

Party Discipline across Electoral Mandates and Career Concerns: Theory and Evidence from Votes and Speech in the Mexican Congress

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Abstract

We study how party discipline varies with electoral mandates and career concerns. In our model, partisan benefits induce discipline insofar as leaders rally enough support among their legislators to make their promises credible. Absent reelection, constituency concerns offset the leader's promises, leaving district legislators less disciplined than their list copartisans. Reelection makes these benefits electorally valuable, directly improving district legislators' local valence and list legislators' renomination prospects, and indirectly strengthening the leader's credibility in both tracks. We test the empirical implications of the model in Mexico's mixed-member Congress around the reform introducing consecutive reelection. We measure disagreement with party leaders in votes and speech across seven Congresses (2006-2024): disagreement falls in both tracks after the reform, most among district incumbents. Leaders, in turn, redirect partisan benefits toward district incumbents ex ante and reward the disciplined while punishing dissenters ex post. Accountability reforms that leave ballot access, list placement, and campaign finance in party hands can strengthen the organization they were meant to check.

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1 Introduction

Party discipline and cohesion are widely viewed as central to legislative performance and the functioning of responsible party government (Bowler et al., 1999). Party leaders promote unity through their control over candidate nominations, campaign resources, committee assignments, and agenda access (Morgenstern and Nacif, 2002), while legislators weigh these partisan rewards against the returns to cultivating a personal reputation with constituents (Crisp, 2007; Carey, 2007). Electoral institutions set the terms of this trade-off: legislators elected in majoritarian systems, such as single-member districts (SMD), have strong incentives to cultivate geographically concentrated constituencies that may be misaligned with the party line, whereas legislators elected under proportional representation (PR) depend on aggregate party support and are less tightly linked to any local electorate (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Hix, 2004; Ascencio and Kerevel, 2021).

The “competing interests” accounts that explain legislative behavior through this trade-off typically treat the disciplining power of party leaders as fixed. Yet the resources leaders offer depend on the support they command among backbenchers (Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991; Cox and McCubbins, 1993; Aldrich, 1995)—leadership is, in this sense, *contestable* (Iaryczower et al., 2008). Therefore, the credibility of leaders’ promises rests on backbenchers’ beliefs about their intraparty support. Disagreement with party leaders then does more than reveal heterogeneous preferences: it signals the leader’s internal standing, not only through voting but potentially also through other, less salient behavior such as floor speech, where dissent carries a lower reputational cost.

This paper develops a model of party discipline under *contestable leadership* in a legislature that combines two electoral mandates, SMD and PR, with and without reelection incentives, and tests its predictions using the introduction of consecutive reelection in the mixed-member Mexican Congress.

In the model, a party leader builds support for her preferred policy by offering partisan benefits, which she delivers only if she retains sufficient backing among SMD and PR party members in the legislature. The main distinction between electoral tracks is that SMD members must reconcile the party leader’s preferences with those of their district constituencies, a concern that operates even without consecutive reelection. When deciding whether to support the leader’s policy, legislators weigh the leader’s offers against their own policy preferences and, for SMD members, against those of their districts. The value of partisan benefits therefore depends on each legislator’s belief about the leader’s support among copartisans from both tracks: discipline reflects not only the resources leaders control but also the credibility of their promises. The introduction of consecutive reelection makes partisan benefits electorally valuable, raising SMD incumbents’ local valence and improving PR legislators’ prospects of renomination to viable party-list positions. We characterize equilibrium behavior in both tracks, with and without reelection incentives, and compare party discipline, the extent to which partisan benefits move legislators’ behavior toward the party line, across electoral mandates and reelection regimes.

The model yields three main empirical implications. First, absent reelection, party discipline is weakly higher among PR than SMD legislators when SMD legislators place sufficient weight on constituency concerns relative to the value of the party leader’s promises. Second, when SMD legislators can convert partisan payments into electoral returns, improved reelection prospects pull them away from their constituents’ preferences and closer to the party leader; discipline also rises for PR legislators through stronger beliefs in the leader’s survival, and because the direct SMD effect dominates this spillover, the PR–SMD discipline gap shrinks. These effects are heterogeneous within tracks: among SMD legislators the response varies with electoral competitiveness, and among PR legislators the gains concentrate on those competing for viable list positions. Third, the model carries implications for leaders’ own behavior: *ex ante*, reelection raises the return to deploying party-controlled resources; *ex post*, the credibility of the exchange requires honoring promises, rewarding disciplined legislators and punishing dissenters.

We take the model’s empirical implications to data on roll-call voting and parliamentary debates in the Mexican Congress between 2006 and 2024. Mexico’s mixed-member electoral system, which allocates seats through both SMD elections and closed-list PR, allows us to compare legislators operating under different electoral mandates *within the same national legislature*, holding constant the broader institutional environment. We capture variation in career concerns by exploiting the 2014 electoral reform that introduced consecutive reelection for federal legislators, which generates variation in reelection incentives across electoral tracks and over time. Moreover, because incumbents seeking renomination must register internally as pre-candidates, parties’ internal registration records let us measure variation in reelection concerns at the legislator level within each track.

To capture party discipline in this context, we construct measures of legislators’ disagreement with the party leadership from their voting and speech behavior. We complement roll-call measures of disagreement—in policy positions and in outright defections from the party line—with novel measures of “voiced” disagreement extracted from parliamentary debates. Our text-based indicators capture (i) divergence in *issue emphasis*, how legislators allocate attention across policy topics relative to party leaders, and (ii) divergence in *expressed policy positions*, recovered by scaling legislators’ speech along a partisanship dimension.

The results of the empirical analysis line up with the model’s implications. Because these implications are conditional, the results do more than test the framework: they identify which force dominates in the Mexican Congress:

- (i) Before the introduction of consecutive reelection, disagreement in both votes and speech is significantly higher among SMD than among PR legislators, consistent with credible partisan benefits whose disciplining effect on SMD legislators is offset by stronger constituency concerns. These concerns are instrumental: SMD legislators arrive with more experience in local elected office and disproportionately pursue such offices after their federal terms, whereas PR

incumbents more often move into the party organization or the Senate.

- (ii) Under consecutive reelection, disagreement declines in both tracks, with a significantly larger reduction among SMD legislators, shrinking the PR–SMD gap. This convergence follows the model’s logic: SMD legislators can now convert partisan payments into improved electability, and their greater support for the leadership leads legislators in both tracks to update positively about the credibility of the leader’s promises. Within the PR track, only incumbents who can improve their electoral viability through a better list ranking exhibit comparable disagreement declines to SMD legislators.
- (iii) On the leaders’ side, consecutive reelection changes both how party resources are deployed and how the exchange is enforced: *ex ante*, leaders shift power-committee assignments toward SMD legislators and centralize SMD candidate nomination procedures; *ex post*, they honor their promises, denying renomination to legislators who dissent in both tracks and demoting PR dissenters to less viable list positions.

Our findings speak to three strands of research. The first studies how electoral rules govern the trade-off between the party label and the personal vote (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Carey, 2007; Crisp, 2007; Hix, 2004; Kam, 2009), with mixed-member systems as the workhorse setting because they place legislators with different mandates inside a single chamber, holding institutional confounders constant (Shugart and Wattenberg, 2001; Haspel et al., 1998; Herron, 2002; Ferrara et al., 2005; Sieberer, 2010; Stratmann and Baur, 2002; Kunicova and Remington, 2008);¹ work on Mexico documents the centralized party organization and candidate-selection procedures through which leaders sustain discipline (Nacif, 2002; Casar, 2000; Weldon, 2002; Wuhs, 2008; Ascencio and Kerevel, 2021). In these accounts the resources a leader can promise are a fixed endowment, so discipline follows from how much legislators value them relative to their constituents. We instead treat that promise as an equilibrium object, building on a second strand that views party leadership as conditional, held only so long as members continue to support it (Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991; Cox and McCubbins, 1993; Aldrich, 1995; Aldrich and Rohde, 1997). Within this perspective, discipline has been modeled as the deployment of party resources to induce support for the party line (Patty, 2008; Volden and Bergman, 2006). In particular, we build on the *contestable*-leadership model of Iaryczower et al. (2008), which we extend in three directions: legislators differ by electoral mandate; because promise credibility depends on aggregate support, discipline spills across tracks; and reelection concerns enter each mandate through a distinct electoral channel.

The third strand asks what electoral accountability does to the behavior of the accountable. Models of electoral control give voters leverage over incumbents through reappointment (Barro, 1973; Ferejohn, 1986; Fearon, 1999), and work exploiting term limits and reelection eligibility finds

¹As Olivella and Tavits (2014) note, even within mixed-member systems the average SMD legislator differs from the average PR legislator in characteristics other than mandate type, a concern our research design addresses directly.

that this prospect shapes how legislators allocate effort (Carey et al., 2009; Dal Bó and Rossi, 2011; Fourinaies and Hall, 2018); Mexico’s long-standing ban on consecutive terms made it a standard case of the opposite arrangement, in which deputies serve constituents only instrumentally, through the subnational offices they seek next (Kerevel, 2015; Samuels, 2003; Micozzi, 2013; Ames, 2002). We show that when party leaders control the resources reelection requires and gain from deploying them, reforms designed to strengthen electoral accountability can instead strengthen party discipline, pulling legislators away from their local voters’ interests.²

Closest to the empirical application in this paper, Motolinia (2021, 2025, 2026) studies the same 2014 reform in Mexico’s state legislatures and finds, as we do for federal legislators, that reelection brought legislators closer to their party leaders in voting and speech. We depart in three respects: in our model, the power of partisan benefits is conditional on the leader’s credibility, so discipline can rise even among legislators with no personal electoral stake in the reform; we identify the disagreement gap across electoral mandates within party and Congress, exploiting both reelection eligibility and career concerns measured through pre-candidate registration; and we document the exchange itself, from the electoral returns of leader-controlled resources to their ex ante deployment and ex post honoring. Given the electoral value of partisan benefits, the two settings also part ways in the reform’s consequences for legislative behavior: unlike state legislators, who respond to reelection by accommodating voters’ concerns through more particularistic speech while appeasing party leaders through greater rhetorical cohesion, federal deputies instead increase their discipline while reducing particularism in favor of the party’s national agenda, consistent with local appeals carrying less electoral value in federal races than party-funded campaign resources.

2 Theoretical Framework

In the model, party leaders condition future partisan benefits on legislators’ current support; because these benefits are valuable only if the leader retains sufficient support within the party, discipline depends not only on the resources the leader controls but also on the credibility of her contingent promises. We present the main structure of the model here; additional derivations and formal proofs appear in Online Appendices A and B, respectively.

There are three types of agents: a party leader L , a continuum of proportional representation legislators of measure λ , and a continuum of single-member district legislators of measure $1 - \lambda$. The legislature chooses between two policies, q and x , with $q < x$. Let the policy gap and midpoint be

$$\Delta \equiv x - q > 0, \quad \varphi \equiv \frac{x + q}{2},$$

²Our evidence on the resources leaders deploy also complements a small set of studies, focused on the United States, on the conditions under which party discipline affects discretionary spending (Primo and Snyder, 2010; Cann and Sidman, 2011; Curto-Grau and Zudenkova, 2018).

repectively. The leader has ideal point $\theta^L > \varphi$ and therefore strictly prefers x . Legislator i 's ideal point is

$$\theta_i = \theta + \epsilon_i,$$

where $\theta \sim N(\theta_0, \eta^2)$ is the common party component and $\epsilon_i \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$ is an idiosyncratic component. Each legislator observes her own θ_i , but not the common component θ or the preferences of other legislators. Hence a legislator's own preferences provide information about the distribution of preferences within the party.

The leader has two instruments. First, she can allocate unconditional payments or pork $r \in [0, R]$ to those who support her preferred policy.³ Second, the leader can distribute partisan benefits e . These represent future party-controlled resources such as renomination, campaign support, endorsements, internal party posts, or other career benefits. The leader's decision regarding partisan benefits operates on the extensive rather than the intensive margin: for a fixed level of e , L chooses whether to activate these contingent promises.

Unlike pork, partisan benefits are contingent on the leader's survival. Let Γ_t denote the mass of legislators from electoral track $t \in \{PR, SMD\}$ who support the leader's preferred policy x . The leader survives if

$$\Gamma_{\text{party}} \equiv \lambda \Gamma_{PR} + (1 - \lambda) \Gamma_{SMD} \geq \mu,$$

where $\mu \in (0, 1)$. If the leader survives, legislators who supported x receive e . If the leader fails, partisan benefits are instead allocated to those who supported q . Thus, the expected value of a partisan benefit depends on the legislator's belief that the leader will remain in control of the party organization.

The sequence of play is as follows. First, θ and the idiosyncratic shocks ϵ_i are realized, and each legislator privately observes θ_i . Second, the leader, who observes neither θ nor any θ_i and therefore acts on the primitives alone, chooses pork r and whether to distribute partisan benefits. Third, having observed the leader's choices, legislators simultaneously choose whether to support x or q .

2.1 Baseline Model: No Direct Reelection

The key distinction between electoral tracks is that SMD legislators are linked to local voters in a given district, whereas PR legislators are elected from lists spanning many districts and are not tied to any single constituency. We model a closed-list PR system with high district magnitude, as in our Mexican application: there is no intraparty competition within the list, and any single candidate's

³The legislature also includes a non-strategic continuum of opposition legislators of mass β , whose aggregate support for x is a continuous and increasing function $\Gamma_o(r_o)$ of the pork $r_o = (R - r)/\beta$ they receive. Policy x is adopted when total support reaches a majority of the full legislature:

$$\lambda \Gamma_{PR} + (1 - \lambda) \Gamma_{SMD} + \beta \Gamma_o\left(\frac{R - r}{\beta}\right) \geq \frac{1 + \beta}{2}.$$

This adoption rule underlies the leader's problem in Proposition 6 in Appendix B.

effect on her own electoral prospects is negligible (Shugart et al., 2005).

In the baseline model, SMD legislators internalize district preferences even in the absence of direct reelection incentives. This may reflect intrinsic representation motives (Pitkin, 2023) or broader career concerns associated with local political ambition (Ames, 2002; Samuels, 2003; Micozzi, 2013; Kerevel, 2015).

Let the district median's ideal point be

$$\theta_i^d = \theta + u_i, \quad u_i \sim N(\mu_d, \sigma_d^2),$$

where the district preferences differ from the party common component by μ_d . Given the normal information structure, legislator i uses her private ideal point to update on the common party component with posterior mean

$$m(\theta_i) = (1 - b)\theta_0 + b\theta_i, \quad b \equiv \frac{1}{\sigma^2\tau_\theta}, \quad \tau_\theta \equiv \frac{1}{\eta^2} + \frac{1}{\sigma^2}.$$

The expected district-representation cost of supporting x rather than q is

$$\rho_0(\theta_i) \equiv \mathbb{E}[(x - \theta_i^d)^2 \mid \theta_i] - \mathbb{E}[(q - \theta_i^d)^2 \mid \theta_i] = 2\Delta [\varphi - (m(\theta_i) + \mu_d)]. \quad (1)$$

This term is decreasing in θ_i : legislators with more pro- x ideal points expect their districts to be more favorable to x . Let δ^d denote the pure district-representation cutoff defined by

$$m(\delta^d) + \mu_d = \varphi.$$

Without partisan benefits, the PR cutoff for supporting x is

$$\delta_{PR}^n(r) = \varphi - \frac{r}{2\Delta}. \quad (2)$$

SMD legislators face the same policy and pork incentives, but also internalize district-representation costs with weight $\kappa > 0$. Their cutoff is

$$\delta_{SMD}^n(r) = \frac{1}{1 + \kappa b} \delta_{PR}^n(r) + \frac{\kappa b}{1 + \kappa b} \delta^d. \quad (3)$$

Thus the SMD cutoff is a weighted average of the PR cutoff and the pure district-representation cutoff, with the weight on the latter increasing in κ .

Now suppose the leader offers partisan benefits, which are conditional on backbenchers' support. We focus on symmetric cutoff equilibria in which legislators in each electoral track support x

whenever $\theta_i \geq \delta_t^w$. Let

$$\delta^w \equiv (\delta_{PR}^w, \delta_{SMD}^w).$$

For a given cutoff vector δ^w , aggregate support among party backbenchers is

$$\Gamma^w(\theta; \delta^w) = \lambda \Phi\left(\frac{\theta - \delta_{PR}^w}{\sigma}\right) + (1 - \lambda) \Phi\left(\frac{\theta - \delta_{SMD}^w}{\sigma}\right).$$

Let $\hat{\theta}(\delta^w)$ be the leader-survival threshold, defined by

$$\Gamma^w(\hat{\theta}(\delta^w); \delta^w) = \mu.$$

Conditional on θ_i , the posterior probability that the leader fails to gather enough support from backbenchers is

$$F(\delta^w, \theta_i) = \Phi\left(\sqrt{\tau_\theta} \left[\hat{\theta}(\delta^w) - m(\theta_i)\right]\right).$$

Hence the net expected value of one unit of the partisan benefit after supporting x rather than q is

$$p(\theta_i, \delta^w) = 1 - 2F(\delta^w, \theta_i).$$

For the pivotal legislator in track t , write

$$p_t^w(r) \equiv p(\delta_t^w(r), \delta^w(r)).$$

Throughout, we maintain the following moderate-benefits condition.

Assumption 1 (Moderate partisan benefits).

$$e < \bar{e} \equiv \frac{2(x - q)}{(1 + b)\sqrt{2/\pi}\sqrt{\tau_\theta}}.$$

Under Assumption 1, Proposition 1 in Appendix B establishes existence and uniqueness of the symmetric cutoff equilibrium with partisan benefits. The equilibrium cutoffs satisfy

$$\delta_{PR}^w(r) = \varphi - \frac{r + ep_{PR}^w(r)}{2\Delta}, \tag{4}$$

and

$$\delta_{SMD}^w(r) = \varphi - \frac{r + ep_{SMD}^w(r) - \kappa\rho_0(\delta_{SMD}^w(r))}{2\Delta}, \tag{5}$$

where $ep_t^w(r)$ captures the expected value of the partisan benefit e for the pivotal legislator in track t . The institutional difference between tracks is that SMD legislators additionally weigh district-

representation costs $\kappa\rho_0(\delta_{SMD}^w(r))$: constituency misalignment raises the cutoff an SMD backbencher must exceed to support the party line.

2.2 Party Discipline

We define party discipline as the extent to which contingent partisan benefits lower the cutoff for supporting the leader's preferred policy.

Definition 1 (Party discipline). For a fixed pork allocation r , party discipline in electoral track $t \in \{PR, SMD\}$ is

$$d_t(r) \equiv \delta_t^n(r) - \delta_t^w(r). \quad (6)$$

A positive value of $d_t(r)$ means that partisan benefits induce a larger set of legislators in track t to support x . Subtracting the cutoff with partisan benefits from the cutoff without partisan benefits gives

$$d_{PR}(r) = \frac{ep_{PR}^w(r)}{2\Delta}, \quad (7)$$

and

$$d_{SMD}(r) = \frac{ep_{SMD}^w(r)}{2\Delta(1+\kappa b)}. \quad (8)$$

Thus discipline is positive when the pivotal legislator in each track expects the leader's promised benefit e to have positive net value ($p_t^w(r) > 0$). The same partisan benefit, however, has a smaller direct effect on SMD legislators: district concerns attenuate the cutoff shift by the factor $(1+\kappa b)^{-1}$, and the attenuation strengthens as legislators' attachment to their district (κ) increases or as the weight they place on their own ideal point (b) grows.

The difference in discipline across electoral tracks is

$$d_{PR}(r) - d_{SMD}(r) = \frac{e}{2\Delta(1+\kappa b)} \left[\underbrace{\kappa b p_{PR}^w(r)}_{\text{District Effect}} - \underbrace{(p_{SMD}^w(r) - p_{PR}^w(r))}_{\text{SMD promise advantage}} \right]. \quad (9)$$

Equation (9) shows that the ranking of SMD and PR discipline depends on whether the district-representation effect of the partisan promise is strong enough to offset any promise-value advantage of the pivotal SMD legislator over her pivotal PR counterpart.

Remark 1 (PR–SMD discipline gap without reelection). *Suppose that $p_{PR}^w(r) > 0$. Party discipline is weakly greater among PR legislators than among SMD legislators if and only if*

$$\kappa b \geq \frac{p_{SMD}^w(r)}{p_{PR}^w(r)} - 1.$$

Thus, even when the pivotal SMD legislator places a higher net value on the leader's promise, PR discipline remains greater provided that district-representation concerns are sufficiently important

relative to this promise-value advantage.

2.3 Comparative Statics and Leader Choices

The formal comparative statics of the model are derived in Online Appendix B; the main implications are as follows. Discipline in both tracks is decreasing in the leader-survival threshold μ , which makes survival more demanding and contingent promises less valuable (Proposition 2). Under the marginal-pivotality condition of Lemma 2, pork r increases discipline in both tracks, both by making support for x directly more attractive and by raising expected support for the leader and hence the credibility of her promises (Proposition 3);⁴ a shift of the party's common position θ_0 toward the leader's preferred policy raises discipline for the same credibility reason (Proposition 4). The effect of preference heterogeneity σ^2 is ambiguous, since it simultaneously moves the precision of posterior beliefs, the weight on private signals, and the survival threshold, forces that need not operate in the same direction (Proposition 5).

Appendix B also characterizes the leader's joint choice of pork and partisan benefits. Proposition 6 shows that the leader chooses the regime and pork allocation that maximize the ex ante probability that x is adopted. Corollary 1 provides a sufficient condition for distributing partisan benefits: if, at the no-benefit optimal pork allocation, the net value of partisan promises is weakly positive for the pivotal legislator in both tracks and strictly positive for at least one, then distributing partisan benefits strictly dominates not distributing them.

2.4 Party Discipline with Reelection

The baseline model assumes that SMD legislators internalize district preferences but do not face direct reelection incentives. We now allow SMD legislators to seek consecutive reelection, so that partisan benefits act not only as intraparty career resources but also as electoral resources that improve their local valence.⁵

An SMD legislator faces a local election against a passive challenger and is reelected when her net advantage over the challenger plus a district-wide popularity shock $\omega_i \sim \mathbb{U}[-L, L]$ is positive. If she supports x and the leader activates partisan benefits of size e , the benefit produces a valence return γe when the leader survives, where $\gamma > 0$ measures the legislator's ability to convert e into electoral gains in her district.; if she supports q , the benefit instead accrues when the leader fails. The reelection return to supporting x rather than q thus depends on the relative policy cost of each alternative to the district median voter and on the same promise value $p(\theta_i, \delta^w)$ that appears in the

⁴The equilibrium cutoffs themselves fall with pork unconditionally; the marginal-pivotality condition is needed only to sign the discipline response.

⁵See Appendix A for mathematical details.

baseline model. SMD discipline with reelection becomes

$$d_{SMD}^R(r) = \frac{\alpha e p_{SMD}^R(r)}{2\Delta D_L}, \quad \alpha \equiv 1 + \frac{\kappa\gamma}{2L}, \quad D_L \equiv 1 + \frac{\kappa b}{2L}, \quad (10)$$

where $p_{SMD}^R(r)$ is the promise value evaluated at the reelection equilibrium.⁶ The multiplier α captures the electoral return to party resources: it is larger when district concerns (κ) are stronger, when partisan benefits convert more effectively into local valence (γ), and when local electoral uncertainty (L) is lower; since we maintain $\gamma > 0$, benefits carry strictly positive electoral value ($\alpha > 1$). The term D_L captures the electoral cost of district-policy misalignment, which the same electoral uncertainty scales symmetrically. Since PR legislators have no district-level electoral component, PR discipline retains its baseline form, $d_{PR}^R(r) = e p_{PR}^R(r)/(2\Delta)$.

A higher α raises SMD discipline directly. Because promise values are equilibrium objects, reelection also operates indirectly through the leader's survival threshold $\hat{\theta}(\delta^w)$: the additional discipline of SMD legislators improves all legislators' beliefs about the leader's survival, strengthening promise credibility in both tracks. Proposition 8 shows that, under the maintained regularity conditions, the SMD total effect dominates the PR credibility spillover.

Remark 2 (PR–SMD discipline gap with reelection). *Under Assumption 1 applied to $\alpha e/D_L$ (see Proposition 7) and $p_{SMD}^R > 0$, reelection increases discipline in both tracks, but the increment is larger for SMD legislators, so*

$$\frac{d}{d\alpha}(d_{PR}^R - d_{SMD}^R) < 0.$$

Hence, stronger reelection incentives reduce $d_{PR}^R - d_{SMD}^R$: the PR–SMD discipline gap narrows while it is positive and can eventually reverse sign.

Figure 1 illustrates this comparative static. At $\alpha = 1$, partisan payments have no electoral component and PR discipline exceeds SMD discipline, reflecting SMD legislators' stronger district constraints. As α rises, discipline increases in both tracks, but more sharply for SMD legislators, and for sufficiently strong reelection incentives discipline across tracks converges.

The reelection channel also changes the leader's own calculus as summarized in the next remark.

Remark 3 (Reelection and the leader's offer of partisan benefits). *Because α raises the disciplining power of promised benefits while leaving behavior in their absence unchanged, the leader's ex ante gain from activating partisan benefits is strictly increasing in α (Corollary 2 in Appendix B). Therefore, whenever offering benefits is worthwhile without reelection, it remains strictly worthwhile with it. The additional return originates in the SMD track, whose legislators convert benefits into electoral valence.*

⁶Proposition 7 in the Appendix establishes existence and uniqueness of the reelection equilibrium; Assumption 1 keeps reelection probabilities interior.

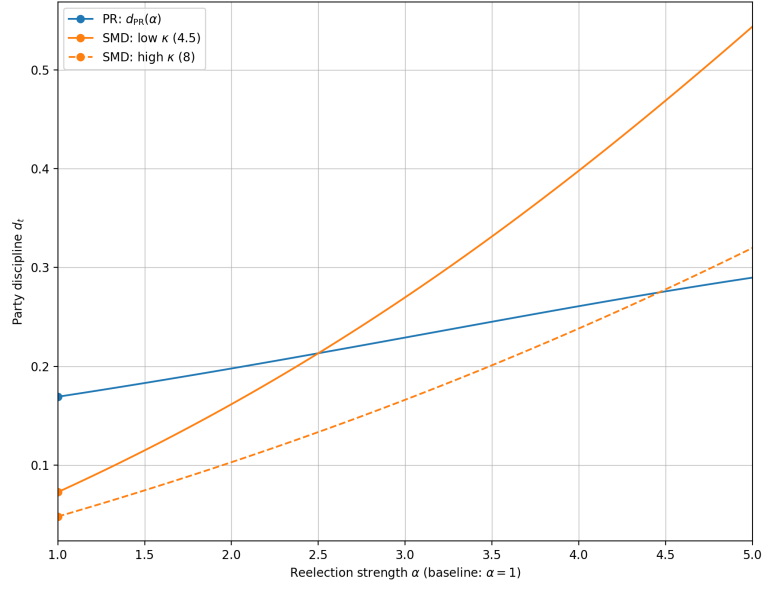


Figure 1: Effect of Reelection on Party Discipline

Electoral competitiveness within the SMD track. We capture electoral competitiveness for a SMD legislator with the support of her district’s electoral shock: a close district has $L_C < L_S$. A smaller shock variance L amplifies both channels of the reelection extension at the same rate: it raises the valence value of partisan benefits, governed by γ , and the electoral penalty for voting against the district’s preferred policy, governed by b (Appendix A).

Remark 4 (PR–SMD discipline gap with close versus safe SMD districts). *Electoral competitiveness affects SMD discipline through two opposing channels. A lower L makes party-provided valence more electorally valuable, increasing the return to supporting the leader. But it also makes district-policy losses more electorally consequential, strengthening constituency constraints. Hence competitive districts should become more disciplined than safe districts after reelection only when the valence channel dominates the amplified constituency-cost channel.*

2.5 PR Reelection Incentives through List Safety

The reelection extension lets SMD legislators convert partisan resources into electoral valence. We now allow an analogous career channel for PR legislators. In closed-list systems, reelection prospects depend on future list placement, so leader-controlled resources become electorally valuable if loyalty improves the probability of renomination into a viable list position. A PR legislator’s renomination probability increases with her list safety up to a cap at one; partisan benefits raise list safety when the leader survives, while a failed leader’s rivals reward those who supported q . For *competitive*-list legislators ($g = C$), far enough from the cap, the leader’s improvement has its full marginal effect; for *safe*-list legislators ($g = S$), close to or at the cap, the same improvement is truncated and is

worth nothing to those whose renomination is already assured.⁷ PR discipline in group g then takes the multiplier form,

$$d_{PR}^{R,g} = \frac{e \alpha_{PR}^g p_{PR}^g}{2\Delta}, \quad \alpha_{PR}^C \geq \alpha_{PR}^S \geq 1, \quad (11)$$

where the PR reelection multiplier α_{PR}^g scales the promise value by the renomination gain that partisan benefits deliver in group g (Appendix A.6).⁸ Provided promise values are positive and promise credibility is not substantially lower for competitive-list legislators, they become more disciplined after reelection than PR legislators already in safe list positions.

Remark 5 (Reelection and the PR–SMD gap under list-safety incentives). *With the list-safety channel active, reelection strengthens discipline in both tracks: SMD legislators convert partisan benefits into electoral valence, PR legislators into viable list positions. Holding promise credibility fixed, the reelection-induced change in the discipline gap for PR group $g \in \{C, S\}$ is*

$$\frac{e}{2(x-q)} \left[\underbrace{(\alpha_{PR}^g(s_i^0; e) - 1)p_{PR}^g}_{PR \text{ list-safety channel}} - \underbrace{\frac{\alpha - 1}{D_L} p_{SMD}}_{SMD \text{ electoral channel}} \right] \quad (12)$$

(see Appendix A.6 for derivations). Two empirical implications follow. First, for safe-list PR legislators the list-safety channel is inoperative ($\alpha_{PR}^S \simeq 1$), so expression (12) reduces to the SMD electoral channel and the PR–SMD discipline gap unambiguously narrows, as in Remark 2. Allowing promise credibility to adjust reinforces this conclusion: safe-list legislators’ own discipline then responds only through the leader’s strengthened credibility, while the direct effect on SMD legislators dominates the spillover (Proposition 8). Second, for competitive-list PR legislators the list-safety channel offsets the narrowing—reversing it only if leader-controlled list placement is sufficiently valuable—so relative to their safe-list copartisans, competitive-list legislators become more disciplined after the reform ($\alpha_{PR}^C \geq \alpha_{PR}^S$).

3 Institutional Background

Three institutional features of Mexico’s Chamber of Deputies make it well suited to studying how electoral institutions and career incentives shape party discipline: its mixed-member design places members of the same legislature under different electoral mandates, single-member districts (SMD) and closed party lists (PR); a 2014 constitutional reform introduced consecutive reelection for legislators elected from 2018 onward, shifting career incentives at a single, well-defined point in time; and party leaders control the resources that matter most for a legislative career, above all candidate nomination and campaign finance.

⁷Baseline list safety is treated as common within each group, so that g indexes two homogeneous PR groups with common cutoffs.

⁸Proposition 9 in the Appendix establishes existence and uniqueness of the equilibrium with PR reelection incentives.

Electoral Institutions. Mexico is a presidential democracy whose Chamber of Deputies (i.e., House of Representatives) is elected under a mixed-member system. The chamber has 500 seats and is renewed in full every three years: 300 deputies are elected by relative-majority vote in single-member districts, and 200 are elected by proportional representation from closed regional party lists in five multimember electoral regions of 40 seats each; only parties that obtain at least 3% of the valid list vote are eligible to receive PR seats.

The two tracks place deputies in contrasting electoral environments. A deputy elected in a single-member district represents a fixed territory and depends on a local plurality to win, which ties her to a geographically defined constituency and often to a subnational career built on municipal and state office (Kerevel, 2015). A deputy elected by proportional representation, in contrast, owes her seat to a rank on a closed regional list set by the party and cannot be individually rewarded or sanctioned at the ballot box, all the more so because voters cast a single fused vote: the ballot for the SMD candidate simultaneously counts toward the party's list seats.

The 2014 Reelection Reform. Until 2014, the Mexican constitution barred federal deputies from serving consecutive terms, a prohibition in place since 1933; deputies could return to the Chamber only after sitting out at least one term. The political and electoral reform published in February 2014 introduced consecutive reelection for federal and state legislators. Proponents argued that it would strengthen accountability, professionalize legislative careers, and lend continuity to policy decisions by lengthening politicians' time horizons (Gobierno de la República, 2014). The new rules reach only legislators elected from the 2018 process onward, which makes the 2018 cohort the first that may seek a consecutive term: deputies may serve up to four terms in total. Importantly, candidates seeking consecutive reelection must generally be renominated by the same party, or by a party within the original coalition that nominated them, subject to limited exceptions. Thus, while the reform expands voters' ability to reward or sanction incumbents, access to the ballot remains largely mediated by party leadership.

A Party-Centered System. Parties concentrate control over the resources that define both the legislative aspirations of a party member and the tenure of an incumbent legislator: candidate nomination, campaign finance, committee assignments, and agenda power. As a result, a legislator depends on the party leadership both to win a seat and to shape legislation. Inside the Chamber, the deputies of each party form a parliamentary group led by a coordinator, and the coordinators sit jointly on the Political Coordination Board, which sets the legislative agenda and decides which committees review each bill, giving the leadership control over the flow of legislation (Weldon, 2002). Because committees amend bills and every bill must clear one before reaching the floor, a seat on a relevant committee allows a deputy to shape the bills it reports out, especially if she chairs it. Committee seats are apportioned across parliamentary groups in proportion to their size, but the

Board proposes both the membership of every committee and its chairs, which the plenary ratifies;⁹ within its proportional quota, each coordinator therefore controls which of the party’s deputies sit on which committees and who chairs the committees the party holds.

A candidate reaches the ballot through the party, which chooses how it selects its candidates in each district and on each regional list; that choice can rest with national leaders, with state or local leaders, or with a primary among members, and it can vary across districts within the same party. The party also fixes the order of its regional lists, and because seats are filled in list order, a higher rank raises a candidate’s chance of winning a seat.¹⁰ The 2014 reform ties renomination to the party as well: an incumbent returns only if her party, or a party in its coalition, nominates her again, and she cannot switch parties to reach the ballot.

Candidates also rely on the party for campaign finance. Public funds cover most campaign spending at the district level, and they flow directly to party leaderships, not to individual candidates.¹¹ Each party’s leadership then decides how much each of its candidates receives. The law caps private donations, so a candidate whom the leadership funds sparingly cannot make up the shortfall with private money. How the leadership divides these funds therefore shapes how competitively each candidate can run.

4 Data and Measurement of Party Discipline

4.1 Data

Testing the empirical implications of the model requires measuring, for each individual legislator, both their disagreement with the party leadership and the resources the leadership allocates to them, across electoral tracks before and after the reform introducing consecutive reelection. We assemble an original dataset that does so for every federal deputy in Mexico’s Chamber of Deputies over seven consecutive Congresses, the 60th through the 66th (2006–2024). The unit of observation is the deputy within a given Congress; the sample contains 3,297 unique deputies and 3,463 deputy-Congress observations.¹² We organize the data into three groups. *Legislator characteristics* collect the individual covariates that control for selection into the electoral tracks and potentially affect discipline independently of track selection. *Legislative behavior* gathers each deputy’s floor speeches

⁹Organic Law of the General Congress, Art. 43.

¹⁰Gender rules changed over the sample period. Through the 2012 election, a quota reserved a minimum share of candidacies for the underrepresented gender: 30% from 2002 and 40% from 2008. The 2014 reform replaced this quota with full parity from the 2015 election onward, requiring parties to nominate women and men in equal numbers, alternate the two down each regional list, and spread each gender’s district candidacies across districts grouped by past vote share, so that neither gender is confined to the districts the party expects to lose.

¹¹By law, public financing must exceed private financing; it is allocated to the parties 30% in equal shares and 70% in proportion to each party’s vote in the previous Chamber election (Art. 41).

¹²We capture behavior of the seated principal deputy, not of the alternate who substitutes during her absences. We assign each deputy the party under which she was elected and hold it fixed within the Congress, so a deputy who switches parties mid-term retains her entry party. We exclude the 33 deputies who sat without a party affiliation, since our disagreement measures are defined relative to the party leadership. Online Appendix C details the data sources and construction, and Table C.1 there defines every variable used in the analysis.

and roll-call votes, from which we measure disagreement with the leadership. *Party resources* record the main levers the leadership holds over a deputy’s career: the committees it assigns inside the Chamber and the candidates it nominates and funds at election time. We describe each group in turn.

Legislator Characteristics We collect each deputy’s gender, education, and pre-Congress career from her official congressional profile page. These covariates address a selection problem at the center of our track comparison: deputies do not sort into the SMD and PR tracks at random, so the two pools differ in ways that could confound a raw comparison of their behavior. Table G.1 in the Appendix reports each characteristic by track, before and after the reform took effect in 2018. The two pools differ in gender and prior office before the reform. Women reach the Chamber far more often through the party lists (0.41) than through the districts (0.26), because parties met their gender quotas mostly by placing women in list positions; once the 2014 parity rules extend equal-representation requirements to district races, this gap closes. Education barely separates the tracks in either period. The durable axis of selection is prior experience: PR deputies more often arrive from federal office (a previous Chamber or Senate seat), whereas district deputies more often come from state and local office (a municipal presidency or state governorship), a divide that narrows after the reform yet persists throughout. Our empirical strategy addresses this selection and sorting into electoral tracks through optimal matching within party–Congress cells, which reweights deputies to balance these covariates across tracks (Section 5).

We also collect, from the National Electoral Institute (INE), track-specific covariates that capture the electoral environment in which a deputy won her seat. For PR deputies we record their rank on the regional party list, which distinguishes safe list positions from marginal ones. For SMD deputies we record the margin of victory over the runner-up, which distinguishes safe from closely contested districts. These measures let us test the within-track predictions of Remarks 4 and 5, which turn on the electoral safety of a deputy’s seat.

Legislative Behavior The first and most salient record of legislative behavior is how each deputy votes on the floor. We collect every recorded roll-call vote the Chamber holds and code whether the deputy votes for or against each measure, setting aside abstentions, absences, and votes cast by an alternate in her place. Across the seven Congresses these amount to 4,293 roll calls, each a recorded vote on a bill, decree, or resolution brought to the floor. A typical deputy votes on about 75 percent of the roll calls held during her term (Table D.1 in the Online Appendix reports the roll-call record by Congress).

The second record of behavior is the deputies’ floor speeches. A vote forces a deputy into one of two positions on the leadership’s agenda, whereas a speech lets her choose which issues to raise and the policy slant of her vocabulary, so speech can reveal disagreement that unanimous or lopsided

votes conceal—provided leaders cannot ration access to the floor. Proksch and Slapin (2012) show that where leaders control speaking time, they grant the floor to loyalists and the speech record understates intraparty disagreement. The Mexican Chamber affords leaders no such control: for each debate, party leaders name an opening slate of speakers from their own parliamentary group, but once that slate is exhausted, any deputy who requests the floor may take it, so that “debates resemble first-come-first-served after the party appointees have spoken” (Magar, 2021). We collect every speech from the Chamber’s *Journal of Debates*, which records the speaker, the date, and the issue under discussion, and link each to the deputy who delivers it. Participation in parliamentary debates is high: 92 percent of deputies take the floor at least once, together delivering 58,141 speeches across 7,013 debates (Table E.1 in the Online Appendix reports the speech record by Congress).

Party Resources Our final group records the party-controlled resources that the model treats as contingent partisan benefits, the rewards a leader can promise in exchange for support and withhold from dissenters. We measure three: access to the ballot, including the procedure by which the party selects its candidates; campaign funding; and committee assignments. Each is a lever the leadership controls at a distinct stage of a deputy’s tenure, and together they let us test whether leaders deploy these resources *ex ante*, in anticipation of their disciplining power, or condition them *ex post* on a deputy’s alignment with the party agenda.

We assemble the nomination record from parties’ filings to the National Electoral Institute (INE) and, for the 2006 and 2009 cycles, from the candidate-selection data of Ascencio and Kerevel (2021).¹³ For each candidacy we record the selection method and place it on a five-point scale of leadership control, ranging from a primary open to members or citizens, through polls, lotteries, and selection by party bodies or conventions, to imposition by the national leadership.¹⁴ For the post-reform Congresses we additionally record which incumbents register as *pre-candidates*, formally declaring to the party leadership their intent to compete for renomination to their current seat. Registration is the incumbent’s own decision, unlike the subsequent nomination procedure, in which the party selects its general-election candidate; the first margin reveals legislators’ career intentions, the second incorporates the leadership’s response. Table G.2 in the Appendix shows that leaders hold the ballot more tightly on the list side: PR nominations are more centralized than SMD nominations in both periods, and among post-reform incumbents, SMD deputies register as pre-candidates nearly twice as often as their PR copartisans.

We measure campaign funding from the finance reports parties file with the INE for every election. For each SMD candidacy we record the candidate’s own campaign spending, in real terms, for the

¹³For 2012 through 2024 we code the selection methods from transparency requests and candidate-registration resolutions of the INE’s Executive Directorate of Prerogatives and Political Parties.

¹⁴Table F.1 in the Online Appendix reports how often parties use each method in each Congress. The lottery system was first introduced by MORENA, whose statutes order part of its PR list by a random draw among ordinary members put forward in open local assemblies (MORENA, 2022, Art. 44).

election that seated the incumbent and for the following election, when the seat is next contested.¹⁵ Because candidate-level spending is observed only for incumbents who run again, it raises a selection problem that we address when we turn to the results. An SMD incumbent spends, on average, 1.46 million pesos before the reform and 0.99 million after (constant 2024 pesos; Table G.2), and only a negligible share of these funds is self-financed, underscoring candidates’ dependence on money the party allocates.

Finally, we collect every committee assignment the party leadership makes. On each committee a deputy serves as chair, secretary, or ordinary member. Following work on committee power in the Mexican Chamber (Nacif, 2002; Casar, 2000; Kerevel, 2015), we classify as “power committees” those with exclusive jurisdiction over binding legislation in fiscal, constitutional, security, and governance matters that remain standing across all seven Congresses.¹⁶ Our committee-based measure of party reward is an indicator for assignment to at least one power committee. On average, deputies sit on about three committees, of which fewer than a quarter are power committees (Table G.2).

These party resources play distinct roles in the analysis: pre-candidacy registration captures the intensity of a legislator’s career concerns; renomination is itself a reward whose relationship to disagreement we examine; committee assignments capture the intensive margin of partisan benefits the leadership dispenses inside the Chamber; and campaign spending captures the intensive margin activated at election time, conditional on renomination.

4.2 Measuring Disagreement with the Party Leadership

In our model, party discipline captures the extent to which leader-controlled benefits expand the set of legislators willing to support the party line. Although this shift is not directly observed, it leaves a footprint in observed *disagreement* with the party leadership across two dimensions of behavior, roll-call voting and floor speech; our empirical strategy in Section 5 connects these disagreement measures to changes in party discipline.

Our speech-based measures of dissent depart from standard practice in the study of legislative behavior, which extracts disagreement almost entirely from roll-call votes, through party-unity scores (Desposato, 2003) or the distance between estimated ideal points (Poole and Rosenthal, 1991; Clinton et al., 2004). Such measures can mask actual disagreement when party-line voting is near universal, because lopsided votes compress the variation they aim to record (Morgenstern, 2003); floor speech, where dissent carries a lower cost, surfaces the disagreement that votes bury. Whereas most existing text-based measures scale legislators to compare them *across* parties (Laver et al., 2003; Slapin and Proksch, 2008; Gentzkow et al., 2019), we turn the text inward and measure how far a legislator strays from her own leadership, in both the issues she raises and the positions she takes.

¹⁵Spending is reported at the candidate level only for SMD races. PR candidates run on a single closed list, so list-wide spending cannot be attributed to individual legislators.

¹⁶Budget, Finance, Constitutional Affairs, Governance, Justice, Foreign Relations, Economy, Public Security, Energy, Transparency, and Oversight of the Federal Audit.

From roll-call votes we build two measures: the distance between a legislator’s revealed policy position and that of her leadership; and vote defection, the share of her votes cast against the leadership. From floor speech we recover two more: the divergence in *issue emphasis*, how a legislator allocates attention across policy topics relative to the leadership; and the distance between her expressed policy position and that of her leadership. Each pair thus captures two separable signals of disagreement within the same behavior.

Every measure benchmarks a legislator against her party leadership. We define a party’s leader as the coordinator of its parliamentary group, who sits on the Political Coordination Board, the body that steers the legislative agenda (Section 3).¹⁷ For each disagreement measure we summarize the leadership’s behavior and record how far each of the party’s remaining legislators departs from that benchmark.

Roll-Call Distance We recover each legislator’s revealed policy position from her roll-call votes with a hierarchical item-response model, estimated jointly across all Congresses and placed on a common one-dimensional scale by using legislators who serve more than once as bridges, so that positions are comparable within and across Congresses (Imai et al., 2016). Writing $\hat{x}_i$ for legislator i ’s estimated position in a given Congress and L for the set of her party’s leaders, her disagreement is the distance from the leaders’ median position,

$$\text{dist}_i = \left| \hat{x}_i - \text{median}_{k \in L} \hat{x}_k \right|.$$

Online Appendix D describes the sample of roll-call and reports the estimation of the hierarchical ideal point estimates in full.

Vote Defection We compare a legislator’s vote to the leaders’ position on each roll call and record the share on which the two differ (Eggers and Spirling, 2016),

$$\text{against}_i = \frac{1}{|J_i|} \sum_{j \in J_i} \mathbf{1}\{v_{ij} \neq \ell_j\},$$

where v_{ij} is her vote and ℓ_j the leaders’ majority position on roll call j . This measure counts a legislator’s overt breaks with the leadership and, unlike the ideal-point measure, rests on no scaling model.¹⁸

Issue Divergence Our first speech measure captures how far a legislator’s focus across policy issues departs from her leadership’s, regardless of the policy positions she takes on them. We work from the text of every floor intervention a legislator makes in a given Congress, first stripped of

¹⁷See Online Appendix C.5 for details and for an alternative definition that expands the set of leaders to include members of the Chamber’s presiding board. Our empirical results are robust to either definition (Appendix I.4).

¹⁸Online Appendix D provides more details on the construction of this variable.

procedural language, and we recover 20 latent topics summarizing legislative speech in each Congress with a structural topic model (Roberts et al., 2014).¹⁹

Online Appendix E describes the text pre-processing steps, including the removal of procedural vocabulary, and the estimation of the topic model in full. We average each legislator’s topic shares into an issue-attention profile Π_i and the leaders’ profiles into $\bar{\Pi}_p$, and we measure their separation with the Kullback–Leibler divergence,

$$\text{div}_i = \sum_{k=1}^{20} \bar{\Pi}_p^k \log \frac{\bar{\Pi}_p^k}{\Pi_i^k},$$

which weights each issue by the leadership’s own attention to it, so it equals zero when a legislator divides her attention exactly as her leaders do and rises as she neglects the issues they emphasize. This measure recovers a dimension of disagreement that votes cannot, namely the issues a legislator chooses to emphasize. Figure G.1 in the Appendix illustrates with the PRI in the 64th Congress: the party’s most aligned member (KL = 0.30) spreads her attention across the issues the leadership emphasizes most, while its least aligned member (KL = 3.19) concentrates roughly three-quarters of her attention on issues the leadership barely raises, neglecting its priorities in favor of her own.

Speech Distance Our second speech measure captures how far a legislator’s expressed policy position departs from the party leadership. We take a semi-supervised route that fixes the positions of reference texts (Laver et al., 2003) but lets the data choose the discriminating words (Slapin and Proksch, 2008). Within each Congress we fit an elastic-net penalized logistic regression that separates the speeches of two anchor parties: the main party of the right (the PAN) and the main party of the left (the PRD through 2015, MORENA thereafter). We keep the words that best tell them apart as a signed partisan vocabulary (Gentzkow et al., 2019), score every legislator, anchor or not, by how far her use of this vocabulary leans toward either pole, and standardize the score within the Congress. The learned vocabulary is interpretable on its face: in the most recent Congress, for instance, phrases such as *budget cuts* and *fiscal fraud* mark the right pole and *the fourth transformation* and *neoliberalism* the left. Writing s_i for a legislator’s standardized position and $\tilde{s}_p$ for the median position of her leaders, her disagreement is the distance between them,

$$D_i = |s_i - \tilde{s}_p|.$$

Online Appendix E.4 details the full construction of the scale: the partisan vocabulary, the scoring of legislators, and its validation.

¹⁹Our empirical results are robust to alternative choices of the number of topics.

5 Empirical Strategy (From the Model to the Data)

To evaluate the empirical implications of the model summarized in Remarks 1–5, we link the disagreement measures of Section 4.2 to the model’s concept of party discipline, the shift in equilibrium cutoffs induced by partisan promises. Two steps are required. First, observed disagreement must track the unobserved cutoff shift: Appendix Lemma 4 shows that an increase in discipline expands the set of legislators who support the leader’s position, so greater discipline is reflected empirically in lower observed disagreement. Second, the variation we compare must be attributable to the leader’s partisan benefits rather than to baseline differences across tracks and legislators. The model implies

$$d_{PR,c} - d_{SMD,c} = (\delta_{PR,c}^n - \delta_{SMD,c}^n) + (\delta_{SMD,c}^w - \delta_{PR,c}^w),$$

so changes in observed disagreement identify changes in relative discipline only after accounting for baseline cross-track differences in the benchmark without partisan benefits, $\delta_{PR,c}^n - \delta_{SMD,c}^n$.

We test the empirical implications of the model by estimating how the disagreement gap between PR and SMD legislators changes with the introduction of consecutive reelection (Remarks 1 and 2).

We exploit within-party–Congress variation across electoral tracks and estimate regressions of the form

$$Dist_{i,c} = \beta_{SMD} SMD_i + \beta_{DID} (SMD_i \times Post_c) + X'_{i,c} \Gamma + \varphi_{pc} + \varepsilon_{i,c}, \quad (13)$$

where $Dist_{i,c}$ is one of the vote- or speech-based disagreement measures constructed in Section 4.2. The indicator SMD_i equals one for legislators elected in single-member districts, with PR legislators as the omitted category. The indicator $Post_c$ equals one for Congresses in which incumbent legislators are eligible for consecutive reelection, and $X_{i,c}$ collects legislator-level controls.

The controls $X_{i,c}$ account for observable baseline differences across electoral tracks that may affect disagreement independently of the disciplining effect of partisan benefits. They comprise the pre-treatment characteristics reported in Table G.1: gender, education, and prior office in federal, state, and local government. We further include state fixed effects, which absorb geographic and demographic differences across deputies’ home states, and an indicator for partisan alignment with the state governor, which captures the influence governors exert over the federal legislators from their state, and over their copartisans in particular (Rosas and Langston, 2011), a force we separate from disagreement with the national party leadership.

The fixed effects φ_{pc} control for party-by-Congress heterogeneity. They absorb the party-specific primitives that determine the level and credibility of partisan promises within each Congress: the value of the partisan benefits the party can distribute (e_{pc}), financed largely by its public funding; the party’s common policy position ($\theta_{0,pc}$); and the leader’s survival threshold (μ_{pc}). They also absorb

leader characteristics and time-varying party conditions, including the party agenda, organizational resources, and leadership stability.

Because deputies do not sort into tracks at random and the reform introduced compositional shifts across tracks—visible in the raw descriptive differences in gender and prior experience (Table G.1), the covariate adjustment in equation (13) may leave residual imbalance that the SMD–PR contrast would then absorb as a difference in discipline. To base the comparison on comparable legislators, all specifications use optimal matching weights that balance PR and SMD legislators within each party–Congress cell on the same pre-treatment observables (Rosenbaum, 1989; Ho et al., 2007). The identifying variation thus comes from PR and SMD legislators in the same party and Congress who are similar on these covariates, making the estimated SMD–PR differences less likely to reflect selection into tracks. Figure G.2 in section G of the Appendix summarizes the covariate balance achieved by the matching procedure; robustness to alternative matching schemes is reported with the results (Section 6).

All specifications report standard errors clustered at the legislator level, allowing arbitrary serial correlation in disagreement across Congresses for legislators who serve in multiple sessions.

Under this specification, β_{SMD} is the pre-reform SMD–PR disagreement gap within party and Congress, and β_{DID} the post-reform change in that gap. Since disagreement is inversely related to discipline, $\beta_{SMD} > 0$ indicates lower discipline among SMD legislators and $\beta_{DID} < 0$ a narrowing of the PR–SMD discipline gap after the introduction of consecutive reelection.²⁰

The causal interpretation of β_{DID} rests on a parallel-trends assumption: absent the reform, the within-party SMD–PR disagreement gap, conditional on $X_{i,c}$ and φ_{pc} , would have evolved identically across tracks. The main threats are compositional change in who enters each track, which the matching addresses, and track-specific shocks coinciding with the reform. The event study in Appendix Figure I.1, which traces the gap Congress by Congress, and the placebo reform in Table I.1 provide direct evidence on this assumption.

Finally, we exploit incumbents’ *pre-candidate* registration as described in Section 4.1 to capture individual-level variation in career concerns under consecutive reelection. Because registration takes place toward the end of the term, the indicator captures the intensity of career concerns rather than their presence or absence. We estimate regressions of the form

$$\begin{aligned} Dist_{i,c} = & \beta_{SMD} SMD_i + \beta_{DID} (SMD_i \times Post_c) \\ & + \beta_{PRE} Precand_{i,c} + \beta_{DID,PRE} (SMD_i \times Post_c \times Precand_{i,c}) \\ & + X'_{i,c} \Gamma + \varphi_{pc} + \varepsilon_{i,c}, \end{aligned} \tag{14}$$

where $Precand_{i,c}$ equals one if legislator i registers as a pre-candidate for the next election and

²⁰In this specification, φ_{pc} absorbs $Post_c$ and any party-specific level shifts following the reform.

zero otherwise.²¹ The coefficient β_{PRE} measures the post-reform disagreement differential of PR pre-candidates relative to PR legislators who do not seek renomination, and $\beta_{DID,PRE}$ the additional differential for SMD pre-candidates. The controls, matching weights, party-by-Congress fixed effects, and clustering are as in equation (13).

5.1 Heterogeneity within Tracks

Remarks 4 and 5 imply that the response to reelection should differ *within* tracks with the strength of legislators' electoral incentives: across SMD legislators facing competitive versus safe districts, and across PR legislators holding competitive versus safe list positions. For SMD legislators, exposure is measured by the district margin of victory: within each Congress, districts in the bottom tercile of the SMD margin distribution are classified as competitive ($g = C$) and the remaining two terciles as safe ($g = S$).²² For PR legislators, exposure is proxied by list placement: within each Congress-party-electoral-region cell, legislators placed at least as close to the top of the list as their cell's average are classified as safe ($g = S$), and those placed lower as competitive ($g = C$).

Let $T_i^{t,g}$ indicate that legislator i belongs to track t and exposure group $g \in \{C, S\}$. For each track t , we estimate

$$Dist_{i,c} = \sum_{g \in \{C, S\}} [\beta_g^t T_i^{t,g} + \beta_g^{t,DID} (T_i^{t,g} \times Post_c)] + X'_{i,c} \Gamma + \varphi_{pc} + \varepsilon_{i,c}, \quad (15)$$

where the omitted category is the opposite electoral track and the controls, matching weights, party-by-Congress fixed effects, and clustering are as in equation (13).

For $t = SMD$, Remark 4 predicts a larger post-reform decline in disagreement in competitive than in safe districts, $\beta_C^{SMD,DID} < \beta_S^{SMD,DID}$, if and only if the valence channel dominates the amplified constituency-cost channel ($\gamma > b$); the comparison is thus directly informative about which channel prevails.

For $t = PR$, since each $\beta_g^{PR,DID}$ is the post-reform change in PR group g 's disagreement relative to SMD legislators, it maps directly onto the change in the discipline gap in Remark 5: for safe-list legislators only the spillover channel from SMD operates, so $\beta_S^{PR,DID} > 0$, an unambiguous narrowing of the discipline gap; for competitive-list legislators, the list-safety channel offsets part of this adjustment and can reverse it.

²¹Because pre-candidate registration exists only once consecutive reelection is allowed, $Precand_{i,c} = 0$ in all pre-reform Congresses; the lower-order interactions with $Post_c$ are therefore redundant and the specification is a complete triple difference.

²²Our empirical results are robust to alternative thresholds for classifying races as competitive versus safe.

6 Main Results

Table 1 presents estimates of equation (13) for our vote- and speech-based measures of disagreement. The estimates of the pre-reform SMD–PR gap in disagreement (β_{SMD}), identified within party and Congress, are positive and significant across measures: SMD legislators disagree with their leadership more than their PR copartisans do in both voting and speech behavior. This pattern is consistent with Remark 1: district-representation concerns weigh heavily enough on SMD legislators, relative to the value of the leader’s partisan promises, to make them harder to discipline than their PR copartisans.

The previous evidence indicates that, before the electoral reform, SMD legislators pulled away from the party leadership relative to their PR copartisans in response to their constituents’ policy preferences, even though voters at the time could not reward district responsiveness by retaining incumbents in office. SMD legislators nonetheless had instrumental reasons to serve their local electorates: local voters still shaped their prospects in the municipal, state, and gubernatorial races they disproportionately come from and go on to pursue. Figure G.3 in the Appendix shows that SMD legislators are significantly more likely than their PR copartisans to hold prior subnational office (mayor, governor, or state legislator) and to run for such office immediately after leaving the Chamber, whereas PR legislators move instead into cabinet or party positions. This career channel provides an empirical foundation for the baseline model’s assumption that SMD legislators weigh district preferences ($\kappa > 0$) even without direct reelection incentives.

Table 1: **Effect of consecutive reelection on SMD vs. PR deputies’ disagreement with party leaders**

	<i>Outcome:</i>			
	<i>Vote Disagreement</i>		<i>Speech Disagreement</i>	
	<i>Vote Distance</i> (1)	<i>Vote Defection</i> (2)	<i>Issue Divergence</i> (3)	<i>Speech Distance</i> (4)
SMD	0.134*** (0.036)	0.008*** (0.002)	0.367*** (0.096)	0.094** (0.039)
SMD × Post-Reform	-0.160*** (0.059)	-0.008*** (0.002)	-0.541*** (0.126)	-0.206*** (0.066)
Observations	2346	2346	2346	2346
R^2	0.309	0.436	0.386	0.319
Party × Congress FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Optimal matching	✓	✓	✓	✓
Covariate controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean (PR, pre-reform)	0.390	0.019	1.974	0.432

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered by legislator in parentheses. Estimates are reweighted by optimal full-matching weights, with exact matching within congress × party. Covariate controls include gender, education, state of origin, indicators for prior experience and governor alignment.

The estimates of β_{DID} , the post-reform change in the SMD–PR disagreement gap, are negative and significant across measures. Once consecutive reelection is introduced, the decline in disagreement is significantly larger among SMD than among PR legislators, shrinking the SMD–PR gap.

This is precisely the pattern predicted by Remark 2: reelection makes partisan benefits electorally valuable to SMD legislators, which in turn raises the credibility of the leader’s promises, increasing party discipline more strongly for SMD legislators. Descriptively, disagreement falls in both tracks after the reform (Appendix Figure G.4), and the SMD–PR gap narrows Congress by Congress around the reform (Appendix Figure I.1); these absolute declines, however, cannot be separated from party- and Congress-level shocks that the design absorbs by construction. The design therefore identifies the differential effect of reelection:

$$\beta_{DID} = \text{direct channel} + (\text{credibility gain}_{SMD} - \text{credibility gain}_{PR}),$$

which retains the direct electoral channel but nets out the credibility gain accruing to PR legislators. Because the model predicts this netted-out component also reduces disagreement, β_{DID} is a conservative estimate: the total decline in SMD disagreement is at least as large in magnitude.

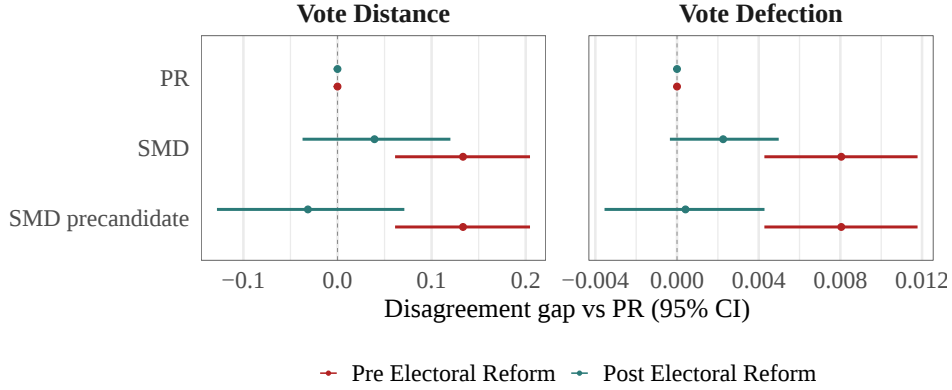
The results before and after the introduction of consecutive reelection point in a common direction across types of legislative behavior and measurement approaches. Roll-call voting and speech capture distinct behavioral margins, and within each, our measures rest on different modeling assumptions; that the same cross-track pattern emerges from all of them suggests it reflects real differences in discipline rather than an artifact of any particular measurement choice.

In our framework, cross-track differences in discipline stem from constituency concerns whose electoral weight the reform changed. We therefore examine whether the disagreement patterns are mirrored in the content of debates: the extent to which legislators emphasize constituency-oriented issues (particularism) over national ones. We measure particularistic speech in three ways: dictionary-based references to the legislator’s home state, the home-state share of all geographic references, and a particularistic topic share that weights each policy topic attention by its home state content. Before the reform, SMD legislators devote significantly more speech to local and particularistic content than their PR copartisans; this differential falls significantly once consecutive reelection is introduced (estimates of equation (13) in Table G.3 in the Appendix). Higher disagreement is thus associated with local, district-oriented speech before the reform, while the post-reform convergence reflects a reorientation toward general, nationwide themes, consistent with SMD legislators trading district representation for the party’s national agenda once incumbents can convert leaders’ partisan benefits into electoral gains.

The post-reform reduction in the SMD–PR disagreement gap is consistent with the model’s prediction whenever career-concerned incumbents can use partisan benefits to improve their reelection prospects. The increase in discipline should therefore be sharpest among legislators with the strongest reelection concerns, which we proxy with pre-candidate registration within each track. Table G.4 in the Appendix presents estimates of equation (14), which differentiates the post-reform

SMD–PR gap by pre-candidate registration. We find that SMD pre-candidates drive the post-reform narrowing of the gap ($\beta_{DID,PRE}$), and they do so through voting rather than speech; among PR legislators, by contrast, pre-candidates and non-registrants move together (β_{PRE} is small and insignificant). Figure 2 plots each SMD group’s estimated disagreement gap relative to PR legislators, before and after the reform, for the two vote-based measures. After the reform, SMD legislators who do not seek renomination converge toward the PR baseline, whereas SMD pre-candidates overshoot it, disagreeing with the leadership even less than their PR copartisans.

Figure 2: **Precandidate heterogeneity in disagreement**



Each panel plots, for one vote-based disagreement measure (left: vote distance computed with the IRT model; right: share of votes against the leader), the estimated disagreement gap of SMD legislators (precandidates and non-precandidates) relative to the PR baseline (dashed line at zero), before (red) and after (teal) the consecutive-re-election reform. Points are medians and bars 95% confidence intervals.

Because pre-candidate registration occurs late in the legislative term, we interpret these results with the caveat that registration is measured after part of the observed legislative behavior has taken place. If legislators who dissent anticipate that party leaders will deny them the party’s electoral resources, they may strategically opt out of registering. The pre-candidate indicator therefore captures both ex-ante ambition and the ex-post realization of political viability. Yet even if strategic dropout contributes to the differential, it underscores the mechanism at the core of our framework: legislators understand that surviving the reelection environment requires the party’s support.

The results are robust to alternative design, sample, and measurement choices, as detailed in Appendix I. Section I.1 reports null estimates from a placebo reform assigned to an earlier Congress (Table I.1). This result, along with the event study in Figure I.1, supports the interpretation that the estimated shift in the PR–SMD gap follows from the reform rather than from a differential shock between tracks unrelated to reelection incentives. Section I.2 shows that the results survive excluding MORENA legislators in all Congresses (Table I.2); this exclusion addresses the concern that the estimates reflect MORENA’s emergence as the dominant force in the Chamber after the 2018 election rather than the reelection reform.

The remaining checks vary the specification. Section I.3 reports estimates under alternative

matching schemes across tracks within party and Congress, including no matching at all (Table I.3). Section I.4 re-estimates the main results under an alternative definition of the leadership benchmark that adds the members of the Chamber’s presiding board to the set of party leaders (Table I.4). Section I.5 shows that the results are robust to alternative numbers of topics in the speech model (Table I.5), and Section I.6 reports the speech-disagreement results controlling for speech volume (Table I.6). Section I.7 excludes the ongoing 66th Congress, for which we observe only the first two legislative years (Table I.7), and Section I.8 uses the full rather than the balanced sample across disagreement measures (Table I.8). All specifications yield estimates similar in magnitude and significance to those presented here.

6.1 Heterogenous Results

Remark 4 leaves the close–safe comparison to the data: it turns on whether the valence channel or the amplified constituency-cost channel dominates. We therefore estimate equation (15) distinguishing close from safe districts by the incumbent’s margin of victory. The results are reported in Table 2. Pre-reform, disagreement is higher in close than in safe districts ($\beta_C^{SMD} > \beta_S^{SMD}$), consistent with constituency pressure being strongest where races are most competitive. By contrast, the post-reform decline in disagreement is at least as large in safe districts ($\beta_S^{SMD,DID} \leq \beta_C^{SMD,DID}$), indicating that the valence gain channel does not dominate constituency policy concerns. Reelection thus disciplines SMD legislators most where districts permit it: partisan resources are valuable and constituency punishment unlikely in safe seats, while in close races the same resources come with a binding constituency constraint. This ordering does not depend on where we draw the line between close and safe districts, as Section I.9 in the Appendix reports the same comparison under alternative cutoffs (Table I.9).

Table 2: **Heterogeneous treatment effects by district competitiveness: effect of consecutive reelection on disagreement with party leaders (SMD deputies)**

	<i>Outcome:</i>			
	<i>Vote Disagreement</i>		<i>Speech Disagreement</i>	
	<i>Vote Distance</i> (1)	<i>Vote Defection</i> (2)	<i>Issue Divergence</i> (3)	<i>Speech Distance</i> (4)
SMD Close	0.176*** (0.059)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.470*** (0.125)	0.110** (0.049)
SMD Safe	0.112*** (0.040)	0.006*** (0.002)	0.314*** (0.104)	0.086** (0.044)
SMD Close $\times$ Post-Reform	-0.118 (0.081)	-0.008** (0.003)	-0.596*** (0.158)	-0.134 (0.090)
SMD Safe $\times$ Post-Reform	-0.191*** (0.068)	-0.008*** (0.003)	-0.518*** (0.137)	-0.251*** (0.071)
Observations	2,346	2,346	2,346	2,346
R^2	0.312	0.438	0.387	0.321
Party $\times$ Congress FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Optimal matching	✓	✓	✓	✓
Covariate controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean (PR, pre-reform)	0.390	0.019	1.974	0.432

Notes as in Table 1. SMD deputies are split by district competitiveness: *Close* deputies have a margin of victory in the bottom third of SMD margins within their congress, the most competitive races, while *Safe* deputies fall in the upper two-thirds. PR deputies are the reference category.

For PR legislators the analogous margin is their list position, so we next split them by how safe that position is. Table 3 presents estimates of equation (15) decomposing the PR track by list safety. These estimates line up with the predictions of Remark 5. For safe-list legislators, disagreement relative to SMD legislators rises significantly after the reform across all four measures ($\beta_S^{PR,DID} > 0$), because the list-safety channel is negligible for them ($\alpha_{PR}^S \simeq 1$). For competitive-list legislators, by contrast, $\beta_C^{PR,DID}$ is significantly smaller than $\beta_S^{PR,DID}$ for every measure. This pattern indicates that the list-safety channel offsets the narrowing of the PR–SMD discipline gap under consecutive reelection for those PR legislators who still stand to gain a viable list position, keeping them aligned with the leadership even as SMD legislators converge.

Table 3: **Heterogeneous treatment effects by PR list safety: effect of consecutive reelection on disagreement with party leaders (PR deputies)**

	<i>Outcome:</i>			
	<i>Vote Disagreement</i>		<i>Speech Disagreement</i>	
	<i>Vote Distance</i> (1)	<i>Vote Defection</i> (2)	<i>Issue Divergence</i> (3)	<i>Speech Distance</i> (4)
PR Competitive	-0.122*** (0.041)	-0.006** (0.003)	-0.243* (0.134)	-0.008 (0.047)
PR Safe	-0.145*** (0.043)	-0.009*** (0.002)	-0.483*** (0.112)	-0.173*** (0.051)
PR Competitive $\times$ Post-Reform	0.064 (0.051)	0.004 (0.003)	0.334* (0.174)	0.082 (0.084)
PR Safe $\times$ Post-Reform	0.253*** (0.083)	0.011*** (0.003)	0.719*** (0.157)	0.323*** (0.085)
Observations	2,337	2,337	2,337	2,337
R^2	0.311	0.436	0.388	0.323
Party $\times$ Congress FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Optimal matching	✓	✓	✓	✓
Covariate controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean (SMD, pre-reform)	0.449	0.022	2.510	0.678

Notes as in Table 1. The sample comprises SMD deputies together with PR deputies who hold a positive list rank, and SMD deputies are the reference category. PR deputies are split within each congress $\times$ party $\times$ electoral region cell using the cell average of their list rank: *Safe* deputies have a list rank at or below that average (the more secure, higher list positions), while *Competitive* deputies rank above it.

6.2 Discipline Mechanisms

The results so far show that Mexican legislators responded to the introduction of consecutive reelection not by becoming more responsive to their districts, but by aligning more closely with their party leadership, at the expense of district representation. This pattern is consistent with our theoretical framework whenever partisan benefits are credible and carry electoral value, conditions we assess empirically in this section. The framework has two further implications for party leaders. First, because reelection raises the leadership’s return to offering benefits to SMD legislators (Remark 3), leaders should expand the resources they deploy ex ante, tightening their control over district nomination procedures and assigning seats to SMD legislators on powerful committees. Second, for these promises to induce discipline they must be credible, which requires honoring them ex post: renomination, list placement, and campaign funding, all allocated at the end of the term, should reward the discipline a legislator exhibited during it. We examine the two margins in turn.

To provide evidence on the ex ante deployment of partisan benefits toward SMD legislators, we examine assignment to power committees and the centralization of candidate nomination procedures, both defined in Section 4.1. Table 4 presents estimates of equation (13) with these party-controlled resources as outcomes. Pre-reform, SMD legislators were 13 percentage points less likely than their PR copartisans to receive a power committee assignment; this gap closes almost entirely after the reform. Similarly, nomination procedures for SMD candidacies were over half a point less centralized than PR nominations before the reform, on a one-to-five scale of leadership control, and became one point more centralized after the reform relative to PR nominations, placing SMD renomination

more firmly under leaders' control. Overall, these estimates suggest that party leaders expand their offer of partisan benefits precisely where reelection makes them electorally valuable (Remark 3).

Table 4: **Mechanisms: effect of consecutive reelection on power committee assignments and the centralization of candidate nomination (SMD vs. PR)**

	<i>Outcome:</i>	
	<i>Power Committee</i> (1)	<i>Nomination Centralization</i> (2)
SMD	-0.129*** (0.031)	-0.521*** (0.034)
SMD $\times$ Post-Reform	0.124*** (0.044)	1.020*** (0.044)
Observations	3416	2853
R^2	0.097	0.877
Party $\times$ Congress FE	✓	✓
Optimal matching	✓	✓
Covariate controls	✓	✓
Mean (PR, pre-reform)	0.492	4.116

Notes as in Table 1. The dependent variable in column 1 is an indicator equal to one if the deputy holds at least one seat on a power committee; in column 2, the centralization of the procedure used to select candidates for the deputy's seat, scored from one to five, where higher values indicate procedures more tightly controlled by the national party leadership.

Next, we examine the credibility of partisan benefits in the form of renomination, PR list placement, and campaign funding, all allocated at the end of the term, ahead of the next electoral cycle, and assess whether party leaders reward the discipline a legislator exhibited during the term. Restricting attention to the post-reform period, we first regress an indicator for whether the incumbent legislator was renominated on our disagreement measures, with the same party-by-Congress fixed effects and legislator controls as before and standard errors clustered by legislator.

Table 5 presents the results. Across both vote and speech measures, greater disagreement with the leadership is associated with a significantly lower probability of renomination. A one standard deviation increase in disagreement is associated with a 3 to 7 percentage point lower probability of renomination across measures. Leaders thus appear to withhold renomination from dissenters, precisely the behavior that makes the promise of partisan benefits credible.

Table 5: **Mechanisms: disagreement with party leaders and the probability of renomination**

<i>Outcome: Renomination for next legislative election cycle</i>				
<i>Disagreement Measure</i>	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>
Vote Distance	-0.109*** (0.022)			
Vote Defection		-1.596** (0.649)		
Issue Divergence			-0.072*** (0.019)	
Speech Distance				-0.061*** (0.022)
Observations	923	936	635	907
R^2	0.126	0.117	0.156	0.128
Party $\times$ Congress FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Covariate controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Full matched sample	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean disagreement	0.266	0.008	1.480	0.452
Mean nomination	0.348	0.349	0.324	0.348

Notes as in Table 1, except that estimates are computed on the matched sample without matching weights. The dependent variable equals one if the deputy is renominated on either electoral track for the following election, either as a candidate in a single-member district or with a position on the party's next list, and zero otherwise. The sample is restricted to the LXIV (2018–2021) and LXV (2021–2024) legislatures, the two seated after consecutive reelection took effect, so that incumbents in both tracks could seek renomination. Each column reports the coefficient on the disagreement measure named in its row, so higher values indicate greater disagreement with the party leadership.

We turn to campaign funding, a resource party leaders allocate to SMD candidates at their full discretion, asking first whether it is electorally valuable enough for its withdrawal to hurt an incumbent, and second whether leaders condition it on discipline. On the first question, Appendix H estimates the electoral return to campaign spending with a logit model of the demand for votes (Berry, 1994) on the panel of all SMD candidacies. Because spending is endogenous to a candidacy's unobserved local appeal, we instrument it with the district's exposure to the formula-driven allocation of public financing after the reform, and with the party's past spending in the district before it; Appendix H details both instruments and their exclusion restrictions. The instrumented estimates imply an elasticity of the vote share with respect to spending of roughly 0.7 before the reform and 0.8 after: a 10% increase in spending raises a candidate's vote share by about 7–8%.²³ Withholding campaign funds is thus a costly sanction: it translates directly into forgone votes, making the allocation of campaign resources an effective lever of discipline.

Table G.5 in the Appendix relates campaign funds to discipline: for incumbent SMD legislators in Congress c , we regress the within-seat percentage change in real campaign funding between the elections leading to Congresses c and $c + 1$ on our disagreement measures, with the same party-by-Congress fixed effects, legislator controls, and legislator-clustered standard errors as before. We find no significant campaign-funding penalty for disagreement. Since the outcome is measured at the district level, however, this estimate bundles a composition effect, in which less disciplined

²³These returns are comparable in magnitude to the demand-based estimates of Rekkas (2007) for Canadian legislative elections, but larger than those of Gillen et al. (2019) for Mexico's pre-reform 2012 SMD races (0.63 percentage points per US\$10,000, close to our OLS estimates).

incumbents are dropped from the ballot, with a direct effect on the funding of those renominated; and because renomination itself responds to disagreement (Table 5), comparisons among retained incumbents condition on a treatment-affected sample. Panel B of Table G.5 therefore bounds the direct effect following Lee (2009).²⁴ The selection margin is significant and sizable: within party and Congress, high-disagreement incumbents are renominated less often than their low-disagreement copartisans. By contrast, the bounds for the always-renominated straddle zero for every measure. Discipline through campaign funds thus operates on the selection margin rather than the intensive margin: dissent costs an incumbent the nomination itself, while incumbents who survive to run again face no detectable funding penalty.

The relationship between campaign funds and disagreement is specific to the SMD track. For PR deputies, the analogous disciplining instrument is the position the leadership assigns them on the party list, which shapes their reelection prospects, as the list-safety extension of Section 2.5 lays out. Table G.6 in the Appendix presents estimates relating the change in an incumbent’s list safety between the elections leading to Congresses c and $c+1$ to her disagreement during Congress c , retaining the specification of the funding regressions: party-by-Congress fixed effects, legislator controls, and standard errors clustered by legislator.²⁵ Higher disagreement is associated with a deterioration in list safety across measures and significantly for vote and speech policy distance measures. As with SMD legislators, discipline operates in part through selection, with high-disagreement incumbents re-listed at lower rates than their low-disagreement copartisans. Unlike in the SMD track, however, the Lee bounds also reveal a direct effect on placement. For the always-re-listed, the bounds on the change in list safety lie strictly below zero for three of the four measures, indicating that a dissenting PR incumbent is pushed down the list even when she is kept on it.

The evidence in this section shows leaders widening the resources they deploy once reelection makes them valuable and withholding them from deputies who disagreed. Renomination, committee assignments, and list placement all move with discipline. For district campaign funding, the punishment works through who is selected rather than through how much a district receives. Party discipline thus rests not only on backbenchers’ incentives but also on how leaders allocate partisan benefits to enforce it.

7 Conclusion

We asked how party discipline differs across legislators with different electoral mandates and career concerns in a model where the leader’s power to discipline rests on the credibility of the partisan promises she offers, a credibility sustained by the support she rallies among incumbent legislators.

²⁴Under the monotonicity assumption that higher disagreement never *causes* a renomination that would not otherwise have occurred, the bounds identify the in-place defunding effect for the *always-renominated*, legislators who would run again regardless of their disagreement, for whom composition is fixed by construction.

²⁵A legislator is safe when her position is at or above her list’s midpoint. Incumbents who do not reappear on any list are coded as unsafe at $c+1$, so the outcome, the change in the safety indicator, ranges over $\{-1, 0, 1\}$.

We take the model to Mexico’s Chamber of Deputies between 2006 and 2024, where a mixed-member system places legislators of the same party under two electoral mandates and the 2014 reform introduced consecutive reelection. We assemble an original dataset that joins measures of disagreement from the full record of roll-call votes and floor speeches of every incumbent legislator to the resources party leaders control to trace how discipline responds to electoral mandates and to legislators’ varying career concerns.

Absent reelection, SMD legislators are significantly less disciplined than their PR counterparts, a pattern consistent with constituency preferences pulling them away from the party leadership and toward their districts. Indeed, these constituency concerns are instrumental: district responsiveness furthers legislators’ subnational political careers after they leave Congress (Samuels, 2003; Micozzi, 2013), and we find SMD legislators disproportionately seeking elected office at the municipal and state levels.

Our model shows that when partisan benefits can be used to improve legislators’ reelection prospects, the career concerns that tie SMD legislators to their districts absent reelection have the opposite effect on discipline under consecutive reelection, increasing alignment with the party leadership. We recover this change in behavior across our vote- and speech-based measures of disagreement. Moreover, the disciplining power of partisan benefits concentrates among the legislators with the most at stake: SMD incumbents who register as pre-candidates and PR incumbents whose list positions leave room to improve. This increase in discipline runs against the prediction that follows most directly from the personal-vote logic, under which giving voters the power to retain an incumbent should pull district legislators toward their constituents and away from the party line (Carey and Shugart, 1995). What reverses the expected sign is that the legislators who gain a personal electoral stake also depend on the leadership for the resources that decide their races, so reelection raises the value of the leader’s promises more than the return to local responsiveness. Leaders act on both sides of this exchange, centralizing the nomination of SMD candidacies and closing the track gap in access to power committees once reelection is available, while withholding renomination and safe list placements from the deputies who disagreed most.

These findings carry a lesson for the design of institutions meant to tighten the electoral connection between legislators and their constituents. Consecutive reelection was defended in Mexico as a way to make deputies answerable to voters, on the premise that longer time horizons would bind legislative behavior to district demands. That premise treats the tie to voters as the binding constraint on a deputy, when the binding constraint is the tie to whoever controls access to the ballot, a dependence the reform left untouched by keeping nomination, campaign finance, and list placement in the leadership’s hands. Our evidence traces that consequence: after the reform, SMD deputies converged on the behavior of their more disciplined PR copartisans, moving toward the national party agenda and away from the local and particularistic behavior that had set them apart, the

opposite of what the reform’s proponents anticipated. Electoral reforms that extend accountability to voters without also loosening the party’s grip on the resources a political career depends on may fail to deliver the electoral connection they promise, and instead strengthen the organization they were meant to check.

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