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## *The Strategic Use of Legislative Voting Procedures*

Legislative votes can be taken by roll call—noting the position of each individual member—or by some form of indication (sitting or standing, shouting yea or nay, etc.)—noting only an aggregate outcome. Cameral rules define one method of voting as the standard operating procedure and how to invoke any alternative voting methods. We develop a series of hypotheses related to *position taking* to explain why, when procedures would typically lead to a vote taken by indication, legislators choose to vote by roll call—a means that makes it much easier for actors outside the chamber to observe the positions taken by individual legislators and partisan blocs. With data from Argentina and Mexico, we test these hypotheses regarding the strategic choice of vote procedures and their relationship to observed party unity.

While the tasks of creating policy and governing are paramount, substantial research in the field of legislative politics has documented how the time and energy of legislators is frequently devoted to appearing to be on the “right” side of any issue (Alemán et al. 2009; Box-Steffensmeier, Arnold, and Zorn 1997; Crisp et al. 2004; Fenno 1978; Fiorina 1974; Mayhew 1974). Position taking entails *speaking* and *judging*, rather than *doing* (Mayhew 1974). As roll-call votes are the unambiguous statement of support or rejection of a proposed action, they have dominated the attention of scholars scrutinizing position taking.<sup>1</sup> Where voting methods are at legislators’ discretion, as they are in many legislatures around the world, the choice of *how to vote* is also informative. We seek to explain why legislators invoke roll-call vote procedures when their standard operating procedure would be a relatively anonymous form of voting by some indication not recorded at the individual level. We also develop and test hypotheses regarding the relationship between the reason for going on the record and the observed unity of partisan delegations.

Legislators may wish to convey their positions to a wide variety of actors: the national executive, partisan bloc leaders, the media, and interest groups who shape public opinion, or voters themselves. Not all of

these actors are equally attentive or equally capable of monitoring legislators' signals. Political insiders such as party leaders and the executive are able to constantly observe legislators' behavior. They, or their trusted associates, are there when legislators draft committee reports, when they intervene in legislative debates, when they propose bills or amendments, and when they shout "aye" or "nay" to express their preferences on an issue facing the legislature (hereafter we will refer to votes taken by a means that does not entail recording of individual members' positions as voting by "indication"). Most actors outside the legislature, however, suffer from a case of "informational asymmetry" (Carey 2008). Outsiders often do not have the means or resources to systematically observe the nuanced details of legislative life. Instead, it will take a relatively blunt instrument to stake out a position that can be easily observed by the media, interest groups, or individual voters. Roll-call votes can serve that purpose. They allow individual legislators to position take and provide all observers with a clear signal of not only where they as individual members stand but also whether they are standing together as part of a relatively cohesive partisan bloc.

This last point means that even those insiders who can constantly monitor the positions of legislators may care differently about behavior visible only to them and behavior visible to outsiders as well. Presidents and bloc leaders may expect copartisan legislators to serve as their agents when drafting committee reports, offering amendments, voting by indication (for, example, shouting "aye" or "nay"), *and* when voting by roll call. However, it is only in the latter instance that the faithfulness of the agent to the insider principal is on display for even outsiders to observe. Choosing to put legislators on the record individually may make the threat of punishment or the promise of a reward more credible. Both the principal and the agent have the published record to which they may appeal. By extension then, party unity should be particularly high when position taking on issues important to the executive and legislative bloc leaders. When issues are less important to these important insiders, individual legislators may feel freer to respond to any "competing principals," electoral audiences whose preferences may diverge from those of powerful insiders (Carey 2008).

Most of the existing literature assumes that legislators must go on the record via roll-call procedures<sup>2</sup> and then seeks to determine what explains variations in party unity (Carey 2008; Shomer 2010). Taking one step back, we consider why legislators would *choose* to go on the record when they would ordinarily not have to, and then ask whether the determinants of the voting method are systematically related to party cohesiveness. As we noted above, key to our thinking is the importance

of *position taking*. In short, we argue that there are characteristics of items before a legislature that makes public position taking (via roll-call procedures) particularly valuable for at least a subset of legislators. What is more, once staking a position publicly on these types of items, there are reasons to expect that legislative delegations will have reasons to appear generally cohesive if they can.

Where legislators have a choice, via their choice of voting methods, about whether their individual positions will be made public, if we find that vote methods are not randomly distributed across legislative activities and that the method of voting has an impact on how individual legislators vote, it could have substantial consequences for inferences based on visible (roll-call) legislative voting. For conclusions about legislators, partisan blocs, and law making, the discipline frequently relies on analyses of visible votes—without much consideration of the potential sample bias induced by the availability of multiple voting methods.<sup>3</sup> If what is being voted on and the outcome of the vote are both a function of position-taking value, for example, inferences drawn regarding individuals' ideal points, party cohesion, the power of chamber leaders, or the legislative influence of the executive will be biased.

Regardless of the voting method, we can always learn what is being voted on, who initiated it, and whether it is controversial enough to generate a lengthy discussion. We can also learn which voting method was selected in order to come to a collective decision. Where multiple methods of voting are available to legislators, it is unlikely that the choice of a voting method is random. Moreover, if the roll-call method is invoked, we can learn whether particular matters were characterized by more or less party unity. By comparing what information we have about all votes across the methods by which votes are taken, we can gain insight into what legislators wish to communicate and to whom.

Using data from Argentina and Mexico, we explain why, when the standard operating procedure would typically lead to a vote taken by indication through a show of hands, for example, legislators choose to vote by roll call—a means that makes it much easier for interested parties outside the chamber to observe their individual decisions. When voting on final passage of a bill, roll-call procedures are required in both countries.<sup>4</sup> However, for the vast majority of legislative business, as we detail below, voting by indication is the standard operating procedure. Nonetheless, deputies can and do choose to go on the record, by invoking roll-call procedures, when it would otherwise not be the norm. It is this decision to publicly take a position, and its effect, that we will explain.

First we motivate our theorizing about the role of *position taking* for understanding the choice of voting procedures and the impact of

position taking on party unity. We then document norms of vote transparency in legislative assemblies across Latin America, showing that choice over procedures is widespread, but variable. Turning then to the legislative minutes in Argentina and Mexico, we test our hypotheses. We find that the voting method invoked is systematically related to the position-taking potential of the item under legislative consideration and that the position-taking potential of an item in turn influences party unity.

### Theorizing about Legislative Voting

Legislative voting is the central empirical phenomenon considered in most studies of legislative behavior. Published voting records are the basis of studies interested in individual legislators' preferences (Alemán et al. 2009; Hix, Noury, and Roland 2006; Jones et al. 2009; Rosas and Shomer 2008), party positions (Hix 2002; Kreppel and Hix 2003; Mattila 2004), party cohesiveness and discipline (Carey 2008; Cox 1987), and the dimensionality of the policy space and the fault lines of political conflict (Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers 2004; Poole and Rosenthal 2000; Rosas and Shomer 2008). Yet given the centrality of voting records to so many research questions, it is surprising how little attention political scientists have devoted to understanding fundamental elements of the data-generating process (Carrubba, Gabel, and Hug 2008; Hug 2009). When a single voting procedure is not mandated, what are the institutional requirements for invoking different voting methods and what explains legislators' decision to exercise the prerogative? What are public (roll-call) votes meant to communicate, and to whom? These questions have received relatively little attention in the existing literature.

Cameral rules define some method of voting as the standard operating procedure (SOP),<sup>5</sup> alternative voting methods, and the procedures by which those alternate methods may be invoked. Standard operating procedures determine to whom information is typically relayed when a vote is taken, though what can be learned and by whom varies with the method of voting (Carey 2008; Carrubba et al. 2006; Carrubba, Gabel, and Hug 2008; Hug 2009). Most cameral rules allow for voting by roll call: *indication* by a simple show of hands, rising to one's feet, shouting "aye" or "nay" at the appropriate time,<sup>6</sup> and, less frequently, by secret ballot. Individual legislators' positions when voting by *indication*—through raising one's hand or shouting "aye" or "nay," etc.—may be observable to political insiders, such as bloc leaders or allies of the president, but they are not readily available to potentially interested groups outside the chamber, such as interest groups, watchdog organizations, or common voters (Carey 2008). Therefore, the decision to

invoke an alternative method may be telling in itself because it changes the audience—and possibly the content of the signal itself (how each member ultimately votes).

Preferences over vote visibility vary across individuals, institutional context, and time (Jenkins and Stewart 2003; Snyder and Ting 2005). For example, in institutional contexts where legislators face “competing principals” beyond their partisan bloc leaders in the legislature, they may be forced to choose among them if their individual vote decisions will be recorded. Carey (2007) finds that intraparty competition diminishes party unity as personal vote-seeking legislators vote with their individual constituencies in mind (Hix 2002; Shomer 2010). Moreover, partisan bloc unity is generally lower in federal systems where powerful subnational governors may exert pressure on copartisans in the national legislature to defend the state’s interests (Eaton 2002; Samuels 2002). He also argues that directly elected executives are competing principals who, when they have interests that clash with those of legislative bloc leaders, may serve to decrease party unity (Alemán and Calvo 2010). Finally, opposition members tend to express stronger preferences for legislative transparency, as exposing unpopular governmental position may be one of the few tools they have at their disposal (Carey 2008).

Another thread in the existing literature focuses on roll-call procedures and their effects on party discipline (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Hix, Noury, and Roland 2005; Miller and Stokes 1963). Carrubba et al. (2006, 2008) and Hug (2009) tell a disciplining story, arguing that putting legislators’ votes on record may increase party unity by making the detection of defectors easier. Party leaders who anticipate needing to use sticks and carrots to ensure that members vote the party line may employ roll calls simply to determine who merits the stick and who the carrot (Fenno 1987; Hix 2002; Jenkins and Stewart 2003).<sup>7</sup> Even if it is not necessary for making an individual member’s position known, a roll call may make the threat of punishment for defection or reward for loyalty more credible. When all observers witness a member’s vote choice, leaders may more acutely feel the need to follow through on possible punishments or rewards. Recent works have demonstrated that elective use of roll-call procedures tends to be associated with greater party unity, and some of this research explicitly underscores the point that the choice of legislative voting procedures may be strategic (Carrubba et al. 2006; Carrubba, Gabel, and Hug 2008; Hug 2009).

Beyond these very recent works, to date, most of our theorizing fails to consider when legislators wish to take a position and whether the visibility of the position they are taking affects its content (the vote

choice). Instead, scholars usually assume that legislators must take a position—that their votes are made public—and that the signal they are sending is observable to any interested party. However, it is rare that cameral rules define only one means of taking a vote, and below we will show the variation across Latin American assemblies. We focus on the choice of voting procedures and the theoretical model we adopt conceives of roll-call votes as a means to advertise personal or party positions on particular issues (Benedetto and Hix 2007; Clinton 2006; Mayhew 1974). We reason that legislators may capitalize on the easy visibility of roll-call voting in order to stake out what they expect to be a popular position (Ames 1995; Box-Steffensmeier, Arnold, and Zorn 1997; Golden and Chang 2001; Hix 2004; Miller and Stokes 1963)—or perhaps to expose an opposition party for supporting an unpopular one (Carey 2008). Legislators know that roll-call results are often monitored by interest groups to rate legislators on the policies of most importance to the group (Groseclose, Levitt, and Snyder 1999). Even if individual constituents do not monitor roll-call votes, those results may still indirectly influence legislators' electoral futures (Bianco, Spence, and Wilkerson 1996; Smith 1995). Thus, our model of legislative voting is based on the reasoning that some items before the legislature have greater position-taking value than others, thus increasing the probability that an elective roll call will be invoked. We also reason that the position-taking value of the item—and being on the record regarding whether they supported or opposed it—will systematically influence party and bloc unity, typically, but not always, making them more unified.

In their seminal works on agenda setting in the United States Congress, Cox and McCubbins (1993, 1994, 2005) contend that much of the majority party's energy is devoted to controlling the legislative agenda (and other legislative resources), rather coalition building on each vote of final passage. The majority party "cartelization" strategically employs cameral procedures and the distribution of resources to ensure that those bills that reach a vote of final passage will not divide the governmental coalition and will best preserve the image of the ruling party for the good of its members (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). While some defection from the party line on votes of final passage may be tolerated, breaking with one's party on procedural issues is paramount to desertion and often subject to harsh penalties or expulsion (Cox and McCubbins 2002; Sinclair 2000). This effect is especially pronounced for majority parties, whose primary objective is to maintain the "cartel."

Votes to alter the legislative agenda may be a particularly attractive opportunity for position taking for the opposition. Bräuninger and Debus (2009) find that opposition parties are more likely to attempt to change

the legislative agenda when the governing party or coalition is internally heterogeneous, suggesting that agenda changes might be an opportunity to expose political inconsistencies in the governmental platform. In addition, those in the opposition may wish to go on the record to document the futility of their attempts to influence the legislature's business, showing the homogeneity of their party in pursuit of alternative issues. Analogously, confidence votes in parliamentary systems are often advanced, even though the attempt to bring down the government will surely fail, because they are a highly publicized means of drawing attention to the difficulty the opposition faces in influencing the agenda (Benedetto and Hix 2007; Huber 1996). Without control over the agenda, the opposition may never get a chance to vote directly on the policies of greatest importance to their constituents. Yet publicly advertising their attempts to make an agenda change—even when they know their efforts will be rebuffed—may be a good way to stake out a position on an issue that would otherwise not reach the floor in a way that can be easily observed by external audiences.

Setting the agenda determines the substantive issues that will be discussed and the policy areas in which a change in the status quo is even an option (Cox and McCubbins 2002; Sinclair 2000). We reason that legislative blocs will elect to publicize their votes on motions to change the legislative agenda (Benedetto and Hix 2007; Huber 1996). Leaders of majority parties typically have no reason to invoke roll-call procedures for adopting or revising their preferred agenda. They can take positions, shape the agenda, and make policy directly on the issues that concern them most. However, we expect votes on the agenda to show relatively high levels of party unity. Members of ideologically cohesive parties will share a position on making sure the party's priorities are reflected in the legislature's business. Even if ideological cohesion is lacking, these are the exact votes on which partisan bloc leaders will attempt to exercise all the carrots and sticks at their disposal to enforce discipline.<sup>8</sup> Enforcing discipline on the agenda can avoid embarrassing votes on issues that might divide their parties at a later date. It can also allow those who cannot get their issues on the agenda to express what they would prioritize if they were in control of the agenda (Carey 2008; Huber 1996).

*H1A: Legislators will want to make public their positions on proposals regarding the legislative agenda.*

*H1B: When a roll call is used to vote on an agenda item, party unity will be higher than votes on substantive, non-agenda items.*

Once the agenda is determined, legislators will elect to position take by invoking roll-call procedures on important issues that are already in the public eye. Directly elected presidents develop platforms of the policies they will pursue once in office (Canes-Wrone 2006). Given both formal and informal powers, the president's priorities often dominate the legislature's time and effort (Morgenstern and Nacif 2002; Shugart and Carey 1992). Executives enjoy inherent advantages in capturing public attention; making legislative items with their origins in the executive branch are relatively likely to be receiving media coverage (Canes-Wrone 2001b; Kernell 1986). Additionally, the executive branch, with its control over the bureaucracy, is more likely to have access to the information and expertise to draft major pieces of legislation with national importance. Roll-call voting in presidential systems gives all legislators an opportunity to publicize their support for—or dissent from—the presidential agenda (Carey 2007), and roll-call results are an easy way for outsiders to monitor the president's coalition (Ames 2002).

Given the president's national stature, we hypothesize that items initiated by the president are more likely to be voted on via roll call. Riding presidential coattails, legislators can take credit for their part in high profile and well publicized policymaking and legislation (Canes-Wrone 2001b).<sup>9</sup> What is more, given the tools at the president's disposal, we would expect that when a roll call is invoked it will show that the president, more often than not, successfully built support for his or her agenda. Thus, we would expect that votes on particularly important pieces of legislation originating in the executive will reflect the cleavages that divide parties from one another—making partisan blocs appear particularly cohesive, either for or against the president's agenda. Again, even if ideological cohesion is lacking, these are the exact votes on which partisan bloc leaders will attempt to exercise all their tools to enforce party discipline because party reputations are built on unified stances on the policies most important to voters.

*H2A: Legislators will want to make public their positions on items initiated by the executive.*

*H2B: When a roll call is used to vote on an item with its origins in the executive branch, partisan voting unity will be higher than it is when voting on items with their origins in the legislative branch.*

Many decisions taken by legislatures may be characterized by a high level of consensus, due in large part to the gate-keeping efforts of majority parties in their control of the agenda. In these instances

discussion will likely be brief and the voting method quick and efficient, as no faction within the legislature would gain by invoking the roll-call process. Alternatively, lengthier debates may indicate political controversy (Baumgartner and Jones 2009; Martin and Vanberg 2004; Monroe, Colaresi, and Quinn 2008). Issue divisiveness may cause legislators' to want to justify their positions to different audiences or to try to frame actions in a particular light (Chong and Druckman 2007; Mayhew 1974; Riker 1986).

Appealing again to Carey's (2007) model of "competing principals," legislators must often weigh the pressures put on them by party bloc leaders, presidents, subnational officials, and their own constituents, not to mention their own conscience. Legislative speech is an opportunity to stake out and defend a position, even if members know the vote outcome will not (or will) go their way (Mayhew 1974). Speeches may be given to clarify a legislator's "true" commitments or to justify a vote that may contravene the wishes of one or more principals. Based on this rationale, we hypothesize that votes following longer than average debates will more often be taken by roll call, as opposed to some relatively anonymous *indication vote*, such as a vote by voice or show of hands.

Finally, issue divisiveness may also manifest at the level of party cohesion. Individual members may feel added pressure to justify their positions and an added desire to persuade, or perhaps chastise, their fellow members (King and Grimmer 2009). Thus, invoking a roll call on a much-debated item allows outsiders to see where legislators and partisan blocs stand on "hot button" topics, and the long debate gives them an opportunity to justify that position. If legislators' allegiances are pulled in one or more directions by "competing principals," then he or she may be compelled to publicly justify the reason for dissenting from the national party line. As such, we anticipate that votes that are preceded by longer than average debates (normalized by country) will manifest lower levels of party unity than items debated an average or less amount.

H3A: *Legislators will want to make public their positions on items debated for a longer than average period of time.*

H3B: *When a roll call is used to vote on an item that has generated a lengthy debate, partisan voting unity will be lower than on items debated a less than average amount of time.*

We have argued that while published voting records are central to most studies of legislative behavior, few works concern themselves with

the importance of the method of voting itself. Where voting by roll call is mandatory and universal, vote results will include votes about which a legislator cared very little and votes about which he or she cared a great deal. It will also include items on which they were “whipped” by bloc leaders and items on which they were left to their own consciences. In other words, the meaning of the voting record for each individual member may not intrinsically obvious. On the other hand, where a less visible alternative method of voting was available, the strategic choice among voting methods should be accounted for and considered informative. Our model of voting procedures capitalizes on both the competing principal’s model of Carey (2008) and the disciplining model of Carubba, Gabel, and Hug (2008). Emphasizing the *position-taking value* of roll-call voting, we have been able to deduce hypotheses about when roll-call procedures will be invoked and the subsequent influence on coalition voting unity.

In what follows, we first review the cameral procedures governing voting methods in legislative assemblies across Latin America. The standard operating procedures for voting and the ability to set aside those procedures vary widely across chambers, though legislators typically have a choice about when they will make their decisions visible to an audience beyond the legislature. We then examine our hypotheses about when legislators are most likely to position take via a roll-call vote. Next, we test hypotheses on whether the method of voting chosen influences unity. We conclude by returning to the relationship between our “position-taking” model and alternative models that focus on disciplining and competing principals. We also discuss the implications of our findings for inferences drawn from roll-call vote results when other means of voting are available to legislators (Hug 2009).

### **Voting Methods in Latin American Legislatures**

There is good reason to give some thought to the choice of voting procedures. Voting methods and the procedures by which they may be changed are detailed in Table 1.<sup>10</sup> While the standard operating procedure for voting varies, the cases where legislators do not have a choice among methods are relatively rare.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, the process by which an alternate method can be invoked differs greatly across chambers. Voting procedures are fixed in the Chilean lower and upper houses, the Dominican lower and upper houses, and the Nicaraguan unicameral assembly, where all votes are done by roll call.<sup>12</sup> Roll calls are mandated on votes regarding final passage of a bill in the Argentine lower and upper houses, the Mexican lower and upper houses, and the Peruvian unicameral

TABLE 1  
Voting Methods in Latin American Legislatures

	Most Legislative Business		Final Passage Bills	
	To Invoke Roll Call	Indication Vote	To Invoke Roll Call	Indication Vote
Argentina House	≤10% of those present	SOP	SOP	Not an Option
Argentina Senate	≥50% of those present	SOP	SOP	Not an Option
Bolivia House	≤10% of Members	SOP	≤10% of Members	SOP
Bolivia Senate	≥5 0% of those present	SOP	≥50% of those present	SOP
Chile House	SOP†	Not an Option	SOP†	Not an Option
Chile Senate	SOP†	Not an Option	SOP†	Not an Option
Colombia House	≥50% of those present	SOP	≥50% of those present	SOP
Colombia Senate	≥50% of those present	SOP	≥50% of those present	SOP
Costa Rica	≥50% of those present	SOP	≥50% of those present	SOP
DR House	SOP†	Not an Option	SOP†	Not an Option
DR Senate	SOP†	Not an Option	SOP†	Not an Option
Ecuador	≤10% of Members	SOP	≤10% of Members	SOP
El Salvador	≤10% of Members	SOP	≤10% of Members	SOP
Guatemala	≤10% of Members	SOP	≤10% of Members	SOP
Honduras	≤10% of Members	SOP	≤10% of Members	SOP
Mexico House	≤10% of Members	SOP	SOP	Not an Option
Mexico Senate	≤10% of Members	SOP	SOP	Not an Option
Nicaragua	SOP*	Not an Option	SOP*	Not an Option
Panama	≥50% of Members	SOP	≥50% of Members	SOP
Paraguay House	>10% / <50% of those present	SOP	>10% / <50% of Members	SOP
Paraguay Senate	>10% / <50% of those present	SOP	>10% / <50% of Members	SOP
Peru	≤10% of Members	SOP†	SOP†	Not an Option
Uruguay House	>10% / <50% of those present	SOP	>10% / <50% of those present	SOP
Uruguay Senate	Procedure unspecified	SOP	Procedure unspecified	SOP
Venezuela	≤10% of Members	SOP	≤10% of Members	SOP

† The use of electronic equipment to record indication votes—and their subsequent publication—renders them effectively the same as roll calls.

\* Individuals' votes are 'public' to the plenary but they are not later published (Carey 2008).

assembly—though legislators can choose among voting methods for their normal business in these three countries.

Roll-call voting methods are most often defined as the standard operating procedure when legislators are taking a final vote on a piece of legislation—but even then in only a minority of cases. Voting by roll call is the SOP for votes of final passage in 10 of 24 chambers. In all the cases where roll call is the SOP for votes of final passage, it is the *only* voting method allowed.<sup>13</sup> In the remaining 14 cases, the SOP does not require that legislators go on the record with their individual votes on votes of final passage. This means that in order to take a position that is easily observed by outsiders, the typical mode of voting must be set aside and a roll call explicitly invoked.

In 19 of 24 chambers, the standard operating procedure for most votes is some verbal or physical indication where legislators' individual responses are not recorded. However, in all 19 of these cases, legislators have the option of choosing to go on the record via roll call if they so desire. In other words, legislators can decide to transform a vote decision that would have been directly visible to only legislative insiders into a public vote that may be monitored by actors outside the chamber. As Carey (2008) points out, interest groups, watchdog agencies, journalists, academics, and citizens are likely to lack the resources to monitor votes taken on the legislative floor by voice, a show of hands, etc. When legislators opt to invoke a roll call, they are making up for the informational asymmetries that these actors would otherwise suffer relative to political elites, including party bloc leaders and the president.

While the option is widespread, we can also see that the procedures for invoking this change vary widely. In some countries, it requires the consent of only a handful of members while in others it takes a majority or more. Thus, even within a chamber where the barrier is fixed, parties will differ in their size and unity, and as a result may also differ in their ability to select the voting method that best suits their particular goals. We will examine in further detail (in the rest of this article) two cases, Argentina and Mexico, where the threshold for deciding to go on the record is relatively low.

Argentina and Mexico pose particularly appropriate tests of our theory. Skeptics have suggested that voting procedures are unimportant—they are not strategically chosen and the use of one procedure over another has no effect on unity. *If* legislators are going to strategically choose voting methods, we should expect that they would do so only on *really important* tasks, like final passage of a bill. Thus, if we find support for our hypotheses here, where legislators are going about the bulk of their everyday business, then we should be relatively confi-

dent that our findings will generalize to other cases where legislators can choose among voting methods for supposedly *more important* tasks.<sup>14</sup> Point of fact, it may very well be that where vote procedures are fixed for votes on final passage, it is in this other business that all the interesting “action” takes place. As Hug notes, where votes on final passage are published as a matter of course, “[i]t might be that at that time in the legislative process all conflictual elements have been resolved or that their final passage vote is largely a formality. As a consequence we would hardly expect the set of final passage votes to give us an accurate reflection of parliamentary conflict” (2009, 226). On the other hand, where vote procedures are at legislators’ discretion, the choice is likely to be meaningful.

### Choosing to Position Take via Roll Call

The data employed here were collected from the floor minutes of the lower houses in Argentina (for March 2007 to December 2007) and Mexico (for September 2006 to May 2007). Through a combination of automated and manual procedures, we searched digital copies of the legislative floor minutes for all instances of voting. For each instance, we coded for vote procedure used (roll call or indication), the length of the debate preceding the vote, the institutional position of the actor initiating the action, its substantive subject matter, and ultimately, if a roll call was used, how individual members voted.

Cameral rules regarding voting methods are generally quite similar across Argentina and Mexico. In both cases, the standard operating procedure (and only method allowed) for voting on final passage of the entirety of bill is to use the roll-call method. However, on the majority of their business—nonbinding resolutions, confirmation of presidential appointees, votes on the agenda, individual articles of bills (in Argentina), and amendments to bills (in Mexico)—the chambers in both countries use indication voting as their standard operating procedure. While indication voting is the SOP, invoking the roll-call method of voting requires only six legislators in Mexico, and in Argentina it requires only 10% of those present.

During the period of study, Nestor Kirchner of the *Frente Para Victoria*, a Peronist electoral alliance, held the presidency of Argentina. His supporters had a plurality of the seats in the lower house, but two opposition parties individually (not to mention the opposition coalition as a whole) were also large enough to invoke roll-call procedures without cooperation from any other bloc. Vicente Fox of the *Partido Acción Nacional* was president of Mexico at the beginning of our analysis and

was succeeded in December 2006 by his copartisan Felipe Calderón. During both of their administrations, as with Kirchner, their own copartisans and at least two opposition parties had sufficient seats to invoke the use of roll-call procedures.

Even in these chambers where roll call is the mandatory procedure for the final passage of legislation, voting by simple indication is the most frequent method employed when considering the legislature's business as a whole. In one year of legislative action, we observed 1,237 votes of varying types, 535 in Argentina and 702 in Mexico. Only 20% of those votes were votes on the final passage of bills, where roll-call voting is mandatory. On the other 80% of votes, legislators had a choice of whether they wished to go on the record individually—and they chose to do so more than 10% of the time. Put another way, nearly 40% of all roll-call votes were taken on legislative business where the SOP was indication voting. We will now systematically explore when legislators are likely to invoke a nonstandard operating procedure. More specifically, we explore situations in which legislators are most likely to go out of their way to position take.

When changes to the agenda are under consideration, we expect roll-call methods to be more likely. For one thing, given their lack of control over the chamber's agenda, the opposition may not get to discuss the issues of greatest importance to their constituents. The closest they can get to staking out a position on those issues is to show their frustration by attempting to have them placed on the agenda.

As we noted above, the policy platform of the directly elected president is likely to receive the most public attention and media coverage. Thus, when an action had its origins in the executive branch, we might expect legislators to invoke roll-call methods as a way of taking a position on the president's program. For the president's copartisans, it is an opportunity to show the party's supporters that they are faithfully pursuing the president's mandate. For the opposition, it is an opportunity to show their supporters that they are attempting to derail the president's agenda.

Almost by definition, the most divisive issues are likely those on which members will wish to take a position. When an issue arises that is hotly debated, members may feel the need to take a position publicly, defending their upcoming vote on the floor. As a proxy for issue divisiveness, we use the length of the debate preceding the vote. The longer the debate, the more likely roll-call procedures will be invoked—or, put another way, when it is clear they will be put on the record for outsiders to easily see, legislators will have a lot to say to publicly justify their vote choice.

TABLE 2  
The Decision to Use Roll-Call Procedures

Variable	Coefficient	Robust St. Error	90% Confidence Interval
Change Agenda	-.09	0.24	(-.48,.30)
Initiated by President	1.13	0.41	(0.45,1.80)
Long Debate	1.80	0.21	(1.45,2.15)
Intercept	-2.62	0.16	(-2.88,-2.36)
Wald Chi Sq.	73.01		
Log Pseudo Likelihood	-325.05		
N	977		

Given the binary nature of our outcome variable—use the standard operating procedure (0) or set it aside in favor of a roll call (1)—we present a logit model in Table 2. Our statistical results do lend support to some of our hypotheses. Counter to our expectations, votes on items regarding the agenda were *not* more likely to be voted on via roll call (Hypothesis 1A). However votes on initiatives advanced by the president (Hypothesis 2A) and elective roll calls preceded by a lengthy debate (Hypothesis 3A) were relatively more likely to be voted on via roll call.

To give a more intuitive substantive interpretation to these coefficients, we present simulated probabilities of using the roll-call method when it is not the standard operating procedure, allowing key covariates to vary while all other explanatory variables are held constant. This simulation-based approach conveys numerically precise estimates of the quantity of greatest substantive interest—in this case, the probability the roll-call method of voting will be invoked—and a reasonable measure of uncertainty (a 90% confidence interval) about those estimates (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 1999).<sup>15</sup>

We use as a baseline a piece of legislative business that deals with a non-agenda item, that is initiated by a member of the chamber, and that is debated an average or less amount of time. For this baseline category, there is only a .068 probability that a roll call will be invoked (see Table 3).

As expected, actions under consideration with their origins in the executive branch were more likely to be voted on by roll call than actions that were proposed by legislators themselves. The probability of making one's vote visible increased from .068 to .190 when the item had its origins in the executive branch—an increase of nearly threefold. For example, in Mexico a presidential petition to leave the country was converted into an opportunity for political position taking on foreign relations. In response to a request by PAN President Calderón to travel to Nicaragua and El Salvador, members of all three of the major parties

TABLE 3  
 Predicted Probability of Invoking Roll-Call Procedures  
 (when it is not the SOP)

	Predicted Probability of Roll Call
Baseline (none of the above)	.068 (.053–.086)
Initiated by President	.190 (.106–.294)
Lengthy Debate	.307 (.251–.368)

took the opportunity to call attention to different aspects of Mexican relations with their Central American neighbors. Several PRIista deputies intervened to emphasize that Mexico had long been a critical actor in the peace treaty negotiations of the 80's and 90's (while the PRI still controlled the presidential palace). Members of the PRD delegation used it as an opportunity to register their dissatisfaction with the previous Fox administration (and to call attention to the wall being constructed on the border in the north). Finally, members of the PANista delegation expressed their full support of their copartisan president, emphasizing the importance of Mexican leadership in encouraging free trade and increased regional integration.

Lengthy debates were even more likely to be associated with the invocation of a roll-call vote—with a predicted probability of .307. In other words, all else equal, an issue debated more than the average amount of time gets voted on by roll call more than 30% of the time while an issue debated an average or less amount is only voted on by roll call less than 7% of the time (see our baseline category above). Contentious issues likely generate many and/or lengthy interventions, followed by the opportunity to go on the record individually via a roll call. For example, in Argentina when the legislature considered contracts for railway and natural gas development, a long debate about the use of tax breaks to encourage investment ensued. Several members took to the floor advocating several modifications to the proposed contracts, many focusing on the idea that tax breaks should be disproportionately awarded to domestic investors relative to multinationals. As debate wound down, members opposed to the contracts invoked a roll call. The contracts were approved without further modification with ayes outnumbering the nays at about 2:1. Similarly, in Mexico, the Chamber of Deputies passed a resolution condemning plans by the Bush administration in the United States to expand the wall along the border between the two countries. All partisan

blocs voted to support the resolution and roll-call procedures allowed individual deputies to frame their reasons for voting in support of or in opposition to the measure. The desire to use the opportunity for position taking was so great that a motion to close discussion after the allotted time was rejected—this despite the near unanimity of the eventual vote.

Let us turn now to an examination of the relationship between the issue being voted on and party unity. Recall that we hypothesized that knowing they will be easily observed by insiders and outsiders alike, each partisan delegation would prefer to appear internally unified when voting on agenda items and important items that originated in the executive branch. On much debated issues, if the debate reveals cleavages within parties, party unity may actually decline.

### **Position Taking and Party Unity**

Agenda control gives those who have it the ability to keep items they oppose from even getting a hearing or items that might divide their bloc from coming to a vote. Conversely, efforts to modify the agenda may be the only chance those without agenda control have to make their priorities visible to political outsiders. Forcing a public vote on the agenda allows those without agenda control to say “Here is how we would have used the legislature’s time if it were up to us.” If there is any chance that a partisan bloc would be divided on an agenda, it seems likely that this is when bloc leaders would be most willing to use the power at their disposal to enforce discipline. Setting the chamber’s agenda involves defining each party’s most cherished issues. If outsiders are going to find it easy to view bloc unity, from the perspective of party bloc leaders, it had better be a disciplined, if not naturally cohesive, party that they see.

In the presidential systems of Latin America, the executive branch often defines the nation’s policy priorities broadly speaking (Morgens-tern and Nacif 2002). Presidents are the focal point of media attention and have many informal and formal powers at their disposal (Canes-Wrone 2001a; Kernell 1986). What is more, Latin American presidents can submit the priority items directly to the legislature for its consideration (Shugart and Carey 1992). They are also the only elected officials who represent the nation as a whole, while legislators are elected in districts that are only subsets of the nation. Thus, items before the legislature with the origins in the executive branch are relatively likely to be important issues with broad implications for the country. It is through the positions they take on these issues that parties can build their shared reputations. Not only are they taking positions on particular issues,

they are also taking a position on the presidential mandate. Thus, we hypothesized that parties would show relatively high levels of unity on issues with their origins in the executive branch.

We use the length of the preceding debate to capture how divisive or contentious an issue is. Again, we reasoned that members would want to go on the record to justify their positions to their “competing principals.” As we mentioned earlier, Carey (2007) finds that in federal systems where powerful subnational governors act as principals, they may exert pressure on copartisans in the national legislature to defend the state’s interests. Vibrant federalism has characterized Argentina longer than it has Mexico (Eaton 2002; Jones et al. 2002; Nacif 2002).<sup>16</sup> Thus, it seems most likely that in Argentina “contentious” might be particularly likely to signal divisions within partisan blocs, typically along regional lines (Jones et al. 2002). Given the historical centralization of politics in Mexico, “contentious” in this scenario seems likely to distinguish parties from one another. On the other hand, the mixed-member electoral system used in Mexico does mean that members elected in single-member districts have incentives to send clear and distinguishable signals about their positions to constituents. Their desire to position take on behalf of district-level concerns could lower party unity.

To measure party and coalition unity, we calculated the Average Weighted Unity scores for major parties in each legislature and for the governing coalition (those supporting the president) and the opposition coalition (Carey 2007; Morgenstern 2004). This score averages the per-bloc RICE cohesion score over all votes, giving more weight to votes that were most closely contested.<sup>17</sup> For example, when a vote is unanimous at the level of the legislature, it receives a weight of zero; while a perfect split (50-50) is weighted as 1, discounting each vote by the “closeness” of the vote in the legislature as a whole (Carey 2007; Morgenstern 2004). This vote weight is calculated as follows:

For each vote  $j$  in the legislative period:

$$weight_j : 1 - \left| \frac{total\ yea_j - total\ nea_j}{total\ votes_j} \right| \quad (1)$$

such that the Average Weighted Unity Score (AWU) (Morgenstern 2004, 45) for each party  $i$ , on each vote  $j$  is:

$$AWU_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^n RICE_{ij} \times weight_j}{\sum_{j=1}^n weight_j} \quad (2)$$

Recall that during the period of study Nestor Kirchner of the *Frente Para Victoria* held the presidency of Argentina. His supporters had a plurality of the seats in the lower house, but two opposition parties individually were also large enough to invoke roll-call procedures without cooperation from any other bloc. The governing coalition was made up of *Frente Para Victoria*, *Frente Cívico por Santiago*, *Encuentro Popular y Social*, *De la Concertación*, *Movimiento Popular Neuquino* (Jones, Hwang, and Micozzi 2009), and the opposition coalition was made up of *Unión Cívica Radical*, *Coalición Cívica – ARI*, *Partido Socialista*, *Propuesta Republicana*, *FREJULI*, *Unión Peronista*, *Unión Celeste y Blanca*, *Proyecto Sur*, *Concertación Federal*, and the party group *Solidaridad and Igualdad* (Jones et al. 2009). Vicente Fox of the *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN) was president of Mexico at the beginning of our analysis and was succeeded in December 2006 by his copartisan Felipe Calderón. Neither of their administrations enjoyed a *PANista* majority in the legislature. The other major parties in the legislature were the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) and the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD). Most analysts would place both the PRD and the PRI to the left of the PAN (in order from left to right: PRD, PRI, PAN) (Rosas and Langston 2011). However, the PRD and the PRI did not form an official coalition in opposition to the government. We report unity scores for the nongovernment “coalition” in subsequent tables, and we discuss unity scores for individual parties, the PRD, PRI, and PAN (the government party), in the text.

In Table 4 we report bloc unity when choosing to vote on agenda items via roll call. While we did not find support for our expectation that agenda items would relatively frequently provoke a roll call (H1A), we do find that they have a systematic impact on party and bloc unity (H1B), especially in Argentina. In Argentina, both the government and the

TABLE 4  
Unity on Elective Roll Calls Regarding the Agenda

Bloc/Party	Agenda	Not Agenda
<i>Argentina</i>		
Government	93.06	66.47
Opposition	95.05	70.56
<i>Mexico</i>		
Government Fox	96.77	94.75
Government Calderón	n.a.	99.75
Opposition Fox	64.73	71.47
Opposition Calderón	n.a.	30.86

opposition showed marked increases in unity when the item under consideration is the agenda. Our reading of the floor minutes indicate that these items are typically proposals by the opposition to change the agenda as determined by the government coalition. This gives the opposition an opportunity to position take on items that may never reach a full discussion, but to do so in a public and high profile manner. Their efforts are met by increased unity within the governing coalition, protecting its control of the agenda. For example, the *Frente para Victoria*, the president's party, had a weighted unity score of 98.67 when voting on the agenda but only 72.77 on items not related to the agenda. We also calculated unity scores for roll calls that were mandatory. Elective votes on the agenda show levels of unity comparable with unity displayed on mandatory roll calls while elective votes on items other than agenda show significantly less unity within the coalitions.

In Mexico, we see that the party of the president, the PAN, was highly disciplined on elective roll calls, regardless of whether it was a vote on the agenda or not. The major individual parties in opposition were also highly disciplined individually—but they did not necessarily vote with one another. Votes from the Fox administration indicate that the PRD and PRI were somewhat less likely to vote together if the legislative agenda was under consideration. There were no elective votes on the agenda during the Calderón administration. To the extent that there is a dynamic in Mexico surrounding elective roll calls on the agenda, it is not an intraparty one.

In Table 5 we report bloc unity when choosing to vote via roll call on items with their origins in the executive branch. Recall, we did find support for our hypothesis that the elective roll-call procedure would be invoked more frequently when voting on the president's proposals (H2A). In Argentina we see that the government coalition is much more

TABLE 5  
Unity on Elective Roll Calls on Items Originating in the Executive

Bloc/Party	President's Item	Not President's Item
<i>Argentina</i>		
Government	92.09	76.48
Opposition	76.16	80.76
<i>Mexico</i>		
Government Fox	100	94.99
Government Calderón	100	99.75
Opposition Fox	81.38	70.19
Opposition Calderón	66.51	30.54

unified when voting on an item with its origins in the executive branch than when voting on an item that had its origins in the chamber itself (H2B). As with the agenda, elective votes on the president's items show levels of unity comparable with unity displayed on mandatory roll calls while elective votes on items other than president's items show significantly less unity within the governing coalition. This lack of unity on items with their origins in the Chamber is not replicated in mandatory roll-call votes, where the weighted unity scores of the governing coalition are much closer (97.07 on president's proposals, 93.13 on chamber proposals).

The same is not true of the opposition coalition. If anything, its unity declines slightly on items initiated by the executive. Anecdotally, based on the minutes, there appeared to be times when the president could win over the UCR, one of the larger parties in the opposition bloc, while not being able to win over other members of the opposition. Interestingly, when the UCR defects from the coalition in support of the president, it did so almost unanimously.

In Mexico, once again, the PAN proved to be generally unified, regardless of the origin of the legislative item. President Fox's proposals did elicit very slightly greater party unity than items with their origins in the chamber itself. "The Opposition" also showed relatively more unity when voting on items initiated by the president. The PRD and the PRI frequently voted together during the Fox administration, and they were even more likely to do so when the item had its origins in the executive branch. Opposition unity was generally lower under Calderón but, relatively speaking, it increased on items sent from the executive branch. Opposition "coalition" unity was almost always substantially lower than the unity of any given party, and opposition unity declined over time (a theme to which we return in the conclusion).<sup>18</sup>

In Table 6 we report bloc unity when choosing to vote on much debated items via roll call. Recall, we did find support for our hypothesis that the elective roll-call procedure would be invoked more frequently on much debated items (H3A). In Argentina, long debates are opportunities for members of the governing coalition and the opposition coalition to explain why they will not be voting as unified coalitions (H3B). In other words, the drop in the average party unity of the coalition is a function of a drop in the unity of the individual parties making up the coalition—and not primarily a function of unified parties within each coalition being at odds with one another. *Frente para la Victoria*, for example, had a weighted unity score of only 73.98 after a long debate but a score of 92.19 when voting on an item that did not generate greater than average discussion. Whenever legislators are going to be put on the record in a

TABLE 6  
 Unity on Elective Roll Calls on Much-Debated Items

Bloc/Party	Much-Debated Item	Less-Debated Item
<i>Argentina</i>		
Government	67.55	86.55
Opposition	68.93	91.60
<i>Mexico</i>		
Government Fox	94.52	96.15
Government Calderón	99.64	99.99
Opposition Fox	73.16	64.98
Opposition Calderón	25.50	44.27

situation when they cannot display party unity, a long debate with members defending their votes precedes the actual tally. Analysis of the floor minutes reveals the abundant use of terms like *dejar constancia* or “leave record of”; *fijar mi posición* or “establish my position”; and *fundar el voto* or “establish (the rationale behind) my vote.”<sup>19</sup> Previous research has found a federal dimension to Argentine legislative behavior (Eaton 2002; Jones et al. 2002), and this decrease in the unity scores, resulting from divisions *within* the partisan blocs, is also consonant with a “competing principals” argument (Carey 2008). When legislators feel the pull of competing principals, they take to the floor to justify their positions at length.

In Mexico, once again the party of the government, PAN, proved to be generally unified, regardless the length of the preceding debate (Nacif 2002; Weldon 1997). And again, the action on position taking after a hotly debated item seems to be whether the parties other than the president’s party will work with one another or whether one of them—typically the PRI—will stake out a position aligned with the president’s PAN. During the Fox administration, much-debated items showed the opposition coming together to obstruct the majority party. During the Calderón administration the PRI and the PRD remained internally unified, but the “opposition” was generally less unified, *especially* after a long debate. We discuss this dynamic further in the conclusion.

In general, our analysis of elective roll calls indicates that unity while position taking has primarily an intraparty dynamic in Argentina and an intracoalition dynamic in Mexico. In Argentina, individual parties claiming to support the president pulled together internally when voting on the agenda and when voting on items with their origins in the executive, thus making the coalition more unified as well. When they are not able to pull together individually, they take great pains to justify their

defections at length. The opposition coalition also pulled together on agenda items, and it used long debates to explain its lack of unity. The opposition's pattern of behavior did vary from the government's coalition in one way. Contrary to what we hypothesized, the UCR was occasionally willing to defect from the opposition in favor of the governing coalition on bills initiated by the president. That it did so in a unified manner makes it more like the PRI in Mexico than like parties in Argentina on other votes with high position-taking value. In contrast, parties in Mexico maintain relatively unified stances regardless of the position-taking value of the item being voted on. Which party is voting with which other, on the other hand, does seem to vary with position-taking opportunities. Over time, the PRI increasingly frequently sided with the PAN, the party of the president, when the value of doing so was greatest. We originally cast our hypotheses in intraparty terms, but an intrabloc level of analysis seems to best fit the Mexican Chamber of Deputies.

### Discussion

Legislators often have procedural choices when deciding how to conduct their business. The choice of voting methods determines whether the positions of individual members and therefore the unity of blocs become an easily visible part of the public record. In most of the presidential systems in Latin America, the standard operating procedure is to simply indicate one's vote by voice, a show of hands or briefly standing etc.—such that the positions of individual members is not recorded. However, whenever some form of indication voting is the standard operating procedure, rules are defined for invoking a roll-call process where each individual member's choice is made apparent and the unity of parties and coalitions can be systematically observed.

From the existing literature, we built on Carey's (2008) competing principals model and Carrubba, Gabel, and Hug's (2008) disciplining model. As their names imply, the first one tells us when to expect lower unity on roll-call votes, and the latter tells us when to expect greater unity. We have attempted to bring them together by focusing on the *position-taking value* of any business before the legislature. We found that the agenda generally evokes higher levels of party and bloc unity. In Argentina, votes on the agenda brought both the governing coalition and the opposition closer together internally and into clear juxtaposition with one another as blocs. In Mexico, votes on the agenda identified a different position-taking dynamic. During the Fox administration, the first

non-PRI administration in decades, the PRD and the PRI frequently voted together in opposition to the PAN, but that “coalitions” unity was slightly lower on agenda items.

We also found that items with their origins in the executive are more likely to lead legislators to invoke roll-call procedures, and they typically lead to greater unity among those professing to support the president. However, we found that the president was occasionally able to split the opposition in both Argentina and Mexico (especially under Calderón), with entire partisan delegations (the UCR and the PRI, respectively) choosing to stake out positions shared with a president from a party other than theirs. Carey (2007) found that legislative discipline, especially among the governing party, was likely to be lower in presidential systems than in parliamentary systems. Not having examined parliamentary systems, we cannot speak directly to this point. However, we can say that if discipline is lower in presidential systems it does not appear to be on items with their origins in the executive branch itself. If the president is acting as a competing principal, he is lowering party unity on items with their origins in the chambers itself, not his own proposals.

We hypothesized that controversial items would have relatively high position-taking value and that unity on them would show the differences within parties and blocs. We found support for the hypothesis that legislators would more likely invoke roll-call procedures on much-debated items. In Argentina, we also found support for the hypothesis that these items would be exemplified by lower party unity. In Argentina, much-debated items fragmented individual parties, especially the governing party. This seems like evidence in support of position taking for the benefit of competing principals. Unfortunately our coding does not allow us to say with any certainty that these are items where legislators are explaining their reasoning for acting as agents of governors or their individual constituents. In future work we hope to generate more refined hypotheses about position taking for one of many principals and to find a way to discern to which principal legislators are showing themselves to be an agent. In Mexico, we observed a change of position-taking strategy by the PRI over time. It remained internally unified during both PAN administrations, but whether it would side with the governing PAN to its right or the likewise opposition PRD to its left shifted over time, lowering the unity of the opposition as a bloc. The PRI's truculent and recalcitrant behavior under Fox was punished in the 2006 elections, with the party finishing a distant third in the presidential race and dropping to the third largest party in the Chamber (losing nearly half of its seats). After this debacle, during the Calderón administration, much-debated items

frequently showed that the PRI could be a cooperative and positive force—a stance rewarded in the 2009 elections.

Where roll-call procedures are *not* universally mandated, knowing that vote methods are not randomly distributed across legislative activities and that the method of voting has an impact on how individual legislators vote could have substantial consequences for inferences based on visible (roll-call) legislative voting. Much of what we claim to know about legislative politics is based on analyses of visible votes, without much consideration of the potential sample bias induced by the availability of multiple voting methods. We have shown, based on our data from Argentina and Mexico, that the choice of voting procedures and partisan/bloc unity are not independent. Whenever what is being voted on and the outcome of the vote are both, at least in part, a function of position-taking value, for example, our inferences regarding individuals' ideal points, party cohesion, the power of chamber leaders, or the legislative influence of the executive will be biased.

However, when procedures allow for options, we can know that the results recorded by roll call are a biased sample, and we can use the choice among voting methods as an additional source of information. Theorizing about the choice of vote procedures and the relationship of that choice to vote outcomes is advancing with attention being given to competing principals, disciplining, and, now, position taking. We found that legislators are more likely to go on the record when they wish to stake out a position on an item likely to be important for their party and personal reputations. Once on the record individually, efforts to change the agenda and proposals by the executive are more likely to be associated with higher levels of partisan and bloc unity. Conversely, where the vote record was going to show a lack of unity, legislators took great pains to make sure the justification for their actions were included in the minutes of the legislative debate.

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## NOTES

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1. Analysis of roll-call voting is fundamental to our understanding of representation and political accountability more generally, including not only the positions (ideal points) of individual legislators but also the cohesiveness of legislative parties (Carey 2007; Krehbiel 1992) and dimensionality of the policy space (Poole and Rosenthal 2000).

2. With some important exceptions to be discussed later, most authors ignore legislative voting methods, apparently taking for granted that where voting methods are not mandated the choice of procedures is exogenous to the outcome.

3. Important exceptions include Hug (2009); Carrubba, Gabel, and Hug (2008); VanDoren (1990); Clinton and Lapinski (2008); and Clinton (2006).

4. See Article 190 in the cameral procedures for the Mexican lower house and Article 148 in the cameral procedures for the Argentine lower house.

5. We define the standard operating procedures as the method of voting that will be used unless another method is explicitly selected.

6. While we group them together here, variations in the type of indication across chambers can have an effect on the ability of those present in the chamber to observe individual responses, especially given differences in the physical size of chambers, their layout, seating arrangements, and number of members.

7. For an argument to the contrary, see Carey (2008). Legislators interviewed by Carey indicated that leaders could monitor individual's votes regardless of the method used.

8. Legislators may be willing to break discipline on an agenda item if it is particularly important for signaling constituents in their individual districts—especially if their individual vote is not decisive and they have obtained permission from party leaders to distinguish themselves from their copartisans.

9. This may be particularly true in Latin America where presidents can typically introduce legislation directly into the legislature and may have formal mechanisms for moving their proposals to the top of the legislative agenda (Morgenstern and Nacif 2002).

10. This coding is based on cameral rules made available via the *Legislatina* Project at the University of Salamanca, with additional resources being retrieved from the websites of national assemblies. We are aware of changes in cameral rules regarding voting methods in some instances (see the discussion of Argentina below, for example). In future work we hope to detail these changes, explore the reasons for them, and use the “natural experiments” they entail for causal leverage.

11. On the choice of voting procedures in the U.S. House, see Clinton and Lapinski (2008).

12. In Chile and the Dominican Republic, the introduction of electronic technologies to record individual member's votes—and their later publication—ostensibly rendered all votes roll calls. In Nicaragua, votes are recorded at the individual level and are visible to those on the floor, but they are not subsequently published (Carey 2008).

13. The cameral rules do not specify how another form of voting could be invoked. Initially, many of these cases became roll call by default only because electronic equipment was used to register indication votes, and the results were then published. In other

cases, electronic voting equipment is available but not used when vote by indication is the method, or it is used but the results are not reported at an individual level—facts which legislators are well aware of ahead of time (Carey 2008).

14. In more practical terms, we also chose Argentina and Mexico because we had access to a complete set of their floor minutes for an entire year, and these transcripts were relatively easier to put into machine-readable form. As Carey (2008) documents, many national cases would not provide sufficient number of votes on which to base our analysis. Argentina and Mexico have a sufficient number of elective roll calls and a sufficient number of mandatory roll calls to allow for comparison. Pending approval of a funding proposal, we plan to expand our efforts to include as many cases-years across the region as possible.

15. We use the statistical simulation program Clarify (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 1999) to calculate the probability of a roll call over the range of key explanatory variables, while holding all other variables constant at a chosen value.

16. Very recent work by Rosas and Langston (2011) finds support for governor pull effects in Mexico conditional on the fact that the governor's term will outlast the terms of the legislators from his state.

17. Originally developed by Rice (1925), this elegant measure of party cohesion generates an average score of interparty dissension across a series of votes. For each party  $i$  on each vote  $j$ , the RICE score is simply  $Rice_{ij} = \frac{|\text{yea}_{ij} - \text{nea}_{ij}|}{\text{total}_{ij}} \times 100$ , which can range from 0 to 100. A party whose RICE score approximates 1 votes together most of the time, whereas a party with high levels of internal dissension will have a RICE score that converges to 0. One limitation of this measure is that it does not account for the fact that most legislative votes are uncontroversial—heavily lopsided toward passage or failure—which may artificially inflate cohesion scores across all parties.

18. However, returning to the floor minutes themselves, there are instances when the president's proposal caused a major schism within the PRD. It appears that there was a faction of hardcore members who simply refused to vote in favor of anything that had its origins in the PAN executive.

19. In at least one case that we know of, public justification of the vote is a protected procedural right whenever a roll-call vote is successfully invoked. The cameral procedures for the Chamber of Deputies in Uruguay state that “When votes are taken by nominal vote, [each member] can justify his or her vote for up to three minutes.” During this time, no interruptions or contestation is permitted (Articles 83–85).

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