



## THE POWER OF “HEADS OF CONGRESS”: STUDY ON POLITICAL AMBITIONS AND ELECTORAL CHANCES OF DIAP’S AWARDS

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**Abstract:** The paper analyzes Brazilian Federal Deputies elected in 2014 and rewarded as “Heads” of Congress, i.e., those congressmen indicated by the Intersyndical Department of Parliamentary Assistance (DIAP) as the most active in the 55th legislature in Brazil (2015-2018). Considering DIAP’s awards as an indirect indicator of relevance and influence in the Legislature, this study investigates the relationship between being or not a “Head” of the National Congress and the political ambition of the deputy (whether progressive, static, or regressive) and then if this political capital becomes into competitive advantages in subsequent electoral contests (2016, 2018 and 2020). Chi-square independence tests showed that there is an association between ambition type and political capital in the 2018 general election ( $p < 0.001$ ) and 2020 municipal election ( $p < 0.031$ ), but not in the 2016 municipal election ( $p < 0.450$ ). Relative risk and odds ratio tests revealed that there is no positive effect between being classified as a congressional political leader and good electoral performance for the group under analysis.

**Keywords:** Political Ambition; Electoral Success; Political Capital; House of Representatives; Legislative Branch.

### 1 Introduction

Congressmen seeking reelection are always committed to communicating their budget initiatives and benefits achievements to their constituents (MAYHEW, 1974). Faced with the uncertainties of a political career, it is desirable for congressmen who wish to remain in a position to promote their activities not only for the material benefits that they can bring to their electoral base but also through the disclosure of awards and distinctions that increase their political capital. In Brazil, it is known that the congressmen’s regular behavior is for reelection (PEREIRA; RENNÓ, 2001, 2007). At the same time, political careerism is complex. There is high turnover among elected positions in the country, indicating dynamic, non-linear careers with comings and goings between one political position and another, both in the Legislative and Executive branches, to survive electorally (BORCHERT, 2011; CORRÊA, 2016; LIMA, IANA ALVES DE, 2017; PEGURIER, 2009; PINTO, 2012; SANTOS, 1999; SANTOS; PEGURIER, 2011)

This article seeks to understand the relationship between being classified by the

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Intersyndical Department of Parliamentary Assistance (DIAP) as an influential and active parliamentarian (“Head of Congress”) and their future political ambitions and chances. We analyzed the electoral claims of Federal Deputies elected in 2014 for the 55<sup>th</sup> legislature (2015-2018) and compared those not classified as prominent congressmen with those classified by DIAP. The idea here is to know whether or not the fact of being a parliamentarian with higher status and/or great prominence is associated with electoral benefits in subsequent contests. Specifically, we intend to answer whether the power asymmetries within the House of Representatives, measured through the distinction made by DIAP, can be associated with the career strategies (ambitions) and electoral outcomes (successes or failures) of these congressmen.

Since 1983, DIAP has been considered a reference in monitoring the profile and actions of the parliamentary elite. Since 1994, the Department has published the report “*Os Cabeças do Congresso Nacional*” (“The Heads” of the National Congress). In every legislature (in 2021 we are in the 28th edition) the choices for committees, party leadership positions, and positions on the boards of the Chamber and Senate are monitored, allowing us to highlight the 100 most influential legislators of the year. To provide information to social movements about who are the most active and important actors, the report identifies and ranks the key players in the legislative process based on positional, reputational, and decision-making criteria (DIAP, 2020)<sup>5</sup>.

The Department classifies as “*Heads of Congress*” the Federal Deputies and Senators who possess certain skills that distinguish them from their peers. The protagonists of the legislative process stand out because they are skilled at conducting debates and negotiations, at reading the political reality, and at elaborating and passing on their proposals. This is the parliamentarian who “alone or in conjunction with other forces, is capable of creating his role and the context in which to play it” (DIAP, 2020, p. 10).

Given this, we use this classificatory mapping as a proxy for “political capital” to separate and rank the 513 MPs who served between February 2015 and February 2019. By political capital we mean the ability an actor has to organize and influence the legislative process, formulate initiatives, intervene in the public debate, and formulate political pacts. This allows it to stand out from others.

The study intends to test two hypotheses:

**H1:** *The greater the political capital (measured by the DIAP “Heads of Congress” rating), the greater will be the political ambitions of the congressmen;*

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<sup>5</sup> DIAP adopts qualitative and quantitative criteria in the classification and definition of the names that lead the legislative process. The positional method, characterized by the formal link or hierarchical position occupied by the parliamentarian in the structure of the House of Representatives; the reputational, which considers the perception that deputies and senators, advisors, journalists, scientists, and political analysts have about these politicians; and the decisional, which estimates the ability to lead and effectively influence legislative activities.

**H2:** *The fact that the congressman is considered a “Head of Congress” by DIAP, b indicates better political chances of electoral success in subsequent elections.*

The article is structured in four sections: next, we briefly review the studies of political ambition in the literature and about ambition in the Brazilian Legislative (section 2); in section 3, we list the methods and procedures for hypothesis testing and describe the variables and data sources; in section 4 we present the results and discuss the evidence found; in the conclusions, we resume the two hypotheses formulated to verify whether or not they can be verified.

## **2 Political ambition**

Career choices are one of the dimensions under analysis about the political class. They go beyond individual logic, allowing, through this type of evidence, a broader analysis of the political universe. For Schlesinger (1966), movements between elective positions even allow us to describe the arrangement of specific political systems. It is both the rules and opportunity structures of a given political system that enable or drive political careers.

In his investigation of U.S. Governors and Senators, Schlesinger (1966) noticed the existence of patterns in the movements between positions in the United States. Because of the well-established hierarchy of political positions and the opportunity structure of this job system, the movements between them tended to be unidirectional and predictable. Thus, it is possible to identify four types of political ambition. Progressive ambition marks those career choices that represent upward movements, such as going from the municipal legislature to the State legislature and from the State to the Federal legislature. Regressive ambition is the opposite of progressive. Static ambition represents the desire to be re-elected, that is, to remain in the position one holds. Discrete ambition, on the other hand, means giving up political competition after a position.

Based on this pioneering research, several important studies on the theme emerged throughout the 1970s (BLACK, 1972; MAYHEW, 1974; ROHDE, 1979). For Mayhew (1974), for example, congressmen are guided by the objective of reelection and this is a determining factor in understanding their behavior within the Legislative Branch. Considering the long careers in the North American legislature, Mayhew argues based on the idea of electoral connection that congressmen motivated by reelection seek strategies such as resource reallocation, decision making, and marketing to keep themselves always connected to their electorates.

The analysis of parliamentary performance linked to institutionalization aspects gained momentum in the 1980s (COOPER; BRADY, 1981). Fiorina (1989) dedicated herself to understanding the transformations related to the institutionalization of legislative careers in the United States by observing the professionalization of congressmen interested in reelection.

Analyzing the literature that relates political ambition and electoral connection, Carson

and Jenkins (2011) argued that the weakening of political parties makes Mayhew's (1974) theory more applicable to the contemporary period, where congressmen enjoy, in part, greater independence and self-sufficiency in political competition. The creation of institutional structures in legislatures (such as committee or subcommittee positions, reporting positions, etc.) also helps to condition careers, since legislators, by assuming more important positions, became more professional and this careerism increases their chances of reelection.

About the institutionalization of careers in the American legislative branch, Hibbing (1991) shows that congressmen with greater experience in the number of mandates (seniority) become more active in the legislative process, which allows them to conquer important positions in the institution. He demonstrates that the career in the American congress went through a phase of specialization on the part of its members and a clear electoral performance capacity of these incumbents, who were more agile in learning the legislative rules, this not being, however, a generalizable phenomenon to all national contexts (OPELLO, 1986).

When investigating the potential gains of political professionalization at the moment of reelection, Berry and his collaborators point out that more professionalized legislatures and levels of political professionalism mean higher probabilities of reelection, reducing external effects in legislative competition (such as belonging or not to the governing coalition). For these authors, professional legislators seek to reduce electoral uncertainties through the resources available in a legislature (BERRY; BERKMAN; SCHNEIDERMAN, 2000).

In the literature on the Brazilian case, Samuels (2003) diagnosed at the beginning of the current democratic cycle, a high rate of renewal in the House of Representatives allied to a low capacity for consolidation of political careers. The costs and benefits of the choices made by the congressmen were analyzed and the pattern in the House of Representatives would be the progressive ambition towards State (Governor) and municipal (Mayor) Executive positions, where there are more resources and more decision-making power. In this sense, the reelection to the position of Federal Deputy is not a priority for those congressmen with more prestige and influence in the Chamber, because they would have, precisely, more resources or political capital to try for higher positions.

The low retention power of careers in the House of Representatives (SAMUELS, 2003) then began to guide the research agenda in the country. Previously, Santos (1999) had already argued that one of the causes to explain the low institutionalization of the Brazilian House of Representatives was the dictatorial-military regime. It weakened the decision-making power of legislatures and the Brazilian political system itself also encouraged the high movement of the political class between elective posts, causing a "zigzag" effect from one position to another, as the actors sought to reduce the costs and electoral risks of the political profession, allowing, especially for those who were at the end of their mandates or threatened by possible defeats, to choose new positions (SANTOS, 1999).

Leoni, Pereira, and Rennó (2003) contradicted Samuels' (2003) thesis by arguing that congressmen considered weak or of little prestige in the House of Representatives did not opt for reelection, but rather for regressive ambition, seeking lower positions in the political hierarchy and, at least in theory, easier to obtain. In addition, the authors found a high percentage of Federal Deputies seeking reelection. The bet on higher positions (progressive ambition) was only made when they assessed that they had good chances of electoral success.

Pereira and Rennó (2001) contribute to understanding the determinants of the logic embedded in the calculations of reelection in the House of Representatives. The main strategy is to access resources and distribute them to benefit the interests of specific localities at the local level since there is a portion of congressmen oriented toward broader agendas, national issues, who do not take advantage of this. There would be a disconnect between parliamentary performance and electoral success, except for those who bring benefits to their bases. Pereira and Rennó (2013) reported that between 1998 and 2010 the reelection rate for the House of Representatives hovered above 70%, this being the main and most advantageous choice of incumbents, which had already been confirmed by previous research (SANTOS; PEGURIER, 2011). According to Pereira and Rennó, Brazilian congressmen are willing to seek reelection because of the greater possibility of electoral success, and not because of the power potentially accumulated by the position. These advantages identified for incumbents continue to be reinforced in more recent research (SILVA-JÚNIOR *et al.*, 2019).

Important findings, such as those by Santana (2008), Borchert (2009, 2011), and Santos and Pegurier (2011), have emphasized the high turnover of congressmen in elective a position. Santana (2008) calls this alternation between legislative and executive positions "dynamic ambition," neither an objective nor a predictable direction of the political career in the country. Santos (2010) and Santos and Pegurier (2011) emphasized the high competitiveness of the Brazilian political system and highlighted the importance of the House of Representatives in the political career.

Considering the Brazilian political system as a multi-level system, Borchert analyzes political career patterns through the speeds of career movements (frequencies), the direction of movements (political posts), and institutional interactions (levels of government). For Borchert (2009), the Brazilian political system has an integrated career pattern, which, in practice, means there is no well-defined hierarchy of elective political posts and a single direction for movements, resulting in a high frequency of candidacies. One of the reasons for this is high electoral uncertainty, coupled with the high number of attractive positions with rules that make it possible to run for one position without losing the mandate of another in non-simultaneous elections (for the municipal executive and the federal legislature, for example).

More recent studies have considered the peculiarities of the Brazilian multilevel system. Lima (2017) brought evidence of the high frequency of career movements between 1995 and

2015, without a single direction or in search of a specific power space. In addition, the research pointed to a high rate of individuals returning to the House of Representatives after passing through other positions, signaling the appropriateness of describing trajectories as a “zigzag” type movement. In addition, the equation must consider the variations in career patterns according to the competitiveness of each State of the federation and the size of the votes obtained. Candidates with higher votes are more likely to seek higher a position or re-election (COSTA, 2018).

In another recent contribution, Corrêa (2016) investigated the electoral survival of Brazilian State Deputies. According to the author, there is strong evidence that the electoral connections of congressmen influence in advance the choices of careers available in the structure of opportunities. The typology proposed by Corrêa (2016) for the spatial patterns of voting contributes to understanding the connection between the types of political ambitions and the electoral strongholds available to legislators.

Concerning the high circulation between positions and the possibility of Federal Deputies launching candidacies in the middle of their mandates, Pinto (2012) revealed that between 1992 and 2008 an average of approximately 20% of Federal Deputies launched candidacies for City Halls in the middle of their legislative term, achieving an average success rate of 24%. Still, concerning running for a position in the middle of their terms, Graça and Souza (2014) provide evidence that congressmen who run in municipal elections have better results in reelections to the House of Representatives, possibly because entering these races is a way to increase the visibility of congressmen.

Analyzing the performance of São Paulo Federal Deputies between 1991 and 2011, Mancuso and colleagues (2013) made an important addition to this debate. They showed that electoral capital and reputational values are linked to the determinants of career choices and favor the reelection of congressmen. They also considered the “Head” Deputies of Congress and showed, for the case of São Paulo, that those considered influential in the DIAP report, with significant votes in previous elections and loyalty to their parties, are more successful in attempts at reelection.

Also contributing to this debate in Brazil, Lima et al. (2018) suggested that ambitious congressmen have similarities with others in terms of political professionalization, considering experience, positions, and time in the party. However, the small sample (142 cases) for only one legislature does not allow definitive conclusions about this issue.

With this, we understand that in the literature, experience and specialization in the Legislative branch are fundamental parts of a legislative career. In addition, the modes of action and the electoral connection with the grassroots also complete this set of circumstances. In the Brazilian case, some of these aspects are clear, such as tendencies and strategies aimed at static ambition. However, particularities regarding the weight of reputational factors, such as being a

prominent leader in one's Legislative branch, have not yet been sufficiently tested.

### 3 Research design, materials, and method

Using the *Observatório de Elites Políticas e Sociais in Brazil's* (Observatory of Political and Social Elites of Brazil) database of Federal Deputies from 1998-2018, we selected those elected in 2014 for the 55<sup>th</sup> legislature. Through the documents *The "Heads" of the National Congress: a survey of the 100 most influential congressmen of the Intersyndical Department of Parliamentary Assistance* published between 2015 and 2018, we mapped the outstanding congressmen during the 2015-2019 legislature. Finally, consulting the databases of the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) we carried out the collection of the Federal Deputies' career choices elected in 2014, as well as their respective electoral results (elected/not elected) in each competition contested in 2016 (municipal), 2018 (national) and 2020 (municipal). In Table 1, we present the research universe.

**Table 1** – Universe and number of observations under analysis from the 55<sup>th</sup> legislature (2015-2019)

Number of elected congressmen in 2014	Number of congressmen awarded by DIAP (2015-2018)	Number of observations of career choices and electoral success (2016, 2018, 2020 elections)
513	87	1.539

Source: Prepared by the authors based on a database from the Observatory of Political and Social Elites of Brazil (2018), DIAP (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018), and TSE (2016, 2018, 2020 elections).

In Chart 1, we present the set of variables and a brief description of the analysis model.

**Chart 1** – Selected variables in the model

variable in the model	variable	categories and measurements	type/description
Independent	DIAP award-winning	yes/no	nominal categorical variable: number of congressmen awarded or not by DIAP during the 55 <sup>th</sup> Legislature
	number of awards in the legislature	not awarded (0 awards); slightly awarded (1 or 2 awards); highly awarded (3 or 4 awards)	ordinal categorical variable: classification of cases according to the number of DIAP awards received by congressmen during the 55 <sup>th</sup> Legislature
Dependent	career choices	City Councilor; Mayor of a rural town; Mayor of a capital city; Deputy Mayor; State Deputy; Governor; Deputy Governor; Federal Deputy; Senator; Deputy Senator; President; Vice-President	nominal categorical variable: records the political positions for which the federal de congressmen elected in 2014 ran in 2016, 2018 and 2020
	electoral success	elected/not elected	nominal categorical variable: indicates the outcome of the events in 2016, 2018 and 2020

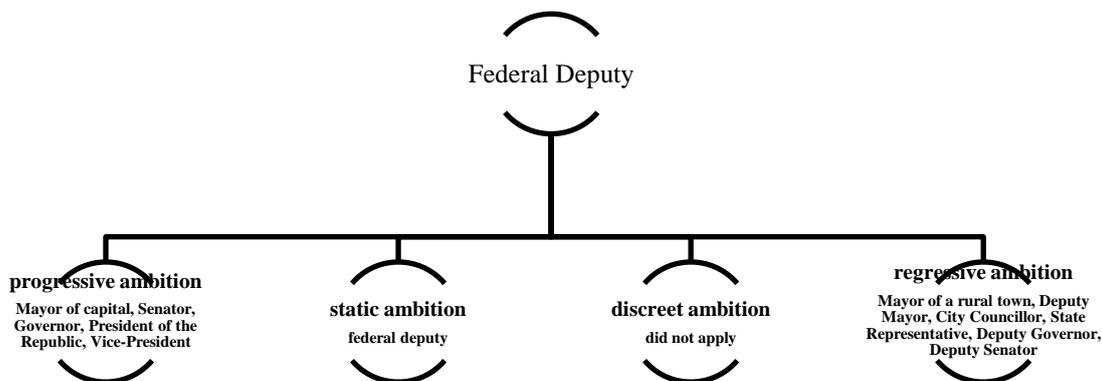
type of political ambition	discrete; regressive; static; progressive	nominal categorical variable: classifies the types of political ambition according to the level of the desired position in the hierarchy of political positions in Brazil
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Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

Two variables in Chart 1 need further explanation. For “number of awards in the Legislature”, we classified the universe of 513 congressmen according to the number of awards won by each one, being: not awarded = 0 awards; slightly awarded = 1 or 2 awards; highly awarded = 3 or 4 awards.

The second variable is “type of political ambition”. Given the complexity of the hierarchy of elective positions in the Brazilian political system (BORCHERT, 2009, 2011; MIGUEL, 2003), we use a logic that takes into account the level of government and the potential political power of the position to structure this hierarchy, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1** – Type of political ambition from the position of Federal Deputy according to career movements



Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

The hierarchy formulated from the position of Federal Deputy takes into consideration the levels of Government, with the federal level being the highest, followed by the State and municipal levels. In the Legislative branch, only the position of Senator will be considered as career progression concerning Federal Deputy. In addition, the first level positions in the State Executive (Governor) and in the Municipal Executive (when it is the capital of the State) were also considered as higher positions, as well as at the federal level (President and Vice-President of the Republic). Positions such as Deputy Senator, Vice-Governor, and Deputy Mayor, in addition to the municipal level in the Legislative or Executive branches of the countryside

municipalities were considered as hierarchical decreases concerning the position occupied in the House of Representatives (regressive ambition).

In the next section, we present the awardees and the career movements made by the analyzed congressmen. In a second moment, through the chi-square test of independence, we test whether there is an association between political capital measured by DIAP awards and the political ambitions presented by congressmen in the three elections after 2014. Finally, we performed the odds ratio and relative risk calculations considered metrics that estimate the odds and probabilities of outcomes between groups, observing whether there is an effect between being a parliamentarian awarded by DIAP and success at the ballot box. The p-value for rejection of the null hypothesis is 0.05.

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Career choices and the direction of political ambition

Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of DIAP awards from the variables elaborated in the research.

**Table 2** – Total of congressmen awarded and not awarded by DIAP in the 55<sup>th</sup> legislature

Heads of Congress (DIAP)	Frequency	percentage on 513
Not awarded	426	83
Awarded	87	17
Slightly awarded (1-2)	40	7.8
Highly awarded (3-4)	47	9.2

Source: Prepared by the authors based on DIAP (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

Only 17% of the congressmen of the 55th legislature were highlighted by DIAP as “Heads”. The vast majority of congressmen (83%) were not considered leaders with legislative influence in this period. 9.2% of the congressmen received the award during three or four years of the legislature, being classified as “highly rewarded”; 7.8% were classified as “Heads” in only one or two years of the legislature, being “not highly rewarded”.

One way to measure the importance of the legislature for the political class may be through their career choices. In Table 3 we present information about the political ambition of congressmen in the 55<sup>th</sup> legislature.

**Table 3** – Type of political ambition of Federal Deputies elected in 2014 in subsequent elections (2016, 2018, and 2020)

variable	Frequency	(%)	electoral success	(%)
<b>2016 municipal elections</b>	73	14.2	18	3.5
Discreet ambition	440	85.8		
Regressive Ambition	45	8.8	17	37.8
Progressive ambition	28	5.5	1	3.6
<b>2018 general elections</b>	454	88.5	270	52.6
Discreet ambition	59	11.5		
Regressive ambition	26	5.1	12	46.2
Static ambition	378	73.7	241	63.8
Progressive ambition	50	9.7	17	34
<b>2020 municipal elections</b>	82	16.2	30	5.8
Discreet ambition	430	83.8		
Regressive Ambition	54	10.5	26	48.1
Progressive ambition	29	5.7	5	17.2

Source: Prepared by the authors based on TSE (2016, 2018, and 2020).

The data on career choices reveal some patterns. In municipal elections (2016 and 2020) the strategic choice of most Federal Deputies is not to contest (more than 80%). In 2018, a decisive moment for the renewal of the mandates of those elected in 2014, 88.5% of congressmen compete electorally.

In 2016, 14.2% of Federal Deputies choose to risk a candidacy at the municipal level, with 8.8% showing regressive ambition, achieving electoral success in 37.8% of these candidacies. Whereas 5.5% of candidacies are classified as progressive ambition, with the electoral success of 3.6%.

In the general elections of 2018, when the mandates of the 55th legislature end, it is noticeable the search of congressmen for maintaining their careers, which leads only 11.5% of the analyzed group not to run for election. With this, the static ambition (reelection) is registered in 73.7% of the cases, with the relatively high electoral success of 63.8%, numbers close to those already identified in the literature for other disputes (PEREIRA; RENNÓ, 2013; SANTOS; PEGURIER, 2011). Unlike municipal elections, in general elections, progressive ambition appears in 9.7% of the choices and 34% of the congressmen succeed. Whereas regressive ambition is recorded in 5.1% of career decisions, achieving electoral success in 46.2% of the cases.

In the 2020 elections, the majority choice of congressmen is not to compete (83.8%) and regressive ambition is 10.5% of their career choices, with electoral success in almost half of these candidacies (48.1%). Progressive ambition, on the other hand, is recorded in 5.7% of the

choices, with electoral success in 17.2%, indicating higher results than those achieved in the 2016 elections, which can be justified by the very end of the legislature closed in 2018, but also by the reelection attempts of those victorious in 2016.

It is possible to perceive different dynamics in career choices when actors are confronted with opportunities in general and municipal elections. In municipal elections, the political system offers a much smaller range of options (Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and City Councilor) and this can mean a career downgrade (for example, leaving the House of Representatives to become a City Councilor or Executive in a municipality that is not very representative). In addition, to run for an executive position, congressmen go through a majoritarian election, and the electoral system is an important factor to be considered in competitiveness and chances of success.

In general elections, besides the institutional incentive of the end of the term, which in politics can be synonymous with "unemployment", the congressmen have a wider variety of choices and, besides the option of reelection, they can step down to the position of State Deputy or even prefer positions of lesser expression, such as Vice-Governor or Deputy Senator. In addition, there are career advancement alternatives, such as Senator, Governor, Vice-President, and President of the Republic. These positions, however, are more competitive, the elections are majoritarian and campaign costs tend to be higher.

The data presented in Table 3 reinforce the finding that the main career choice of Federal Deputies is to remain in the House of Representatives.

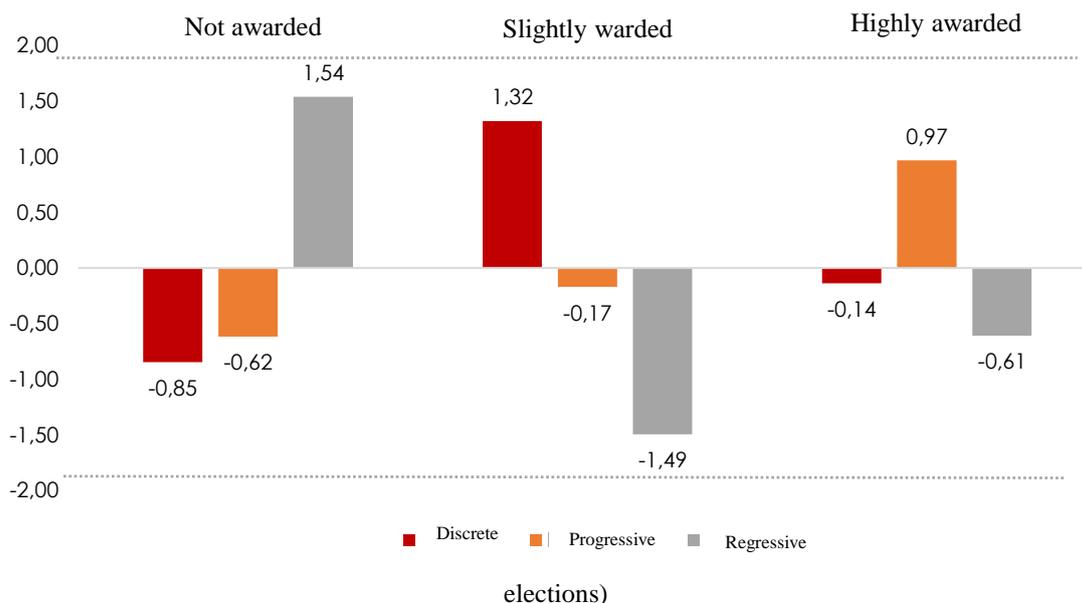
#### **4.2 Career choices and political capital accumulated in the legislature**

Charts 1, 2, and 3 analyze the effect of the awards of the Departamento Intersindical de Assessoria Parlamentar on the career choices of Federal Deputies and reveal whether or not there is an association between the outstanding performance of the congressmen in legislative work in the House of Representatives and their future political career aspirations.

In Chart 1 we observe the result of the test of association between political capital measured by DIAP's award and the political ambitions of congressmen in 2016.

The values are represented in adjusted standardized residuals. Standardized residuals are an indication that the values found exceed the expected values, either positively or negatively. That is, given an ideal probabilistic distribution, the standard residual denotes the data that deviates from the statistically expected probability, either plus or minus, in the distribution. Here, residuals with values above 1.96 or below -1.96 indicate that there is a concentration of certain groups beyond the statistical expectation when the confidence interval is 95%. (PESTANA; GAGEIRO, 2008).

**Chart 1** – Association between the type of political ambition and political capital (2016 municipal



Source: Prepared by the authors based on TSE (elections) and DIAP (2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018).

Note: the independence chi-square test showed that there is no association between ambition type and political capital in the 2016 election [ $\chi^2(4) = 3.689$ ;  $p < 0.450$ ]. The dotted lines indicate the threshold of 1.96 and -1.96.

Mid-term municipal elections can bring benefits for reelection in the House of Representatives, as they can increase the visibility of congressmen during campaigns (GRAÇA; SOUZA, 2014). However, Chart 1 evidences that there was no association between ambition in 2016 and accumulated political capital. As observed previously (Table 3), the 2016 municipal elections are preempted or were not privileged in the congressmen’s political survival strategy, not being targeted by a significant number of candidacies. In previous research, Pinto (2012) revealed that only 20% of Federal Deputies run for the position of mayor in their midterm.

In Table 4 we present the risk estimate for awarded or not awarded congressmen during the 55<sup>th</sup> legislature in the 2016 electoral competition, exposing the odds ratio (odds ratio) and relative risk for success in that opportunity.

**Table 4** – Estimated electoral risk for awarded and not awarded congressmen in the 2016 municipal elections

	Value	95% confidence interval	
		Inferior	Superior
Odds Ratio for Awarded (No / Yes)	3.326	.391	28.258
For cohort Election success 2016 = Elected	2.698	.402	18.100
For cohort Election success 2016 = Not elected	.811	.628	1.047
N of Valid Cases	73		

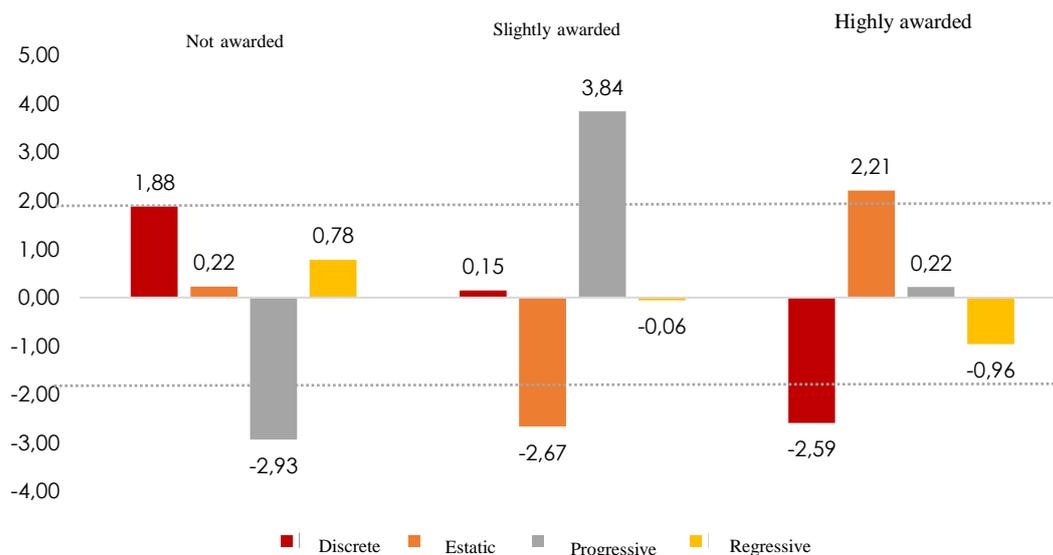
Source: Prepared by the authors based on TSE (2016) and DIAP (2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018).

Note: The independence chi-square test showed that there is no association between awardees and electoral success in 2016 [ $\chi^2(1) = 1.340$ ;  $p < 0.247$ ].

The results reveal that there is no association between receiving the DIAP award and electoral success in 2016. Moreover, the chance of being elected or not awarded is, paradoxically, 3.3 times higher than that of an award, and the relative risk is less than 1, indicating a decrease in this probability. The explanation for this is possibly the career choices of the not awarded individuals: a greater number opted for positions of lower political status (regressive ambition). Thus, this calculation indicates the first clue related to the inexistence of the DIAP award's effect beyond the internal environment of the House of Representatives, not being a factor that would explain better electoral performances, at least among the analyzed congressmen.

In Chart 2, we test the existence or not of an association between the political capital and political ambition in the 2018 elections, a decisive moment for the group of analyzed congressmen. The results of this test show that there is an association between political capital measured through awards and types of political ambition.

**Chart 2** – Association between the type of political ambition and political capital (2018 general elections)



Source: Prepared by the authors based on TSE (elections) and DIAP (2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018).

Note: the independence chi-square test showed that there is an association between ambition type and political capital in the 2018 election [ $\chi^2(6) = 23.401$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ]. The dotted lines indicate the threshold of 1.96 and -1.96.

We highlight the negative association (-2.93) related to congressmen “not awarded” by DIAP and progressive ambition, pointing out a low tendency of congressmen with low prominence in the House of Representatives to launch themselves in candidacies for positions higher than the Federal Deputy. “Slightly awarded” congressmen are more associated with progressive ambition (residual of 3.84) and negative association with static ambition, as shown in the orange bar (reelection to the same position occupied at the moment). In turn, “highly awarded” congressmen show a negative association with discrete ambition (-2.59), while they have a positive association (2.21) with static ambition, allowing us to infer that those who accumulated more DIAP awards in the 55<sup>th</sup> legislature were those who tried hardest to remain in the House of Representatives.

Congressmen with low political capital, i.e., not awarded as “Heads” of Congress, did not present significant static ambition, while the group of “highly awarded” congressmen stands out by seeking to remain in the Legislative, at least in the examined legislature. These data contradict the conclusions of Samuels (2003), according to which the House of Representatives does not attract “heavyweight” congressmen and, consequently, those in a good position to seek higher positions. Despite not having statistical significance (residuals of 0.78) in this specific case, regressive ambition could, theoretically, be more associated with not awarded congressmen, this being an indication of holding little political capital and thus choosing to move down the hierarchy to survive electorally (LEONI; PEREIRA; RENNÓ, 2003). In the case of the 2018 general elections, this was not what we found.

Considering that in the municipal elections previously analyzed the DIAP award did not influence electoral success, in Table 5 we present the risk estimate for the success of congressmen in the 2018 elections. In this dispute, the mandates in the House of Representatives are at stake, which could prove what the effects of political capital measured by the DIAP award on electoral performance would be.

**Table 5** – Estimated electoral risk for awarded and not awarded congressmen in the 2018 general election

	Value	95% confidence interval	
		Inferior	Superior
Odds Ratio for Awarded (No / Yes)	.817	.498	1.339
For cohort Election success 2016 = Elected	.924	.768	1.112
For cohort Election success 2016 = Not elected	1.132	.830	1.542
N of Valid Cases	454		

Source: Prepared by the authors based on TSE (2018) and DIAP (2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018).

Note: the independence chi-square test showed that there is no association between awardees and electoral success in 2018 [ $X^2(1) = 0.646$ ;  $p < 0.422$ ].

The chi-square test showed no association between awards and electoral success in 2018. However, we note that the odds ratio of not awarded becomes less than 1, indicating that the chance of this group being elected decreases. Although the relative risk is 1.1 (a number considered low for this statistic where  $RR > 1$  means increased outcome), the calculation suggests higher electoral risks in the 2018 elections for those not awarded. Therefore, it is not possible to affirm that the political capital accumulated thanks to the awards conferred by DIAP is linked to electoral success in 2018. However, the evidence shows that those not awarded ran more risks of electoral failure.

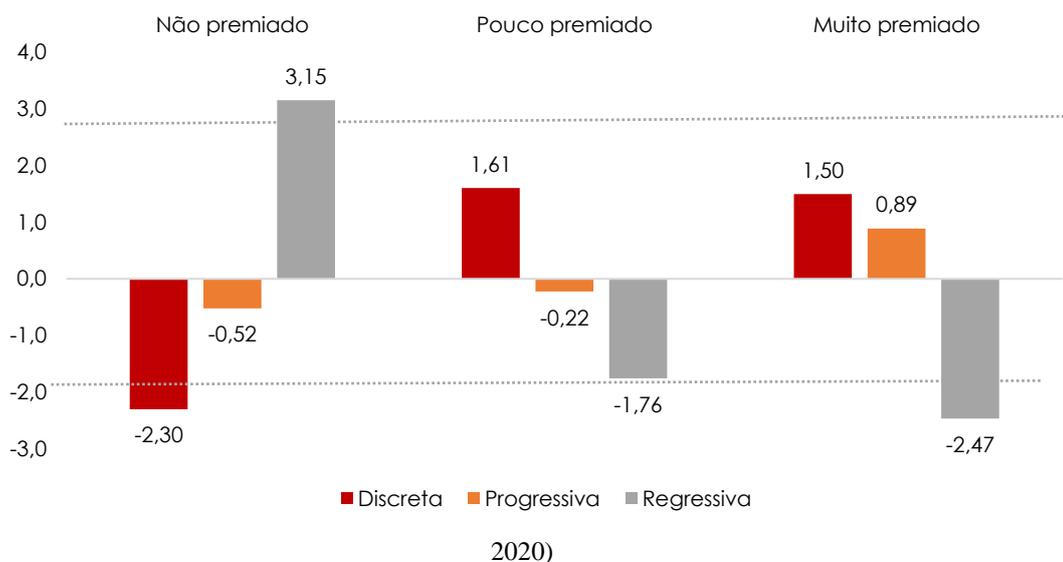
Unlike the results found in the first analyzed municipal election (2016), Chart 3 shows that in 2020 there is an association between the political capital and political ambition.

There was an association between “not awarded” congressmen and regressive ambition (adjusted standardized residuals of 3.15). Congressmen with low political capital in the House of Representatives are more likely to move down the political hierarchy and try to jump to a municipal position, which may represent for them the maintenance or an improvement of their political career. There is also a negative association between this group of congressmen and discrete ambition (-2.3).

In the “highly awarded” group (those 47 individuals with 3 or 4 awards in the legislature) there is a negative association with regressive ambition: these congressmen do not tend, for the most part, to run for positions lower in the political hierarchy than that of Federal

Deputy when the contests are municipal.

**Chart 3** – Association between the type of political ambition and political capital (municipal elections



Source: Prepared by the authors based on TSE (elections) and DIAP (2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018).

Note: the independence chi-square test showed that there is an association between ambition type and political capital in the 2020 election [ $X^2(4) = 10.648$ ;  $p < 0.031$ ]. The dotted lines indicate the threshold of 1.96 and -1.96.

Knowing the inexistence of an association between DIAP awards and electoral success, in Table 6 we expose the results of the risk estimation for this group in the 2020 municipal election.

**Table 6** – Estimated electoral risk for awarded and not awarded congressmen in the 2020 municipal elections

	Value	95% confidence interval	
		Inferior	Superior
Odds Ratio for Awarded (No / Yes)	1.543	.281	8.477
For cohort Election success 2016 = Elected	1.336	.400	4.460
For cohort Election success 2016 = Not elected	.866	.525	1.428
N of Valid Cases	83		

Source: Prepared by the authors based on TSE (2020) and DIAP (2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018).

Note: the independence chi-square test showed that there is no association between awardees and electoral success in 2020 [ $X^2(1) = 0.252$ ;  $p < 0.616$ ]

The results of the risk estimation resemble the results found in the 2016 election. Once again, the chance of non-award winners being elected is 1.5 times greater than that of award winners. In addition, this group has a lower risk of failing in this election than those of the

awardees. As in 2016, the number of Federal Deputies who stand in Municipal elections is reduced. In the 2020 elections, the non-prize winners are associated with regressive ambition, which brings a clue to the chances of greater success than that of the group of prize winners.

## 5 Final considerations

The research aimed to understand the political-electoral effects of belonging to DIAP's list of the "Heads" of the Congress between 2015 and 2018 and the types of political ambitions, as well as the chances of the electoral success of Federal Deputies elected to the 55<sup>th</sup> legislature. We seek to answer whether the political capital accumulated thanks to inside work in the House of Representatives - indirectly measured by DIAP's mapping - had an impact on the type of ambition and electoral outcomes in 2016, 2018, and 2020.

We observed that the effect of being influential in the House of Representatives was not associated with the types of ambitions in the 2016 Municipal elections (discrete, progressive, or regressive). In this case, even without statistical significance, we observed that non-prize winners choose in larger numbers to move down the political hierarchy, which explains, in turn, the reasons for higher chances of being elected. As for the 2020 Municipal elections, we observed a positive association between the group of congressmen not awarded by DIAP and regressive ambition, as well as a negative association between the ambition to be Mayor or City Councilor and the group of highly awarded congressmen, demonstrating some impact of this political capital on future ambitions.

In the 2018 elections, there is an association between the "Heads" of Congress and their political ambitions. Congressmen considered influential but with only one or two distinctions (low awardees) tend more than others to seek higher office, and those who are very influential or highly awarded opt for reelection. Both groups have no association with discretionary ambition. The non-awarded congressmen, on the other hand, are mostly not in the group of politicians with progressive ambition, i.e., seeking higher positions.

This evidence opens up room to argue that the reputational effect linked to the status of prominence in the House of Representatives has some incentive on the career choices of the investigated congressmen. In some ways, this allows us to measure a preference for stability in a position on the part of the highly prized, pointing to careerism and professionalization. But it is also possible to interpret the choice for progressive ambition by the low award winners as the necessary incentive for them to seek candidacies for higher positions.

On the effects of this type of political capital and the outcome of the polls, no associations were observed. However, the odds ratio for non-influential congressmen in 2016 and 2020 is positive, which can be explained by the number of congressmen who launch candidacies and by the choices of regressive ambition. In the 2018 elections, the relative risk calculation showed a higher risk of electoral failure for non-winning congressmen, indicating a

low probability of success for these candidacies.

Thus, the H1 of the research was only partially confirmed, which supposed the existence of an association between being one of the “Heads” of the National Congress (or having high political capital) and progressive ambition, since we identified an association between the future career choices of influential congressmen (little awarded or highly awarded) in the 2018 and 2020 elections. However, we reject H2 of the research, since there is no association between political capital measured by the Intersyndical Department of Parliamentary Assistance and the chances of electoral success in subsequent contests.

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