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Latin America's (Legal) Subnational
Authoritarian Enclaves:
The Case of Mexico

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Abstract

This article evaluates two arguments about how local leaders perpetuate authoritarian control over subnational governments amidst national democracy. One argument highlights the important role of political isolation in helping local leaders stave off national intrusion in local political affairs and in maintaining hegemonic political positions. The other highlights the role of local practices that undermine universal suffrage and secret ballots in facilitating electoral victories and local authoritarian control. To evaluate the arguments, this article takes advantage of legally recognized municipal political institutions in Mexico's state of Oaxaca that have allowed some municipalities to exclude national political party participation in local affairs, as well as deny suffrage rights to certain groups and the use of the secret ballot. Statistical analysis of electoral behavior in Oaxaca's 570 municipalities provides support for arguments about the role of political isolation rather than exclusionary political practices for the perpetuation of local authoritarian rule.

Keywords: Municipal Government, Political Institutions, Authoritarian Rule, Mexico.

Resumen

Este artículo evalúa dos argumentos acerca de cómo es que los líderes locales perpetúan su control autoritario sobre los gobiernos subnacionales coexistiendo con un régimen democrático a nivel nacional. Un argumento destaca el importante rol que juega el aislamiento político al permitir intromisiones de estos líderes locales en la política nacional y mantener sus posiciones políticas hegemónicas. El otro argumento subraya el rol que juegan las prácticas locales, que socavan el sufragio universal y el voto secreto, al facilitar victorias electorales y control local autoritario. Para evaluar los argumentos, este artículo aprovecha las instituciones políticas locales legalmente reconocidas para el estado de Oaxaca, que han permitido excluir en algunos municipios la participación política de los partidos políticos en los asuntos locales, así como negar los derechos de sufragio a ciertos grupos y la utilización del voto secreto. El análisis estadístico del comportamiento electoral en los 570 municipios de Oaxaca apoya los argumentos acerca de que el rol del aislamiento político es más importante que las prácticas políticas excluyentes para la perpetuación del autoritarismo.

Introduction

Scholars of Latin American politics have long noted the survival of subnational authoritarian enclaves within nationally democratic systems. In Argentina, for example, political elites in several provinces have maintained their privileged political positions even after the return to democracy in 1983, sometimes supporting local family political dynasties (Gibson, 2005). Similarly, the rise of competitive national multiparty politics in Brazil with democratization in the 1980s did not hinder the power of local elites running state governments during military rule who often retained their hold over government (Hagopian, 1996). Mexico's formerly hegemonic *Partido Institucional Revolucionario* (PRI) is still the dominant player in many states, even with national democratization in the 1990s, with state governments sometimes handed over to carefully chosen successors (Cornelius, *et al.* 1999).

Latin America's recent experience with subnational authoritarian regimes points to the variety of forms it can take. Subnational authoritarian enclaves persist in nationally democratic nations when there is an: "unevenness of the territorial distribution of the practices and institutions of democracy within the nation-state. This unevenness can be slight, with no more than minor differences from jurisdiction to jurisdiction in the transparency of electoral procedures or the rule of law. But it can also be dramatic, with full-blown authoritarian regimes depriving provincial inhabitants of rights and liberties enjoyed by citizens of other provinces in the same nation-state" (Gibson, 2005). Subnational authoritarianism can thus survive when the selection of state and municipal governments does not conform to national democratic standards. In the few cases where national leaders still formally appoint local governments, any interference in their freedom to do so by local leaders would indicate some form of local control not conforming to national procedural norms. In the large number of cases where democratic elections are used to select local public officials, the ability of local leaders to ignore nationally recognized democratic procedures to the benefit of themselves or the parties they favor indicates the presence of subnational authoritarian control.

Despite anecdotal evidence from several Latin American nations that subnational leaders have sometimes sidestepped national democratic procedures to preserve control over local government, scholarly research has not yet adequately explained this phenomenon, though it has raised important theoretical and methodological issues. Theoretically, though the recent decentralization of elections, policy authority, and fiscal resources to state and municipal governments has been instrumental in preserving local political trends apart from national ones, two additional factors have been identified as key to the survival of local authoritarian rule. Scholars have argued that

local leaders able to minimize national influence in local affairs are better able to maintain their positions in government (Gibson, 2005). For example, local leaders able to prevent opposition groups from bringing national allies into local political contests will be best able to retain support for their parties and thus political control. Scholars have also argued that local leaders able to alter the local political institutional rules of the game can stack the cards in their favor. For example, local leaders able to undercut nationally guaranteed universal suffrage and the secret ballot are best able to exclude political opponents and manipulate electoral outcomes to maintain authoritarian control (Fox, 1994). Though these arguments have been depicted as complementary agents in preserving local authoritarianism, they should be evaluated separately as their causal mechanisms are somewhat distinct.

Methodologically, arguments about local authoritarianism have tended to rely on only a few case studies to support them. However, given the lack of information about Latin America's vast number of states and their political dynamics it is unclear whether cases were chosen to illustrate arguments or to test them. The focus by most scholars on federal systems also overlooks decentralized unitary systems and municipal politics. Of course, subnational leaders can only stave off national political trends or engineer local electoral processes when they can operate independently from higher levels of government, so it is not surprising that the region's strongest federal systems have witnessed the most obvious cases of local authoritarianism. However, regardless of whether a country is federal or unitary, many countries have introduced decentralizing reforms since the 1980s and have also begun to rely on municipalities as their first point of political organization. That most citizens' first experience with politics occurs at municipal levels whose governments have lately enjoyed increased autonomy underscores the likely existence of municipal authoritarian enclaves.

With these theoretical and methodological issues in mind, this article seeks to add to the study of subnational authoritarian enclaves in two ways. First, I evaluate arguments about political isolation and exclusion to determine which, or what combination thereof, best explains local authoritarianism amidst national democratic rule, if at all. Second, I increase the robustness of any findings about local authoritarianism by testing the arguments systematically across a large number of cases. To this end, I evaluate explanations for subnational authoritarianism using the Mexico's State of Oaxaca and its 570 municipal governments. Oaxaca, one of 31 states, is known for being one of the last strongholds of the formerly hegemonic Partido Revolucionario Institucional. Though the PRI began to suffer national electoral losses in the late 1980s, it remained the unchallenged custodian of Oaxacan state politics until the mid 2000s when it narrowly won the 2004 gubernatorial race.

Oaxaca's longtime rule by the PRI, however, masks surprising political variation among its 570 municipalities. Some municipalities have demonstrated the presence of authoritarian leaders while others have made the transition to competitive party politics. More important, Oaxaca's municipalities range in their level of political isolation from state and federal politics and in their levels of political exclusion. Changes in municipal electoral codes undertaken by the State of Oaxaca in the 1990s gave municipal governments the freedom to eliminate national political parties from local political processes and to choose new mechanisms for electing local leaders that often differ notably from conventional electoral systems. This form of government, called *Usos y Costumbres* (UyC) or *Uses and Customs*, is currently used in 418 out of 570 Oaxacan municipalities.

That Oaxacan municipal governments vary in the level of political competition, political isolation, and municipal electoral rules allows us to test systematically the relative explanatory power of arguments about subnational authoritarianism. In this study, I find that Oaxaca's municipalities varied in their level of electoral support for the formerly hegemonic PRI according to the level of political isolation but not according to the UyC rules of the game. That is, municipalities adopting UyC political structures raised the level PRI support, at least for a time. I also find that municipalities varied in their electoral margins in systematic ways, with first-place parties in UyC systems enjoying larger margins than those in non-UyC ones. In contrast, the analysis shows that the specific rules of the game used in UyC systems had no systematic affect on winning margins. That electoral margins rose with the level of political isolation underscores the hold that local leaders in Oaxaca have over their citizens; they can guarantee support for the politicians they favor even after switching partisan allegiances. Subnational authoritarian leaders should not need to work through any particular political group but would be free to switch partisan allegiances while maintaining control. I also find that political isolation caused by UyC institutional structures reduces citizen interest in politics at higher levels, as demonstrated by their lower levels of participation in federal elections in UyC compared to non-UyC municipalities.

I proceed like so: First, I review Mexico's political and subnational institutional backdrop, discussing institutional variation among Oaxaca's municipalities in the second section. I then present two alternative arguments for local authoritarian rule and develop a series of testable hypotheses to distinguish between them. The fourth section reviews the main dependent and independent variables, and the fifth results for the statistical analysis used to evaluate the alternative arguments and their hypotheses. Finally, I conclude.

1. Mexico's Subnational Political and Institutional Backdrop

Mexico is constitutionally federal and is divided into states and municipalities. Mexico's 31 states, as well as the Federal District, have constitutions and elected governors and unicameral legislatures. States, but not the Federal District, are subdivided into nearly 2,500 municipalities. The structure of municipal government is outlined in the Constitution (1917) and includes a mayor (*alcalde*), city council, whose members are called *regidores*, and a local attorney general (*síndico*). The size of municipal councils is up to states but usually depends on population. States determine rules for electing municipal governments.

Despite its longtime federal structure, Mexico is well known for the centralizing rule of the PRI during most of the 20th century. In addition to its regular manipulation of election outcomes through electoral institutions (Méndez de Hoyos, 2000), the centralization of economic policy and tax authority facilitated the domination of the federal government over subnational levels and PRI rule until the 1980s (Díaz Cayeros, 2006). Between 1946 and 1976, the PRI averaged 86% total national votes in presidential elections and 83% in Chamber of Deputies elections [Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE)]. PRI domination was reproduced in state and municipal governments as well.

Mexico's centralized federalism changed with the debt crisis in 1982. Two parties, Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) and the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), began to challenge the PRI. Former PRI member Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano (PRD) competed for the presidency in 1988, winning 30.9% votes compared to the PRI's 51.22%. The PRI lost control over the lower chamber of congress in 1997 and in 2000 the presidency when Vicente Fox Quesada (PAN) obtained 43.4% support to the PRI's 36.9%. The PAN took the presidency again in 2006 when Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, won 35.9% votes to Andrés Manuel López Obrador's (PRD) 35.3%. PRI candidate Roberto Madrazo Pintado came in third with 22.3%. In contrast to the PRI's waning national fortunes, at the local level this party remains a formidable political force. In mid-2000, it controlled 17 out of 32 states, compared to the PAN's nine and the PRD's six, and just over 50% of municipalities.

Declines in national PRI support were coterminous with decentralizing reforms.¹ Starting in the late 1980s, the share of federal resources transferred to local governments increased dramatically. In 1983, states accounted for around 11% total expenditures; by 1995 this had risen to 24%. In mid-2000, states accounted for just over 27% total expenditures (Selee, 2006). In 1983, municipalities accounted for 2% expenditures; by 1995 this had increased to

¹ Scholars are divided about the roots of decentralizing reforms. Some argue they were a PRI strategy to protect local leaders, others that opposition leaders pressured for changes.

nearly 4%. In mid-2000 municipalities accounted for about 7% public expenditures (Selee, 2006). Nearly all municipal funds come from federal and state transfers but municipal governments can also collect some taxes, a testament to their growing importance in Mexican politics and public spending.

2. Oaxaca's Variety of Municipal Institutional Arrangements

Nearly all Mexican municipalities elect their governments in the same way: mayors are usually elected by plurality from a single, municipal district and municipal councilors are elected from closed party lists on ballots fused with mayoral ones, with a complex allocation formula guaranteeing mayors a majority of seats on city councils (Acedo, 2003). More important for our purposes, candidates for elected municipal (as well as state and federal) offices are almost always selected and presented by political parties that have been formally recognized by the IFE and thus have met restrictive national registration guidelines.² A secret ballot is used for casting votes, while all men and women eighteen years and older are eligible to vote in municipal (state and federal) elections. Scholars of Mexican politics refer to this combination of political party-based electoral processes, secret ballots, and universal suffrage as the "Political Parties" (PP) system.

The PP system is always used to elect officials to the federal and all state level governments but this is not the case at municipal levels. Although most municipalities use the PP system, in 1992 the federal government amended its constitution to acknowledge the nation's multiethnic character, kicking off state-level debates over indigenous representation (Anaya Muñoz, 2005; Recondo, 2002). Oaxaca was the only state to change its municipal electoral codes in 1995, with reforms in 1997, to allow a new election mechanism that would legally recognize local community practices that had been used for decades (Anaya Muñoz, 2005; Recondo, 2001). This system is called the *Usos y Costumbres* (UyC) or the *Uses and Customs* system. When the state government first approved the introduction of UyC systems in 1995, 412 out of Oaxaca's 570 municipalities chose to adopt it; by 1997 the total number of UyC municipalities had increased to 418 (Recondo, 2001; Servicios para una Educación Alternativa, 2006).

Municipalities using UyC systems must follow federal constitutional guidelines and select a mayor, municipal council, and a local attorney general but the rules used to determine suffrage and candidate eligibility, candidate selection and presentation procedures, and ballot structure and voting

² Aspiring parties must present evidence of 0.13% of total registered voter membership distributed across 51% of the Mexican states (each state having at least 3,000 members), or across 51% of 500 federal districts (each district showing at least 300 members). Parties winning less than 2.0% of national votes in a federal election lose registration.

mechanisms can differ from the PP system in important ways. UyC governments do not formally allow political parties to select or present candidates, although considerable anecdotal evidence suggests that parties still retain some influence in UyC municipalities (Eisenstadt, 2007; Recondo, 2001). Most UyC regimes revolve around a central decision-making body that is the municipality's highest level of political authority, with its decisions/rulings adopted by the municipal government. Sometimes this takes the form of an elder's council, sometimes a public *Asamblea General Comunal* (AGC) or General Communal Assembly (Eisenstadt, 2007; Guerra Pulido, 2000). Two things characterize these decision-making bodies. First, they are charged with running all candidate selection and municipal voting. Second, formal participation in them is limited. Elders' councils are comprised of age-eligible citizens and can be closed-door events. The AGC is organized around a public meeting whose recognized participants, either in the form of its leaders or its voters, varies by community. The AGC is usually comprised of a *mesa de debates* or a debate group that runs the meeting, all elections held in the meeting, and records its decisions/rulings. The *mesa* is usually includes a president, secretary, and note-takers.

UyC regimes vary in their requisites for who is eligible to be selected for elders' council or AGC positions, with the field most often restricted by sex, age, marital status, residency requirements, and satisfactory participation in the *cargo* and *tequio* system (Eisenstadt, 2007; Guerra Pulido, 2000; Recondo, 1999). The *cargo* system requires citizens to hold a variety of formal positions in the community and the *tequio* system service on short-term community projects. Both mechanisms trace their roots to the Catholic Church in this region and are designed to help contribute to the community's political, economic and social life. Service requirements range by municipality, with eligibility limited by age, marital status, and residency requirements. Candidates for municipal offices are recommended by the elders' council or AGC. Candidates must also meet certain sex, age, marital status, residency, and *cargo/tequio* requirements. Sometimes community groups, like peasant or neighborhood associations or police forces, also have the right to name candidates who have complied with minimum requirements. Municipal elections run through the elders' council or AGC, which can use a variety of voting mechanisms, ranging from secret individual ballots to mechanisms of publicly cast votes by individuals or groups. Ballots can also be cast using simultaneous or sequential procedures.

Oaxaca's UyC regimes have attracted considerable scholarly attention, with studies in political science focusing primarily on why Oaxaca approved electoral reforms to allow their formalization (Anaya Muñoz, 2002, 2003, 2005; Elizarrarás Álvarez, 2002; Recondo, 2001, 2002) what explains municipalities' decisions to adopt them (Guerra Pulido, 2000; Recondo, 2002), how they have worked to affect the level of post-election conflict and

violence (Eisenstadt, 2007; Osorio Zago, 2004; Recondo, 2002), how they have helped the PRI maintain political support (Anaya Muñoz, 2003; Elizarrarás Álvarez, 2002; Owolabi, 2004), and how they have affected electoral participation in federal elections (Benton, 2005; Goodman and Hiskey, 2006). This study differs from prior analyses as it casts UyC regimes in terms of how they affect the survival of authoritarian enclaves more generally, often thanks to their effects on abstention rates and PRI support.

3. Two Arguments about Local Authoritarian Rule and Their Testable Hypotheses

The study of subnational authoritarianism in Latin America is still in its infant stage, with most explanations casually mentioned in studies of other topics. Local authoritarianism is said to be a conservative phenomenon, with rural areas more prone to it than urban ones. For example, scholars have suggested that malapportionment might be a factor in translating rural conservative biases into local hegemonic control (Samuels and Snyder, 2001), while the absence of the rule of law in rural areas has also been linked to local authoritarianism (O'Donnell, 1993). Regions far from the nation's capital suffer from ineffective government, corrupt bureaucracy, and arbitrary law enforcement, creating opportunities for local hegemony (O'Donnell, 1993). It has also been suggested that the decentralization of fiscal resources might help local authoritarian leaders deliver benefits (Samuels and Abrucio, 2000).

However, none of these factors appears sufficient to explain local authoritarianism, while there has been no systematic test of the effect of these factors on local authoritarianism as this was not the intended point of focus of these studies. In the case of Oaxaca, though the rule of law is widely criticized throughout this state and most citizens live in rural areas or small towns,³ the strength of hegemonic control has varied dramatically by municipality and thus not according to these factors. Also, any malapportionment in the federal or state legislature would not affect municipalities whose councils are not elected by districts and thus do not malapportion seats in this way. Only fiscal resources might contribute to municipal authoritarian survival in Oaxaca but they would also help democratically elected incumbents and thus cannot explain local authoritarian survival alone.

In contrast to the arguments above, two authors have proposed alternative explanations for local hegemonic rule. The first, which I call A1: Political Isolation, is made by Gibson (2005) who argues that state leaders able to minimize national interference in their political affairs are best able to protect their positions. Local leaders able to prevent opposition groups

³ Over half of Oaxacans live in communities with fewer than 2,500 people (Recondo, 2001).

from bringing national allies into local political contests will be best able to stave off challenges and retain hegemonic control. In contrast, local leaders faced with opposition groups that have attracted the support of national allies will encounter more trouble maintaining authoritarian enclaves (Gibson, 2005). Interestingly, the case studies used by the author to support his argument describe how political isolation was largely achieved through questionable (illegal) actions, which are necessarily difficult to verify, measure, and compare across cases. However, in Oaxaca political isolation is conveniently legal and measurable in the form of UyC systems that preclude the participation of national political parties in municipal processes.

The second argument, which I call A2: Political Exclusion, is outlined by Fox (1994) who argues that local authoritarian leaders able to undercut guarantees of universal suffrage and the secret ballot are best able to maintain authoritarian control. Of course, Fox (1994) intended his argument to refer to illegal measures taken by local leaders as he focuses his analysis on actions that prevent legally enfranchised citizens from casting votes and voting secrecy, two things that allow local rulers to engage in electoral fraud to guarantee victories. However, similar to the case with the argument about political isolation above, Oaxaca's UyC regimes frequently legally disenfranchise voters in a variety of ways, and often revolve around public rather than secret ballots. Again, the case of Oaxaca presents us with a unique opportunity to test systematically the impact of these usually illegal measures on local authoritarianism, and this is what makes the study conducted here unique.

The nature of UyC systems means that we cannot directly observe political behavior in them; parties do not formally participate in local elections, so municipal election results do not reflect partisan politics. However, it is possible to observe how voters in UyC systems behave in elections for other levels of government and thus to develop testable implications about expected behavior in federal elections under each argument. Adjusting A1: Political Isolation to Oaxacan municipal politics, UyC systems should erect barriers between local and (state and) national politics that isolate the community politically. Though there is some evidence to suggest that political parties still participate informally in UyC systems, that UyC systems restrict their formal participation means that, relatively speaking, the influence of parties should be less in UyC municipalities than in PP ones. UyC rules are endogenous to local customs and traditions, not state or national ones, something that also raises the level political isolation of the community relative to that of PP systems. UyC systems also centralize the discussion of community issues among a few local leaders. Leaders in UyC communities thus have the tools at their disposal to control the expression of opposition viewpoints and the intrusion of state and federal issues in community affairs. The ability to isolate the community from such outside influence should

reduce ties between UyC and (state and) national political debates and processes, leading to two testable hypotheses:

H1a: Abstention in federal elections will be higher in UyC than PP municipalities, all else being equal.

H1b: PRI performance in federal elections will improve with the adoption of UyC systems compared to PP systems, all else being equal.

H1c: Margins won by first-place parties in federal elections in UyC systems will be greater than those won in PP systems, even where the PRI does not win, all else being equal.⁴

As UyC communities are relatively more isolated from (state and) national political parties and events than PP ones, their citizens should be relatively less informed and interested in politics at higher levels. The PRI should be better protected in UyC systems than in PP ones from national and state trends in its support. However, this does not mean that political domination in Oaxaca will always occur through the PRI. The centralization of political discussion among a few community leaders privileges their policy and political preferences but these leaders may not always support the PRI as a means for maintaining hegemonic positions. Indeed, the formal proscription of parties from UyC systems should weaken party influence in these municipalities, giving UyC leaders more flexibility to change partisan allegiances. Though PRI hegemony at municipal levels should remain strong, the temptation to switch parties should rise as the fortunes of the PRI decline at higher levels and local leaders consider ways to improve their career prospects beyond their communities. As a result, should they choose to do so, local leaders should be able to lead their communities to party-switch, with their partisan choices gaining hegemonic status in the community.

A1: Political Isolation requires that voting behavior vary between UyC and PP systems in systematic ways, however, this argument says nothing about how UyC systems might vary among one another. In contrast, A2: Political Exclusion predicts that any variation among UyC municipalities and between UyC systems and PP ones will occur according to differences in UyC rules. Because UyC systems often restrict suffrage, variation in suffrage rules should lead to variation in citizen experience with municipal politics and in their interest in participating in political processes at higher levels of government. Because UyC systems vary in the use of private ballots, the nature of the

⁴ Of course, large margins could result from party popularity rather than authoritarianism but evidence suggests that large margins in Oaxaca have been the result of political and electoral manipulation. The Secretaría de la Función Pública reports that Oaxaca has not complied with the Federal Access to Information Law and ranks last in terms of state governmental transparency and among the last in municipal transparency (Secretaría de la Función Pública, 2007). Aregional reports Oaxaca last of all states in fiscal transparency (Aregional, 2005).

municipality's voting mechanism should affect the level of influence that municipal leaders have over voting behavior and political outcomes at local and national levels. A2: Political Exclusion thus leads to the following variants on the testable hypotheses listed above:

H2a: Abstention in federal elections should vary positively with the restrictiveness of voter eligibility rules and non-secret ballots, all else being equal.

H2b: PRI federal electoral performance will vary according to the restrictiveness of voter eligibility rules and non-secret ballots, all else being equal.

H2c: Margins won by first-place parties in federal elections will vary according to restrictiveness of voter eligibility rules and non-secret ballots, even where the PRI does not win, all else being equal.

Given the variety of institutional structures employed in UyC systems, ranging from highly restrictive to more inclusive, those UyC systems at the inclusive end may produce political behavior not much different from that observed in PP systems. This means that, if A2: Political Exclusion best explains local hegemonic party politics amidst national democracy, its hypotheses will find support but not the hypotheses associated with A1: Political Isolation. In contrast, for A1: Political Isolation to explain local authoritarian rule, its hypotheses but those associated with A2: Political Exclusion must survive empirical tests. The arguments here are thus presented as alternative propositions; however, there are two additional possibilities that might obtain. First, neither argument might find support. Second, all hypotheses might simultaneously find support. In this case, political behavior in all UyC systems would contrast from PP systems, while UyC municipalities would also vary among one another according to institutions. Isolation and institutions would both contribute to local authoritarianism but in different ways.

4. The Variables and Data

I begin the analysis with the 1994 presidential elections, the elections immediately prior to reforms allowing UyC systems, and include elections posterior to this date, including the 1997 midterm Chamber of Deputies elections, the 2000 presidential elections and the 2003 midterm deputy

elections.⁵ The principal dependent variables of concern include voter participation, electoral margins of first-place parties, and support for the PRI in federal elections. I use abstention to measure voter participation. Abstention was calculated as $1 - (\text{voters casting votes} / \text{total registered voters})$. IFE reports total votes as including party votes and blank and null ballots. Electoral margins won by first place parties are $(\text{number of votes won by that party} / \text{total votes cast}) - (\text{the number of votes won by the second-place party} / \text{total votes cast})$. PRI support is $(\text{number of votes cast for PRI}) / (\text{total votes cast})$.

The principal independent variables include the presence of UyC institutions, PRI incumbency and PRI victories, and selected institutional rules of the game used in UyC systems. To record whether a municipality uses a UyC system or not, I created a dummy variable coded 1 for UyC system and 0 for PP system.⁶ Only two dummy variables for UyC regimes, 1995 and 1998, were included in the analysis as those municipalities using the system in 2000 and 2003 were the same as in 1998. Dummies capturing whether the PRI came in first place (1) or did not (0) in federal elections were created for each year. To code differences among UyC political structures, I created dummy variables coding whether women are excluded from voting (1=excluded, 0=included), people living outside of the municipal seat are excluded from voting (1=excluded, 0=included), and whether voting is public (1=public ballot, 0=secret ballot).⁷ I also include control variables that have been linked to abstention, electoral margins, and PRI support, including municipal spending capacity, economic and educational levels, and municipal religious and ethnic composition.⁸

⁵ All municipal-level federal electoral information was generously provided by the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE). The 2006 elections have not yet been recorded by municipality. Space limitations led me to exclude deputy elections for 1994 and 2000 but they produced similar results to presidential elections those years.

⁶ Municipal status in 1995, 1998 and 2001, following the local electoral cycle, is from the Government of the State of Oaxaca (2006), Instituto Electoral Estatal de Oaxaca (IEEO) (2006) and Servicios para una Educación Alternativa, A.C. (EDUCA) (2006).

⁷ Data for UyC political institutional structures is from Velásquez Cepeda and Méndez Lugo (1995). Data from the Government of the State of Oaxaca (2006) shows similar results.

⁸ Data is from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática (INEGI) (2006). Municipal spending per capita is $(\text{total pesos spent per year}) / (\text{total population})$. Poverty and income are $(\text{dwellings with non-earth flooring}) / (\text{total dwellings})$ and $(\text{citizens over age 12 earning less than one minimum wage}) / (\text{all economically citizens over age 12})$. Illiteracy rates $(\text{citizens unable to read} / \text{citizens over age five})$ measure education levels. Ethnicity is $(\text{indigenous language speakers}) / (\text{population over five years})$. Religious makeup is $(\text{citizens affiliated with the Catholic Church}) / (\text{population over five years of age})$. Municipal population was not included as its high multicollinearity with spending per capita interfered with significance tests of this variable.

5. Statistical Tests of the Hypotheses and Discussion of Results

I conduct a series of statistical tests to evaluate the arguments and their hypotheses. All models were estimated using ordinary least squares regression (OLS) with robust standard errors (RSEs). Panel analysis was inappropriate as data for the main control variables are only available for 1990 and 2000. OLS with RSEs addresses two problems observed during data diagnostics: the presence of outliers⁹ and heteroskedastic residuals in some models when OLS without RSEs was used.¹⁰

Tables 1 through 4 show results for the models used to evaluate A1: Political Isolation. The results for tests of Hypothesis 1a about the effect of UyC systems on abstention rates are shown in Table 1, Models 1 through 4, corresponding to election years 1994, 1997, 2000 and 2003. Model 1 shows that, according to theoretical expectation, there was no difference in the abstention levels reported in the 1994 presidential elections that year between the 412 municipalities that would adopt UyC systems in 1995 and those that would not. The coefficient for UyC 1995 was not significant. By 1997, however, the adoption of UyC systems had an effect on abstention rates. As shown in Model 2, the coefficient for UyC 1998 was 0.064, meaning that abstention was 6.4% higher in UyC compared to PP municipalities. The coefficient showed $p < 0.000$. Abstention continued to remain higher in UyC than PP systems in subsequent elections. In 2000, it was 9% higher and in 2003 it was 5% higher, with both coefficients for UyC 1998 showing $p < 0.000$.

⁹ Robust regression produced results similar to those from OLS and from OLS with RSEs, demonstrating the minimal leverage of outliers on parameter estimates.

¹⁰ OLS without RSEs produce normally distributed but heteroscedastic residuals in models for first-place margins and PRI support. Model specification tests reveal potential omitted variables but heteroscedasticity cannot be resolved through model specification. The abstention models produce normally distributed, homoscedastic residuals, signaling their adequate specification. These same variables should affect first-place margins and PRI support. Addition of explanatory variables or lagged dependent variables, elimination of independent variables, and transformation of non-normally distributed variables did not improve results. The source of heteroscedasticity is unknown, justifying OLS with RSEs.

TABLE 1. THE EFFECT OF USOS Y COSTUMBRES ON ABSTENTION RATES IN OAXACA, 1994–2003

	MODEL 1: 1994 PRESIDENT			MODEL 2: 1997 DEPUTIES			MODEL 3: 2000 PRESIDENT			MODEL 4: 2003 DEPUTIES		
	COEF.	RSE	P> T	COEF.	RSE	P> T	COEF.	RSE	P> T	COEF.	RSE	P> T
UYC 1995	0.009	0.008	0.274	0.064	0.010	0.000						
UYC 1998							0.090	0.009	0.000	0.050	0.011	0.000
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1993	-0.004	0.001	0.001									
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1996				-0.007	0.001	0.000						
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1999							-0.002	0.000	0.000			
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 2002										-0.002	0.001	0.000
NON-DIRT FLOORING 1990	-0.044	0.025	0.080									
NON-DIRT FLOORING 2000				-0.038	0.029	0.183	-0.045	0.023	0.050	-0.003	0.026	0.904
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 1990	-0.206	0.070	0.003									
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 2000				0.003	0.090	0.976	-0.084	0.086	0.328	-0.049	0.092	0.595
ILLITERACY 1990	0.518	0.086	0.000									
ILLITERACY 2000				0.091	0.056	0.105	0.047	0.048	0.324	0.053	0.051	0.301
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 1990	-0.058	0.015	0.000									
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 2000				-0.019	0.018	0.306	-0.013	0.015	0.410	-0.012	0.018	0.515
CATHOLIC 1990	-0.048	0.046	0.299									
CATHOLIC 2000				0.030	0.049	0.536	0.082	0.041	0.046	0.106	0.045	0.018
CONSTANT	0.334	0.047	0.000	0.512	0.052	0.000	0.383	0.044	0.000	0.534	0.052	0.000
PROBABILITY > F			0.000			0.000			0.000			0.000
R-SQUARED			0.153			0.146			0.147			0.066
ROOT MSE			0.103			0.125			0.106			0.119
OBSERVATIONS			567			568			570			570

Note: Dependent variable is abstention rate or 1-(votes cast/registered voters).

Public expenditures had a negative and significant effect on abstention rates in all models. Higher spending likely meant greater citizen interest in political affairs. For all years under consideration, this variable produced coefficients with $p < 0.001$ or 0.000 . The other control variables did not produce systematic results across the years. This is likely due to the heavy migration within Oaxaca and to other regions or other countries during the 1990s as a result of Mexico's mid-1990 financial crisis. It is also for this reason that I use control variables for 2000 rather than 1990 for the evaluations of 1997 deputy elections in all models, though control variables using 1990 measurements did not change results.

Table 2 reports results for tests of Hypothesis 1b about PRI electoral performance. As shown in Model 1, the coefficient for the dummy variable noting those municipalities that would adopt UyC systems in 1995 was not statistically significant, demonstrating that there was no difference in the level of PRI support between these would-be UyC communities and PP systems in the 1994 presidential vote, according to the hypothesis. In the 1997 federal deputy elections, shown in Model 2, the coefficient for the UyC variable is positive and significant, also according to expectation. The PRI won an additional 0.020 or 2% support in UyC compared to PP systems that year, regardless of whether the party was the first-place finisher in the municipality or not. This UyC system benefit carried through to the 2000 presidential elections, shown in Model 3, with the 0.024 coefficient representing 2.4% additional votes for the PRI in UyC compared to PP systems, also controlling for whether the PRI won or not. The UyC dummy variables in Model 2 and Model 3 were significant at $p < 0.046$ and 0.021 , respectively.

TABLE 2. THE EFFECT OF USOS Y COSTUMBRES ON PRI SUPPORT IN OAXACA, 1994–2003

	MODEL 1: 1994 PRESIDENT			MODEL 2: 1997 DEPUTIES			MODEL 3: 2000 PRESIDENT			MODEL 4: 2003 DEPUTIES		
	COEF.	RSE	P > T	COEF.	RSE	P > T	COEF.	RSE	P > T	COEF.	RSE	P > T
UYC 1995	0.006	0.012	0.625	0.020	0.010	0.046						
UYC 1998							0.024	0.010	0.021	-0.019	0.011	0.079
PRI WIN MUNICIPAL CURRENT ELECTION	0.330	0.014	0.000	0.251	0.010	0.000	0.240	0.009	0.000	0.231	0.012	0.000
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1993	0.005	0.001	0.001									
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1996				0.003	0.001	0.000						
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1999							0.001	0.001	0.011			
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 2002										0.001	0.001	0.006
NON-DIRT FLOORING 1990	-0.123	0.036	0.001									
NON-DIRT FLOORING 2000				-0.023	0.030	0.444	-0.034	0.030	0.261	-0.042	0.028	0.141
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 1990	0.026	0.095	0.785									
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 2000				-0.192	0.080	0.017	-0.110	0.093	0.238	-0.227	0.084	0.007
ILLITERACY 1990	0.125	0.103	0.227									
ILLITERACY 2000				0.085	0.052	0.106	0.080	0.055	0.143	-0.008	0.052	0.873
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 1990	-0.053	0.022	0.016									
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 2000				-0.018	0.017	0.301	-0.017	0.019	0.383	-0.012	0.019	0.536
CATHOLIC 1990	-0.172	0.062	0.006									
CATHOLIC 2000				-0.013	0.041	0.750	-0.005	0.044	0.903	0.002	0.043	0.959
CONSTANT	0.428	0.067	0.000	0.296	0.046	0.000	0.288	0.047	0.000	0.286	0.051	0.000
PROBABILITY > F			0.000			0.000			0.000			0.000
R-SQUARED			0.514			0.409			0.446			0.446
ROOT MSE			0.137			0.119			0.120			0.120
OBSERVATIONS			570			568			570			570

Note: Dependent variable is the PRI support or (PRI votes/total votes cast).

The PRI's electoral advantage in UyC municipalities, at only 2% in 1997 and 2.4% in 2000, does not appear very large. However, this is a measure of aggregate support, not margins which more adequately reflect the level of political competition and authoritarian control, discussed below. That the positive effect of UyC systems on PRI support wore off by 2003 is not surprising given dramatic changes in PRI electoral fortunes in both national and Oaxacan state politics by the mid 2000s. The negative coefficient, -0.019, demonstrates that the PRI suffered 1.9% fewer votes in UyC communities than in PP ones that year. This coefficient was significant at the $p < 0.079$ level. Though the adoption of UyC systems initially worked to the benefit of PRI support, as time passed and municipal leaders considered other partisan options, the PRI lost its voter advantage in UyC municipalities.

As in Table 1 testing Hypothesis 1a above, coefficients for the effect of municipal fiscal expenditures per capita were positive and significant between the $p < 0.001$ and 0.031 levels across the models. Illiteracy rates did not seem to affect PRI support, while the variable measuring the share of citizens earning one minimum wage or less was only significant in 1997 and 2003, two years without presidential elections. All other control variables did not produce noteworthy results. Illiteracy and citizen income do not matter as much for PRI support as they do for first-place party margins, shown below.

Table 3 reports results for tests of Hypothesis 1c about the effect of UyC systems on first-place party margins. As shown in Model 1 analyzing the 1994 presidential election results, those communities that would adopt UyC systems the following year showed higher first-place party margins than PP systems. The 0.100 coefficient for the dummy variable identifying UyC municipalities was significant at the $p < 0.000$ level, implying that first-place parties in would-be UyC systems could expect 10% more votes than those in PP municipalities. Although this result might at first appear to refute Hypothesis 1c, analysis of subsequent years shows that it does not. The UyC regime dummy variable was statistically significant at the $p < 0.000$ level in Models 2, 3, and 4, while the coefficients show that, between 1997 and 2003, first-place parties in UyC communities maintained a 13.3%, 11.8%, and 5.7% advantage, respectively, over their counterparts in PP municipalities. However, this vote advantage occurred in a context of declining first-place party margins across the nation and across Oaxaca State. As shown in Table 4, though the ratio of average predicted UyC margins to average predicted PP margins was 1.510 in 1994, it rose to 1.763 in 1997 and 1.821 in 2000 with the adoption of UyC regimes. Declining margins in all municipalities led this ratio to decline to 1.373 in 2003. Though margins were higher in pre-UyC regimes but rose with the formal adoption of UyC systems is consistent with Hypothesis 1c.

TABLE 3. THE EFFECT OF USOS Y COSTUMBRES ON WINNING MARGINS IN OAXACA, 1994–2003

	MODEL 1: 1994 PRESIDENT			MODEL 2: 1997 DEPUTIES			MODEL 3: 2000 PRESIDENT			MODEL 4: 2003 DEPUTIES		
	COEF.	RSE	P> T	COEF.	RSE	P> T	COEF.	RSE	P> T	COEF.	RSE	P> T
UYC 1995	0.100	0.020	0.000	0.133	0.016	0.000						
UYC 1998							0.118	0.016	0.000	0.057	0.016	0.000
PRI WIN MUNICIP. PRIOR ELECTION	-0.047	0.060	0.435	0.099	0.019	0.000	0.064	0.020	0.001	0.121	0.017	0.000
PRI WIN MUNICIP. CURRENT ELECTION	0.122	0.025	0.000	0.106	0.020	0.000	0.111	0.017	0.000	0.124	0.020	0.000
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1993	0.008	0.002	0.001									
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1996				0.004	0.001	0.002						
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1999							0.002	0.001	0.031			
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 2002										0.002	0.001	0.030
NON-DIRT FLOORING 1990	-0.210	0.058	0.000									
NON-DIRT FLOORING 2000				-0.062	0.048	0.196	-0.044	0.046	0.347	-0.058	0.040	0.149
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 1990	0.150	0.161	0.352									
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 2000				-0.278	0.139	0.045	-0.259	0.143	0.069	-0.354	0.119	0.003
ILLITERACY 1990	0.397	0.180	0.027									
ILLITERACY 2000				0.154	0.088	0.083	0.152	0.086	0.080	-0.052	0.074	0.480
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 1990	-0.075	0.036	0.039									
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 2000				-0.019	0.028	0.487	-0.016	0.030	0.591	-0.024	0.026	0.368
CATHOLIC 1990	-0.110	0.101	0.295									
CATHOLIC 2000				-0.007	0.068	0.916	0.004	0.072	0.956	0.049	0.066	0.454
CONSTANT	0.305	0.121	0.012	0.023	0.077	0.762	0.020	0.077	0.799	0.006	0.076	0.933
PROBABILITY > F			0.000			0.000			0.000			0.000
R-SQUARED			0.155			0.223			0.210			0.206
ROOT MSE			0.228			0.191			0.187			0.175
OBSERVATIONS			570			568			568			570

Note: Dependent variable is the winner's margin or (first-place party votes)-(second-place party votes). The number of cases (municipalities) analyzed each year does not always add to 570 due to missing election data for two Uyc systems in 1997. This missing data affected results for 1997 and 2000 (through the "PRI Win Municip. Prior Election" dummy variable).

TABLE 4. COMPARING AVERAGE PREDICTED (Y-HAT) FIRST-PLACE PARTY MARGINS AND NUMBERS OF WINNERS, 1994-2003

AVERAGE PREDICTED MARGINS	ALL WINNERS			PRI WINNERS			OTHER WINNERS		
	UYC	PP	RATIO UYC/PP	UYC	PP	RATIO UYC/PP	UYC	PP	RATIO UYC/PP
1994	39.7%	26.3%	1.510	42.1%	22.0%	1.914	31.8%	18.3%	1.736
1997	34.4%	19.5%	1.763	37.0%	23.0%	1.607	21.3%	7.7%	2.755
2000	31.6%	17.3%	1.821	34.8%	20.9%	1.664	20.1%	6.6%	3.025
2003	29.7%	21.6%	1.373	31.9%	24.0%	1.325	17.3%	8.0%	2.179
NUMBER OF CASES	UYC	PP	TOTAL	UYC	PP	SUBTOTAL	UYC	PP	SUBTOTAL
1994	412	158	570	318	128	446	94	30	124
1997	410	158	568	343	128	471	67	30	97
2000	416	152	568	325	114	439	91	38	129
2003	418	152	570	355	129	484	63	23	86

Note: The number of municipalities for each year does not always add to 570 due to missing election data for two Uyc systems in 1997. This missing data affected results for 1997 and 2000 (through the "PRI Win Municip. Prior Election" dummy variable).

The analysis also shows that, though the PRI always maintained a larger margin of victory than its opponents, UyC systems had a greater positive impact on the margins won by non-PRI parties than the PRI. When the PRI came in first its margin was higher than that of other parties. As shown in Table 3, the coefficient capturing a first-place PRI finish that year shows that this party, when it won, could count on a margin of 0.122 or 12.2% over other winning parties in 1994, 10.6% in 1997, 11.1% in 2000, and 12.4% in 2003, regardless of the presence of UyC systems. All coefficients were significant at the $p < 0.000$ level. But Table 3 also shows that first-place party margins were greater in UyC compared to PP municipalities, regardless of whether the PRI won.

This is made apparent in Table 4 where figures for the first-place margins won by any party demonstrate that margins were always higher in UyC municipalities than in PP systems, particularly after the adoption of UyC rules. Indeed, comparison of the average predicted margins for PRI and non-PRI winners in UyC and PP municipalities shows that the adoption of UyC political structures favored non-PRI party margins more than PRI ones across time. The ratio of the average predicted first-place margins won by non-PRI parties in UyC systems to PP systems increased radically after 1995 and remained that way through 2003. Of course, in 1997 non-PRI parties lost 27 races in areas that adopted UyC regimes, with the ratio of non-PRI margins in UyC compared to PP areas increasing as weaker parties were weeded out of UyC areas.

But the dramatic recovery by non-PRI parties in UyC areas in 2000 did not come at the expense of margins, with non-PRI parties' UyC margins three times as large as those in PP areas. Though UyC rules initially gave the PRI additional victories, they did not help the party increase margins in the long run. The ratio of average predicted PRI margins in UyC and PP systems steadily declined regardless of whether it increased its number of first-place UyC municipalities. This finding is in line with arguments about how political isolation allows municipal leaders to party-switch and throw their support to new parties.¹¹

The effect of municipal expenditures per capita was positive and significant (between $p < 0.001$ and $p < 0.002$) in all models in Table 3. In contrast to the models for abstention in Table 1, two of the control variables had a significant effect on first-place party margins. Illiteracy rates, measured as the share of population over five-years of age unable to read, had a positive and significant effect on margins for the earlier years 1994, 1997, and 2000, but failed to have an effect in 2003.

Coefficients were significant at the $p < 0.027$, 0.083, and 0.080 levels, respectively. Oddly, the coefficient for the share of citizens' earning one minimum wage or less was negative and significant in Models 2, 3, and 4 for

¹¹ But it contrasts with case studies on the effect of UyC systems on PRI support by authors like Anaya Muñoz (2003), Elizarrarás Álvarez (2002) and Owalabi (2004).

the years 1997, 2000 and 2003. Instead of measuring poverty, the ability to earn up to one minimum wage might be a sign of comparative wealth in this highly impoverished state.

The results in Tables 1 through 4 provide support for A1: Political Isolation. According to theoretical expectations, UyC systems raised abstention rates and first-place party margins, and they benefited PRI support, though this effect declined over time. UyC systems also worked to the benefit of non-PRI parties who won with higher margins in UyC systems than they did in PP ones.

This finding attests to the fact that UyC regimes, though their adoption may have been fostered by the PRI in an effort to maintain party hegemony in Oaxaca, facilitated local authoritarian control more generally. Local leaders switching party allegiances were able to bring their citizens with them, helping maintain authoritarian control that can only occur outside of the PRI party umbrella.

Despite strong support for A1: Political Isolation, the statistical models do not distinguish between key features of UyC systems that might affect political processes and voting behavior in federal elections. For this reason, a second set of statistical analyses was conducted that include variables capturing certain UyC rules that might affect municipal politics and lead to municipal-level electoral variation in federal elections, as outlined in A2: Political Exclusion. Specifically, two variables capturing whether women and citizens not residing in the municipal seat are excluded from participating in municipal UyC political processes and a variable capturing whether the municipality uses a public or secret ballot were included in the analyses. Tables 5 through 7 present results for these models.

Table 5 shows results for tests of Hypothesis 2a about the effect of UyC institutions on abstention in federal elections. As shown, the variables capturing whether women and citizens not residing in the municipal seat were excluded from municipal political processes and whether votes are cast publicly were not systematically significant across Models 1 through 4 for federal elections in 1994, 1997, 2000, and 2003.

In only one model, 1997, was one of these UyC institutional variables significant, the variable capturing whether women were excluded from municipal electoral processes. Given this variable's lack of importance in all other models, however, it appears that its effect in 1997 was spurious. The models thus do not provide support for Hypothesis 2a or A2: Political Exclusion. Rather, the analyses shown in Table 5 act as a robustness check for the analyses of Hypothesis 1a above and A1: Political Isolation.

Despite the inclusion of these UyC institutions in the models, control variables for whether the municipality was recognized as UyC or PP retained effects similar to those reported in Table 1. Municipalities that would adopt UyC systems in 1994 showed no difference in abstention rates from those that

would not. Once UyC systems were introduced, these municipalities counted on abstention rates about 10% higher than in PP systems in 1997 and 2000, lowering to 4.6% in 2003. These variables were significant at the $p < 0.000$ and 0.018 levels. All other control variable results were similar to those reported in Table 1, Models 1 through 4.

TABLE 5. THE EFFECT OF SELECTED USOS Y COSTUMBRES RULES ON ABSTENTION RATES IN OAXACA, 1994–2003

	MODEL 1: 1994 PRESIDENT			MODEL 2: 1997 DEPUTIES			MODEL 3: 2000 PRESIDENT			MODEL 4: 2003 DEPUTIES		
	COEF.	RSE	P > T	COEF.	RSE	P > T	COEF.	RSE	P > T	COEF.	RSE	P > T
UYC 1995	0.000	0.018	0.980	0.097	0.020	0.000						
UYC 1998							0.109	0.019	0.000	0.046	0.019	0.018
WOMEN DO NOT VOTE 1995	-0.007	0.017	0.674	-0.039	0.018	0.028						
NEIGHBORS DO NOT VOTE 1995	-0.014	0.014	0.312	-0.001	0.017	0.961						
PUBLIC VOTING 1995	0.013	0.018	0.468	-0.028	0.019	0.146						
WOMEN DO NOT VOTE 1998							-0.017	0.015	0.263	-0.024	0.015	0.126
NEIGHBORS DO NOT VOTE 1998							-0.019	0.014	0.180	-0.001	0.016	0.931
PUBLIC VOTING 1998							-0.012	0.018	0.486	0.011	0.018	0.522
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1993	-0.004	0.001	0.000									
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1996				-0.007	0.001	0.000						
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1999							-0.002	0.000	0.000			
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 2002										-0.002	0.001	0.000
NON-DIRT FLOORING 1990	-0.048	0.025	0.060									
NON-DIRT FLOORING 2000				-0.021	0.029	0.451	-0.038	0.023	0.102	0.004	0.026	0.879
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 1990	-0.175	0.072	0.015									
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 2000				0.000	0.090	0.999	-0.080	0.085	0.348	-0.060	0.093	0.523
LITTERACY 1990	0.488	0.086	0.000									
LITTERACY 2000				0.087	0.056	0.122	0.053	0.048	0.270	0.046	0.052	0.375
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 1990	-0.058	0.016	0.000									
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 2000				-0.010	0.018	0.585	-0.010	0.016	0.508	-0.005	0.018	0.794
CATHOLIC 1990	-0.048	0.046	0.293									
CATHOLIC 2000				0.040	0.047	0.398	0.083	0.041	0.040	0.109	0.045	0.015
CONSTANT	0.339	0.048	0.000	0.495	0.051	0.000	0.377	0.043	0.000	0.530	0.052	0.000
PROBABILITY > F	0.000			0.000			0.000			0.000		
R-SQUARED	0.145			0.172			0.160			0.073		
ROOT MSE	0.103			0.123			0.105			0.119		
OBSERVATIONS	553			554			557			557		

Note: Dependent variable is abstention rate or 1-(votes cast/registered voters). The total number of observations does not equal 570 due to missing information on some Uyc regime institutions.

The models shown in Table 6 test Hypothesis 2b and also demonstrate the general lack of a systematic affect of exclusionary UyC institutions on PRI support, though whether a locality was categorized as UyC or PP retained its positive and significant effect on PRI support as outlined in A1: Political Isolation. However, the variable depicting whether citizens residing outside the municipal seat were excluded from municipal political processes was positive and significant in Model 3 for the 2000 presidential contest. It thus appears that municipalities using this exclusionary practice could count on 4.5% larger margins than those UyC and PP systems that had no such rule that year. This coefficient is significant at the $p < 0.018$ level. Again, that this variable had no effect in any other elections under consideration here makes it difficult to conclude that it was critical in maintaining authoritarian control in any systematic way, even though it did seem to help local PRI supporters in 2000.

TABLE 6. THE EFFECT OF SELECTED USOS Y COSTUMBRAS RULES ON PRI SUPPORT IN OAXACA, 1994–2003

	MODEL 1: 1994 PRESIDENT			MODEL 2: 1997 DEPUTIES			MODEL 3: 2000 PRESIDENT			MODEL 4: 2003 DEPUTIES		
	COEF.	RSE	P > T	COEF.	RSE	P > T	COEF.	RSE	P > T	COEF.	RSE	P > T
UYC 1995	-0.017	0.022	0.422	-0.006	0.018	0.748	0.016	0.018	0.388	-0.039	0.020	0.048
UYC 1998							0.016	0.018	0.388	-0.039	0.020	0.048
WOMEN DO NOT VOTE 1995	-0.017	0.022	0.434	-0.005	0.016	0.760						
NEIGHBORS DO NOT VOTE 1995	0.022	0.019	0.267	0.012	0.018	0.495						
PUBLIC VOTING 1995	0.026	0.020	0.205	0.027	0.018	0.120						
WOMEN DO NOT VOTE 1998							0.012	0.016	0.441	0.012	0.016	0.459
NEIGHBORS DO NOT VOTE 1998							0.045	0.019	0.018	0.019	0.020	0.325
PUBLIC VOTING 1998							-0.004	0.018	0.800	0.014	0.019	0.466
PRI WIN MUNICIP. CURRENT ELECTION	0.326	0.014	0.000	0.250	0.010	0.000	0.238	0.009	0.000	0.232	0.013	0.000
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1993	0.005	0.001	0.001									
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1996				0.003	0.001	0.000						
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1999							0.001	0.001	0.007			
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 2002										0.001	0.001	0.006
NON-DIRT FLOORING 1990	-0.116	0.037	0.002									
NON-DIRT FLOORING 2000				-0.016	0.030	0.582	-0.038	0.029	0.202	-0.046	0.029	0.109
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 1990	0.025	0.097	0.794									
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 2000				-0.183	0.081	0.024	-0.113	0.094	0.229	-0.209	0.086	0.016
ILLITERACY 1990	0.124	0.107	0.246									
ILLITERACY 2000				0.085	0.053	0.107	0.071	0.055	0.192	-0.002	0.052	0.971
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 1990	-0.045	0.023	0.048									
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 2000				-0.016	0.017	0.351	-0.017	0.019	0.384	-0.014	0.019	0.455
CATHOLIC 1990	-0.170	0.062	0.007									
CATHOLIC 2000				-0.015	0.040	0.710	-0.012	0.044	0.782	-0.006	0.043	0.883
CONSTANT	0.422	0.068	0.000	0.294	0.046	0.000	0.299	0.047	0.000	0.292	0.052	0.000
PROBABILITY > F	0.000			0.000			0.000			0.000		
R-SQUARED	0.514			0.420			0.457			0.330		
ROOT MSE	0.137			0.118			0.118			0.123		
OBSERVATIONS	556			554			557			557		

Note: Dependent variable is the PRI support or (PRI votes / total votes cast). The total number of observations does not equal 570 due to missing information on some Uyc regime institutions.

Whether a municipality would adopt UyC systems or not maintained its effect on winning margins, as shown in Table 7, despite the inclusion of variables for specific UyC institutions used to test Hypothesis 2c. However, though the exclusion of women and use of public ballots had no systematic effect on winning margins, the variable capturing whether citizens living outside the municipal seat (called "Neighbors Do Not Vote 1995/1998") would be or were currently excluded from municipal political processes showed significant results in the presidential electoral contest held in 1994, prior to the formal adoption of UyC regimes, and in 2000. The exclusion of such citizens from municipal processes raised winning margins in federal presidential elections by 7.5% in 1994 and 6.9% in 2000, with both coefficients significant at the $p < 0.016$ and 0.021 levels. It thus appears that certain suffrage limiting mechanisms adopted by some UyC municipalities had an important impact on municipal-level voting behavior in federal presidential elections. Moreover, this effect obtains regardless of whether the winning party was the PRI or an opposition group, as expected in Hypothesis 2c. However, although the exclusion of neighboring citizens from participating in municipal political processes appears to have worked to help local leaders maintain support for the parties they favored in highly visible presidential races, given its lack of effect on midterm legislative contests it is difficult to conclude that such institutions facilitated the survival of local authoritarianism in a systematic way, leading us to reject Hypotheses 2c, even if sometimes the hypothesized effect is proven to exist. Again, control variables showed results similar to those in prior analyses.

TABLE 7. THE EFFECT OF SELECTED USOS Y COSTUMBRES RULES ON WINNING MARGINS IN OAXACA, 1994-2003

	MODEL 1: 1994 PRESIDENT			MODEL 2: 1997 DEPUTIES			MODEL 3: 2000 PRESIDENT			MODEL 4: 2003 DEPUTIES		
	COEF.	RSE	P> T	COEF.	RSE	P> T	COEF.	RSE	P> T	COEF.	RSE	P> T
UYC 1995	0.067	0.037	0.071	0.110	0.027	0.000						
UYC 1998							0.114	0.028	0.000	0.051	0.026	0.053
WOMEN DO NOT VOTE 1995	-0.029	0.036	0.417	-0.011	0.027	0.674						
NEIGHBORS DO NOT VOTE 1995	0.075	0.031	0.016	0.030	0.028	0.286						
PUBLIC VOTING 1995	0.028	0.035	0.431	0.010	0.026	0.713						
WOMEN DO NOT VOTE 1998							-0.001	0.026	0.971	-0.007	0.024	0.766
NEIGHBORS DO NOT VOTE 1998							0.069	0.029	0.021	0.033	0.026	0.205
PUBLIC VOTING 1998							-0.011	0.028	0.683	-0.001	0.025	0.958
PRI WIN MUNICIP. PRIOR ELECTION	-0.047	0.059	0.421	0.093	0.019	0.000	0.066	0.021	0.002	0.116	0.017	0.000
PRI WIN MUNICIP. CURRENT ELECTION	0.116	0.025	0.000	0.109	0.020	0.000	0.110	0.017	0.000	0.126	0.021	0.000
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1993	0.008	0.002	0.001									
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1996				0.004	0.001	0.002						
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 1999							0.002	0.001	0.019			
EXPENDITURES/CAPITA 2002										0.002	0.001	0.026
NON-DIRT FLOORING 1990	-0.206	0.059	0.000									
NON-DIRT FLOORING 2000				-0.052	0.049	0.284	-0.044	0.046	0.332	-0.060	0.040	0.139
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 1990	0.129	0.162	0.427									
ONE MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS 2000				-0.295	0.140	0.035	-0.269	0.143	0.061	-0.330	0.121	0.007
ILLITERACY 1990	0.367	0.185	0.048									
ILLITERACY 2000				0.143	0.088	0.105	0.137	0.086	0.110	-0.042	0.072	0.563
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 1990	-0.065	0.037	0.083									
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE 2000				-0.015	0.028	0.601	-0.014	0.030	0.649	-0.026	0.026	0.321
CATHOLIC 1990	-0.097	0.100	0.335									
CATHOLIC 2000				-0.011	0.069	0.873	-0.005	0.072	0.948	0.038	0.066	0.560
CONSTANT	0.303	0.122	0.013	0.033	0.077	0.673	0.029	0.077	0.706	0.014	0.076	0.859
PROBABILITY > F	0.000			0.000			0.000			0.000		
R-SQUARED	0.162			0.216			0.223			0.207		
ROOT MSE	0.226			0.191			0.186			0.173		
OBSERVATIONS	556			554			555			557		

Note: Dependent variable is the winner's margin or (first-place party votes)-(second-place party votes). The total number of observations does not equal 570 due to missing information on some Uyc regime institutions.

The statistical analyses shown in Tables 1 through 7 provide preliminary support for argument A1: Political Isolation that UyC systems isolate local political processes from state and national intrusion, thereby facilitating authoritarian control. Though specific UyC rules that exclude citizens living outside the municipal seat from participating in municipal political processes had an important effect on winning margins in presidential electoral contests and sometimes on the level of PRI support, this institution did not systematically affect citizens' political behavior in all years under scrutiny. Though such exclusionary practices appear to have helped first-place parties retain their positions in some elections, they do not appear to have been decisive in preserving local political hegemony across time. Moreover, none of the other institutions such as public ballots or the exclusion of women obtained significant results, adding to the evidence that A2: Political Exclusion does not systematically explain local authoritarian survival.

Conclusions

Legal Subnational Authoritarian Rule in Latin America

This article evaluated two arguments about how local leaders perpetuate authoritarian control amidst national democracy. One argument highlights the important role of local political isolation in helping local leaders stave off national intrusion in local political affairs and in maintaining hegemonic political positions. The second argument highlights how certain local political practices undermining universal suffrage or secret ballots can be used to facilitate electoral victories and local authoritarian control. The statistical analysis, however, provided support for the role of local political isolation rather than specific exclusionary political practices on the perpetuation of local authoritarian rule. Not only were abstention rates higher in UyC municipalities but so too were the winning margins of first place parties in federal elections. That margins were higher in UyC regimes regardless of whether first place parties were PRI or opposition groups underscores the fact that UyC regimes enabled local leaders to isolate their municipalities from both federal and state —where the PRI retained its hegemonic position— politics and political intrusion to protect their positions. Local leaders were able to switch partisan allegiances and carry citizen support with them to the parties and politicians they favored, rather than having to work through the PRI organization, a true test of the extent and strength of local political control.

The focus on study of Oaxaca's 570 UyC and PP municipalities to evaluate arguments about subnational authoritarianism differs dramatically from prior studies of this topic. Until now, arguments have been supported by only a few case studies, justified methodologically on the grounds that quantifying arguments about the role of political isolation or questionable or illegal exclusionary political practices in perpetuating local hegemony is nearly impossible to undertake systematically. Measuring the level of political isolation, or confirming the fraudulent exclusion of voters or denial of secret ballots is nearly impossible to gage or document systematically, even if it can be shown to have occurred in specific cases. Thanks to their legally recognized municipal variation in political isolation and exclusionary political practices, Oaxaca's 570 municipalities provides us with a unique opportunity to evaluate arguments about subnational authoritarianism based on vague concepts or normally illegal political practices.

Evaluation of hypotheses about authoritarian rule using Oaxacan municipalities also reveals an important feature of Mexico's political system: the existence of legal subnational authoritarian practices and thus enclaves in this state. Mexican scholars have often argued that UyC regimes facilitate

local political participation by codifying traditional political practices that have been long accepted but not recognized in these areas. Indeed, these arguments were used by politicians advocating the adoption of UyC systems in the first place. However, the comparison of Oaxacan UyC and PP municipalities conducted here reveals that UyC systems facilitated the legal perpetuation of local subnational authoritarian control. UyC systems isolate political communities from state and national political processes that have been increasingly competitive and democratic since the 1990s. They undermine political participation and exacerbate the winning margins of first-place parties. These things work to perpetuate local political hegemony rather than to strengthen political competition and democracy in Mexico.

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