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Raymond, C. D., & Juárez, S. B. (2019). Constituency Preferences and Committee Selection in the Mexican Cámara de Diputados. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 61(4), 95-117. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1017/lap.2019.26>

Published in:

Latin American Politics and Society

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:

[Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal](#)

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Revision

Constituency Preferences and Committee Selection in the Mexican *Cámara de Diputados*

Abstract

Previous research examining selection to legislative committees has assumed that the impact of constituency preferences on committee assignments—as seen in previous research—is due to the incentives for individual legislators to use their committee seats to increase their personal chances of re-election. Examining the case of the Mexican Cámara de Diputados (where legislators have—until recently—been barred from re-election), we argue that the impact of constituency preferences on selection to committees also occurs because parties have incentives for their members to use committee assignments to increase the party’s chances of being re-elected. Analysis of assignments to eleven committees over four legislative terms provides support for our argument. These findings reinforce previous research arguing that concerns with constituency representation and its impact on re-election also apply to political parties—and not solely to individual legislators.

Keywords

Constituency preferences; committee assignments; legislative organization; distributive theory; cartel theory

In examining selection to committees, a large body of research has studied whether legislators seek selection to committees that offer the potential to distribute particularistic benefits to constituents. According to one prominent theory of legislative organization, distributive theory, legislators seek membership on committees allowing them to provide distributive goods to constituents (*e.g.*, through targeted spending), to claim credit for sponsoring or supporting legislation that would help particular groups of constituents, and to give voice to constituents' interests (Mayhew 1974; Shepsle 1978; Weingast and Marshall 1988; Shepsle and Weingast 1995). Doing so, according to distributive theory, increases the name recognition of members engaging in these activities, which in turn enhances the potential of winning personal votes from constituents (*i.e.*, votes for the candidate beyond those that the party label alone would have garnered) and, thus, augmenting the likelihood of re-election (Fenno 1978; Mann and Wolfinger 1980; Stein and Bickers 1994; Evans 2004).

While some research concludes that members with outlying preferences for particular committee assignments are not significantly more likely to be selected to committees (Groseclose 1994; Overby and Kazee 2000; Overby, Kazee, and Prince 2004; Prince and Overby 2005; Battista 2006), a sizable body of research on committee selection in the US has found evidence supporting the predictions of distributive theory (Rohde and Shepsle 1973; Weingast and Marshall 1988; Londregan and Snyder 1994; Rundquist et al. 1997; Adler and Lapinski 1997; Adler 2000; Frisch and Kelly 2004; Sprague 2008; Lewis 2014). Despite the peculiarities of American legislatures (including, among other things, two-party dominance), research examining committee selection outside the United States has found evidence that constituency preferences influence committee selection patterns (Stratmann and Baur 2002; Ciftci, Forrest, and Tekin 2008; Fujimura 2012; Raymond and Holt 2014; *ibid* 2017; Mickler 2018a; *ibid*

2018b). Most of these studies assume, as distributive theory does, that the relationship between constituency preferences and committee appointments results from individual legislators pursuing their personal re-election goals. To what extent, however, does the alignment of constituency preferences and committee selection owe to the interests of political parties? Do the relationships between constituency preferences and committee assignments arise solely due to the interests and actions of legislators, or do parties also work to promote the representation of constituency interests by their members?

In this study, we examine these questions using the case of the Mexican Cámara de Diputados (the lower house of the Mexican Congress). Until the elections of 2018, taking effect for the elections of 2021, diputados (members of the Cámara de Diputados) were barred from seeking re-election. Thus, the principal assumption required for constituency preferences to influence committee selection (according to distributive theory) is not met, as committee work does not help members' career prospects within the legislature. However, parties may also have interests in representing constituents by providing distributive goods (real or symbolic) to constituents to enhance the *party's* chances of re-election (see Raymond and Holt 2014, 179-180; Mickler 2018a, 117; *ibid* 2018b, 521). If constituency preferences influence committee selection in the Cámara de Diputados despite the absence of individual election-seeking motivations, this would provide evidence in favor of a revised perspective on committee selection. Namely, if parties face incentives that lead them to compel their members to represent constituency interests on committees, then observing that constituency preferences influence selection to committees would suggest that parties also care about and use distributive politics to their electoral advantage in the same way as assumed of individual politicians by distributive theory.

In the next section, we outline the case of the Mexican Cámara de Diputados in

greater detail. We then examine the reasons why parties may promote the party's re-election chances by appointing members to committees representing constituencies concerned with the business of those committees. Following that, we discuss our research design before proceeding to a discussion of the results of our empirical analysis. A final section concludes with discussion putting the findings into the larger context of the literature.

Committees, Careers, and Distributive Politics in Mexico

The Mexican Cámara de Diputados provides a theoretically interesting case for studying the impact of constituency preferences on committee selection for two principal reasons. For one, committees in the Cámara de Diputados are quite powerful (especially in relation to other Latin American legislatures: Palanza et al. 2016), and thus are attractive venues in which particularistic constituent interests could be pursued. Similar to other legislatures like the US Congress or German Bundestag in which committees operate as potential legislative gatekeepers, Mexican committees hold considerable powers to amend and even block legislation, and possess their own staff and other resources to support detailed scrutiny of legislation (Béjar 2006, 13; Rivera 2004). To be sure, committees in the Cámara de Diputados lack other powers characteristic of strong committee systems. For instance, while they possess formal authority to compel members of the executive to appear and provide evidence (Fish and Kroenig 2009, 448), in practice, committees in the past have lacked recourse when executive officials refused to attend (Rivera 2004, 297-297). Additionally, committee members find that party discipline often prevents them from securing pork-barrel spending. That said, the powers possessed by committees in the Cámara de Diputados do offer members considerable potential to engage in the sort of actions predicted by distributive theory—even if they

are not as able to actually distribute particularistic goods to constituents through legislation as in often the case in many US legislatures.

Specifically, committees in the Cámara de Diputados offer numerous opportunities for “credit claiming” and “position taking.” Diputados can claim credit among voters for legislation favorable to their constituencies that they supported and/or to which they have contributed—as well as taking credit for undermining legislation with negative consequences for their constituents. Because committee membership garners media attention over and above that available to non-members, diputados can also use their positions as committee members to take public stances on issues relevant to constituents—even if these issues are not addressed with legislation during a particular legislative term—which provide diputados with an additional means of demonstrating their representation of (or at least desire to represent) constituents’ interests. Through both credit claiming and position taking, diputados are able to signal to their constituents that they are actively representing their interests. On the basis of the potential to engage in credit claiming and position taking on committees in the Cámara de Diputados, one might expect that diputados representing districts with more constituents affected by a committee’s business would be more likely to seek selection to that committee than legislators representing fewer such constituents (*e.g.*, Adler and Lapinski 1997; Adler 2000).

The second major reason the Cámara de Diputados provides a theoretically interesting case to study is because the individual motivations that are assumed to be necessary for constituency preferences to impact committee assignments are *not* present. Distributive theory is predicated on the assumption that, if left free to their own devices, legislators needing to attract personal votes to secure re-election will seek committee assignments aligning with their constituents’ interests (*e.g.*, Mayhew 1974; Shepsle

1978). Absent these re-election motives, however, legislators would seemingly not have a reason to seek such committee assignments. Until the most recent legislative term (the LXIV legislature, elected in 2018), diputados were barred from immediate re-election. Term limits would seemingly prevent constituency preferences from impacting selection to committees, as diputados not needing to secure personal votes to win re-election would lack incentives to seek out committee assignments aligning with their constituents' preferences.

And yet, despite the lack of individual re-election incentives, previous research shows that diputados still engage in behaviors associated with a distributive model of legislative activities, such as sponsoring constituency-targeted spending through budget amendment proposals (Kerevel 2015a).¹ If diputados pursue distributive spending despite the absence of individual re-election incentives, this raises the possibility that diputados engage in other behaviors associated with distributive theory, including sitting on committees aligning with their constituents' preferences. In the absence of re-election incentives, however, observing that selection to committees in the Cámara de Diputados is associated with constituency characteristics would suggest that other actors—and not individual diputados themselves—are concerned with the electoral benefits gained from constituency representation on committees.

The Roles of Parties: Promoting Constituency Representation?

While distributive theory developed in a context in which parties exerted relatively little control over committee assignments—which, proponents argue, allows members to essentially self-select onto their preferred committees—parties in most legislatures around the world play a commanding role in determining the composition of legislative committees. The roles played by parties in selecting members to committees

(even in US legislatures) led many scholars to question the degree to which constituency preferences determine committee appointments in legislatures where committee assignments are controlled by party leaders.

One account of the roles played by parties in organizing legislative business is cartel theory (Cox and McCubbins 1993). According to cartel theory, party leaders exercise control over all legislative business to ensure their members' behavior does not damage the party's brand (*i.e.*, its collective record in the electorate's view). Leaders exert such control because the party brand is a collective good which impacts the re-election chances of all members. In their quests to provide distributive benefits to constituents, members might use their committee appointments to enhance their own goals instead of working for the benefit of the party as a whole. Anticipating the deleterious effects of such behavior on the party brand (in turn affecting the re-election probability of all members), parties often act as gatekeepers to committee selection. Party leaders achieve this by appointing loyal members to committees, avoiding other members who would seek committee assignments to further their personal goals in ways which hurt the party brand (or removing members acting in such a way after they have been appointed). The high level of control exerted over members' committee assignments, thus, may prevent members from self-selecting onto committees aligning with their constituents' preferences.

Perhaps due to the high degree of party control exerted over legislative business, committee appointments in Latin American legislatures have received little attention in previous research (Alemán 2013). Like many legislatures in Latin America, party discipline is rigidly enforced in the Mexican Cámara de Diputados. Political parties in Mexico are highly centralized and possess several tools to ensure that members conform to the interests of the party (Nacif 2002; Díaz 2006; González 2010). This concern with

party discipline extends to committees. In the *Cámara de Diputados*, parties receive a share of seats on each committee in roughly equal proportion to their total seat share. Parties distribute committee presidencies (the equivalent of chairs in the US Congress) and determine their seat totals on each committee through negotiation, with the proportionality rule (relative to parties' seat shares) serving as a rough benchmark for these negotiations. Once they receive their allotments of committee seats, party leaders carefully select their representatives on each committee on the basis of party loyalty before sending their lists for formal installment by the *Junta de Coordinación Política*, which is the primary "control committee" organizing business in the *Cámara de Diputados*. Through such partisan selection, and through the use of committee secretaries (diputados who assist committee presidents and often serve as informal whips on committees), parties exert strict control over their members' behavior in order to advance the party's agenda. As evidence of their control, party leaders have often withheld favorable committee assignments and removed disloyal members from committees (Béjar 2014).²

Although concerns with the party brand suggest party leaders will engage in significant gatekeeping that prevents the representation of constituency preferences on committees, cartel theory also acknowledges that parties may be willing to allow for constituency representation on committees. Why might political parties be willing to allow, or perhaps even encourage, constituency representation and the pursuit of constituents' particularistic interests on committees? One reason is that parties will allow for committees to be composed of members with particular interests in sitting on the committee if any negative consequences of their actions do not negatively affect the party brand in the electorate at large (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 191-199). In the case of representing parochial constituency preferences, parties may be willing to select members

to committees aligning with their constituents' interests if those issues are sufficiently localized that they do not negatively impact the party brand among voters nationwide. Another reason is that parties must concern themselves first and foremost with vote-seeking before they can consider their office- or policy-seeking goals (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 189-190).³ Given such concerns with re-election, and because the representation of constituents' particularistic interests on committees may increase the re-election prospects of committee members (see, *e.g.*, Mayhew 1974; Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987), party leaders may compel members to represent their constituents' interests on committees in the hopes that such representation will improve the party's standing among constituents—and thereby increasing the party's prospects of re-election.

Rather than viewing such constituency representation as a nuisance to avoid, constituency representation is often an important part of parties' electoral strategies (*e.g.*, Latner and McGann 2005; Celis, Schouteden, and Wauters 2015). Even highly centralized and disciplined parties competing in multiparty contexts have incentives to promote the representation of constituency preferences by their members (Taylor 1992; Carey 1996). For parties to maintain good relationships with voters concerned in part with constituency-specific issues, previous research has noted how parties may promote the sort of constituency representation on committees predicted by distributive theory to promote the party and attract votes from constituents satisfied with the party's efforts to represent constituents and their concerns (Mickler 2018a, 117; *ibid* 2018b, 521). This is particularly important for parties in contemporary Mexico, which until recently could not depend on individual members' re-election ambitions to provide a secure number of seats for the party. Moreover, considering the increasingly competitive nature of federal elections in Mexico (Kerevel and Bárcena 2017), such efforts to represent constituents' interests may be essential to winning closely fought elections featuring an increasing

number of parties competing for and attracting votes. While some parties may be more popular among some groups of voters and/or expend more effort to attract those voters' support as part of their national electoral strategy, we expect that all parties will seek to ensure representation of constituency issues on committees aligning with their constituents' preferences: If one party uses its allocation of committee seats to represent constituents' interests in an effort to increase their support among voters affected by the committee's work, we would expect other parties to follow suit, as failing to do so would advantage those other parties.

While this discussion suggests parties have an incentive to select diputados to committees to represent their constituents' particularistic interests, one question remains: why would individual diputados represent constituents' interests on committees if they lack the re-election incentives that motivate legislators in most other legislatures to seek committee assignments that help them win personal votes among their constituents? One reason is that Mexican politicians concerned with their careers after their time in office is over—both those pursuing political and non-political careers—depend to a significant degree on different members within the party. While a majority of diputados seek another elected office after their term in the Cámara de Diputados expires (Kerevel 2015b), they will only be nominated to run if they have demonstrated sufficient party loyalty. Because constituency representation is an important part of demonstrating diputados' service and loyalty to the party, this suggests diputados will act on behalf of the party while in office by representing their constituents on relevant committees as a means to enhance their career prospects after their term is over.

This need to engage in constituency representation to please party leaders also applies to diputados seeking opportunities at the state level, as state governors control access to the ballot in state-level elections (Langston and Aparicio 2008; Kerevel

2015b).⁴ Even those intending to leave elected office altogether must engage in constituency representation on behalf of the party, as administrative jobs controlled by the party are awarded on the basis of loyalty (as are many high-level jobs in the private sector, which often require good party contacts). While some research notes how concerns for future employment and the need to remain in the good graces of governors may undermine party cohesion in the Cámara de Diputados (Langston 2010; Rosas and Langston 2011; Cantú and Desposato 2012), the activities needed to appease governors involve the same sorts of constituency representation promoted by party leaders at the federal level. Indeed, the fact previous research shows that diputados finding future employment at the national or the state level (for those seeking elected and unelected offices) both engage in efforts to secure particularistic funding for their constituents while in office demonstrates that most diputados are expected by federal and state party leaders to represent constituency interests as a condition for furthering their careers. In other words, diputados thinking about most career options following their time in office have incentives to represent the interests of their constituents by accepting or even seeking committee assignments addressing their constituents' interests.

Before concluding that any correlation between constituency preferences and appointment to committee reflects the vote-seeking efforts of parties, however, one must account for the possibility that diputados are selected not to represent particular constituencies' interests, but rather for their personal expertise. According to the informational theory of legislative organization (Gilligan and Krehbiel 1990; Krehbiel 1991), legislators are selected to committees on the basis of the information they can provide the legislature: because legislatures are ultimately concerned with the production of good policies, they will appoint members who have expertise and specialized knowledge in the issue areas addressed by the committees to ensure that committees have

the best information possible with which to formulate policy. Even in legislatures where parties exert strong control over the agenda, previous research notes that parties have the same incentives to promote expertise (Mickler 2018a, 117; *ibid* 2018b, 521). The fact term limits have meant constant membership turnover—which prevented the development of expertise and specialist knowledge that otherwise would have accumulated over multiple successive terms serving on committees—suggests parties in the Cámara de Diputados have been particularly reliant on the expertise and specialized knowledge of their members for completing committee business. In keeping with an informational perspective, previous research suggests that diputados are more likely to be appointed to committees if they possess specialized knowledge (Aparicio and Langston 2009). Because what appears to be an effect of constituency preferences on committee appointments may instead reflect parties appointing diputados with expert knowledge of the issues addressed by committees—who are more likely to reside in areas with many constituents affected by the committee’s work—we need to account for the expertise diputados potentially bring to committees before concluding that constituency preferences impact committee appointments.

Thus, the Mexican Cámara de Diputados offers an interesting opportunity to test the argument that constituency preferences influence the selection of legislators to committees because *parties* have an interest in the benefits of committee service for the re-election of the party. If parties are concerned with the distributive politics of committee representation, we would expect that diputados are selected to committees aligning with their constituents’ interests. Because diputados in previous terms have not faced re-election incentives, any evidence that constituency preferences influence appointment to committees would suggest party leaders use the representation of constituents’ interests on committees to further the party’s electoral interests—instead of

merely tolerating such representation pursued by individual members, as such behavior does not advance members' own career interests within the legislature.

Testing for Constituency Effects on Committee Appointments in the Mexican Congress

To determine whether constituency preferences influence parties' appointments to committees in the Mexican Cámara de Diputados, we examine a dataset containing all members elected to the Cámara de Diputados in the LX-LXIII legislatures (corresponding with the period between 2006 and 2018). We focus on this period due to the consistency of district boundaries and the availability of data to measure constituency preferences. Biographic, institutional, and political data for each diputado were drawn from the Mexican Cámara de Diputados official webpages and the Mexican System of Legislative Information (*Sistema de Información Legislativa*).

We examine the appointment of diputados to eleven committees: Migration (*Asuntos Migratorios*), Northern Border Affairs (*Asuntos Frontera Norte*, in operation in the LXII and LXIII legislatures), Southern Border Affairs (*Asuntos Frontera Sur-Sureste*, in operation in the LXII and LXIII legislatures), Mexico City (*Distrito Federal*, a committee dealing with issues specific to the capital city, in operation in the LX-LXII legislatures), Agriculture,⁵ Agrarian Reform (*Reforma Agraria*), Citrus (*Citricultura*, in operation in the LX and LXI legislatures), Ranching (*Ganadería*), Fishing (*Pesca*), Tourism (*Turismo*), and Indigenous Affairs (*Asuntos Indígenas*). Diputados were coded one if they were selected to sit on the committee at the start of the term, and zero otherwise. We focus only on initial appointments due to the fact that these committee assignments are less likely to be affected by additional strategic considerations (*e.g.*, as with any legislature, the membership of the Cámara de Diputados changes during the

term) that may influence committee appointments at later points during the term. This avoids potential omitted variable bias that would affect committee assignment decisions later in the term.

We focus on these eleven committees for two reasons. First, due to the nature of their remits, these committees have an identifiable constituency with targeted, particularistic interests in the legislation addressed by each committee. This, in turn, creates incentives for parties to select diputados representing areas with more constituents who might be concerned with the issues examined by these committees—as their service on these committees and representation of constituents’ interests may help the party to curry favor with voters that, in turn, increases the party’s prospects of re-election. The second reason for examining these committees deals with the availability of data to measure constituency characteristics that would create incentives for diputados to sit on certain committees.

Following the practice of previous research (Adler and Lapinski 1997; Adler 2000; Stratmann and Baur 2002; Raymond and Holt 2014, 2017), we measure constituency preferences using a combination of census data—in this case collected from the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía* (Mexico’s national statistics agency)—and other identifiable structural/geographical incentives. We then examine the relationship between these constituency profile measures and whether or not diputados representing districts/states with identifiable constituency preferences are more likely to be selected to the relevant committee than those not representing areas with identifiable constituency preferences. While there may be other committees with constituents who are concerned with the business conducted on those committees, we prefer to be conservative in our coverage, focusing only on those committees for which we can reliably measure constituency profiles.

Constituency preferences on the Northern and Southern Border committees are measured using dummy variables coded one for diputados representing districts/states located on the northern/southern borders of the country (and zero otherwise). Because the Migration Affairs committee deals with issues of migration to the United States and the Mexico-US border, we also use the variable measuring diputados representing districts/states on the northern border. In the case of the Mexico City committee, we measure constituency preferences using a dummy variable coded one for diputados representing the federal capital. In each case, we expect that diputados from the affected districts/states will be more likely to seek and be appointed to each committee addressing the interests of the affected geography.⁶

To measure constituency preferences related to the five agriculture and food industry-related committees, we measure the (logged) percentage of constituents employed in agriculture-related occupations (agriculture, ranching, and fishing). Because these committees are tasked with studying legislation regarding agricultural production and the labor required for such production, distributive theory would expect that areas with more constituents employed in agriculture would be the most affected by the business of the committee, and thus parties would be more likely to select diputados representing these areas to each committee. Because data for this variable were not available at the district level, we use the percentage of constituents employed in agricultural work for the state in which diputados were elected. While this is less precise than would be preferable, the imprecision in this case works *against* finding that constituency preferences impact committee selection because the greater heterogeneity of the estimated effects (resulting from both overestimated and underestimated constituency preferences) reduces the chances of finding statistically significant constituency preference effects for diputados elected in the single-member districts.

Constituency preferences on the Tourism committee were measured using a dummy variable measuring districts/states with Mexico's major tourism centers. Specifically, we code all districts (states in the case of diputados elected in the PR tier) with a "beach center" identified by the Tourism Secretary (2016, 6) as one, and zero otherwise. We expect that Diputados representing beach center districts/states will be more likely to be appointed to the Tourism committee than other diputados.

To measure constituency preferences relevant to the Indigenous Affairs committee, we use a variable measuring the (logged) percentage of the district (state) speaking indigenous languages. Because the Indigenous Affairs committee deals with issues affecting indigenous constituents, distributive theory would predict that diputados from districts/states with more indigenous language-speaking constituents would be more likely to be selected to the Indigenous Affairs committee than diputados from districts/states with fewer indigenous language-speaking constituents. Parties looking to win re-election in seats with more indigenous voters would therefore look to use the Indigenous Affairs committee to represent indigenous constituents' preferences to attract more support among these voters. Data for these and the other independent variables discussed below are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 about here

We analyze committee selection for both diputados elected in single-member districts (or *mayoría relativa*) and those elected in the proportional representation (PR, or *representación proporcional*) tier of the electoral system.⁷ We include members elected in both tiers because both types of diputados have an identifiable constituency to represent in the legislature. While diputados elected in the single-member districts represent their particular districts, diputados elected in the PR tier are associated with (and thus can be expected to represent) a particular state—even if they are elected in one

nationwide constituency. Previous research suggests that members elected in the PR tier may be less focused on representing the particularistic concerns of constituents on committees than those elected in single-member districts (*e.g.*, Stratmann and Baur 2002; Langston and Aparicio 2008). However, because the discussion above suggests that diputados elected in both tiers of the electoral system may be equally interested in using their positions to advance their political careers following the end of their term, it is possible that committee selection in the Cámara de Diputados does not differ significantly between the two types of diputados. To test the argument that diputados elected in the PR tier may be significantly less likely to seek and be appointed to committees on which they could represent constituents' preferences, we include a variable coded zero for diputados elected in single-member districts and one for those elected in the PR tier. To test the possibility that constituency preferences have less impact on the appointment of diputados elected in the PR tier, we also estimated models including interactions between each measure of constituency preferences and the variable measuring diputados elected in the PR tier.

We also include several additional control variables potentially explaining committee selection. Because informational theory predicts that diputados possessing specialized knowledge of the issues falling under committees' remits may be more likely to be selected to these committees, we examined diputados' profiles on the System of Legislative Information and included dummy variables coded one for diputados with work experience (whether in the private sector or in public administration) in the areas of agriculture, ranching, fishing, and tourism for the respective committees, and zero otherwise. In the case of the Indigenous Affairs committee, we include a variable measuring whether diputados themselves identify as indigenous (coded one, and zero otherwise), using data from Acosta (2016). While we lack measures of diputados'

expertise associated with the four geography-specific committees, the inclusion of the measures of expertise in the models estimating appointments to the other seven committees provide strict tests of the impact of constituency preferences on selection to those committees. If constituency preferences remain important predictors of appointment to committee after accounting for diputados' expertise, then we would have robust evidence suggesting the constituency preferences impact the committee appointment process.

To control for the possibility that parties might select diputados to committees from less electorally secure districts to enhance their electoral prospects in those districts, we include a variable measuring the percentage difference between the top-two parties in the district or state in which diputados were elected.⁸ To account for the possibility that the probability of being selected to a committee may differ between male and female diputados, with female MPs either more likely to be excluded from committees or relegated to committees dealing with so-called women's issues, we include a variable coded one for female diputados (relative to males, who are coded zero). We also include a variable measuring whether diputados were from the same party as the committee president to control for possible partisan stacking by the party chairing the committee. To account for party-specific variation in the probabilities of being appointed to each committee that are independent of the other covariates examined, we include dummy variables for diputados belonging to the two largest parties, *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) and *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN).⁹ Finally, because members of the *Mesa Directiva* (which sets the legislative agenda and ensures parliamentary practices and standards are followed) and *Junta de Coordinación Política* (tasked with, among other things, proposing the memberships of committees) usually do not have other committee roles, we omit diputados serving on either body from the analysis.¹⁰

To analyze the selection of diputados to committees, we estimate separate logistic regressions for each committee. Each regression model examines committee selection for the entire period covered by our data set. To account for any differences in the underlying probability of being selected to each committee from one legislative term to the next, we treat the LX legislature as the baseline and include dummy variables for each subsequent term.

Analysis

Table 2 presents the results of the logistic regression models predicting appointment to the Migration, Northern Border, Southern Border, and Mexico City committees. On all four committees, the results suggest that constituency preferences are associated with higher probabilities of being appointed to relevant committees. As previous research testing the predictions associated with the distributive theory of committee selection would predict, diputados representing districts/states along the Mexico-US border are significantly more likely to be appointed to the Migration and Northern Border committees; diputados representing districts/states along Mexico's southern borders with Guatemala and Belize are significantly more likely to be appointed to the Southern Border committee, while diputados elected in the federal capital are significantly more likely to be appointed to the Mexico City committee. It is interesting to note that the estimated effects of these constituency preference variables do not differ significantly between those elected in the single-member districts and those elected in the PR tier: not only is the variable measuring PR diputados statistically insignificant, but models including interactions between each constituency preference measure and the PR tier variable do not provide evidence of interaction effects (as seen in the statistically insignificant likelihood ratio model comparison tests).¹¹

Table 2 about here

The predicted probabilities reported at the bottom of Table 2 illustrate the substantive impact of the estimated constituency preference effects. Holding all other variables at their median values, diputados from districts/states located on the Mexico-US border have an eight percent probability of being appointed to the Migration committee, compared with diputados from districts/states not located on the Mexico-US border, who have a four percent probability of being appointed. The probabilities of diputados from northern/southern border districts/states being appointed to the Northern and Southern Border committees are 25 and 27 percent, respectively (compared to one/two percent for those not representing border districts/states). Diputados from the federal capital have a 43 percent probability of being appointed to the Mexico City committee (compared to the two percent probability among diputados representing districts/states outside the federal capital).

Table 3 presents the results of the logistic regression models predicting appointment to the remaining seven committees. For each committee, the measure of constituency preferences is associated with significantly higher probabilities of appointment to the associated committee: diputados representing states with more people employed in agriculture-related occupations are significantly more likely to be appointed to each Agriculture-related committee; diputados representing districts/states with beach centers recognized by the Tourism Secretary are significantly more likely to be appointed to the Tourism committee; and diputados representing districts/states with more indigenous language-speakers are more likely to be appointed to the Indigenous Affairs committee. These findings are even more impressive than those seen in Table 2 because these results emerge even after controlling for diputados' expertise associated with each committee: while expertise resulting from employment in agricultural occupations is

associated with significantly higher probabilities of being appointed to agriculture-related committees, and while expertise accumulated through employment in the tourism sector is associated with higher probabilities of being appointed to the Tourism committee, constituency preferences are associated with significantly higher probabilities of being appointed to each committee. In the case of the Indigenous Affairs committee, the percentage of indigenous language-speakers is associated with higher probabilities of being appointed to the Indigenous Affairs committee even after controlling for the fact that indigenous diputados are more likely to be appointed to the Indigenous Affairs committee.

Table 3 about here

The magnitude of the estimated effects of each measure of constituency preferences can be seen by comparing the predicted probabilities in the bottom of Table 3. Holding all other variables at their median values (with the expertise variables held to zero), diputados from states with the highest observed levels of agriculture-related employment have predicted probabilities of being selected to the agriculture-related committees ranging from seven to nine percent—compared to predicted probabilities of only one-two percent among diputados from states with the lowest observed levels of agricultural employment. The predicted probability of diputados representing districts/states with beach centers being selected to the Tourism committee is 12 percent, compared to five percent among diputados not representing districts/states with a beach center. Diputados representing districts/states with the highest observed percentages of indigenous language-speakers have a 37 percent probability of being appointed to the Indigenous Affairs committee, compared to a probability less than one percent among those with the minimum observed percentages of indigenous language-speakers in their districts/states.

Taken together, the results presented here suggest that constituency preferences impact the selection of diputados to committees. In line with the predictions associated with the arguments holding that parties engage in distributive politics when selecting members to committees, these findings suggest that diputados representing districts/states with more constituents concerned with a particular set of issues are more likely to be selected to that committee in order to distribute particular benefits to that constituency. Because diputados during this period are not personally concerned with re-election, the fact that constituency preferences remain associated with selection to committees is consistent with the argument that party leaders promote the representation of constituency interests on committees to improve their party's electoral prospects in the next election. While Mexican party leaders may still be concerned with the consequences of such representation for the party brand, these results suggest party leaders calculate that any damage done to the party brand by representing constituency preferences may be outweighed the benefits of representing constituency concerns for the party's chances of re-election among constituents affected by the issues addressed by committees.

Although the impact of constituency preferences on the probabilities of being appointed to some committees are far from overwhelming (particularly with regard to the agriculture-related committees), the results nonetheless provide support for the argument that constituency preferences significantly impact committee selection in the Mexican Cámara de Diputados. In line with the argument that parties care about and use distributive politics as an end to improving the party's electoral fortunes, diputados representing constituents with particular interests in the work of a committee are several times more likely to be selected to committee than diputados representing districts where constituents are far less concerned with the committee's activities. It is important to note that these changes in probability occur despite the measurement of agriculture-related

constituency preferences that works against finding evidence of constituency preferences on committee appointments. Even more impressively, the constituency preference effects on assignments to the committees included in Table 3 emerge even after controlling for diputados' personal backgrounds/expertise—thereby accounting for potential overlap with the predictions associated with the informational theory of committee selection.

Discussion and Conclusion

Reflecting the need to extend research on committee selection to legislatures in Latin America (Alemán 2013), this study has examined the impact of constituency preferences on appointment to several committees in the Mexican Cámara de Diputados. Applying theories of legislative organization developed in the study of US legislatures to the case of Mexico presents an interesting problem. Given that diputados were barred from running for re-election until only recently, and with the strong control over diputados exerted by party leaders, the Mexican Cámara de Diputados is an unlikely case in which constituency preferences would be expected to impact selection to committees. On the eleven committees observed here, however, the results suggest that constituency preferences are associated with higher probabilities of selection to relevant committees. Rather than resulting from diputados pursuing committee assignments enhancing their personal prospects of re-election, the case of Mexico highlights the importance of distributive politics and the representation of constituency interests on committees to parties' electoral concerns. Because parties often control diputados' career prospects outside the legislature, the results suggest that parties have compelled their diputados to serve on committees addressing issues of concern to their constituents with the intent of improving the party's standing in future elections—which has resulted in correlations between constituency preferences and committee assignments in the Cámara de

Diputados despite the presence of term limits.

These results have several important implications for the comparative literature on committee selection. For one, the results suggest that it is not only individual legislators concerned with their personal chances of re-election who are searching to exercise the sort of constituent representation on committees expected by distributive theory, but also political parties. Given the absence of re-election incentives in the period examined here, individual diputados selected to committees addressing their constituents' concerns were not engaging in constituency representation for their own re-election benefits; instead, the fact that measures of constituency preferences predict selection to committees suggests that diputados are selected to represent their constituents' interests for the benefit of the party. Thus, the findings presented here suggest that revisions to our understanding of distributive theory are needed: while the pursuit of distributive goods for constituents certainly is an important feature of individuals' own re-election goals, the example of Mexico shows that parties are similarly concerned with such constituent representation for the re-election interests of the party as a whole.

Additionally, the results presented here have important implications for the application of cartel theory to legislatures outside the US. Although distributive theory is often viewed as being at odds with cartel theory, our findings suggest there is much greater overlap between the two theories. Consistent with previous research that has noted how parties may pursue electoral strategies in keeping with many of the predictions associated with distributive theory (Raymond and Holt 2014, 179-180; Mickler 2018a, 117; *ibid* 2018b, 521), our findings suggest that parties have an interest in *promoting* the representation of constituency preferences on committees as a means of enhancing the party's electoral fortunes in the following election. Previous research applying cartel theory acknowledges that parties may not *prevent* self-interested members with outlying

preferences from being selected to committees where they represent their constituents' interests, as such behavior increases the chances the party and its members will be re-elected (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 191-199). However, the fact parties in Mexico continued to select members to committees aligning with their constituents' interests despite the absence of individual re-election interests suggests that more attention to the incentives for *parties* to ensure that constituency interests are represented on committees (independently of individual members' own interests) is needed in future research.

The results also have important implications for the literature on committees in Latin American legislatures. The findings presented here suggest that theories of committee selection developed in the study of US legislatures and applied increasingly to other legislatures also travel to committees in Latin American legislatures. Accordingly, we would expect that future research on committee selection in other legislatures would yield similar findings. Additionally, as this paper has found evidence that distributive politics impact committee selection in the Mexican Cámara de Diputados, future research on committees in Latin American legislatures will need to account for the importance of distributive concerns—both those of parties and their members—when trying to understand the behavior of committee members and those seeking selection to committees. More broadly, these findings reinforce the importance of distributive politics already acknowledged in previous studies (*e.g.*, Taylor 1992; Cunow et al. 2012; Kerevel 2015a) for understanding the politics and products of Latin American legislatures.

One interesting avenue for future research would be to extend the analysis to examine the impact of differences in individuals' career plans on the probabilities of selection to committee. While we noted that, based on previous studies of diputados' post-office careers and their behavior while still in office (*e.g.*, Kerevel 2015a), we could

safely assume that most diputados faced incentives to sit on committees and represent constituency preferences as a means to enhancing future career prospects, future research seeking to extend our analysis might want to examine the effects of differences in career plans on individuals' desire to seek committee assignments aligning with constituency preferences. This may be even more important to understanding committee selection in legislatures without term limits, as those seeking to remain in office may be more enthusiastic in pursuing committee assignments that allow them to represent their constituents' interests than those seeking other offices (and even more so than those looking to quit politics altogether).

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Independent Variables

Independent Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Northern Border Constituency	0.11	0.31	0	1
Southern Border Constituency	0.05	0.22	0	1
Distrito Federal Diputado	0.10	0.30	0	1
% Employed in Agriculture	1.89	1.14	-0.60	3.68
Beach Centers	0.16	0.36	0	1
% Indigenous Speakers	1.28	1.35	-1.17	4.47
PR Diputados	0.40	0.49	0	1
Agriculture Expertise	0.18	0.39	0	1
Ranching Expertise	0.04	0.21	0	1
Fishing Expertise	0.01	0.10	0	1
Tourism Expertise	0.06	0.24	0	1
Indigenous Diputado	0.01	0.12	0	1
Electoral Margin	12.14	9.90	0	62.96
Female	0.32	0.47	0	1
Same Party: Migration	0.20	0.34	0	1
Same Party: Northern Border	0.17	0.37	0	1
Same Party: Southern Border	0.26	0.44	0	1
Same Party: Mexico City	0.38	0.48	0	1
Same Party: Agriculture	0.44	0.50	0	1
Same Party: Agrarian Reform	0.30	0.46	0	1
Same Party: Ranching	0.44	0.50	0	1
Same Party: Fishing	0.40	0.49	0	1
Same Party: Citrus	0.25	0.43	0	1
Same Party: Tourism	0.30	0.46	0	1
Same Party: Indigenous Affairs	0.35	0.48	0	1

“Same Party” refers to whether diputados belonged to the same party as that of the committee chair.

Table 2: The Estimated Effects of Constituency Preferences on Selection to Distributive Committees

	Migration	Northern Border	Southern Border	Mexico City
Northern Border Constituency	0.77 (0.36)*	3.98 (0.60)*		
Southern Border Constituency			3.03 (0.46)*	
Mexico City Diputados				3.93 (0.39)*
PR Diputados	-0.55 (0.29)	-0.56 (0.56)	-0.42 (0.47)	0.08 (0.32)
Margin of Victory	<-0.01 (0.01)	0.05 (0.03)	-0.07 (0.03)*	0.01 (0.01)
Female	0.45 (0.27)	0.16 (0.48)	0.52 (0.42)	0.03 (0.32)
Same Party	0.26 (0.36)	-0.10 (0.81)	-0.05 (0.57)	0.38 (0.43)
PRI	-0.34 (0.31)	-0.78 (0.66)	-0.48 (0.52)	1.62 (0.48)*
PAN	-0.55 (0.34)	-1.21 (0.73)	-0.12 (0.59)	1.25 (0.55)*
Constant	-2.89 (0.38)*	-5.08 (0.82)*	-2.99 (0.61)*	-5.43 (0.56)*
LR Test of Interaction	1.78	1.09	0.14	0.63
McFadden's R ²	0.03	0.29	0.22	0.28
n	1868	936	936	1401
The Impact of Constituency Preferences on Committee Appointment				
Minimum Constituency Preference Value	0.04 (0.03, 0.05)	0.01 (<0.01, 0.01)	0.02 (0.01, 0.03)	0.02 (0.01, 0.02)
Maximum Constituency Preference Value	0.08 (0.03, 0.14)	0.25 (0.09, 0.40)	0.27 (0.11, 0.43)	0.43 (0.29, 0.57)

* $p < 0.05$. Entries in the top part of the table are logistic regression coefficients (standard errors). Term fixed effects excluded. Entries in the bottom two rows are the predicted probabilities of being appointed to committee (95% confidence intervals). "LR Test of Interaction" is the χ^2 value from model comparison tests of models with and without interactions between the constituency preference variables and the variable measuring diputados elected in the PR tier. Insignificant values suggest the interaction effect does not significantly improve model

fit.

Table 3: The Estimated Effects of Constituency Preferences on Selection to Distributive Committees, Controlling for Diputados' Backgrounds

	Agriculture	Agrarian Reform	Citrus	Ranching	Fishing	Tourism	Indigenous Affairs
% Employed in Agriculture	0.34 (0.12)*	0.31 (0.13)*	0.55 (0.27)*	0.55 (0.16)*	0.41 (0.13)*		
Beach Centers						0.97 (0.28)*	
% Indigenous Speakers							1.05 (0.11)*
PR Diputados	-0.43 (0.26)	0.02 (0.26)	-1.16 (0.59)	-0.27 (0.31)	-0.23 (0.27)	-0.64 (0.27)*	-0.62 (0.30)*
Agriculture Expertise	1.63 (0.22)*	1.79 (0.24)*	0.96 (0.46)*				
Ranching Expertise				2.08 (0.34)*			
Fishing Expertise					2.33 (0.52)*		
Tourism Expertise						1.71 (0.27)*	
Indigenous Diputados							2.03 (0.47)*
Electoral Margin	<-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)	<-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Female	-1.16 (0.35)*	<-0.01 (0.28)	0.07 (0.59)	-0.37 (0.33)	-0.38 (0.30)	0.56 (0.23)*	0.85 (0.27)*
Same Party	-0.02 (0.32)	-0.01 (0.27)	0.30 (0.55)	-0.02 (0.45)	0.37 (0.36)	0.17 (0.24)	0.44 (0.28)
PRI	-0.35 (0.39)	-0.04 (0.30)	-0.76 (0.64)	0.05 (0.52)	-0.56 (0.35)	-0.06 (0.28)	-0.73 (0.34)
PAN	0.13 (0.31)	0.26 (0.31)	0.09 (0.60)	0.30 (0.38)	-0.21 (0.34)	-0.02 (0.28)	0.57 (0.33)
Constant	-3.84 (0.46)*	-4.13 (0.50)*	-4.72 (0.93)*	-5.18 (0.64)*	-3.45 (0.49)*	-3.16 (0.33)*	-5.48 (0.48)*
LR Test of Interaction	0.36	0.27	2.98	3.32	1.62	2.70	0.29
McFadden's R ²	0.13	0.11	0.10	0.12	0.07	0.07	0.30
n	1868	1868	932	1868	1868	1868	1868
The Impact of Constituency Preferences on Committee Appointment							
Minimum Constituency	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.05	<0.01

Preference Value	(0.01, 0.04)	(<0.01, 0.03)	(<-0.01, 0.02)	(<0.01, 0.02)	(<0.01, 0.03)	(0.04, 0.07)	(<0.01, <0.01)
Maximum Constituency Preference Value	0.09 (0.06, 0.12)	0.07 (0.04, 0.09)	0.07 (0.02, 0.12)	0.07 (0.04, 0.11)	0.08 (0.05, 0.11)	0.12 (0.07, 0.18)	0.37 (0.26, 0.49)

* $p < 0.05$. Entries in the top part of the table are logistic regression coefficients (standard errors). Term fixed effects excluded. Entries in the bottom two rows are the predicted probabilities of being appointed to committee (95% confidence intervals). “LR Test of Interaction” is the χ^2 value from model comparison tests of models with and without interactions between the constituency preference variables and the variable measuring diputados elected in the PR tier. Insignificant values suggest the interaction effect does not significantly improve model fit.

Notes

¹ In line with previous research noting that strong committee systems emerge in countries where there are both incentives to cultivate personal votes and an electoral system favoring those politicians engaging in distributive politics to represent constituents (Martin 2011), the drive to secure particularistic spending for constituents may help to explain the comparative strength of the Mexican committee system despite the absence of re-election motives during this period.

² At the beginning of each three-year legislative period, party leaders in the Cámara de Diputados must decide which legislators will be members, chairs and secretaries of the different standing committees. Any diputado (except for those in the Chamber's chair) can belong to up to three committees. Although party leaders have the last word in this assignment process (and are allowed to remove or change their caucus members at any time), diputados and other local and national party leaders have recently gained some leverage over this process.

³ On parties' orientations towards vote, office, and policy seeking, see Strøm (1990).

⁴ Similar findings can be seen in other Latin American countries (see Taylor 1992; Carey 1996).

⁵ In the LX and LXI legislatures, this committee was known as the Agriculture and Ranching committee, becoming the Agriculture and Irrigation committee (*Agricultura y Sistemas de Riego*) in the LXII and LXIII legislatures.

⁶ We thank the reviewers for their suggestions regarding measurement of constituency preferences on the Migration, Northern Border, Southern Border, and Mexico City committees.

⁷ Since 1988, 300 diputados have been elected each election in single-member districts, while the remaining 200 diputados are elected in the proportional tier. We focus

exclusively on those diputados elected (known as *propietarios*) and exclude their alternates (*suplentes*).

⁸ We also examined the possibility that the effects of constituency preferences are conditioned by electoral security by including interactions between the two sets of variables. However, model comparison tests showed that these interactions did not significantly improve model fit.

⁹ Controlling for party-specific variation in committee appointments is particularly important given differences in the parties' constituency profiles. For instance, difference-in-means and difference-in-proportions tests reveal that PRI's diputados were significantly more likely to represent states with high percentages employed in agriculture, significantly less likely to represent voters in the federal capital, and significantly less likely to represent beach centers than diputados from other parties. PAN diputados were particularly more likely to represent constituents along the northern border, and significantly less likely to represent districts/states with more indigenous language-speakers, than diputados from other parties.

¹⁰ We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting that we account for diputados sitting on these committees. Including these diputados produces results comparable to those presented here.

¹¹ The absence of significant interactions between mode of election and constituency preferences (as well as the absence of significant coefficients for PR diputados in most of the models seen in Tables 2 and 3) is an interesting finding given previous research showing differences in incentives between different modes of election (Stratmann and Baur 2002) and differences in efforts to achieve particularistic spending (Kerevel 2015a). While we can only speculate on this (non-)finding, it may be that the need to pursue future career options through constituency representation compels diputados to seek

committee assignments aligning with their constituents' preferences to a greater degree than might be observed in legislatures without term limits.