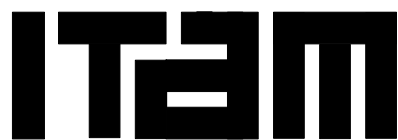# Documentos de Trabajo en Ciencia Política

WORKING PAPERS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Public and its Representatives:
Mass and Elite Opinions in Mexico

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Abstract[*]

Congress has a new face in Mexico. Pluralism has increased, and the question is whether representation has too. The first goal of this paper is to compare basic attitudinal and ideological orientations at both the elite and the mass levels. The argument is as follows: Congress as an institution has earned some trust among Mexicans in the last decades, but it still remains as a relatively unknown body of government and favorable evaluations of the current congress are rather low. With the increase of leftist legislators, the present legislature has become slightly more polarized as the previous one. However, there is agreement between legislators and mass electorates on issue preferences, especially among PR representatives. Nonetheless PR representatives are much more disciplined in their voting decisions than plurality deputies, a fact that raises an apparent paradox: while PR parliamentary elites show more similar issue positions to their mass electorates than plurality deputies do, it is the latter who are more likely to base their voting decisions on their constituencies' preferences. PR deputies are potentially more representative according to their issue positions, but they are more party oriented as well.

Síntesis

El congreso mexicano ha cambiado. El pluralismo se ha incrementado en su interior, y la pregunta que surge es su representatividad también. El primer objetivo de este ensayo es comparar las orientaciones básicas relacionadas con actitud e ideología en los niveles de élite y de masa. El argumento es el siguiente: En las últimas décadas, El Congreso como institución ha ganado cierta confianza entre los mexicanos, pero aún permanece como un cuerpo del gobierno relativamente desconocido y las evaluaciones favorables al Congreso actual son más bien bajas. Con el incremento del número de legisladores de izquierda, la legislatura actual se ha vuelto un poco más polarizado que el anterior. Sin embargo, existe un acuerdo entre los parlamentarios y el electorado con respecto a las preferencias sobre los temas de política, especialmente entre los diputados de representación proporcional. No obstante, el que los diputados de representación proporcional sean mucho más disciplinados en sus decisiones de voto que los diputados electos por mayoría, es un hecho que muestra una paradoja aparente: mientras las élites parlamentarias de representación proporcional muestran posiciones sobre los temas de política más similares al electorado masivo que los diputados por mayoría, son éstos últimos los más proclives a basar sus decisiones de voto en las preferencias de sus distritos.

Congress has a new face in Mexico. For the first time in more than 50 years, there is no party in the Chamber of Deputies--the Mexican lower house--that holds more than 50% of the seats. Pluralism has increased, and the question is whether representation has too. Public trust in Congress as an institution has also increased during this decade, but this year alone, favorable public opinion about congressional representation and performance is relatively low nationally and moving at decreasing rates at least in Mexico City. The relatively low public support for Congress contrasts with the higher presidential popularity ratings, but Congress is indeed a complex and still less salient branch of government for most Mexicans. People know little about how Congress works and how representatives behave. Nonetheless, the Mexican Congress has an increasing visibility and is likely to be a central institution for public scrutiny in the immediate future.

This paper was prepared with several interrelated goals in mind. The first was to compare basic attitudinal and ideological orientations at both the elite and the mass levels. How do general and ideological orientations in the current, more plural Congress compare with the ideological orientations in the previous, PRI-dominated Congress? How do those orientations differ from the mass publics? How constrained or vague are such orientations? How do they affect the legislators' behavior in Congress, especially their votes? In this paper I analyze data conducted both at the elite and the mass levels following the previous questions. However, such questions are mostly exploratory, and the findings presented in the paper may serve only as a basis for further analysis.

Given the empirical findings presented in this paper, the argument is as follows: pluralism in the Mexican Congress seems to have polarized parliamentary elites slightly, in comparison with the previous, PRI-dominated Congresses. Agreement between parliamentary elites and mass electorates varies

depending upon the issue at stake, but P.R. deputies seem to be more representative of the public views and preferences on several issues. However, P.R. deputies are also more party disciplined when voting than plurality deputies, who seem to grant more importance to their constituencies than the latter. This raises a paradox of representation in Mexico. Also, as the literature has argued for decades, parliamentary elites show higher levels of ideological constraint across issues than the mass electorates. Nonetheless, it seems that the more salient an issue is, the higher the level of agreement between elites and masses is. Issue salience, thus, may lead to a higher level of political representation.

Public Opinion about the LVII Congress

Although the New Mexican Congress is more plural in terms of the proportion of seats held by different political parties, public opinion is still skeptical about it. A public opinion poll conducted in Mexico City in December, 1997, showed that 21% of respondents agreed with the following statement: "citizens are well represented by the current Chamber of Deputies." In contrast, 27% disagreed with the statement, 31% said that they didn't agree nor disagree, and 12% gave no answer.[1] By June, 1998, the proportion of respondents who agreed with that same statement dropped to 16%, the proportion of disagreement increased dramatically to 49%, and respondents with no opinion or no answer were 27 and 8% respectively.[2] The changes in opinion during that six-month period show that the proportion of people having no opinion decreased, an expected finding given that the December poll was conducted shortly after the

[1] The poll, known as *Termómetro Capitalino,* was conducted by the Centro de Estudios de Opinión Pública (CEOP), among 1,579 adults in Mexico City on December 4-5, 1997. It used a multi-stage probability sample and in-home, face-to-face interviews.
[2] *Termómetro Capitalino*, CEOP, June 6-7, 1998, n=1,597.

LVII Congress took office and that people had six months to minimally observe or hear about Congressional activities before the poll was conducted again in June.

Interestingly, as the level of awareness about Congress increased, the idea that the current Congress lacks representation also increased. And so did the negative opinions about Congress. In December, 1997, 48% of poll respondents had an unfavorable opinion about the Chamber of Deputies, remaining at the same level (48%) in March, and increasing slightly to 53% in June. Consequently, favorable opinions about the Chamber of Deputies dropped from 30% in December, to 29% in March, to 25% in June.3 These trends speak of a relatively unpopular Congress whose minimal popularity in Mexico City has been decreasing during its first months of office.

At the national level, however, approval ratings for the Chamber of Deputies have remained fairly stable, and so has a relatively high level of unawareness about it. In December, 1997, 31% of respondents to a national representative sample said that they "approved" the Chamber's performance, 28% said they "disapproved" of it, and 41% had no opinion or gave no answer.4 With a different question wording, a June, 1998, national poll showed that 33% of respondents had a "favorable" opinion about the Chamber's performance, 36% had an "unfavorable" opinion, and 31% had no opinion or gave no answer.5 A follow-up to the same national poll showed that in September, 1998, favorable opinions represented 31% of the sample, unfavorable opinions 33%, and the no

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3 *Termómetro Capitalino*, CEOP. The March-1998 poll took 1,550 interviews during the first weekend of the month. See footnotes 1 and 2 for more details.
4 *Reforma* national poll, November 8-21; sample size: 1,200. In-home, face-to-face interviews. The poll results were published as of December.
5 *Reforma* national poll, May 22-25; sample size: 1,190. In-home, face-to-face interviews. The poll results were published as of June.

opinion, no answer share was 36%.6 The national trends, like the Mexico City trends, show relatively low approval ratings toward to Chamber of Deputies, but, unlike the Mexico City polls, the proportion of "don't know" and no opinion remains relatively high.

Whether or not the current Congress is more or less popular than previous ones is a question that cannot be answered here, given the lack of comparable data. However, *World Values Survey* data provide us with a measure of confidence in Congress in Mexico that is particularly illustrative about public attitudes toward that institution: while the trends showed above are evaluations of performance in the short run, public trust in Congress as an institution may reflect more general long-term attitudes among Mexicans. In 1990, for example, only 6% of adult Mexicans nationwide expressed "a great deal" of confidence in the federal Congress, 29% expressed "quite a lot" of confidence, 37% had "not very" much confidence, and 28% said they had no confidence at all. By the time the third wave of the *World Values Survey* was conducted in Mexico that is in 1996-1997, public confidence in Congress had slightly increased in comparison with 1990. By then, 11% of adult respondents nationwide expressed "a great deal" of confidence, 32% "quite a lot" of confidence, 31% "not very much" confidence, and 26% had no confidence at all in Congress.7 Adding the categories "a great deal" and "quite a lot," the percent of trust in Congress increased from 35% in 1990 to 43% in 1996. What we observe with these two series of data is that opinions toward the LVII Congress have worsened during its first six months of

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6 *Reforma* national poll, August 14-17; sample size: 1,200. In-home, face-to-face interviews. The poll results were published as of September.
7 The Mexican component of the *World Values Survey* in 1990 was taken from a national sample of 1,531 adults; the 1996-1997 survey was a national sample of 1,511 adults. *World Values Survey* data can be consulted through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), at the University of Michigan.

performance, but that a general attitude of Mexicans toward Congress as an institution has in fact improved during the current decade.8

Ideological Orientations in Congress

The composition of Congress has changed significantly during the last four legislatures, that is, since 1988 (See Table 1). The PRI continues to be the party with the greatest number of seats in the Chamber of Deputies, but after traditionally having more than 50% of the seats, and even reaching a decade high of 64% in the 1991-1994 Congress, the party's share of seats felt short from reaching absolute majority for the 1997-2000 period. The opposition parties have gained from the PRI's loses. The most significant difference between the LVI Congress and the LVII Congress is the PRI's fall from 60% to 48% of the seats and the PRD's growth from 14% to 25%, almost an exclusive exchange of 11 points out of the total number of seats. The PAN remained basically the same size in Congress.

The growth of the leftist party in Congress has moved the average ideological positions of its members from a relatively moderate center-left position to a more extreme left position. Research on the ideological positions of Mexican legislators is very limited, especially because it relies on surveys at the

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8 In comparative perspective, from 1990 to 1995, trust in the parliamentary body dropped in Argentina from 17% to 15%; in Brazil, it increased from 24% to 34%; in Chile it dropped from 63% to 38%; in the United States it dropped from 46% to 30%; and it increased in Norway from 59% to 69%. In 1995 alone, trust in the parliament or Congress was 60% in South Africa; 37% in Spain; 31% in South Korea; 27% in Japan; 23% in Russia; 23% in Venezuela; and 15% in Peru. Given these comparable data with other societies, Mexican's trust in Congress seems to be at a middle level, compared with high trust in Norway and South Africa, and low trust in Russia, Venezuela and Peru. Data come from the *World Values Survey* Association.

elite level, which are very scarce. Fortunately, there has been some research based on elite-level surveys among deputies from both the LVI Congress and the LVII Congress. In this section, I compare the results of a survey conducted by newspaper *Reforma* among 164 deputies from the LVII Congress with a survey of 103 deputies conducted during the LVI Congress and reported by Martínez (1998).9 For the mass-elite comparison, I use the *Reforma* survey of deputies and compare it with national representative data from the *World Values Survey*.

The first notable finding when comparing both the LVI Congress and the LVII Congress is that ideological orientations changed slightly, making the LVII Congress a little more polarized than the previous one. This is the case, assuming that the samples (which are not random samples) are representative of the legislators in general and, therefore, comparable with each other.10 Table 2 shows the distribution of legislators along a five-point left-right scale in both

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9 Martínez (1998) reports little detail about how the survey of 103 deputies from the LVI Congress was conducted. The proportion of deputies from each party in her sample over represent PAN deputies by 10% (34% of the sample were PAN deputies, while in the Chamber they had 24% of the seats); under represents PRI deputies by 16 points (44% of the sample were PRI deputies, while in the Chamber they had 60% of the seats); and over represents PRD deputies by 12% points (22% of the sample were PRD deputies, while in the Chamber they had 14% of the seats). The *Reforma* survey was weighted according to the proportion of seats held by each parliamentary group, so the results reflect proportions of deputies as follows: 48% from the PRI, 25% from the PRD, and 24% from the PAN, the same proportions as in the actual number of seats in the LVII Congress (See Table 1).

10 One of the main problems in conducting a survey among deputies is that no response rates are high, and those who respond may not necessarily constitute a representative sample of all legislators. A legitimate methodological concern is whether no response rates are caused by basic qualitative difference among deputies. If there are significant differences, then we may have a very strong bias in the sample. If not, then there may still be another methodological concern: because the Reforma survey was self-administered, we may ask ourselves about the chances that someone else rather than the deputy (for example, someone from the deputy's staff) could have answered the survey for him or her.

legislatures.11   According to the data in Table 2, PRD legislators are much more heavily distributed in the leftist positions, while PRI and PAN legislators converged toward the center.12   So, the increasing polarization from one legislature to the next seems to be explained mainly by a movement of the PRD toward the left. However, considering the average positions of the three parties, as shown in the last three columns of Table 2, we do notice that, in fact, all three parties moved in the ideological continuum: the PRD moved toward the left, the PRI moved from a center-left position to a center position, and the PAN became a little more moderate toward the center.13 The PRD's turn to the left increased the distance between its average position and the PAN's, suggesting that the LVII Congress may be actually a bit more polarized than the previous one, but still remaining relatively moderate.14 In any case, the legislators' average ideological placements show the PRD as the center-left party in Congress, the PRI as the center party and the PAN as the center-right party.15   Breaking the average positions of the parties by the way the deputy was elected—either plurality or proportional list—we find no differences among PRI and PRD deputies, but we do, in fact, find a significant variation among PAN deputies: plurality deputies have an average position more to the right, while deputies elected by proportional

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11 The data for the LVI Legislature were taken from Martínez (1998), whose survey originally used a ten-point scale, in comparison to the Reforma survey, which used a five-point scale. Martínez herself collapsed the ten-point scale into a five-point scale, so the distribution in Table 1 is reported as hers.

12 In the Martínez survey, 98% of the sample declared a position on the left-right scale, while in the Reforma survey 95% did so.

13 The average positions were calculated from Table 2, because, although Martínez reports average positions for all three parties, her results reflect the ten-point scale distribution instead of a five-point scale. Using the data from Table 2 to calculate the average positions allowed me to make them comparable across samples.

14 The distance between the more polarized parties—PRD and PAN—in each legislature is 1.1 and 1.3 points in the scale for the LVI and LVII legislatures respectively.

15 A breakdown of left-right positions by education level does not show clear patterns for any of the three parties.

list have a slightly more leftist position, even more to the left than the PRI deputies. This fact shows that PAN proportional list members may be more "liberal" or leftist than the PAN deputies who actually win elections, an interesting combination about the composition of party candidates who enter Congress by election or selection. The other to major parties are, as mentioned before, more homogeneous ideologically speaking. Nonetheless, depending upon what issue is at stake, we find variations in the average positions of parties as well as by the form of election, either plurality or P.R.

Mass and elite ideological orientations

When we compare the left-right positions among parliamentary elites with positions among the mass public we find an important difference: the 1996-1997 mass-level data show the PRD as the leftist party and the PAN as the center party according to their constituencies' mean positions, and the PRI to the right of the PAN. In fact, these mass ideological orientations have been like that since 1990 (Moreno, 1998). This clearly contrast with the elite positions, where the PAN is to the right of the PRI. Why is there such a difference? One possible explanation lies on what left and right mean to both the elites and the public, that is, what are the main issues considered when taking a left-right position in each level. As it has been suggested, in the 1990s the Mexican public has expressed political issues when they define their own placement on a left-right scale, rather than economic issues. This implies that the left is mostly identified as a democratic left and the right as an authoritarian right, and the issue of democracy appears to be more relevant than the classic socioeconomic left-right polarization (Moreno, 1998). In contrast, legislators may be more driven by an economic and more traditional underlying meaning of left and right than the mass public. This, as shown below, is the case if we consider economic issues, but not if we consider political issues.

The data in Table 3 show average ideological positions at the mass and elite levels on several issues, including, the left-right scale, two economic issues, and a political issue. The data are illustrative in the sense that the legislators' average positions change significantly depending upon what issue is at stake. And so do the constituencies' positions.

Let us proceed by parts here. First of all, mean positions on the left-right scale at the mass level differ from the mean positions at the elite level when we consider the total sample of legislators. However, as noted earlier, legislators elected to Congress by proportional list actually show more similar positions to the mass publics, with the PRD on the left, the PRI on the right, and the PAN on the middle. However, the distance between PAN and PRI is greater at the mass level than at the elite level, suggesting that the intermediate position of the PAN among legislators may be just an accident of the sample, given the small number of P.R. legislators surveyed. If this is not a sample artifact, then P.R. legislators may actually reflect more faithfully the public's positions than plurality legislators.

A similar pattern is found when we consider the economic issue of income equality versus individual incentives (or increasing social programs vs. reduction of taxes in the elite survey), where the mass electorates show the same party space as the P.R. legislators, with the PRD for more income equality, the PAN for more individual incentives, and the PRI in between (PRD-PRI-PAN). In contrast, plurality legislators have different positions, with the PRI expressing a greater preference for more social programs, the PAN for more reduction of taxes, and the PRD in between. (PRI-PRD-PAN). A big problem here is that this was the only of all four questions shown in Table 3 where question wording used for the public is somewhat different to the elite survey's. An apparently bizarre finding is that the PRD appears on the middle among plurality legislators. That is because both the PAN and the PRD Congressional candidates proposed a tax

reduction in their 1997 electoral campaign, and the IVA—tax to aggregate value—reduction was being debated around the time when the survey took place. So, results do not necessarily show the PRD as less oriented toward social programs than the PRI, but more oriented toward a reduction of taxes at that moment.

The classic characterization of left and right based on the level of state intervention in the economy is represented by preferences for either more government or more private ownership of business and industry. In this case, no big differences are observed among the party electorates at the mass level, who barely take different positions on this issue. However, this is a clearly polarizing issue among parliamentary elites: the pattern among plurality legislators is the PRD for more government ownership, the PAN for more private ownership, and the PRI in the middle. Again, P.R. legislators seem to be an exception: in this case the PRI appears slightly to the right of the PAN, confirming the relatively more leftist position of P.R. PAN legislators. So, economic issues make the difference in the ideological orientations of PAN parliamentary elites, who, as we will see below, show no significant differences in political issues.

The issue of political reform, in which opinions are polarized from those who think that reforms have taken place too rapidly and advanced enough, and those who think that reforms have taken place slowly and there is still much to do, shows clear similarities between elites and their electorates. The electorate's positions show the PRI on the side of those who think that reforms have taken place too rapidly and the PRD on the side of those who think that reforms have taken place slowly, with the PAN in the middle, resembling the same party space as the single left-right scale. In this case, we may argue that the opinion that political reform has taken place slowly and there is still much to do represents the leftist positions and the opposite opinion represents the right positions (Moreno, 1998). Political reform is an issue in which elites seem to agree the most with

their mass electorates. Such agreements are not necessarily measured by the distances between the mean party positions, but by the ordering of the parties in the scale: the PRD on the left, the PRI on the right, and the PAN on the middle. Also, political reform is an issue in which elites seem to agree the most with themselves controlling by plurality or P.R. election, except in the case of PRI parliamentary elites, in which case the plurality deputies differ significantly from P.R. deputies, being the former more clearly convinced that political reform has taken place too rapidly and advanced enough. In other words, PRI deputies elected by proportional list are slightly more "liberal" or leftist in political issues than their colleagues elected by plurality. This pattern among PRI elites in regards to political issues, and the PAN elites in regards to economic issues, shows that parliamentary elites elected by proportional lists are in fact more leftist than plurality deputies. The exception is the PRD, whose parliamentary elites elected by plurality or proportional list show no significant differences in the issues considered here. This may suggest, as mentioned earlier, that the PRD selection of candidates may reflect more homogenous criteria than the PRI's or the PAN's criteria, or simply that PRD elites are more homogeneously leftist across issues. Now, homogeneity is a vague concept, but the data offer some ways to evaluate the level of ideological "constraint" among parliamentary elites and their electorates.

Ideological constraint

If the mean scores shown in Table 3 indicate the average ideological positions at the elite and mass levels in different issues, their respective standard deviations may serve as a raw measure of ideological constraint or consensus in

those ideological positions.16   For example, high standard deviations on a particular issue indicate that legislators, or in any case the mass public, have less constraint, consensus, or agreement on that particular issue; in other words, the greater the standard deviation, the more dispersion of opinions or ideological positions. In contrast, low standard deviations indicate a greater consensus or agreement in that issue. In other words, simple standard deviations give us a basic measure of dispersion of opinions and positions at the individual level in regards to the group average.

So, following this simple rule, we find that, on average, mass electorates show less ideological constraint than elites do. In other words, ideological constraint among elites is higher than among mass electorates. This finding confirms the literature on mass and elite belief systems and ideological orientations (Converse, 1964; Jennings, 1992). However, this is the case of the left-right self-placement and positions on economic issues; in regards to positions toward political reform, dispersion among mass electorates and elites is practically the same (1.2). In this sense, political issues not only show similar party positions at the mass and elite levels, but also similar levels of constraint. However, total standard deviations shown in table 3 at the elite level also consider the PVEM and the PT deputies sampled. If we take them out of the analysis, then constraint in political issues among PAN, PRI, and PRD elites increases (as the standard deviation decreases), confirming that, among the three major parties, constraint is higher at the elite level than at the mass level. If political issues show a high level of agreement among elite and mass electorates, and political

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16 Constraint is a more complex concept than the idea followed in this analysis. However, by using standard deviation as a simple measure of opinion dispersion we may capture the degree of agreement or consensus between individuals within party groups. With a more sophisticated analysis pending, I will use the terms constraint, agreement, and consensus interchangeably, not unaware of the theoretical and empirical implications that this may have.

issues are highly salient issues, then we may argue that the more salient an issue is, the more agreement we may find among elites and their mass electorates. Of course, issue salience was not measured by simple survey questions and we would need another type of analysis to assess the salience hypothesis. However, if representation can be measured by the level of agreement between elites and mass electorates on issue positions, and issue salience makes the level of agreement higher, then we may argue that the higher the salience of an issue is, the higher the level of representation may actually be. Some observers have argued, for example, that government responsiveness is weak when public information, salience and attention is low (Page and Shapiro, 1992:393).

The levels of constraint among parliamentary elites are relatively similar. However, the differences that we found can be enumerated as follows: First of all, PRI elites show a slightly higher constraint on the left-right self-placement scale than the other two parties, with the PAN showing the lowest constraint. This, as mentioned earlier, is explained by the fact that PAN elites show greater ideological differences depending on whether they were elected by plurality or by P.R. lists. Secondly, PAN elites show higher constraint on economic issues, especially in social programs and taxes. However, PRI P.R. deputies show the highest constraint on the issue of government vs. private ownership. Finally, the issue of political reform generates the most striking differences of constraint among the party elites: PRI deputies show the lowest consensus on this issue, suggesting that there are marked differences within the party toward political reform, especially between the democratizers and hard-liners. However, although constraint remains low among PRI plurality deputies, among P.R. deputies the level of constraint is very high. The opposite story takes place among PRD and PAN deputies, and, therefore, the composition of parliamentary elites by plurality and P.R. election shows strong differences of opinion about political reform. Although plurality Priístas express a more hard-line average position on the issue

of political reform than P.R. Priístas, the former also show lower constraint on this issue than the latter.

In summary, elite ideological constraint is higher than mass constraint. However, we find differences of constraint at the elite level depending upon two things: the issue at stake, and the way the deputy was elected to Congress. This latter aspect also has an important influence upon the legislator's voting behavior in Congress.

Voting in Congress

Two thirds of the Mexican legislators who answered the *Reforma* survey said they have always voted in accordance with their parliamentary group, whereas one third of the sample said that, although most of the time they vote following their party lines, sometimes they vote differently.17 Variations by party membership are not significant, however, suggesting, according to the survey results, that party discipline in Congress is fairly similar among all three major parties. The percent of deputies who said that they sometimes vote differently from party lines is 35% of Priístas (38% plurality and 18% P.R.), 33% Panistas (41% plurality and 24% P.R.), and 30% Perredistas (37% plurality and 24% P.R.).

What influences some legislators to vote independently of their parliamentary groups? Common wisdom sustains that single plurality deputies tend to be less disciplined and more independent in their voting decision, while P.R. deputies show more party discipline. A multivariate analysis of the data

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17 The Reforma question offered a wider variation of responses ranging from a totally partisan (or group) vote to a totally independent vote in a five-point scale. Responses only took a dichotomous distribution toward the partisan side of the scale. Therefore, the analysis done here only considers the chances of voting away from party lines sometimes; in other words, we only obtained responses in categories 1 and 2 from the five-point scale.

shows that partisan commitments and the way how the legislator was elected to Congress are indeed strong factors that explain party discipline, while the constituency's centrality on the deputy's political career and visibility as a legislator explain relatively the patterns of independent voting. In addition, ideology seems to play an important role in explaining variation in voting patterns: the more leftists the legislator is, the more likely he or she is to vote independently. If the left-right scale used in the survey is related to Liberal-Conservative distinction of legislators, then we could argue that Liberals are more likely to vote independently, while Conservatives are more likely to vote in agreement with party lines. This is the case no matter what parliamentary group the legislator belongs to. That is, the difference between more liberal and more conservative legislators seems to be given *within* parliamentary groups, rather than *between* parliamentary groups. This is confirmed by the fact that PRD legislators, who are more leftist (or liberal) according to the data shown here, have not shown patterns of greater independent voting in comparison to the other parties.

Table 4 shows the relationships just described. The most important factors affecting independent voting are the times that the deputy has used the tribune to address Congress (salience), and the importance that the deputies grant to their constituencies for their future political career. In contrast, the most important factors explaining party discipline are the partisan expectations in regards to the composition of the deputy's staff, and the fact that the deputy was elected by proportional representation. In other words, P.R. members of Congress are indeed more disciplined than plurality legislators. Finally, as mentioned earlier, left-right orientations also contribute to explain the independent vote, with the more leftist legislators being more likely to vote in an independent way than legislators from the right. Again, these differences are given within parties, rather

than between them. Neither gender, age, education, nor partisan longevity explains patterns of party discipline or independent voting.

Conclusion

The Mexican Congress has an increasing centrality in the country's political life as well as in the Mexicans' evaluations of the overall governance. Congress as an institution has earned some trust among Mexicans in the last decade, but it still remains as a relatively unknown body of government and favorable evaluations of the current Congress are rather low. With the increase of leftist legislators, the current Congress has become slightly more polarized than the previous one. However, there is agreement between parliamentary elites and mass electorates on issue preferences, especially among P.R. representatives. Nonetheless, P.R. representatives are much more party disciplined in their voting decisions than plurality deputies, a fact that raises an apparent paradox: while P.R. parliamentary elites show more similar issue positions to their mass electorates than plurality deputies do, it is the latter who are more likely to base their voting decisions on their constituencies' preferences. P.R. deputies are potentially more representative according to their issue positions, but they are more party oriented as well. This fact definitely creates a puzzle about political representation in Mexico.

Table 1. Composition of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, 1988-2000.

	LIV Congress (1988-1991)				LV Congress (1991-1994)				LVI Congress (1994-1997)				LVII Congress (1997-2000)			
	Pl	PR	Tot	%	Pl	PR	Tot	%	Pl	PR	Tot	%	Pl	PR	Tot	%
PAN	38	63	101	**20.2**	10	80	90	**18.0**	18	101	119	**23.8**	65	57	122	**24.4**
PRI	234	26	260	**52.0**	290	31	321	**64.2**	277	23	300	**60.0**	164	75	239	**47.8**
PRD	--	--	--	--	0	40	40	**8.0**	5	66	71	**14.2**	70	55	125	**25.0**
PT	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	10	10	**2.0**	1	5	6	**1.2**
PVEM	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	8	8	**1.6**
PARM	0	29	29	**5.8**	0	14	14	**2.8**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
PPS	0	30	30	**6.0**	0	12	12	**2.4**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
PFCRN	0	35	35	**7.0**	0	23	23	**4.6**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
PMS	0	17	17	**3.4**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
CD	28	--	28	**5.6**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
TOTAL	300	200	500	100.0	300	200	500	100.0	300	200	500	100.0	300	200	500	100.0

Source: Lujambio (1998). Pl = Plurality; PR= Proportional representation; Tot=Total number of seats; %=% of seats.

Table 2. Left-Right Distribution and Average Positions in the Mexican Congress.

						Average position		
	Left	Center-left	Center	Center-right	Right	Total	Plurality	P.R.
LVI Congress (1994-1997)								
PRD	26	35	39	0	0	2.1	n.a.	n.a.
PRI	2	35	49	12	2	2.8	n.a.	n.a.
PAN	3	15	41	38	3	3.2	n.a.	n.a.
LVII Congress (1998-2000)								
PRD	34	46	17	2	0	1.9	1.8	1.9
PRI	0	22	63	12	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
PAN	6	6	62	21	6	3.2	3.3	2.9

Source: LVI Congress data were taken from Martínez (1998). LVII Congress data are from the newspaper *Reforma* survey of Congress. P.R. = Proportional representation / n.a. = not available.

**Table 3. Average ideological positions at the mass and elite levels.
(All 5-point scales)**

| | Mass public | | | Legislators | | | | | | | | |
| | National sample | | | Total sample | | | Plurality subsample | | | P.R. subsample | | |
	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N
Left-right self-placement												
PRD	**2.8**	(1.1)	252	**1.9**	(0.8)	41	**1.8**	(0.8)	19	**1.9**	(0.7)	21
PRI	**3.6**	(1.2)	351	**3.0**	(0.7)	74	**3.0**	(0.7)	62	**3.0**	(0.7)	11
PAN	**3.2**	(1.1)	318	**3.2**	(0.9)	35	**3.3**	(0.9)	19	**2.9**	(0.8)	16
Total	**3.2**	(1.2)	1119	**2.7**	(0.9)	154	**2.8**	(0.9)	101	**2.5**	(0.9)	52
Income equality vs. private incentives												
PRD	**3.0**	(1.3)	266	**3.9**	(1.0)	38	**4.0**	(0.9)	19	**3.8**	(1.1)	19
PRI	**3.3**	(1.4)	389	**3.5**	(0.9)	76	**3.4**	(0.9)	64	**4.0**	(0.9)	11
PAN	**3.4**	(1.3)	362	**4.2**	(0.7)	39	**4.1**	(0.7)	39	**4.4**	(0.7)	17
Total	**3.3**	(1.4)	1267	**3.8**	(0.9)	158	**3.4**	(0.9)	105	**4.0**	(1.0)	52
Government vs. private ownership												
PRD	**3.3**	(1.2)	264	**2.9**	(0.9)	38	**2.9**	(1.0)	19	**2.9**	(0.9)	19
PRI	**3.2**	(1.3)	381	**3.8**	(0.9)	78	**3.7**	(0.9)	67	**4.4**	(0.5)	11
PAN	**3.3**	(1.3)	357	**4.3**	(0.8)	39	**4.3**	(0.7)	22	**4.3**	(1.0)	17
Total	**3.3**	(1.3)	1235	**3.7**	(1.0)	161	**3.7**	(1.0)	108	**3.7**	(1.1)	53
Political reform												
PRD	**3.4**	(1.3)	173	**4.5**	(0.8)	41	**4.5**	(0.7)	20	**4.5**	(1.0)	20
PRI	**2.8**	(1.2)	463	**2.9**	(1.0)	76	**2.8**	(1.1)	64	**3.4**	(0.5)	11
PAN	**3.1**	(1.2)	216	**4.2**	(0.8)	39	**4.2**	(0.6)	22	**4.2**	(1.0)	17
Total	**3.1**	(1.2)	1295	**3.7**	(1.2)	161	**3.4**	(1.2)	107	**4.1**	(1.0)	53

Source: Author's calculations using the *Reforma* survey of deputies. (See footnote).
P.R.=Proportional representation; S.D.=Standard deviation; N=Number of cases.

Table 4. A Logistic Model of Congressional Voting: Explaining Independent Vote.

	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
Legislator's characteristics								
Gender (female)	-0.59	0.54	-0.60	0.54	-0.60	0.54	-0.58	0.54
Age	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02
Education level	-0.01	0.26	0.00	0.26	-0.01	0.26	0.01	0.25
Legislative activities								
How many times D has voted law initiatives (Q16)	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.04
Size of legislative staff (Q12)	-0.09	0.09	-0.10	0.09	-0.09	0.09	-0.09	0.09
D has used the tribune to address the Chamber (Q15)	1.37	0.44***	1.36	0.44***	1.38	0.43***	1.36	0.43***
Partisanship								
PRI member	0.55	1.29	0.05	0.59	0.86	0.83	░░░░░░░░░	
PRD member	-0.37	1.20	-0.80	0.69	░░░░░░░░░		-0.77	0.76
PAN member	0.54	1.22	░░░░░░░░░		0.85	0.70	0.07	0.55
Years as party member (Q6)	-0.02	0.03	-0.02	0.03	-0.02	0.03	-0.02	0.02
Always belonged to the same party (Q7)	0.28	0.66	0.28	0.65	0.32	0.64	0.29	0.65
Partisan commitment of advisers (Q14c)	-0.36	0.20*	-0.36	0.20*	-0.37	0.20*	-0.36	0.20*
Political career								
Elected by proportional list (Q5)	-1.22	0.49***	-1.26	0.48***	-1.20	0.48***	-1.28	0.47***
Has occupied another elective office before (Q8)	-0.07	0.43	-0.08	0.43	-0.06	0.43	-0.07	0.43
Importance for future political career:								
Respond to constituency demands (Q19d)	0.68	0.37*	0.67	0.37*	0.69	0.37*	0.68	0.37*
Follow partisan lines (Q19g)	-0.25	.21	-0.24	0.21	-0.25	0.21	-0.25	0.21
Ideology								
Left-Right self-placement (Q27)	-0.99	0.31***	-0.96	0.30***	-0.98	0.31***	-0.96	0.30***
Constant	0.05	2.58	0.42	2.44	-0.32	2.30	0.37	2.47
Model chi-square		38.58***		38.39***		38.49***		38.40***
% Responses correctly classified		78.20		78.49		77.41		78.77

Source: Reforma Survey of Deputies (author's calculations).

n=164 (2 missing cases); ***Significant at .001 level; **Significant at .05 level; *Significant at .1 level.

b=logistic regression coefficient; se=standard error; D=deputy.

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