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Committee Leadership Selection without Seniority: The Mexican Case

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Abstract

How are committee leaders in legislatures chosen absent seniority norms? This paper argues that the prior political experience of legislators can serve as cues to caucus leaders to reduce adverse selection in a legislature where seniority cannot be the basis of allocating committee leadership posts because of single term limits. We assess whether differences in background and expertise have any effect on the likelihood of leading major, issue, or duty panels in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies elected between 1997 and 2006. Using a dataset of 1,391 federal deputies, we estimate the effect of the level (federal, state or local) and type (legislative, bureaucratic or party) of their prior expertise on committee leadership. Using Bayesian multinomial logit models, we find that well educated legislators with bureaucratic expertise are more likely to lead a major committee than those with prior legislative or other national level expertise. We find mixed evidence for so-called state governor loyalists.

Resumen

¿Cómo son elegidos los líderes de comisiones legislativas en un sistema sin reelección? Cuando los presidentes o secretarios de las comisiones no pueden asignarse según la antigüedad de los legisladores, es posible que los líderes partidistas usen la experiencia política previa de aquellos para reducir problemas de selección adversa. En este documento se evalúa si de la experiencia y antecedentes de los legisladores tienen algún impacto en la probabilidad de presidir diferentes tipos de comisiones en la Cámara de Diputados de México entre 1997 y 2006. Con base en datos de 1,391 diputados federales, se estima el efecto tanto del nivel —federal, estatal o local— como del tipo de experiencia previa —legislativa, burocrática o partidista—. Mediante modelos bayesianos logísticos multinomiales, la evidencia indica que los diputados con mayores niveles de estudios y con mayor experiencia burocrática tienen mayores probabilidades de presidir alguna de las comisiones clave, que aquellos con experiencia legislativa, partidista u otros cargos de nivel federal.

Introduction

This paper seeks to understand how the committee leadership posts are allocated in the absence of the norm of seniority (which dictates that those who have served the longest in the chamber eventually move into leadership positions and stay there until they lose office). This is an important question outside the United States because in many legislatures around the world, and especially in Latin America, re-election rates are quite low and seniority plays a small role, if any, in determining who runs committees in congress (Altman and Chasquetti, 2005; Jones *et al.,* 2002; Morgenstern and Nacif, 2002; Samuels 2000, 2003).[1]

Committees in legislatures enhance specialization and improve the policy making process, and in doing so, have the potential to decentralize authority within the chamber (Cox and McCubbins, 1993; Fenno, 1973; Rohde, 1991). In many legislatures around the world, however, committees are not nearly as powerful as their US counterparts. But, while there is little doubt that committee chairs and secretaries are the agents of their legislative leaders in Mexico in particular, and Latin America in general, caucus coordinators must still delegate some of their power over policy making to panel leaders because of the committees' procedural ability to revise and rework legislation (Morgenstern and Nacif, 2002). This paper argues that because of this delegation, caucus leaders should choose leaders who are closest to their particular preferences, or lacking that, those who are most loyal to avoid major agency losses. Therefore, they must choose loyal, tested co-partisans to lead committees. On the flip side, loyalty and experience should not matter that much for committees where agency costs are lower.

This paper will use the largely unexplored case of Mexico to understand why certain legislators are chosen to be committee leaders, which we define as presidents and secretaries, rather than others. The Mexican legislature is an excellent example to use because of the nation's constitutional prohibition of consecutive legislative re-election, which makes it an outlier in terms of low re-election rates and seniority around the region. The Chamber of Deputies (Mexico's lower house of congress) has functioned without major interruption for almost 100 years; and while its committees are not particularly powerful, they do enjoy rule-based prerogatives that allow them to modify, adapt, or block initiatives.

To understand how committee leadership posts are allocated in a far more hierarchical legislative model, one in which legislative party leaders are not

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[1] Altman and Chasquetti (2005) report that while in the US congress, about 83% of members win re-election, this number drops to 59% for Chile, 47% for Uruguay, and only 17% for Argentina. This number is zero in Mexico because of the constitutional prohibition against consecutive re-election for legislators.

obligated to decentralize authority to help win legislative majorities,[2] one should take into account the two distinct goals of Mexico's caucus leaders: first, legislative coordinators (as they are known) want to place loyal agents with relevant technical experience on important committees to help them control the legislative work done and in doing so, keep their extra-legislative principals content. Second, they want to strengthen their leadership position and keep their back-benchers compliant in order to avoid a rebellion.[3]

Most federal deputies want a leadership post on a committee because of the extra pay that leadership brings, because they can win greater media exposure, and because they will be able to form alliances with a greater number of co-partisans and with members of other parties, all of which should help the politician's future career goals. Consecutive re-election is prohibited in Mexico, but not the desire to continue one's career.[4]

This paper will help demonstrate that a deputy's prior political experience before coming to the Chamber is a crucial proxy that party leaders use to lower the search costs of the deputy's true preferences over different issues, and therefore, in explaining which deputy has a higher probability of becoming a president or secretary of different types of committees. Because of the prohibition against consecutive re-election, party leaders cannot depend on reputation and repeated interactions over time with a group of representatives to provide information about policy preferences and legislative abilities. And because national party leaders cannot control candidate selection across the board to the Chamber, they must rely on indirect measures, such as prior political background and political connections, to avoid adverse selection problems when allocating committee leadership posts.

One could argue that caucus leaders choose their committee leaders solely on the basis of informal contacts and alliances rather than prior political experience. In fact, this is not a completely excludable way of understanding committee leadership selection. Prior political experience is also a way of measuring informal ties that have been constructed over the life-span of a political leader with different elements of her party. A leader cannot hope to know all politicians within her party (especially in a federal system, such as Mexico's). But, by knowing that a certain legislator has prior experience as a finance secretary in a state government, the caucus leader can assume two

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[2] Because of the strong three-party system in Mexico, no legislative majority has existed in the Chamber since the PRI lost its hegemonic position in 1997. In the absence of a majority, no party controls the presidencies of all panels, as is the case in the US.

[3] Former PRI legislative leader, Arturo Núñez states that because then-coordinator Elba Esther Gordillo (59th Legislature, 2003-2006) did not give certain politicians in her caucus the committee posts they expected, she lost a great deal of support, which helped lead to her ouster. Interview, March 9, 2009. Also, "Priístas convertirían independientes", *El Universal*, 2 September, 2003 and "Crece división en fracción Tricolor", *Mural*, 3 September, 2003.

[4] More than 92% of federal deputies continue in political posts after their single term in congress ends (Langston and Aparicio, 2008).

things: first, that the legislator has some ability to understand budgetary issues; and second, that this person is an ally of the current governor of her state. One could argue that by choosing this legislator to run a committee, the coordinator is relying on informal ties to the governor, but is also choosing a politician with certain skills fitted to the panel. To tackle this issue empirically, we will distinguish specific bureaucratic or legislative experience from ties with governors and party affiliations.

It is important to point out that not all committees in legislatures are equally relevant. For example, in the Chamber of Deputies, winning a committee leadership position on the powerful Budget Committee is not the same as winning one on the Equality and Gender or the Fisheries panels; therefore, we categorize the 42 different committees into three groups: major, issue, and duty (or burden) committees to better capture the leadership selection process for different sorts of committees.[5] We take advantage of the variation in the level of importance of the different types of panels to help test our hypothesis. If the backgrounds are an important element in the decision making process, then one should see significantly different types of prior political experience across different types of committees. We hypothesize that deputies with greater prior political experience —especially in government posts— will have a higher probability of leading a major committee, which are the most important in terms of policy and the most active. Conversely, we would expect that deputies without much prior political experience would tend to lead duty or burden panels.

This paper will first discuss the theoretical literature on committees in congress and their relation to the ambitions of party leaders and individual representatives who seek leadership posts on committees. Then, it will categorize the different types of panels that exist in the Mexican legislature. Because committee request data is simply not available, we use committee leadership appointments. To understand what type of party politician wins leadership posts on different types of committees, this work will use a unique data base of almost 1,400 deputies' career backgrounds prior to winning a seat in the lower house of Congress. This data base includes the level of educational background, as well as the prior party, elected, and government experience of the individual deputies.

The penultimate section of the paper presents our data and methods to estimate the relation between prior political background and the probability of winning a leadership post in different types of legislative committees. We use Bayesian logistic and multinomial logistic regression models, and simulate some results of interest. Finally, in the conclusion we will examine what these findings mean for understanding the organization and delegation of authority in the Mexican Chamber.

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[5] We use Master's (1961) term.

1. Literature Review

Many authors believe that members of congress adopt institutions that help deliver their primary goal, which is reelection, while recognizing that other objectives, such as policy goals or internal chamber power matter as well (Cox and McCubbins, 1993; Fenno, 1973; Katz and Sala, 1996; Rohde, 1991). In what has come to be called the distributive model of committee work, legislative committees help members of congress deliver particularized benefits to their constituencies so that representatives can win reelection (Adler and Lapinski, 1997: 896; Maltzman, 1997). The aim of party leaders in congress is to "provide collective goods for the party by winning majority party status," which then brings with it a number of extra benefits, such as the ability to guide policy and control over committee chairs (Heberlig, 2003: 151). So it is also in the interest of party leaders to distribute committee posts to those deputies who can hope to contribute and benefit more from them.

The norm of seniority and other property rights in committees were created over time in part to protect legislators against their congressional leadership once their personal reputation became as or even more important than their party label in winning elections (Kernell, 1977; Swenson, 1982). Rational legislators choose the committee that can best provide personalistic goods to their respective districts, and over time, seniority rights were established that allowed representatives to stay on their particular committee as long as they kept their congressional seats. Leadership posts in the US congress are now allocated based largely on the seniority norm: those that have been on a committee longest and are from the majority party run the panel's operations (Bullock, 1985; Collie and Roberts, 1992; Deering and Smith, 1997).

Outside the confines of the American case, however, one might find extra-legislative institutions, such as candidate selection practices and electoral rules that influence the allocation of committee leadership post in different ways. If candidate selection is controlled by party leaders, and not voters (as in a primary), then one can expect that elected representatives would be more likely to work for the interests of their "selectors" in the party (Siavelis and Morgenstern, 2008). Electoral rules are another factor that helps determine whether the candidate or the collective reputation of the party label is more important to winning reelection. Plurality elections in single-member-districts (SMDs), in which it is easy for the voter to split her ticket, dictate that candidates try to build up their personal reputation to win office, while closed list PR systems make the collective party reputation more important (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Katz and Sala, 1996). If candidates must rely on their own reputations to win elections, they will pressure their party leaders to win committee posts that allow them to bring home the bacon. But

if the party label is more influential, then representatives should be more attuned to the wishes of their party leaders, especially when these leaders control candidate selection as well. Thus, candidate selection and electoral rules can help determine the relation between an ambitious politician and her party leader in congress (Carey, 2007; Samuels, 2003). As a result, if legislators cannot hope to win re-election, or if it is not in their interests to seek reelection to congress, one should find different forms of legislative organization (Jones *et al.*, 2002).

Even when caucus leaders are able to control the selection of committee chairs; that is, when the seniority rule is weak or non-existent, they must still delegate some decision making power to these panel leaders (although it may be very little) because of procedural rules that allow committees to revise bills and initiatives before they are sent to the floor of the chamber. Thus, the tradeoff that Kiewiet and McCubbins (1991: 5) report between policy expertise and influence over policy decisions made in committees is subject to "the constraints imposed by the relation (of the agent) with the principal." As we shall see in the section below, the limitations that the principals can impose on their agents are great in a system with no consecutive reelection, such as Mexico's; but even so, delegation from caucus principals to committee agents represents some danger in that agents might make mistakes, shirk, or work for a different set of interests than those of their principals. As a result, caucus leaders take great care in selecting panel presidents and secretaries, especially for the most active committees.

2. Committees in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies

Committees are important legislative players in the Mexican Chamber, although they do not compare to their US counterparts in terms of specialized policy work. There are currently 42 permanent commissions in the Mexican congress, with a limit of 30 members on each (except for Budget and Treasury), and each legislator can be a member of up to three committees. Their formal tasks are to consider initiatives that are sent to them, collect information on the specific bill, and to produce a report (dictamen), which can include extensive corrections to the original legislation.[6]

The caucus leadership of each party formally decides committee leadership posts in Mexico's lower house of congress.[7] The only requirement

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[6] Article 39-3 of the Ley Orgánica states that, "…tienen a su cargo tareas de dictamen legislativo, de información y de control evaluatorio … y su competencia se corresponde en lo general con las otorgadas a las dependencia y entidades de la Administración Pública Federal."

[7] The Ley Orgánica del Congreso General de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos (2008), article 34-c states that the Junta de Coordinación Política proposes to the floor the integration of the committees. The Junta is made up of the Coordinators (caucus leaders) of each Parliamentarian Group (or party). The members of the PRD's and the PRI's legislative delegations elect their "coordinator" while the national executive committee (CEN) – that is, the national leadership body– decides the PAN's leader.

the legislative leaders must follow for integrating the committees is that the Junta de Coordinación Política must form committees with the same proportion of seats as each party holds in the Chamber. Furthermore, the Junta, when choosing members and leaders, must take into account the background and the legislative experience of the deputies (Ley Orgánica, Article 43-44).

It is important to point out that candidate selection to the Chamber is not controlled by the national party leadership in Mexico: they share this control with local political leaders —most importantly the directly elected governors— who enjoy great influence in the selection of their party's candidates for the 300 single-member-districts (SMDs), while national party leaders hold relatively greater power over the placement of names on the proportional representation (PR) lists that make up the remaining 200 deputies.[8] Even in the case of the PR deputies, one finds that 40% of them come directly from local political posts, which is an indication that many local political leaders have some ability to place local allies on the PR lists as well. Thus, national party leaders cannot dictate which party politician will arrive to the Chamber, except those who hold a high rank slot on each of the five closed multi-member lists.

Each of the three major party caucuses[9] normally holds between 80 and 225 members, which gives the caucus leaders a wide cross-section of different types of party legislators from which to choose committee leaders. The deputies within each party's caucus come from a wide variety of prior political arenas, including municipal and state governments, as well as the federal bureaucracy. Some have close relations with a co-partisan governor, while others have worked in the national party organization. Some have specific technical skills that others do not hold.

The leaders of the three main parties in congress have imperfect information about the preferences, interests, and abilities of all their deputies, which may lead to adverse selection problems and potential losses. There are weeks of negotiations that take place on two levels: the first is among the members of a party's delegation and their party's caucus leadership. Here, the deputies try to convince their leader to choose them for a leadership position.[10] The second takes place among the leaders of the major parties in congress over which party will win the presidency of each specific committee. The committee leader is usually thought of before the party knows whether it will win the presidency of that specific committee or not. If a certain party is unable to win the top spot of a committee, its highest

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[8] The PR deputies are chosen from five closed multi-member districts, called circumscriptions that return 40 deputies each to the lower house.

[9] These parties are the center-right National Action Party (PAN), the center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), and the former hegemonic Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI).

[10] "Coordinadores reparten comisiones", *El Universal*, 7 September, 2000.

ranking person for that committee will take on one of the positions of secretary. The secretary of a committee is then expected to look after her party's interests on that committee (Nacif, 2000).

Deputies meet with their legislative leaders to express their preferences over committee slots in the weeks after the election and before the start of the legislative session.[11] The caucus leadership is expected to revise the political backgrounds of the new deputies and take into account their preferences that have been collected by the state delegation leaders or by surveys administered by the party.[12] It is considered relatively normal for negotiations over committee membership and especially leadership posts to take place between governors and their respective parliamentary leaders.[13] In fact, at times deputies who do not have a co-partisan governor can be at a disadvantage in the distribution of committee leadership positions.[14] At other times, all deputies elected in plurality districts and not just those who do not have a co-partisan governor, have complained they are unable to win leadership posts.[15]

Committees and especially committee leaders —while less autonomous than their US counterparts— do have the capacity to influence legislation that passes through their jurisdiction (Weldon 1998), which helps explain why caucus leaders need to carefully delegate authority to tested, well-known political actors. All legislative bills that enter the Chamber or that are produced within it are channelled to a relevant committee, and are supposed to have only five days in which to issue a report (dictamen). However, if this deadline is not met, there is little that rank-and-file deputies outside the committee can do to push the bill through.[16] Thus, in Mexican political terminology, one finds many bills in the freezer (la congeladora): they are not rejected, but they are simply not approved by the committee and sent to the floor, giving committees the power to simply postpone the consideration of a bill indefinitely.

However, this ability to block legislation is contained by the enormous power that party coordinators hold over their respective committee leaders. The caucus leaders both place committee leaders in their posts, and at any

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[11] Interview with former PRI caucus leader Arturo Núñez, March 9, 2009. "Afinan agenda del Tricolor", *El Norte*, 17 August, 2003.

[12] The PRI appears to depend more on the state coordinators, while the PAN has used a survey administered by an outside firm. "Analizan las causas de la derrota", *Reforma*, 29 July, 2003. In the PRD, the party's legislative leader reworked an internal set of rules to deal with the issue of committee allocation. "PRD-capacitación", *El Universal*, 28 July 2003.

[13] Interview with a former governor and federal deputy, Ricardo Monreal, February, 2009.

[14] "Relegan en el centro a diputados priístas", *Mural*, 30 September, 2003.

[15] In one instance, PRI deputies who had been elected in SMD complained publicly that they were excluded from leadership posts which were given to PR deputies from their party. "PRI rebelión diputados", *El Universal*, 23 August, 2000.

[16] The Legislative Programming Group (Conferencia para la Dirección y Programación de los Trabajos Legislativos) can exhort a committee to send a dictamen to a floor vote, but it has no sanctioning power (Dávila and Caballero, 2005: 18).

moment they can remove their party's chair or secretary from the committee leadership. Although in practice this does not often occur, the threat of removal can be a powerful reminder of who in fact is in control of the Chamber. Most, if not all, of the important bills are pre-negotiated among the parties' caucus leaders before they even reach committee (Rivera Sánchez, 2004: 263). The Junta de Coordinación Política controls great internal legislative resources and the committee chairs are not members of this leadership body (although they can be included in its discussions by invitation).

The most important role the committees play is to revise initiatives that arrive to their panel for consideration. The committees enjoy wide latitude in the congress to revise, revamp, and rework any bill that is remanded to them (Nacif, 2000: 2; Weldon, 1998). Before a can be sent to the floor to be voted on by the full house (pleno), it must win a majority of votes within the committee,[17] and all tied votes must be retaken until the tie is broken. If this is not possible, the initiative goes to the floor to be discussed.

The committee chairs call the meetings, run them, name the Technical Secretary, hire the committee's staff, and send the documentation produced by the committee to the Gaceta Parlamentaria to be published (Acuerdo parlamentario, Art. 3).[18] Most importantly, the chair can call for executive functionaries to testify before the committee and provide information on any bill being considered.[19] The members of the committees themselves are relatively weak compared to the chair: meetings are called with little prior notice (Rivera Sánchez, 2004); there are no requirements for quorum; and only a modest professionnal staff is available (Nacif, 2000).[20]

Once the committee has remanded a bill to the floor, it is very difficult to amend it. Weldon (1998: 5-9) reports that the process of floor amendment is so unwieldy that one can consider it almost a closed rule, giving committee leaders great power to fashion legislative bills before they reach the floor of the Chamber, although they do so under the watchful eyes of their caucus leadership.

Thus, one can see that while committee chairs and secretaries are beholden to their caucus leaders, they also have procedural strength to modify and block legislation, which is then difficult to modify in floor votes.

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[17] This section relies on several sources, including the "Acuerdo parlamentario relativo a la organización y reuniones de las comisiones y comités de la Cámara de Diputados", (November, 1997) the "Ley Orgánica del Congreso General", the "Reglamento para el gobierno interior del Congreso General de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos", and Weldon (1998).

[18] The committee chairs have been weakened since the loss of the PRI's majority in 1997: if a committee member wishes to call a meeting of the panel, she can do so via her party's secretary (before, only chairs could schedule meetings) (Acuerdo parlamentario, Art. 4).

[19] Ley Orgánica, Artículo 45-1.

[20] *El Universal* (November 2, 2005) reports that "the legislative committees continue today as in the old days of the PRI", because their leaders operate with great discretion, they do not sanction members of the committee who don't attend panel meetings, and they do not inform their members of decisions that are made privately.

This does not negate the fact that most important legislation is negotiated before the committee stage with extra-legislative party leaders, the Executive, and caucus coordinators. Rather, it highlights the importance of how caucus leaders delegate authority to revise and rework bills in committee to trusted, experienced co-partisan deputies.

Fortunately, these differentiated hypotheses can be tested in the Mexican case, as seven committees, which we call major committees, are considered the work-horses of the committee structure, while the bulk of the remaining panels are less involved in the legislative policy process. In Table 1 below, we see that the seven major committees receive almost 60% of all bills from the Mesa Directiva and report over 63% of all bills to the floor or pleno. On the flip side, the seven duty committees receive just over 3% and remand roughly 6% to the pleno. The remaining 25 issue committees are responsible for roughly 32% of all legislation.[21]

TABLE **1**. BILLS REPORTED TO EACH TYPE OF COMMITTEE AND SENT THE FLOOR

	MAJOR COMMITTEES %	ISSUE COMMITTEES %	DUTY COMMITTEES %
BILLS RECEIVED	59.3	31.8	3.2
BILLS SENT*	63.3	31.1	6.2

Source: Monitor Legislativo.
* Bills received cover all three years for all three legislatures. Bills sent to the pleno as of the 2nd year of the 59th Legislature.

We posit that party leaders use the political backgrounds of their party legislators as proxies for their unknown future performance as committee leaders. If this is true, we should see differences between the political backgrounds of major committee leaders and their duty or burden counterparts. The seven major committees are not only responsible for more than 60% of the legislative work in the Mexican Congress, they also control the negotiations over the annual budget law and they help write or amend the Executive's most important reform initiatives. Therefore, the caucus leader will take special care in choosing the leaders of these committees to avoid adverse selection problems.

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[21] Major committees: Budget, Comptrollers Office, Constitutional Issues, Governance (Gobernación), Judiciary, Jurisdiction and Treasury. Burden committees: Equality and Gender, Vulnerable Groups, Culture, Cooperative Ventures, Youth and Sports, Citizen Participation; Strengthening Federalism. Issue committees: Commerce, Communications, Defense, Environment, Foreign Affairs, Health, Housing, Jurisdiction; Labor, Marine, Parliamentary Practices; Public Education, Radio and Television, Rural Development, Science, Social Security, and Transportation, Agrarian Reform, Agriculture, Border and Immigration, Energy, Federal District, Indigenous Affairs, Tourism and Water Resources.

Issue committees, such as Education or Commerce, are normally active only when a major reform in their specific sector is undertaken by the Executive and do not handle as much legislation as the major committees do. But, as Nacif (2000) points out, powerful interest groups care very much about maintaining many of the status quo prerogatives in various specific issues, like those controlled by the Housing, Social Security, and Labor committees, and so they pressure party leaders to place their deputy representatives in leadership positions on many of these panels. Duty or burden committees, such as Gender or Sports, are those that do not control important legislation, the distribution of money, or the control over special interest rents.

Based on the previous discussion, we will focus our analysis on different aspects of legislator's background that may signal desirable features to caucus leaders when selecting leaders for different types of committees.

Hypothesis 1. Major Committees
Education plays an important role in agency decisions because of the complex nature of the issues dealt with on the major committees; therefore, we expect that those deputies with the most education (graduate degrees) will be more likely to win a leadership slot on a major committee. By the same token, those deputies with prior experience in legislative or bureaucratic positions in the federal or state governments, a proxy for technical expertise, should be more likely to obtain leadership positions on a major committee.

Hypothesis 2. Duty or burden Committees
Because duty or burden committees almost by definition are the least sought after, one should expect that female representatives will win a presidency or secretary post on one of these less-desired panels (Heath, Schwindt-Bayer and Taylor-Robinson, 2005). We also expect that deputies without prior bureaucratic or legislative experience will be more likely to serve on a duty committee leadership post, than in any other committee, if at all.

Hypothesis 3. Issue Committees, special interest and rent protection
Deputies with issue-specific expertise or an affiliation with corporatist or special interests should be more likely to seek and obtain leadership positions on issue committees in order to protect the rents from status quo policies and regulations.

Since most if not all of the parties' deputies would want a leadership post, the caucus leader must use a rule that balances between her twin objectives: loyalty and ability on the one hand, and compliance from her deputies on the other. One might argue, following Ascensio and Hernández (2008) that the most important factor in explaining committee leadership is how the deputy arrived to the Chamber —via a single-member-district (SMD) plurality election

or via the closed proportional representation (PR) lists. These authors argue that because the party leadership can place its closest allies on the highest slots on the closed list, committee leadership choices will reflect these political alliances and so, more committee chairs will be chosen from deputies who entered via the PR lists than from that group that won a direct election. We will show that the politicians' prior political background is a more fine grained measure of the types of politicians that legislative coordinators are seeking than the type of seat (PR *vs.* SMD) measure.

3. Data and Empirical Analysis

To assess some of the determinants of committee leadership for members of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, we simulate the posterior distribution of Bayesian logistic and multinomial logistic regression models of the following general form:

> *Prob (CommitteeLeader=j|X)= f* (type of seat, deputy's personal features, prior experience, party label, governor's co-partisanship, legislature term)

Our dependent variable is the type of committee leadership position held by a legislator, if at all, which we code on two different ways. First, committee leadership is coded as a binary outcome that equals 1 when the deputy is president or secretary of any given committee, and zero otherwise. This measure allows us to distinguish the features of panel leaders and non-leaders in a simple way. As explained before, we classified committees in three categories, which lead to our second dependent variable. Leadership type is a categorical outcome that focuses on the type of committee led by the deputy: a major committee leader, an issue committee leader, a duty committee leader, or no leadership position at all.

The posterior distribution for the binary outcome committee leadership is estimated with a Bayesian logistic model, whereas the categorical outcome leadership type is estimated with a multinomial logistic model.[22] We estimate a multinomial instead of an ordinal regression because we do not want to impose or assume a strictly hierarchical ordering among different types of committees. The reason is that even if most legislators might prefer leading a major instead of a duty committee, it may be the case that their expertise makes them better fit for leading an issue committee. Moreover, using multinomial models allows us to estimate a different set of parameters for each type of committee (relative to a comparison or base group), instead of restricting the estimation to one set of parameters being fixed for all types of

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[22] The models were estimated in R with the MCMCpack routines.

committees. This is important because the impact of education, age or gender need not be constant between a major and an issue committee.

Our dataset considers 1,391 federal deputies that were elected in 1997, 2000 and 2003 and that left the chamber in 2000, 2003 or 2006 respectively, from the three main political parties. There are several coding issues that should be discussed. For each legislator, we coded committee membership and whether or not they held secretary or president positions in the committee. We aggregated this committee-specific information into the three committee types mentioned above. Our data also includes information on legislator's age, gender, education, party label, co-partisanship with their state governors, as well as a host of indicators of their backgrounds prior to arriving to the Chamber, including: local or federal level bureaucratic expertise, local or federal legislative experience, political party organization, as well as business experience or affiliation to a corporatist group.

To identify possible differences in the probability of achieving committee leadership positions between deputies coming from different political parties in each one of the three legislatures considered in our sample, we include indicator variables for PAN or PRD deputies, and use the PRI deputies as the comparison group. We also control for the 2000 and 2003 legislatures, using the 1997 congress —the first one in which the PRI lost majority status— as the comparison group. These indicator variables control for the possibility that different coalitions distribute committee posts from legislature to legislature.

Table 2 below presents the descriptive statistics of our data on committee leadership in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies in the three legislatures from 1997 to 2006. As the table indicates, the average age of Mexican legislators is 45 years old, 90% of them had a college degree and 21% had a graduate degree, whereas only 18% of them are female. As expected, 62% of the deputies in our sample come from plurality seats with an average margin of victory of 28%, whereas the remaining 38% come from proportional representation lists. Of our cases, 47% belong to the PRI, 33 to the PAN, and 19% to the PRD. At the beginning of their term, about 41% of them shared the same party affiliation as their respective state governors.

TABLE 2
Committee leadership in the the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, 1997-2006
Descriptive statistics

	All deputies		All committee Leaders		Major committee members		Issue committee members		Duty committee members	
	mean	*std.dev.*	*mean*	*std.dev.*	*mean*	*std.dev.*	*mean*	*std.dev.*	*mean*	*std.dev.*
Plurality seat	0.62	0.48	0.57	0.50	0.54	0.50	0.62	0.49	0.64	0.48
Age	45.23	9.40	45.29	9.21	45.14	9.18	45.09	9.30	43.31	9.53
College degree	0.90	0.29	0.92	0.28	0.99	0.12	0.91	0.29	0.88	0.33
Graduate degree	0.21	0.41	0.26	0.44	0.32	0.47	0.22	0.41	0.19	0.39
Female	0.18	0.38	0.19	0.39	0.14	0.35	0.16	0.37	0.32	0.47
State govt experience	0.44	0.50	0.48	0.50	0.55	0.50	0.44	0.50	0.40	0.49
Federal govt experience	0.25	0.43	0.29	0.45	0.40	0.49	0.25	0.43	0.14	0.35
Local deputy	0.35	0.48	0.34	0.47	0.40	0.49	0.33	0.47	0.32	0.47
Federal deputy	0.16	0.36	0.16	0.37	0.25	0.43	0.16	0.37	0.09	0.29
Senator	0.04	0.20	0.04	0.19	0.05	0.23	0.04	0.20	0.01	0.09
State party committee	0.42	0.49	0.45	0.50	0.46	0.50	0.41	0.49	0.41	0.49
National party committee	0.13	0.34	0.12	0.33	0.21	0.41	0.14	0.35	0.10	0.30
Business experience	0.20	0.40	0.21	0.41	0.17	0.37	0.20	0.40	0.16	0.37
National sector affiliation	0.13	0.34	0.16	0.37	0.12	0.33	0.15	0.35	0.08	0.27
Same governor's party	0.57	0.50	0.57	0.50	0.59	0.49	0.56	0.50	0.56	0.50
Margin of victory	0.33	1.32	0.31	0.29	0.31	0.19	0.29	0.26	0.45	2.43
Elected in 2000	0.33	0.47	0.29	0.45	0.34	0.47	0.35	0.48	0.34	0.47
Elected in 2003	0.33	0.47	0.36	0.48	0.37	0.48	0.32	0.47	0.36	0.48
PAN deputy	0.33	0.47	0.34	0.47	0.32	0.47	0.33	0.47	0.33	0.47
PRD deputy	0.19	0.39	0.22	0.42	0.17	0.38	0.19	0.40	0.19	0.39
Number of observations	1416		633		354		979		405	

Table 2 also presents summary statistics for some selected subsamples of interest. If we focus only on all committee leaders, we can see that 57% of them were elected in plurality seats and 26% have graduate degrees.[23] Moreover, 48% of them have state government experience, and 29% had federal government experience. On the other hand, 34 previously were state legislators and 16 already had been federal deputies. The last three columns of Table 2 present means and standard deviations among the members of major, issue or duty committees. Some contrasts are worth noting: while 40% of major committee members had prior federal government experience, this proportion is only 14% among duty committees. On the other hand, 32% of duty committee members are female, whereas they only represent 14% of major committee members.

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[23] Group mean comparison tests indicate that these averages are statistically different from the sample of non-leaders.

4. Results

Given the above stated differences in observable characteristics between committee leaders and non leaders, as well as between members of different types of committees, we now turn to estimate the probability of attaining a committee leadership position for a given deputy, when simultaneously controlling for a number of covariates in a multiple regression setting. Table 3 summarizes the regression estimates for a sample of 1391 federal deputies from the three major political parties (PAN, PRI and PRD) in the three legislatures ranging from the 1997 to 2006 period. The table summarizes two models, a Bayesian logistic regression for committee leadership as a binary outcome, and a multinomial logistic regression for different types of committee leadership as a 4-category outcome (major committee leader, issue committee leader, duty committee leader, or no leadership position at all). In both cases, having no leadership position is the base category or comparison group.

Model 1 in Table 3 indicates that deputies from plurality districts are less likely to lead a committee but the estimated coefficient is not significant at conventional levels. This suggests that, once we control for prior backgrounds and other covariates, the type of seat is not a robust predictor of committee leadership. Having a graduate degree, however, has a positive and significant impact on the probability of leading a committee, which indicates that better educated legislators are more likely to be selected for leadership positions. Bureaucratic experience, both at the state or federal government levels, also significantly increases the likelihood of committee leadership. On the other hand, previous legislative experience as a local or as a federal deputy does not seem to have any effect on committee leadership. Having held a position in the state party committee also increases the probability of being chosen as a committee leader, whereas national party committee experience (Consejo Ejecutivo Nacional) diminishes it. Business expertise as well as being affiliated with a national corporatist organization (a proxy for special interest linkages) also helps in reaching a leadership post in congress. Similarly, age, gender, or having a college degree do not show a significant impact on legislative leadership. We also find that sharing party affiliation with a state governor, which we consider a proxy for informal ties, does not seem to have a significant impact on committee leadership.

TABLE 3
Committee leadership in the the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, 1997-2006

	Any Committee leader		Major Committee leader		Issue Committee leader		Duty committee leader	
	1 logit		2		3 multinomial logit		4	
Plurality seat	-0.469	[-1.09, 0.13]	-0.263	[-1.58, 0.99]	-0.233	[-0.96, 0.48]	-0.466	[-2.02, 0.93]
Age	-0.004	[-0.02, 0.01]	-0.012	[-0.04, 0.02]	0.000	[-0.02, 0.02]	-0.016	[-0.05, 0.01]
College degree	0.067	[-0.3, 0.47]	**2.311**	[0.39, 5.12]	0.211	[-0.27, 0.72]	-0.219	[-0.99, 0.65]
Graduate degree	**0.440**	[0.16, 0.72]	**0.803**	[0.35, 1.26]	0.232	[-0.1, 0.56]	**0.794**	[0.18, 1.41]
Female	0.004	[-0.29, 0.3]	-0.382	[-1.05, 0.21]	**-0.408**	[-0.81, -0.04]	**1.337**	[0.79, 1.98]
State govt experience	**0.334**	[0.11, 0.56]	**1.052**	[0.58, 1.56]	**0.290**	[0.02, 0.58]	-0.464	[-1.05, 0.08]
Federal govt experience	**0.289**	[0.01, 0.57]	**1.049**	[0.56, 1.54]	0.299	[-0.03, 0.61]	-0.564	[-1.42, 0.22]
Local deputy	-0.027	[-0.28, 0.23]	**0.542**	[0.07, 1.02]	-0.149	[-0.44, 0.14]	-0.129	[-0.79, 0.43]
Federal legislator	-0.003	[-0.34, 0.34]	-0.076	[-0.72, 0.57]	0.099	[-0.28, 0.49]	**-1.058**	[-2.16, -0.04]
State party committee	**0.276**	[0.04, 0.52]	0.047	[-0.4, 0.51]	0.209	[-0.06, 0.48]	**0.712**	[0.17, 1.23]
National party committee	**-0.550**	[-0.91, -0.19]	-0.413	[-1.11, 0.23]	**-0.664**	[-1.11, -0.23]	0.254	[-0.51, 1.02]
Business	**0.421**	[0.11, 0.71]	0.385	[-0.18, 0.95]	0.296	[-0.04, 0.64]	-0.152	[-0.95, 0.55]
National sector	**0.701**	[0.35, 1.04]	0.413	[-0.3, 1.11]	**0.996**	[0.57, 1.4]	0.504	[-0.44, 1.4]
Same governor's party	0.228	[-0.08, 0.55]	-0.089	[-0.76, 0.6]	0.196	[-0.17, 0.56]	0.072	[-0.64, 0.83]
Margin of victory	0.119	[-1.25, 1.47]	1.458	[-1.56, 4.44]	0.448	[-1.2, 2.11]	-1.085	[-4.52, 2.29]
Elected in 2000	-0.231	[-0.52, 0.03]	**0.704**	[0.11, 1.29]	**0.569**	[0.24, 0.9]	**0.731**	[0.12, 1.38]
Elected in 2003	0.057	[-0.23, 0.33]	**0.829**	[0.27, 1.41]	**0.833**	[0.49, 1.16]	**0.664**	[0.01, 1.34]
PAN deputy	**0.373**	[0.09, 0.67]	0.457	[-0.12, 1.07]	**0.429**	[0.08, 0.76]	-0.088	[-0.75, 0.55]
PRD deputy	**0.659**	[0.33, 0.99]	**0.769**	[0.12, 1.39]	**0.652**	[0.28, 1.02]	0.222	[-0.49, 0.93]
Constant	-0.661	[-1.74, 0.36]	-6.387	[-9.96, -3.43]	-2.295	[-3.57, -1.06]	-2.216	[-4.55, 0.18]

Entries are posterior means with 95% credible intervals in brackets. Number of observations = 1391. Number of iterations = 150,000.
In logit model the outcome equals 1 if deputy was president or secretary of any committee, and zero otherwise.
In multinomial model the outcome equals 0 if no committee leadership, 1 duty, 2 issue, 3 major; 0 is the base category.

These results indicate that some kinds of backgrounds and prior experience matter for committee leadership selection but others do not. Moreover, not all kinds of political experience have a positive impact on leadership. To test whether these results change when we distinguish between leadership posts in three different types of committees (major, issue and duty committees), columns 2, 3 and 4 in Table 3 summarize the posterior estimates of a multinomial logistic model.

Column 2 in Table 3 estimates the probability of leading a major committee relative to leading no committee at all. As with the previous logistic model, we find that graduate education and bureaucratic experience has a positive impact. But contrary to the previous model, we now find that former state deputies —a proxy for sub-national parliamentary expertise— are also more likely to lead in major committees. Interestingly, former federal legislators (former deputies or senators) are no more likely to do so than those without such legislative experience.

Column 3 in Table 3 focuses on issue committee leadership. The posterior estimates indicate that female legislators are less likely than males to lead an issue committee. Contrary to what we find for major or duty committees,

education levels do not have an impact on leading issue committees. State level government experience still has a positive impact, but federal expertise does not seem to matter for these committees. On the other hand, National sector affiliation has quite a strong and positive impact in the likelihood of leading an issue committee —a result that we did not find for major committees.

Column 4 in Table 3 estimates the odds of leading a duty committee. Our posterior estimates indicate that highly educated female deputies are indeed more likely to lead this sort of committees. Bureaucratic experience has a negative but rather weak impact on this outcome. Experience in state party affairs has a positive correlation with duty leadership whereas former federal legislators are significantly less likely to lead a duty committee—this contrasts with the fact that none of these two covariates had an impact on leading major or issue committees.[24]

Measuring political types (national, bureaucratic and state governor loyalists)

Since the analysis on Table 3 focuses on very specific background indicators, some of which are more frequently observed than others, as a robustness check we constructed two alternative measures of prior expertise for each legislator. We estimated an ordinal factor analysis with the type and level of expertise indicator variables. Based on the resulting factor loadings, we identified three dimensions, which we identified as follows: a national expertise score (based on having held one or more federal level positions), a bureaucratic experience score (based on having a graduate degree, and one or more non-elected appointments), and governor loyalist score (based on having held a post in a state with a copartisan governor).

Tables 4 and 5 below substitute these three scores, which by definition are orthogonal to one another, for the indicator variables of previous multinomial models. Model 1 in Table 4 indicates that the larger the bureaucratic score of a given deputy, the more likely they are to lead a major committee. On the other hand, those with high national o state loyalist scores are no more likely to do so than deputies with lesser scores.

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[24] As a robustness check we also estimated models with fewer background and expertise indicators. Focusing on legislative, bureaucratic or partisan experience in separate models yields results very similar to those of Table 3. Thus, we report on the less restrictive models.

TABLE 4
Committee leadership in the the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, 1997-2006

	Major Committee leader		Issue Committee leader		Duty committee leader	
	1		**2**		**3**	
			multinomial logit			
Plurality seat	**-0.594**	[-1.07, -0.12]	-0.224	[-0.51, 0.06]	-0.164	[-0.71, 0.39]
Age	-0.006	[-0.03, 0.02]	0.005	[-0.01, 0.02]	-0.022	[-0.05, 0.01]
Female	-0.473	[-1.11, 0.12]	**-0.475**	[-0.85, -0.12]	**1.298**	[0.78, 1.83]
National score[a]	0.004	[-0.5, 0.5]	0.163	[-0.15, 0.47]	-0.405	[-1.05, 0.22]
Bureaucratic score[a]	**2.068**	[1.49, 2.66]	**0.426**	[0.12, 0.74]	0.257	[-0.36, 0.88]
Governor loyalist score[a]	0.457	[-0.03, 0.95]	0.227	[-0.06, 0.52]	-0.340	[-0.91, 0.24]
Elected in 2000	**0.723**	[0.15, 1.32]	**0.547**	[0.23, 0.87]	0.624	[-0.01, 1.27]
Elected in 2003	**0.976**	[0.44, 1.55]	**0.851**	[0.53, 1.17]	0.495	[-0.14, 1.14]
PAN deputy	0.401	[-0.19, 0.97]	0.318	[-0.02, 0.66]	-0.185	[-0.86, 0.49]
PRD deputy	0.623	[-0.01, 1.24]	**0.513**	[0.14, 0.88]	0.166	[-0.56, 0.85]
Constant	-2.620	[-3.95, -1.3]	-1.614	[-2.4, -0.84]	-2.276	[-3.82, -0.79]

Entries are posterior means with 95% credible intervals in brackets. Number of observations = 1391.

The outcome equals 0 if no committee leadership, 1 duty, 2 issue, 3 major; 0 is the base category.

[a] Ordinal factor analysis scores for each legislator.

TABLE 5
Committee leadership in the the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, 1997-2006

	Major Committee		Issue Committee		Duty committee	
	1		**2**		**3**	
			multinomial logit			
Plurality seat	**-0.738**	[-1.21, -0.26]	-0.259	[-0.55, 0.03]	-0.107	[-0.65, 0.46]
Age	-0.009	[-0.03, 0.02]	0.003	[-0.01, 0.02]	-0.020	[-0.05, 0.01]
Female	-0.407	[-1.05, 0.19]	**-0.467**	[-0.84, -0.1]	**1.315**	[0.8, 1.85]
National score[b]	0.197	[-0.04, 0.43]	**0.140**	[0, 0.28]	-0.183	[-0.52, 0.12]
Bureaucratic score[b]	**0.819**	[0.58, 1.06]	**0.180**	[0.05, 0.32]	0.027	[-0.24, 0.3]
Governor loyalist score[b]	**0.351**	[0.1, 0.6]	0.122	[-0.03, 0.27]	-0.259	[-0.55, 0.03]
Elected in 2000	**0.689**	[0.11, 1.28]	**0.505**	[0.18, 0.83]	0.593	[-0.03, 1.23]
Elected in 2003	**0.850**	[0.31, 1.43]	**0.789**	[0.47, 1.11]	0.545	[-0.09, 1.19]
PAN deputy	0.244	[-0.33, 0.81]	0.257	[-0.09, 0.6]	-0.300	[-0.98, 0.36]
PRD deputy	0.456	[-0.18, 1.08]	**0.470**	[0.1, 0.84]	-0.032	[-0.75, 0.66]
Constant	-2.270	[-3.59, -0.96]	-1.448	[-2.24, -0.66]	-2.344	[-3.91, -0.84]

Entries are posterior means with 95% credible intervals in brackets. Number of observations = 1391.

The outcome equals 0 if no committee leadership, 1 duty, 2 issue, 3 major; 0 is the base category.

[b] Ordinal factor analysis scores for each legislator (alternative coding).

Predicted probabilities and marginal effects

The results from the multinomial model indicate that particular skills matter for the selection of major committee leaders, while other sorts of experience and backgrounds matter more for leading an issue or duty committee. The results from Table 3 indicate the sign and statistical significance of the association between our explanatory variables and committee leadership outcomes. But what is the relative magnitude of these impacts? A clearer representation of the relative magnitude of these effects requires estimates of the predicted probabilities of committee leadership, which we can simulate by making draws from the posterior distribution of our multinomial logistic model for different stereotypical profiles of Mexican federal deputies.

TABLE 6
Estimated effect of selected covariates in legislative committee leadership

	Predicted probability of being:			
	Committee leader	Major Committee leader	Issue Committee leader	Duty committee leader
Baseline: a 45 year old PRI deputy with a college degree, elected in 2003 in a plurality seat	**25.1%**	**2.1%**	**19.6%**	**3.5%**
With a graduate degree	33.1	4.2	22.0	6.8
Difference	**8.0***	**2.1***	2.5	**3.4***
Female deputy	26.8	1.5	12.8	12.5
Difference	1.7	-0.7	**-6.7***	**9.0***
With state and federal govt experience	41.4	13.0	27.4	1.0
Difference	**16.3***	**10.9***	**7.8***	**-2.4***
Baseline: a 45 year old PRI deputy with a graduate degree, elected in 2003 in a plurality seat	**33.1%**	**4.2%**	**22.0%**	**6.8%**
With prior legislative experience	31.3	7.1	21.7	2.5
Difference	-1.8	2.9	-0.3	**-4.4***
With national sector affiliation	53.4	4.5	40.8	8.1
Difference	**20.3***	0.3	**18.8***	1.2
With bureaucratic, legislative, and nat'l sector experience	61.3	9.8	50.0	1.5
Difference	**28.2***	5.6	**28.0***	**-5.3***
With state and national party commte. experience	34.6	3.0	14.0	17.6
Difference	1.5	-1.2	**-8.1***	**10.8***

Simulations drawn from the posterior distribution of the multinomial logistic model in Table 3.

* the 95% credible interval for the difference does not include zero.

Table 6 estimates the marginal impact of selected covariates on the predicted probabilities of leading different types of committees in the Mexican Chamber or Deputies. For simplicity, our simulation baseline is a typical legislator in contemporary Mexico: a 45 years old male PRI deputy with a college degree who was elected in a plurality seat in 2003. On other dimensions he is less typical: his state governor is not from the same party, and has no state or federal government expertise. This baseline deputy has a 25% chance of being a committee leader, which can be further broken down as follows: major committee leader 2%, issue committee leader 20%, and duty committee leader 3.5%. And the probability of having no leadership position at all is the remaining 49.7%.

The rows in Table 6 provide estimates of the predicted probabilities of adding different items to the resume of our simulated baseline, as well as first differences with respect to the baseline. If this legislator had a master degree, his chances of leading a committee would rise to 33%, an 8% increment (significant at the 5% level); similarly, his chances of leading a major committee would double from 2 to 4.2%. If the baseline legislator were female instead of male, her chances of leading a duty committee would rise from 3.5 to 12.5%, that is to say, she would be four times more likely to lead a duty committee than a male counterpart.

On the other hand, prior bureaucratic expertise matters more than a graduate degree or the estimated gender gap. If our baseline legislator had both state and federal level government experience before to reaching congress, his chances of leading a committee rise from 25 to 41%. And the likelihood of leading a major committee rise from 2 to 13%, which represents more than a six-fold increase (an estimated risk ratio of 6.7). Similarly, his probability of leading an issue committee rises from 19.6 to 27.4%, or a 42% increment. Finally, his chances of leading a duty committee go down from 3.5 to only 1%.

The bottom half of Table 6 considers a slightly different baseline by adding a graduate degree. If this legislator had been a state and federal legislator before, his chances of leading a major or issue committee would not change significantly but he would be almost three times less likely to lead a duty committee. On the other hand, if this legislator were affiliated with a corporatist group or national sector, his luck in the Chamber would be altogether different. His chances of leading a committee almost double from 33 to 53%, just as the probability of leading an issue committee rise from 22 to 41%. Finally, the combined effect of adding bureaucratic, legislative and national sector experience to our baseline would increase the probability of leading a committee from 33% all the way to 61.3%, and to more than double the likelihood of leading an issue committee from 22 to 50%. Interestingly enough, this well-seasoned legislator would not be much more likely to lead a

major committee —at least not at conventional levels of significance— a striking contrast with the with the strong effect that bureaucratic expertise per se that we found on the top panel.

Conclusions

Even in a hierarchically organized legislature, in which caucus coordinators are not constrained by the seniority norm in deciding committee leadership posts, delegation is still a problem because of the committee prerogatives to revise and rework legislative bills. However, not all committees in Mexico's Chamber of Deputies are created equal, and not every legislator reaches the Chamber with the same set of human capital, experience, and capabilities. As a result, we find that a variety of politicians —who hold distinct prior political backgrounds before reaching congress— are awarded committee leadership posts in different types of committees.

In the key or major committees, those that receive and review the majority of the bills, and those that report almost two-thirds of the bills sent to the floor to be voted on, the more suitable committee chairs and secretaries will be politicians who have had prior bureaucratic experience, such as state or federal government expertise, and higher educational levels, all of which are proxies for technical abilities and other skills. On the other side, those deputies who seek and obtain leadership positions in duty committees are more likely to be well educated women who lack prior bureaucratic or legislative experience – that is to say, the least experienced in policymaking terms. The issue committees are more likely to be headed up by deputies who are affiliated with a corporatist or national organization that has some sort of special interest in the policy domain of a given committee.

Using a dataset of 1,391 federal deputies from the three major political parties (PAN, PRI and PRD) that were elected in 1997, 2000 and 2003, we estimate the probability of attaining a committee leadership position for a given deputy. Our estimates of Bayesian logistic and multinomial logistic regressions indicate that deputies from plurality districts are no more likely to lead a committee once we control for their political backgrounds. Better educated legislators, as well as those with bureaucratic experience at the state or federal levels are significantly more likely to lead a major committee. Being affiliated with a national corporatist organization also helps reaching a leadership post. On the other hand, previous legislative experience as a federal legislator does not affect major committee leadership. Moreover, sharing party affiliation with state governors has no impact in leading any type of committee.

This paper helps to show that even when most important pieces of legislation in Mexico are de facto negotiated previously by caucus coordinators outside of the de jure committee structure of the Chamber of Deputies, the potential agency costs of delegating committee power to disloyal or inexperienced legislators produces a selection for different types of legislators to lead and guard upon different sorts of committees. Our

evidence is consistent with the hypotheses that the prior backgrounds and political experience of Mexican legislators serve as cues to reduce adverse selection losses in a legislature were no consecutive re-election limits reputation building and long term interactions.

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