Supplementary materials

The dependent variable here was operationalized as a dichotomous variable with a different value depending on the tested model. In Model 1, it has a value of one if the RCM obtained as first office within five years of the end of their mandate a role at the national/EU level. In Model 2, it has a value of 1 if the RCM obtained as first office within five years of the end of their mandate an office at the local level. Finally, in Model 3, it has a value of 1 if the RCM did not obtain any institutional role (neither at the local, regional, national, nor European level) within five years of the end of his/her term as an RCM.

Table A Results of the multivariate logistic regressions

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Model 1  (upward) | | Model 2 (downward) | | Model 3  (exit) | |
|  | Coefficient | RRR | Coefficient | RRR | Coefficient | RRR |
| Independent Variables |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Regional President | 0.740 | 2.1 | -1.833 | 0.16 | -0.491 | 0.61 |
|  | (0.532) |  | (0.939) |  | (0.343) |  |
| Woman | -0.051 | 0.95 | -0.743 | 0.48 | 0.463 | 1.59 |
|  | (0.377) |  | (0.540) |  | (0.301) |  |
| Small Party | -0.595\* | 0.55 | -0.182 | 0.83 | 0.375\*\* | 1.45 |
|  | (0.286) |  | (0.263) |  | (0.137) |  |
| Non-Partisan | 0.217 | 1.24 | -0.270 | 0.76 | 0.770\*\*\* | 2.16 |
|  | (0.312) |  | (0.206) |  | (0.191) |  |
| Local Career | 0.0324 | 1.03 | 0.256\*\* | 1.29 | -0.220 | 0.80 |
|  | (0.140) |  | (0.094) |  | (0.133) |  |
| Regional Career | 0.211 | 1.23 | 0.125 | 1.13 | -0.021 | 0.98 |
|  | (0.171) |  | (0.111) |  | (0.0829) |  |
| National Career | 0.210\*\* | 1.23 | -0.289 | 0.75 | 0.0935 | 1.1 |
|  | (0.074) |  | (0.251) |  | (0.0872) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Control Variables |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Age: Reference category 39 or less years |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 40-49 | 0.067 | 1.07 | -0.200 | 0.82 | 0.597\* | 1.82 |
|  | (0.402) |  | (0.491) |  | (0.258) |  |
| 50-59 | -0.633\*\* | 0.53 | -0.760 | 0.48 | 1.179\*\*\* | 3.25 |
|  | (0.224) |  | (0.548) |  | (0.274) |  |
| 60 or more | -1.603\*\*\* | 0.20 | -0.479 | 0.62 | 1.730\*\*\* | 5.64 |
|  | (0.403) |  | (0.614) |  | (0.321) |  |
| Early interruption | 1.246\*\*\* | 3.48 | 0.061 | 1.06 | 0.138 | 1.15 |
|  | (0.313) |  | (0.252) |  | (0.205) |  |
| Geographical localisation. Reference category: Swing/competitive Region |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C-R Stronghold | 0.745\*\* | 2.11 | -0.886 | 0.41 | -0.472 | 0.62 |
|  | (0.256) |  | (0.547) |  | (0.440) |  |
| C-L Stronghold | -0.284 | 0.75 | -0.110 | 0.90 | 0.297 | 1.34 |
|  | (0.529) |  | (0.548) |  | (0.288) |  |
| N | 721  0.129 | | 721  0.06 | | 721  0.11 | |
| PR2 |

Standard errors clustered at the regional level are reported; \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001.

Starting with Model 1, which explains which factors influence obtaining a national-level or EU position at the end of the career for RCMs, it is observed that among the independent variables, belonging to a small party and displaying a previous national career are the only statistically significant ones. RCMs from smaller parties seem to have more difficulty in making career progressions to the national or European level, with a probability that is essentially half (OR 0.55) compared to RCMs who belong to a larger party. Hence, the greater resources available to larger parties are confirmed as central in ensuring the possibility of a movement to the higher level of career for members of regional executives. As a consequence, hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

In addition, as the time of the previous career at the national level increases, so does the likelihood of returning to a role in the national or European arena after the conclusion of the regional executive experience (OR 1.23). In other words, for national politicians, executive positions at the regional level do not necessarily constitute a moment of career halt but rather an intermediate stage, awaiting a return to the national political arena. No other statistically significant effects of local and regional careers were found. Thus, hypothesis 5a is confirmed.

Alternatively, there is no statistically significant effect of being an RP or being a female RCM in relation to an upward movement, even though the direction of the correlation goes in the expected direction in both cases. However, hypotheses H3 and H4a are not confirmed.

Model 2 illustrates the factors that favour a move backwards to the local level. The previous career at the local level is the only statistically significant variable and is positively correlated. Essentially, RCMs with previous local experiences have a greater probability (OR 1.29) of holding a position at the local level within five years of the end of their mandate. Thus, hypothesis H5b is confirmed.

As for the factors influencing the probability of not holding a position in the next five years (Model 3), the analysis highlights a statistically significant and positive effect that favours the exit from politics in relation to belonging to a small party and non-partisanship.

In particular, the analysis shows that RCMs who belong to small parties have about 40% higher odds (OR 1.45) of not holding any position compared to members of larger parties. The greater resources available to larger parties seem not only to influence the possibility of a leap to national politics for their RCMs but also to influence their chances of staying within the political arena, by stabilising their career within different territorial levels. As a consequence, hypothesis H1b is therefore confirmed.

Finally, the statistically strongest effect is represented by non-partisanship, with non-partisan members having more than twice the probability of not obtaining a position within five years of the end of their mandate as RCMs compared to those belonging to a party. This is a particularly relevant effect and consistent with the literature. It also highlights the substantial relevance that political parties play not only in recruiting the political class but also in defining their career paths. An independent or non-party member may be appointed, based on their background or personal relations with the Regional president, to the regional cabinet; however, party membership seems to be an almost essential requirement to give continuity to their political career after finishing their mandate. Consequently, H2 is confirmed.

Despite the positive coefficient, no statistically significant effect is detected in relation to gender with respect to exit from politics. Therefore, hypothesis H4b is not confirmed. In this regard, some additional considerations need to be made regarding the variables gender and regional president. They seem to exert an effect in the direction predicted by the literature but lack statistical significance. However, in both cases, the effect approaches the threshold of statistical significance. This could be attributed to the relatively small number of both RPs and female RMs in the Italian ordinary status regions. Further in-depth analyses will be required to confirm effects in this direction.

As far as the control variables are concerned, age is significant as expected both in Model 1 with a negative effect and in Model 3 with a positive effect. This means that ageing both hinders the possibility to move upwards in political career and favours the exit from politics. Moreover, early term interruption is positively correlated with a movement upwards, meaning that it is likely that RCMs who (individually or collectively) interrupt their regional cabinet term before its natural end, are more likely to use such an occurrence to move upwards, namely, to reach national or European positions. Finally, being in a CR stronghold is positively associated with a movement upwards. However, we think this effect is especially due to a relatively large number of RCMs coming from Lombardy that is one of the regions with more regional executives in the time frame considered, also for the occurrence of several scandals that affected Formigoni cabinet IV which lead to the substitution of several regional ministers (from 2010 to 2011) and finally to the early termination of the entire cabinet in 2012.