

Ambition, Federalism, and Legislative Politics in Brazil

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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain

Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 2003

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Sabon 10/12 pt. *System* L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Samuels, David, 1967–

Ambassadors of the state : federalism, ambition, and congressional politics in Brazil /
David Samuels.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-81671-8 (hb)

1. Federal government – Brazil – History – 20th century. 2. Legislators –
Brazil – Attitudes. 3. Ambition. 4. Legislative power – Brazil. 5. Politics,
Practical – Brazil. 6. Rational choice theory. 7. Brazil – Politics and
government – 20th century. I. Title.

JL2420.S8 S26 2002

320.981 – dc21

2002024684

ISBN 0 521 81671 8 hardback

Contents

<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>	page ix
<i>Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv
Introduction	i
SECTION I	
1 Ambition Theory and Political Careers in Brazil	13
2 In the Absence of Congressional Careerism: Short Stints, Flat Hierarchies, and Low Payoffs in the Chamber of Deputies	35
3 Progressive Ambition and Congressional “Hot Seats” in Brazil, 1945–1998	48
4 Labyrinths of Power, Brazilian Style: Post-Chamber Political Careers	58
SECTION II	
5 The “Gubernatorial Coattails Effect”: Federalism and Congressional Elections in Brazil	79
SECTION III	
6 On the Political (In)Efficacy of Pork-Barreling in the Chamber of Deputies	III
7 Progressive Ambition, Federalism, and Pork-Barreling in Brazil	134
8 Institutions of Their Own Design? Democratization and Fiscal Decentralization in Brazil, 1975–1995	157
9 The Cardoso Administration and Changes in Brazilian Federalism	177
	vii

Conclusion	208
Appendix 1: Coding of Political Positions by Level of Government	213
Appendix 2: List of Interviews	215
<i>References</i>	221
<i>Author Index</i>	241
<i>Subject Index</i>	244

List of Tables and Figures

TABLES

1.1:	Campaign Expenditures for Brazil and the United States	<i>page</i> 25
2.1:	Percentage of Deputies Seeking Reelection	37
2.2:	Political Experience of Deputies Running for Reelection vs. for Other Positions	38
2.3:	Percentage of Deputies Winning Reelection	39
2.4:	Percentage of Deputies with a Given Number of Terms Served at the Start of Each Legislature	41
3.1:	Incumbents Taking Leaves for Municipal, State, or National Positions	51
4.1:	State Statistics	60
4.2:	Post-Chamber Positions Sought or Held – Full Sample	68
4.3:	Percentages of Ex-Deputies in Each State Seeking or Holding Extra-Chamber Positions	70
4.4:	Post-Chamber Careers: Changes over Time	73
5.1:	Presidential Election Results – Brazil 1989–1998	90
5.2:	Congruence of Brazilian Elections – 1989–1998 (all states)	91
5.3:	Alliance Patterns in Brazilian Elections (selected states)	93
5.4:	Determinants of Effective Number of Lists in Brazilian Congressional Elections	100
5.5:	Coattails Effects in Brazilian Elections – 1994–1998	103
6.1:	Number of Budget Amendments Submitted per Year – 1988–2000	116
6.2:	Deputies' Conditional Probability of Amendment Funding – by Party	118
6.3:	Median Approved and Executed Amendment Value – 1995–2000	119
6.4:	Median Total Amount Executed per Deputy – 1995–2000	120

6.5: Factors Associated with Reelection in Brazil – 1994 (logit regressions)	131
6.6: Factors Associated with Reelection in Brazil – 1998 (logit regressions)	132
7.1: Malapportionment in the Brazilian Congress – 1998	136
7.2: Malapportionment and CMO Membership	137
7.3: Budget Amendments by Agent	138
7.4: Percent Value of All Submitted Amendments – by Submitting Agent	139
7.5: Percent Value of All Approved Amendments – by Submitting Agent	139
7.6: Percent Value of Submitted Amendments – by Level of Government	140
7.7: Percent Value of Approved Amendments – by Level of Government	140
7.8: Percent Value of Executed Amendments – by Level of Government	141
7.9: Average Portion of Amendment Value Submitted to Benefit State Government per Deputy – 1991–1998	150
7.10: Average Percentage of Municipalities to which Deputies Submitted Amendments as a Percentage of All Municipalities in the State – 1991–1998	152
7.11: Value of Amendments Submitted to “Their” City as a Percentage of the Total by Deputies Running for Mayor – 1991–1998 (municipal election years 1992 and 1996)	155
8.1: Share of Revenue and Expenditure by Level of Government in Selected Latin American Countries	159
8.2: Share of Expenditure by Level of Government in Selected Federal Countries	160
8.3: Division of the Fiscal Pie in Brazil – 1960–2000	161
8.4: Average Percentage of States’ Revenue from Own Taxes	172
9.1: Evolution of Composition of Federal Revenue in Brazil	185
9.2: Growth of FPE and FPM Transfers – 1994–2000 (values as of 12/31/00)	186

FIGURES

1.1: The Impact of Low or High Congressional Careerism on Legislative Organization	33
5.1: The Relationship between the Number of Competitors for Executive Elections, District Magnitude, and the Number of Lists in a Legislative Election	97

5.2: Presidential vs. Gubernatorial Coattails and “Incongruent” Alliances	101
6.1: Concentration and Domination	122
6.2: Concentration by Domination – 1990–1998	122

Chapter 1

Ambition Theory and Political Careers in Brazil

“A politician’s behavior is a response to his office goals.”
—Joseph Schlesinger

INTRODUCTION

Ambition theory suggests that if politicians’ behavior can be traced either wholly or partly to their office goals, then scholars can understand politicians’ behavior by exploring their political careers. Given this hypothesis, a substantial number of scholars have explored the impact of political ambition in the United States.¹¹ Research focuses on the House of Representatives, where scholars typically assume that politicians are “single-minded seekers of reelection” (Mayhew 1974, 17).¹² Fewer scholars have explored political careers outside the United States,¹³ but the growth within comparative politics of the study of institutions and the roles politicians play within those institutions suggests that scholars ought to seek to uncover how politicians’ career incentives influence their legislative, partisan, and electoral behavior.

In this chapter I begin to explore the political careers of members of the Brazilian legislature. While numerous studies of Brazilian legislators’ *background* characteristics exist (e.g., Leeds 1965; Verner 1975; Fleischer

¹¹ The literature stemming from Schlesinger, Mayhew, Fiorina and others is vast. For examples, see Schlesinger (1991); Black (1972); Levine and Hyde (1977); Kernell (1977); Rohde (1979); Brady et al. (1997); Bianco and Stewart (1996); Buckley (n.d.); Gilmour and Rothstein (1996); Katz and Sala (1996).

¹² As Mayhew and other acknowledge, this is an artificial assumption. Nevertheless, I agree with Arnold (1990, 5n), who wrote that “Some legislators may make trade-offs among their goals, incurring small electoral costs in the course of achieving some other important goal. [However,] incorporating such realism into my theoretical model would make it vastly more complicated without any obvious gain in explanatory power.”

¹³ But see for example Smith (1979); Hayama (1992); Atkinson and Docherty (1992); Carey (1996); Epstein et al. (1997); Patzelt (1998); F. Santos (1999).

1976; Nunes 1978; A. Santos 1995), and some scholars have suggested that Brazilian politicians do not focus their career energies on the Chamber of Deputies (e.g., Packenham 1990 [1970]; Fleischer 1981; Figueiredo and Limongi 1996; F. Santos 1998), this book is the first to provide an empirical and theoretical treatment of incumbent deputies' career goals. I concur that Brazilian politicians do not focus their energies on building a career within the Chamber of Deputies, and in this chapter and the next three chapters I demonstrate that political ambition in Brazil begins and ends at the subnational level. Service in the Chamber serves merely as a springboard to higher office, at a lower level of government.

In this chapter I first discuss the study of political careers generally. I then ask two questions: what is the structure of political careers in Brazil; and why does Brazil have this political career structure? To answer the first question I explore the benefits, costs, and probabilities of winning several offices in Brazil. The sum of this information describes the "opportunity structure" (Schlesinger 1966, 11) Brazilian politicians face. To answer the second question, I highlight how federalism has historically shaped this opportunity structure in Brazil.

ON THE STUDY OF POLITICAL CAREERS

The Political "Opportunity Structure"

To discover what drives political ambition, we must first explore a country's political "opportunity structure." Three factors shape the political opportunity structure: the relative benefits of each office, the relative costs of seeking and/or holding each office, and the probability of winning each office given the decision to seek it (Black 1972; Rohde 1979).¹⁴ Each factor is sensitive to a number of other variables. For example, the relative probabilities of reaching each office depends on the number of candidates, the number of offices at stake, as well as individual attributes of each candidate. I describe these factors in the following text.

The concept of an "opportunity structure" is simple, useful, and sufficiently broad for comparative research. However, most research on political ambition has focused on the United States (e.g., Schlesinger 1966, 1991; Black 1972; Rohde 1979; Brady, Buckley, and Rivers 1999), and this literature usually concentrates on the origins and consequences of careerism in the U.S. House of Representatives. What little comparative work that exists tends to focus either on careers within (and controlled by) national-level parties (e.g., see Smith 1979 on Mexico and Carey 1996 on Costa Rica), or on national-level legislative careers that are highly influenced by national-party

¹⁴ Rohde (1979) argues that whether politicians are risk averse or risk taking also affects the opportunity structure, but for simplicity's sake I do not discuss this issue.

control (e.g., Epstein et al. 1997 on Japan; Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987 on the United Kingdom; Hibbing 1998).

By focusing on national party and/or legislative careers, this literature thus largely ignores the possibility that *subnational* positions could hold significant attractions to career-minded politicians, including those who have already reached the national legislature, and ignores the possibility that subnational politicians may be more important to incumbent legislators' future careers than national party leaders. This was the case in the early nineteenth-century United States (e.g., Young 1966; Price 1975; Kernell 1977), and certainly remains a possibility in federal systems (where positions in state government may be important), in systems where municipal mayors hold great power and prestige, or in countries where a seat in the legislature appears to hold few long-term attractions. As I will show, the Brazilian case points to the importance of looking beyond national parties and national legislatures when mapping a country's "political opportunity structure."

Motivational Assumptions and the Political Career Ladder

Before I turn to the Brazilian political opportunity structure, it is important to state the assumptions behind ambition theory. I adopt a straightforward rational-choice approach and assume that politicians are instrumentally rational: they will, when making career decisions, examine the alternatives, evaluate these options in terms of the probability of their leading to victory or defeat (with the value of victory depending on the costs and benefits associated with the office), and choose the alternative that yields the greatest expected value (Black 1972, 146). We can formalize this relationship simply as:

$$U_i(\text{Running for Office } o) = P_{io}B_{io} - C_{io}$$

That is, the utility to individual "i" of seeking office "o" equals the probability of "i" attaining office "o" times the benefit to "i" of attaining office "o," minus the cost to "i" of running for office "o" (ibid.). Thus, an individual will run for an office only if the expected benefits of holding that office times the probability of obtaining that office exceed the costs of running for that office.¹⁵ While the values of the variables in this simplified "calculus of ambition" are in reality endogenous and interrelated, for any country we can assume that the value of B_o is determined exogenously, at least in the short term. Moreover, by using real-world examples and comparisons across countries we may gain some insight into the ways in which politicians view

¹⁵ The theory implies that a politician will run for the office with the highest PB-C, if that PB-C is greater than the utility of holding no office (U_{io}). We could call this the politician's "reversionary utility," whatever benefit the politician obtains from going to the private sector, for example.

the relative costs, benefits, and probabilities attached to various political offices.

I further assume that politicians hold “progressive” ambition. That is, given that $\{B_1, \dots, B_n\}$ is the set of expected benefits of each office in the political system,¹⁶ if $B_n \geq \dots \geq B_1$ for all politicians, then it follows that a politician would always take a more attractive office if it were offered without cost or risk (Rohde 1979, 3). Finally, I assume that political careers – whether within or outside of legislatures – are *hierarchical*: a set of office benefits makes certain *organized* or sequenced career paths possible. The analyst must thus discern the “rungs” on the career ladder by describing the costs, benefits, and probabilities of seeking various political offices and then explaining the hierarchy of career paths that emerge, moving from the lower-rung offices to the top-of-the-ladder offices. In short, ambition theory guides research into political careers by focusing research on the relative costs, benefits, and probabilities politicians associate with different political jobs.

THE POLITICAL CAREER LADDER IN BRAZIL

Before attempting to answer the question “What is the structure of political careers in Brazil,” we should know something about what offices an ambitious Brazilian politician might seek. Brazil is a presidential, federal system that resembles the United States in its basic institutional structure. However, far fewer positions are elective in Brazil than in the United States. In Brazil, the set of elective positions includes president and vice-president (1 each), governor and vice-governor (27 total), senator (83 total), federal deputy (513 total), state deputy (state assemblies are all unicameral, 1,069 total), municipal mayor and vice-mayor (5,500 approximately total), and city council member (75,000 approximately total). No judges, sheriffs, county clerks, school board members, or water district managers are elected in Brazil.

On the other hand, as was the case throughout much of U.S. history and is still the case in many countries, many important political positions in Brazil are appointed, such as minister of state, judge, head of a state-level executive-branch department, or countless other national-, state-, or municipal-level positions. One recent estimate gave the president the power to make 19,600 political appointments (L. Santos 1996, 224) (as compared to about 4,000 in the United States today), and governors also have the power to hire and fire hundreds or even thousands of people (depending on the size of the state).

Given this set of political offices, where in Brazil could a politician attempt to carve out a piece of “turf?” When assessing a potential job opportunity, an ambitious politician would ask three questions: (1) What’s it worth to

¹⁶ Here $\{1, \dots, n\}$ is the set of political offices and B_0 is the average value politicians attach to office “0.”

me?; (2) What are my chances?; and (3) What's it going to cost me? In an attempt to place political jobs in Brazil in hierarchical order, in this section I consider the answers to these questions.

What's it Worth to Me?

Here I describe the office benefits associated with five sought-after political offices in Brazil: federal deputy, national minister, state governor, state secretary, and municipal mayor.¹⁷ In general, the benefits of office include pay and other perquisites, the size of the budget the office controls, the ability to influence policy, the patronage opportunities attached to the office, the length of the term, the reelection and advancement potential, and so forth. As a first cut to putting these positions in hierarchical order, I also present interview excerpts that illustrate how Brazilian politicians rank these positions. Interviews provide a window into how politicians view offices' relative values.¹⁸ If politicians typically said a congressional career had the highest political value, this would point the empirical research in one direction. On the other hand, if they placed a congressional seat lower on the career ladder, research would head in a different direction.

The Value of a Seat in the Chamber of Deputies. Brazil's 513 federal deputies have considerable political prestige as representatives of districts that conform to state boundaries. Deputies serve four-year terms, with no restriction on reelection. They receive good pay (currently about \$8,000 per month), free housing in Brasilia, four free air tickets to their home district every month, rights to hire several staff members at no personal expense, franking privileges, and many other perks. Deputies have the right to submit pork-barrel amendments to the yearly budget, they can participate in attempts to acquire additional funds for their states and regions, they sometimes nominate associates for positions in the federal bureaucracy, and they may be able to participate in important policy negotiations between the executive and the legislative branches.

All of these activities might bring significant benefits to the people in a deputy's district, and could focus media attention on the deputy. Thus, although the position of federal deputy may not concentrate *extraordinary*

¹⁷ In Brazil, we can separate political offices according to their governmental level: national, state, and municipal. I counted twenty-three types of national-level positions that deputies have held, fifteen types of state-level positions, and three types of municipal-level positions. See Appendix 1 for a complete list of all positions.

¹⁸ I conducted seventy-nine unstructured interviews with elected officials and high-level bureaucrats. Appendix 2 provides information on each interview. For a variety of reasons interviews with politicians suffer potential problems of bias, reliability, and validity and thus cannot be treated as data that one can readily quantify. They do, however, provide essential complementary information to the empirical data about deputies' actual career choices.

powers in the hands of an individual, the office potentially holds significant political attraction. Yet despite these potential attractions, Brazilian politicians consistently pointed to the relative political inefficacy of a Chamber seat.¹⁹ For example, in response to a question as to why so many deputies opt to leave the Chamber for other jobs even *during* their term, deputies responded:

“Being a deputy is exhausting, a lot of work, and provides absolutely no results.”²⁰

“The political return for being in the executive is very, very large. For being in the legislature, it’s very small.”²¹

“When you’re in the executive, you can measure the effects of what you do. In the legislature, this is difficult.”²²

“It’s difficult to obtain recognition for legislative work . . . your name disappears from public view. The legislature is like political exile – it’s a job, but everyone spends their time here thinking ‘how is it that I can move on from here?’”²³

One ex-deputy even claimed that serving as federal deputy in Brasília *harmed* his political career, because it drew him far away from his electoral bases. He stated that

I perceived that if I didn’t return [to state politics] to take care of my people, I would not last long in politics. I might have been able to win a second term, but by the end of my second term in Brasília I would have been so far removed from things here that I would have been finished.²⁴

In sum, although the position of federal deputy appears to offer some attractions, interviewed politicians consistently belittle the relative value of the office.

The Value of a National Portfolio. In 1997, 21 national civilian ministries existed in Brazil (Brasil. MARE 1996). From time to time, ministries are created (e.g., Culture and Science and Technology in 1985) or extinguished (e.g., Administration in 1989) (FGV n.d.). Ministers receive the same salary as a federal deputy, but the real attractions of the job are the perks, the pork, and the power of the pen. Ministers command an entire department of the national government, and are often chosen because of their leadership qualities in relation to Congress. Consequently, they receive a great deal of national media attention, and senators and deputies constantly seek them out.

¹⁹ To precisely assess deputies’ career ambitions, we would ideally survey all deputies during each legislature about their career goals. This proved unfeasible due to time and resource constraints, so I rely on interviews and inferences from deputies’ observed behavior.

²⁰ Interview with Adhemar de Barros Filho.

²¹ Interview with José A. Pinotti.

²² Interview with Marcelo Caracas Linhares.

²³ Interview with Lúcio Alcântara.

²⁴ Interview with César Souza.

Ministries' political attractiveness vary: the Ministry of the *Casa Civil*, or Chief of Staff, has enormous political power but no budget and no direct control over hiring and firing, while the Finance Minister has a small budget but guides the national economy. This gives the Finance Minister considerable influence beyond the halls of Congress. Although ministries' attractiveness may vary, national ministries appear to offer considerably more political benefits than a seat in Congress because of their significant power and prestige.

The Value of a Governorship. Brazil's 27 governors serve four-year terms, with one consecutive or unlimited nonconsecutive reelection allowed. Armed with ample resources and mostly unhindered by oversight, governors in Brazil possess the power to influence federal deputies' electoral bases and career opportunities. This gives governors, and the states they rule, a voice in Congress (Abrucio 1998). Gubernatorial influence derives from control over state-government pork-barrel funds and over thousands of jobs in state bureaucracies. Governors also coordinate many large-ticket investments that involve federal-government funds, and they may control or influence many nominations to *federal* government posts in their state, in the second and third echelons of the federal bureaucracy. Notably, while few deputies expressed much interest in staying in the legislature, politicians typically expressed views like the one belonging to this ex-deputy:

The legislature was, for me, an accidental journey. I never felt like 'a legislator,' I never fully realized my potential there. Resources [for your career] come much more from the state government than from the federal government, and when I went to collect the return on my investment, I ran for vice-governor, not for deputy.²⁵

Control over valuable political resources gives governors power over deputies' careers: if the deputy opposes the governor, either at the state or the national level, the governor can exclude him or her from the distribution of "credit," or refuse his requests to land his cronies plum jobs. Brazil's electoral system exacerbates deputies' vulnerability to gubernatorial influence. Given Brazil's at-large, statewide electoral constituencies, although some deputies concentrate their electoral bases in a few contiguous municipalities (Ames 1995a), deputies can and do seek out votes in any corner of their state. However, this is a double-edged sword. Even if a deputy has a concentrated vote pattern (which might seem more electorally secure than a dispersed vote pattern) he cannot afford to waffle in his support of the governor, because the governor can "sponsor" a competing candidate, for example by letting the newcomer take credit for a project, in just a part of the deputy's bailiwick.

In addition, governors hold power over municipal mayors, whom candidates for federal deputy rely upon to bring out the vote. Despite their

²⁵ Interview with Ivo Wanderlinde.

recent gains in fiscal resources, the vast majority of Brazilian municipalities remain tremendously poor. Although mayors can seek funds in Brasília, governors control the distribution of resources for many municipal public works projects. Political criteria often determine this distribution; thus, mayors seek to remain on good terms with the governor. Consequently, a deputy must also remain on good terms with the governor, for the governor might punish the deputy by cutting off “his” municipalities from state-government programs. The mayors in the “punished” municipalities would then turn to a different deputy, one presumably on better terms with the governor.

Few checks and balances exist at the state level to contain governors’ political machinations. State legislatures make little effort to oversee state-government spending (Azevedo and Reis 1994). Instead, state deputies scramble to enter the governor’s party coalition, knowing that if they fail to do so, they will be cut off from the resources they need to advance their careers (Abrucio 1998). Governors can also nominate their cronies to the one organ that might oversee state government, the *Tribunal de Contas do Estado*. The state legislature must approve these nominations, but governors typically “buy” support for their nominees easily, assuring himself that his actions will never be scrutinized (ibid.). Finally, scant public accountability exists at the state level. In comparison to municipal or national government, the public cares relatively little about what state governments do (Balbachevsky 1992).

In short, control over sizable budgets, the power to hire and fire, an electoral system that leaves deputies’ electoral bases vulnerable, and little accountability provide Brazilian governors with an arsenal of carrots and sticks they can employ against politicians in their state. This gives them influence over federal deputies, which in turn gives them the power that national party leaders have in other countries: influence within Congress. In sum, a governorship offers more benefits than a seat in the Chamber (or the Senate), but it remains unclear whether it ranks higher than a ministry.

The Value of a State Portfolio. Every state in Brazil has a secretariat modeled on the national ministry. Salaries of state secretaries are lower than that of a federal deputy,²⁶ but the office’s attractions, like those of the national ministries, are political, not financial: prestige, pork, and the pen. State secretaries run entire state-government departments. In some states, these departments have larger budgets and more power to hire and fire than some national ministries. Because they are constantly on the road inaugurating

²⁶ In São Paulo, Brazil’s wealthiest state, the base salary of a high-end state official was about R\$5,800/month in August of 1997, at the time equal to about U.S.\$5,800/month. A few state officials, such as lawyers for state-government corporations, earn much more, but these positions are not typically held by career politicians (OESP 4/17/96, p. 6).

state-government public works projects, state secretaries also receive substantial media attention. The prestige and power of these offices lift state secretaries into a position as much-feared candidates for (re)election as federal deputy or even governor.²⁷

Politicians typically pointed to the attractiveness of a state secretary position. The example one ex-state secretary provided is worth quoting at length:

A politician prefers an executive-branch position to being in the legislature, because it gives him a better chance to lay the ground for his next election. As a secretary you increase your exposure to the public. Take the Secretary for Sports and Tourism. You'd think that this secretariat is not that politically valuable, but it really is, even though its budget is small, because all over the state, there are sports clubs that the state sponsors . . . politicians have a lot of success with these groups, because the government builds little stadiums, puts in soccer fields, sponsors sports tournaments. The Secretary is always there. Imagine, if the Secretary of Sports pays for your team's jerseys, or sponsors your team's tournament. Most people can't afford this stuff by themselves, so they're grateful. It's much easier this way, being in the executive, than being in Congress, where you're mixed in with a pile of others, with more competition for attention. Every congressman's complaint is that he has problems getting media attention. Few deputies appear in the media.²⁸

Other deputies who had served as state secretaries echoed this statement. One stated that,

When I was a state secretary, I was more effective. I felt more useful to my state than I do holding a seat in Congress. The exercise of an activity within one's state ends up being more gratifying in both the sense of working for the public benefit and working for your own benefit, because you're closer to the people, closer to the problems of your voters.²⁹

Given the powers and prestige associated with state secretariat positions, and what politicians say about those positions, we have reason to believe that a state secretariat offers substantially greater benefits than a seat in the Chamber of Deputies.

The Value of a Municipal Mayoralty. The smallest unit of government in Brazil is the municipality, akin to the county in the United States. Brazil has

²⁷ Deputies may use the position of state secretary to boost their personal vote base and then subsequently run for deputy again, but this does not imply that the deputy is particularly interested in a *career* in the Chamber. In fact, the opposite is true: the seat in the Chamber is the "fall-back" position. Many deputies win reelection several times, only to leave during each term for a "better" position outside the Chamber, in their home state. They exhibit congressional careerism in one sense, but in the more important sense they do not. See Chapter 4 for more details on this phenomenon.

²⁸ Interview with Luiz Gonzaga Belluzo. ²⁹ Interview with João Henrique.

over 5,500 municipalities, ranging in size from tiny hamlets of a few hundred souls to the city of São Paulo, with a population of nearly 10 million. Mayors serve four-year terms, and can run for one consecutive or as many nonconsecutive terms as they please. Like the other positions, while a mayor may make a good salary, political power is what makes the position attractive: in every municipality, the mayor is the local political “boss,” the person the people turn to with requests. Across Brazil, city councils are weak; the population looks instead to the mayor to solve local problems.³⁰

The political attractiveness of a mayoralty depends on the size of the municipality: in larger and wealthier municipalities, the mayor controls a good number of political appointments and a sizable budget, and has the final word on the division of the spoils. Moreover, like state secretaries, the mayor gets considerable media attention and political credit for implementing public works programs within the municipality. Sixty-five percent of Brazil’s municipalities have fewer than 10,000 voters, but 119 municipalities have over 100,000 (TSE 1996). Half this number of votes will elect a federal deputy in any state. Thus, a successful mayor from a larger municipality can reasonably expect to count on considerable local support if he were to seek a different political post when his term expires.

A position as municipal mayor in one of these larger municipalities offers more political prestige and power than does a seat in Congress. As one deputy stated,

In a Chamber of 513, a deputy can’t stand out. It’s rare, very rare. Many deputies don’t feel that they have any power. Whereas a mayor, even of a medium-sized city, he’s the boss. He is the power, he has the power of the pen. In the Chamber, nobody has the power of the pen. It’s impossible for the average deputy to feel that he has any power.³¹

Another explained why mayors have a much more political impact than deputies. I quote from an exchange with an ex-deputy who had recently run for mayor in his hometown:

Deputy: A deputy suffers a tremendous erosion of electoral support back in his home bases, particularly in larger cities, because he is not the one who attends to the population directly in terms of implementing public works projects. If you spend a lot of time as a deputy, your image becomes one of somebody who hasn’t done anything for the city.

Author: Even though you may have access to the budget, through the yearly amendments?

Deputy: Yes, this still might mean a loss of support because the mayor is the one who is going to *implement* the amendment and take credit for it. So, many deputies run for mayor for this reason. It’s important for a politician to be a candidate for mayor.

³⁰ On municipal institutions, see Couto and Abrucio (1995) and Andrade, ed. (1998).

³¹ Interview with Alberto Goldman.

Especially in the larger cities, where he can show that he has some influence, that he's accomplished important things.³²

Another politician summed up this perspective by affirming that

From the point of view of a political career, a mayoralty represents a real advance. Many deputies say . . . that winning the race for mayor of his principal city is the most important thing that could happen to him. It represents the crowning achievement of his career, his highest aspiration.³⁴

Summary. Thus far I have only explored the benefits of each office: national minister appears most desirable, and governor also seems quite attractive. Without analysis of the costs and probabilities of attaining each of these positions, we cannot discern where these two positions fall on the hierarchy of political positions in Brazil. However, positions in the executive branch of *subnational* governments, such as governor, state secretary, or mayor of one of Brazil's many larger municipalities, do appear to provide greater political payoffs than does a position as federal deputy. One politician encapsulated his colleagues' views and affirmed that

There's a strong tendency for a person in the legislature to have interest in a position in the executive. Either as governor or mayor of a good-sized city. These are more able to establish their presence politically, to stand out more. Governors and mayors have the power, like the president, to set their own budget and distribute resources, which of course brings benefits to the executive. Executive positions provide more status, and consequently more political projection.³⁴

Given only deputies' comments about the benefits of office, a seat in Congress appears to hold but a middling position.

What are My Chances?

The calculus of ambition remains incomplete without an exploration of the probabilities a politician might associate with obtaining each office. For example, while a ministry might be most attractive, it also might be nearly impossible to obtain. Thus, the estimated probability of reaching an office will affect a politician's expected utility from attempting to reach that office.

Certainly, the hardest office to achieve would be national minister, because fewer than a dozen of these positions open up in any given legislature to career-minded politicians (see Chapter 3). Moreover, career politicians do not typically fill all ministries.³⁵ They typically fill only the "politicized" ministries, such as Transportation (which controls the road-building budget),

³² Interview with Aírton Sandoval.

³³ Interview with Antônio Carlos Pojo do Rêgo.

³⁴ Interview with Onofre Quinan.

³⁵ For example, in August 1997 eight of the twenty-one ministries were held by people without long-term political careers. These were Finance (Pedro Malan), Communications

Agriculture (which controls subsidies and investments in that policy area), and Labor (which controls a great number of political jobs). Overall, as a result of the relative scarcity of ministerial positions, only about 1 percent of elected deputies reach the ministry.

Politicians have a slightly better chance of reaching the statehouse, because Brazil has only twenty-six states plus a federal district that elects a governor. On the other hand, each state also has a vice-governorship, and each governor also controls a secretariat. The probability of attaining a position in the secretariat is significantly higher than that of governor (e.g., about one in ten sitting deputies obtains a secretariat during his or her term – see Chapter 3). Likewise, although Brazil has over 5,500 municipalities, only about 100 of these are worthy political prizes for a politician who has reached the Chamber of Deputies. Given that a mayoral race is a plurality race,³⁶ a politician's chance of winning compared to winning a race for deputy would be relatively low.

In sum, of the five positions I analyze here, deputies probably estimate that their chances of obtaining the position of minister as the most difficult, followed by governor and vice-governor, followed by mayor, state secretary, and then deputy.

How Much Does it Cost?

Finally, let us estimate the costs associated with seeking each office. I estimate costs in monetary terms, although we could certainly associate other costs with running, such as opportunity costs, or stress-induced health problems. I generate this estimate by comparing the relative costs of running for several offices in Brazil and the United States. In doing so, we can infer what an average politician is willing to spend to reach that office – and consequently also gain an idea of how valuable politicians consider each office.

The monetary costs of obtaining a national ministry are no higher than that of obtaining a Chamber seat, because deputies are nominated from within the Chamber. Winning gubernatorial candidates, on average, declared about U.S.\$2.5 million in donations in 1994.³⁷ And, as Table 1.1 shows, in

(Sérgio Motta), Administration and State Reform (Luís Carlos Bresser Pereira), Culture (Francisco Weffort), Education (Paulo Renato Souza), Sports (Pelé), Foreign Relations (Luís Felipe Lampréia), and Health (an interim minister). While Motta, Weffort, Bresser Pereira, and Souza had all previously held powerful positions, their careers are not typically political: Motta was Fernando Henrique Cardoso's campaign finance manager, Weffort is best known for his works as a professor, Bresser Pereira is a well-known economist and banker, and Souza has made a career as an educator. Lampréia is a career diplomat, and Pelé requires no explanation.

³⁶ Or majority runoff if the city has over 250,000 people.

³⁷ Brazilian campaign finance law requires declaration of contributions, not expenditures, so I assume that the former equals the latter (candidates must declare contributions to their own campaigns). See Samuels (2001a, 2001b, 2001c). I was unable to find data on the average cost of running for governor in the United States.

TABLE 1.1 *Campaign Expenditures for Brazil and the United States*

Position	Brazil 1994	United States 1986
Senate	377,000	3,200,000
Lower Chamber	94,000	397,000
State Legislature	34,000	62,000

Sources: Gierzynski and Breau (1993, 521); Federal Elections Commission (1998); Samuels (2001a, 2001b).

Brazil, using declared campaign donations, winning candidates for federal deputy raise about 2.75 times more money than do winning state deputy candidates, and winning senate candidates declare about four times more than winning federal deputy candidates. In the United States, using the declared campaign expenditures, winning House candidates in 1986 declared 6.4 times as much as a winning state legislature candidate, while winning senate candidates declared expenditures fifty times larger than state legislative candidates.³⁸ (In 1994, the one Brazilian Real was worth approximately one U.S. dollar.)

Little information exists regarding the costs of mayoral races in Brazil or the United States, but for Brazil we can compare the relative costs of a campaign for governor of São Paulo state with that for mayor of São Paulo city. The winning gubernatorial candidate in São Paulo in 1994 spent at least U.S.\$10 million, and the winner of the 1996 mayoral race also spent at least U.S.\$10 million (*Veja* 9/11/96, p. 8–15). Although lack of information impedes generalizing, this finding at least implies that mayoral races in the larger cities may generally be quite expensive, much more so on average than a race for deputy.

The U.S. and Brazilian campaign finance figures are not directly comparable – the Brazilian figures are donations, while the U.S. figures are expenditures – but even if donations do not accurately reflect expenditures in Brazil, we have no reason to suppose that the ratio of expenditures between offices differs from the ratio of donations between offices. That is, the true cost of a seat in the national legislature in Brazil is most likely about three times the cost of a seat in a state legislature. This is the crucial figure: the *relative* cost that candidates attribute to each office in each country permit inferences about how politicians appraise the expected utility associated with each office. The numbers thus suggest that U.S. politicians value a House seat much more than a seat in a state legislature relative to their Brazilian counterparts.

³⁸ I use 1986 figures for the United States because that is the year I found information on state legislative elections. In 1986, senate candidates declared donations of U.S.\$3.1 million, and congressional candidates declared donations of U.S.\$397,000, so the difference is not that great (FEC 1998).