving as a legislator again. Given that female deputies in Mexico have similar preferences for serving as a legislator or as mayor, while the results in figures 1–3 find larger differences in outcomes, it does not appear individual preferences are driving the results.

8. Parliamentary Elites of Latin America survey data from the Universidad de Salamanca. For more information, see the appendix and <http://americo.usal.es/oir/elites/index.htm>.

## CONCLUSION

Do gender quotas empower women, increase opportunities for political career advancement, and increase the nomination of women for executive office? The results presented here are decidedly mixed but suggest gender quotas have done very little to address the executive glass ceiling faced by women in Mexico. Few women have reached executive office, and among female legislators, their ability to advance to future executive office has not changed substantially since the implementation of mandatory gender quotas in 2002. A handful of women do succeed in breaking through the executive glass ceiling, and I find evidence to suggest the women least likely to have benefited from quotas in their initial election have been relatively successful in winning future executive nominations. In addition, female deputies who can demonstrate their electoral competitiveness are also rewarded with executive nominations at later stages of their careers. However, these findings only hold for a handful of female deputies. While the empirical evidence presented here cannot make causal claims about why female legislators are generally disadvantaged in winning executive nominations, substantial evidence was presented that implies it is not because these women do not desire executive nominations, but that party elites are limiting women's opportunities in these positions.

However, in other ways, gender quotas have empowered women. They have expanded political opportunities in other positions where gender quotas operate, such as future positions in the Senate, state legislatures, and city councils. While not discussed in detail, female deputies also have many future career opportunities in federal and state bureaucracies. Thus, quotas lead more women to enter legislative office, and they are then able to pursue political careers in other elected offices where quotas are used and in less visible appointed positions.

While quotas have expanded opportunities for other legislative positions, and have done very little to provide a pool of candidates that party elites would consider for nomination to executive office, I do not find strong evidence that quotas have negatively affected women's political careers or produced trade-off effects. I do find women are disadvantaged in their pursuit of party leadership positions after the adoption of gender quotas, which is certainly troubling and consistent with the notion that male party elites are resistant to supporting women in positions of power within parties. However, for all other positions, there is no clear evidence that quotas have harmed women's ability to climb the political career ladder.

The results suggest several possible ways women may be able to crack the executive glass ceiling. As prior research shows, and as I find here, women need to demonstrate to party leaders they can win elections in order to be nominated to executive office (Bhavnani 2009). The findings also suggest

women who are able to access a leadership position in the legislature are able to mitigate the disadvantage that many other women politicians face in winning executive nominations. As prior work finds widespread marginalization of women in legislatures (Barnes 2016; Heath et al. 2005), increasing access to committee chairs and other congressional leadership roles may help shatter the executive glass ceiling.

These findings stand in contrast to past work that finds a correlation between women's legislative and executive representation, although these previous studies focus on national executives (Jalalzai 2013; Thames and Williams 2013). However, other studies have found similar patterns to those presented here. Several find increases in women's legislative representation have not improved the presence of women in local executive office (Escobar-Lemmon and Funk 2018; Folke and Rickne 2016; Verge 2010), while Zetterberg (2018) finds in Mexico that after the adoption of legislative quotas, women's representation in cabinets and subnational executive positions has not substantially improved. In general, increases in female legislative representation have not had widespread positive effects on women's representation in executive office or in party organizations across Latin America (Schwindt-Bayer 2018).

Yet, the inability of women legislators to advance to executive office has implications regarding their policy influence. In Mexico, and elsewhere in Latin America, executive positions at the regional and national level are generally more powerful compared to legislative bodies. This is evident in the career trajectories of legislators in Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina where federal legislative seats are used as springboards to municipal and state executive office. Quotas have increased women's career opportunities in less influential positions but do little to help empower women to advance to more powerful positions with greater policy influence.

Given the lack of incumbency in Mexico, the findings presented here suggest women elected through quotas in an environment where incumbency presents an additional barrier are likely to fare even worse in advancing their political careers, as prior work suggests (Schwindt-Bayer 2005, 2018). The lack of incumbency in Mexico also helps women increase access to leadership positions within the legislature when there are no incumbent men. In other cases with quotas, women are even more disadvantaged in their access to power within legislatures. The results reinforce the importance of breaking down these barriers within legislatures to advance women's future political career opportunities.

Mexico is similar to many other cases where quotas exist at the legislative level but not at the executive level. A few countries have recently adopted gender quotas for mayoral office, and several other countries are beginning to experiment with nonlegislative quotas within cabinets, bureaucracies, and



the judiciary (Piscopo 2015). In Mexico, the constitutional adoption of gender parity in 2014 has created legal precedents that have led actors to push for parity in mayoral candidacies in certain states, and the state of Querétaro has recently adopted parity quotas for mayoral candidates (García Méndez 2017). The findings here suggest legislative quotas are ineffective at increasing the number of women in executive office. Those interested in increasing the presence of women in these positions may need to consider the adoption of additional measures beyond legislative quotas, such as executive candidate quotas, to break the executive glass ceiling.

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