Legislative Change across the Nation

Chapter 3 finds that among three states with similar structural conditions, the more competitive the state's electoral politics are, the more autonomous and active the state's legislature is. Chapter 3 further demonstrates that increases in electoral competition preceded the legislative changes in the states of Guanajuato and San Luis Potosí, suggesting that increasing electoral competition causes legislative reform. How generalizable are these findings? Are similar patterns of legislative change taking place in other states? Does the relationship between electoral competition and legislative reform hold across a larger sample of cases?

This chapter answers these questions with a quantitative analysis of electoral competition and legislative behavior across all of the states of Mexico. Because of the difficulty of gathering data across all of the states, the large-N analysis makes use of a more limited set of indicators than the case studies. The benefit of a small-N comparative case study is that it can employ thick operationalizations and provide detailed explanations of the process of reform. While a large-N analysis cannot provide such a rich description, it does allow for a greater degree of generalization, which is necessary for constructing general theories of political behavior. This chapter complements the richly textured case study data presented in chapter 3, and when taken together, these two chapters provide substantial evidence that increasing electoral competition generates new patterns of legislative behavior.

The central argument of this chapter follows the theoretical logic presented in chapter 3. In that chapter I argue that electoral competition generates new incentives and opportunities for legislators that lead to more autonomous and active legislatures with greater resources. In this chapter I test the same hypotheses developed in chapter 3, with the exception of the hypothesis relating to the rights of minority parties. Data on minority party rights are simply not available across all of the states. The three hypotheses tested here are:

Hypothesis I: Increasing electoral competition generates new incentives for legislators to demand increased resources for the legislature.
Hypothesis II: Increasing electoral competition results in higher levels of legislative activity.
Hypothesis III: Increasing electoral competition generates new incentives for legislators to develop autonomy from the executive.

The chapter begins by presenting some general information about the local legislators in Mexico garnered from a survey of state legislators. Then I test the consequences of electoral competition on legislative resources with a cross-sectional times series regression model using the internal legislative expenditures of each state congress as the dependent variable. In the next two sections I use data from a survey of legislators in eighteen states to measure activity and autonomy. These measures are used as dependent variables in various regressions to assess the impact of electoral competition on legislative activity and autonomy. I also briefly examine some data from these surveys regarding legislators' relationships to constituents.

Local Legislatures in Mexico

Most of the data used in this chapter come from a survey applied to the members of Mexico's local congresses in 1998. The Appendix provides a copy of the survey instrument. The questionnaires were distributed by mail to all of the members of the congresses of eighteen states. Ten states were excluded from the survey because they had elections during the year the survey was conducted. As there is no consecutive reelection for members of Mexico's congresses, the entire legislature is replaced after each election. Election years, therefore, are extremely disruptive. Moreover, it is difficult to obtain useful information from deputies who have held their job for only a few weeks. Three additional states were excluded from the analysis because the congresses were unable or unwilling to pro-

Table 4.1.   States Included in Survey

Included in Survey	Excluded because of Elections in 1998	Others
Baja California Sur	Aguascalientes	Campeche
Colima	Baja California	Coahuila
Guanajuato	Chiapas	Estado de México
Guerrero	Chihuahua	
Hidalgo	Durango	
Jalisco	Oaxaca	
Michoacán	Tabasco	
Morelos	Veracruz	
Nayarit	Yucatan	
Nuevo León	Zacatecas	
Puebla		
Querétaro		
Quintana Roo		
San Luis Potosí		
Sinaloa		
Sonora		
Tamaulipas		
Tlaxcala		

vide the names and addresses of the members. Table 4.1 lists the states that were included in the analysis, the states that were excluded because of elections, and the other three states. From a total of 547 surveys distributed, 177 surveys were returned, for a response rate of 32.4 percent.[1]

Table 4.2 presents some general information from the survey about state legislators in Mexico.

The legislators are well educated. Over 80 percent have some college education. The most common careers for a legislator are law, education, accounting, and business. The members of the state legislatures tend to have relatively close ties to their states (especially when compared with governors). Sixty-four percent were educated in the states where they serve, while only 19 percent studied in Mexico City. This figure contrasts significantly with the education of governors in that only 21 percent of governors were educated in the states where they govern. (See chapter 5 and table 5.2 for some general characteristics of the governors.) Eighty-five percent of the respondents live in the districts they represent.

Table 4.2.   General Characteristics of the Local Legislators

	%	(N)
Some college education	82	(138)
Studied law	29	(48)
Studied education	10	(16)
Studied accounting	9	(15)
Studied business	7	(11)
Educated in state	64	(102)
Educated in Mexico City	19	(30)
Live in district they represent	85	(139)
Held an elected post in the past	52	(88)
Served in the local congress in the past	15	(25)
Served on the city council	27	(45)
Served as a mayor	11	(19)
Served in the national congress	11	(19)
Dedicate more than 75% of professional time to service in the congress	49	(79)

The average deputy does not have much experience in politics. Just over one-half have held an elected office. Only 15 percent have served in the local congress in the past. Twenty-seven percent have served on a city council, and 11 percent have served as a mayor. Eleven percent have served in the national congress. While local legislators are not officially permitted to hold other jobs, and all are paid generous full-time salaries, less than half of the surveyed deputies spend more than 75 percent of their professional time working on legislative activities.

The data suggest a pattern that is typical of the local legislatures in Mexico. Most of the members are educated in the state and have stronger ties to the state than to the national political elite in Mexico City. A few, however, are very closely tied to the national political elite, and they are spending a term in the "provinces" either because they have fallen out of favor with the current presidential administration or because they are simply waiting out one term from the federal congress on account of the prohibition on reelection. Until 2000, members of opposition parties were particularly likely to return to the local congresses because positions in the national bureaucracy were typically not available to politicians from parties other than the PRI.

Resources

Resources are fundamental to the functioning of an autonomous legislature. Without a sufficient budget and staff, a legislature must depend on the executive for information and allow the executive to dominate research and lawmaking. A congress with extensive resources has the possibility of acting independently of the executive, whereas a legislature with very few resources does not. Internal legislative budgets are a useful indicator of the resources available to the congress and the potential ability of the congress to develop independent sources of information. The legislative expenditures, measured by the internal budgets, are used primarily to maintain the congressional facilities and pay the staff. A larger budget enables the congress to strengthen its lawmaking capacity by hiring more legislative aides, improving the library, and buying more computer equipment.

The following analysis examines annual data on internal legislative spending, electoral competitiveness, and general socioeconomic indicators across twenty-eight of the thirty-one Mexican states from 1975 to 1996.[2] Such an extensive data set is quite rare in the literature on Mexican state politics, which has been dominated largely by individual case studies. The following analysis employs a cross-sectional time series regression to test the relationship between electoral competition and legislative resources.[3] Each of the independent variables is lagged by one year. Lagging the independent variables clarifies the direction of causality in the model and also makes sense theoretically. If the congress members are elected and take office in 1995, for example, their influence on budgets will not be felt until 1996.

The dependent variable, legislative resources, is measured by the total yearly internal legislative expenditures (in constant 1990 pesos) of each state congress. The state expenditure data are compiled and published by the Mexican government (INEGI 1986, 1991, 1994, 1998).[4] Admittedly, relying on data published by an authoritarian government can be problematic, but in contrast to statistics on social spending or GDP growth, it seems unlikely that the data on legislative expenditures would fall victim to political manipulation.

To measure the central explanatory variable (the level of electoral competition in each state through time), I replicate for the Mexican states the cross-national measure developed by Vanhanen (1990, 2000), using data from each state's legislative elections from 1975 to 1996. Vanhanen's index has two components—participation and competition. The amount of participation in the election (turnout/total population) is multiplied by

the amount of competition (100 − % votes of largest party). For this regression, Vanhanen's index is calculated using the overall level of competitiveness within each state. Aggregate statewide percentages are used rather than district-level data because it is the overall level of competitiveness of the state that is theoretically relevant for the determination of state budgets. The indicator is calculated using the official results from each state's electoral institute. The data used were compiled by the Centro de Estadística y Documentación Electoral at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana—Iztapalapa in Mexico City.

Some scholars have criticized Vanhanen's index because it provides a minimalist conceptualization of democracy, leaving out many important components (Munck and Verkuilen 2002). These critiques do not pose significant problems for this analysis because the attempt here is to disaggregate democracy and focus on its basic procedural dimensions. Vanhanen's index is useful because it is a standard measure that is available for cross-national comparison, and unlike other standard indices of democracy, it is replicable for the Mexican states. All of the statistical analyses performed here were also carried out using a variety of other measures of electoral competition, including the two separate components of Vanhanen's index, the margin of victory, and the percentage vote for the PRI. All of these measures are closely correlated, and the results do not vary substantially when different measurements are used. Ultimately, Vanhanen's index is preferable because it stresses the comparability of the study rather than the specific Mexican context of declining PRI rule.

Clearly, electoral fraud has taken place in some state elections during the period from 1975 to 1996. In cases where fraud has been committed, official electoral results provided by the states' electoral institutes reflect the fraudulent vote count rather than the actual votes. It would be impossible to gather statistics on the actual vote count. Even if it were possible to obtain the actual vote count, the possibly fraudulent official statistics are more useful for the purposes of this analysis than the actual results. Unlike studies of voting behavior, where the true results matter, this analysis is trying to measure the level of openness in the political system in terms of the amount of allowable opposition and contestation. Therefore, the true vote count is less important than the amount of opposition that is permitted by the regime. The official electoral results provide a reliable measure of allowable contestation. Imagine, for example, that an opposition party actually won an election, but the ruling party controlled the polling stations and the electoral institute to such an extent that it was able to manipulate the ballots and claim victory. In such a case it would be more accurate to record the election as a win for the ruling party and

hence a less competitive election than to use the actual electoral results, which would consider the election highly competitive. For these reasons, I use the official electoral results.

In addition to an independent variable for electoral competitiveness, the regression equation also includes control variables for the state GDP (INEGI 1996, 2000), state GDP per capita (INEGI 1996, 2000; Nacional Financiera 1995, 13–15), the number of legislators in each congress (Crespo 1996), the presence of a divided government, the level of urbanization in the state (Nacional Financiera 1995, 13–15), and the total population (Nacional Financiera 1995, 13-15). Modernization theory suggests that more "modern" (i.e., wealthier and more urban) areas will have more institutionalized legislatures (Huntington 1965). Therefore, I expect that a state with a greater GDP and GDP per capita and a higher level of urbanization will have a more institutionalized legislature and will therefore spend more on the legislature. I also expect that a congress with a large number of members will have a higher legislative budget simply to pay the extra members' salaries. Furthermore, the divided government dummy is expected to be positively related to legislative spending because prior research has posited a central theoretical role for divided government in legislative development (Lujambio 1996a). In fact, Lujambio argues that the central explanatory variable in the legislative institutionalization of the Mexican states is divided government. Similarly, Cox and Morgenstern (2001) see the percentage of the congress supporting the executive as a key variable. The control for total population is also expected to be positive because a larger state will tend to have more money to spend on a legislature.

Table 4.3 shows the results of the cross-sectional time series regression using a GEE estimation (corrected for first-order autocorrelation) of the impact of electoral competition on internal legislative budgets.

In support of Hypothesis I, the electoral competitiveness index is positive and just barely misses standard levels of significance ($p = 0.056$); thus, the coefficient is significant with 94 percent confidence. Hence, states with higher levels of electoral competition have greater legislative spending. The divided government variable is also positive and highly significant, confirming the importance of the makeup of the congress in influencing congressional development. Surprisingly, both GDP and GDP per capita are insignificant, suggesting that a state with a big economy does not provide significantly more resources to its legislature. Also unexpectedly, when other important variables are held constant, the number of members of each congress has a negative impact on legislative expenditures.[5] The level of urbanization is positive and significant. As expected, the total population

Table 4.3.   Cross-Sectional Time Series GEE Regression: The Impact of Interparty Competition on Internal Legislative Budgets, 1975–1996 (Corrected for First-Order Autocorrelation)

	Dep. Var. = *Internal Legislative Budgets*
Vanhanen's index	53.566
	(1.91)
Divided government dummy	1,331.664
	(2.59)**
GDP	0.000
	(0.17)
GDP per capita	0.0003
	(0.02)
Number of legislators	-157.590
	(2.23)*
Urbanization	5,357.702
	(2.55)*
Total population	1.754
	(5.43)**
Constant	1,518.220
	(0.60)
Observations	466
Number of group (state)	28

Note: Absolute value of z statistics is in parentheses.
*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

is positive and significant. Thus, the more urban and large the state's population, the greater the internal legislative budget is.

The estimation results suggest that increasing electoral competition has important consequences for the resources allocated to the legislature, even after divided government is controlled. Furthermore, the insignificance of the control variables for GDP and GDP per capita suggest that contrary to the expectations of modernization theory, the level of economic development does not have an important impact on legislative resources. The statistical results of the cross-sectional time series analysis fit well with the more qualitative findings of chapter 3, which uses a much broader range of indicators to establish the relationship between

electoral competitiveness and legislative resources in just three states. Evidence that the pattern found in the case studies holds across twenty-eight states and twenty-two years provides much greater confidence in the generalizability of the conclusions of chapter 3.

The regression analysis of legislative budgets focuses on the macro-level relationship between electoral competitiveness and legislative change. The theoretical logic underpinning the central hypotheses, however, focuses on individual behavior as well as macro-level institutional changes. The survey data presented in the following sections illuminate the micro-level changes in the behavior of individual members of congress that undergird the macro-level relationship found here.

Activity

In this section I analyze the impact of electoral competition on legislative activity. Does the legislature actually do anything, or does it merely serve as a rubber stamp for executive proposals? The level of legislative activity is an important component of legislative development. The data used to analyze both legislative activity and autonomy come from the survey described above. The unit of analysis in these models is the individual legislator. This contrasts with the previous cross-sectional time series model, in which the unit of analysis is the state.

Implicit in the theoretical propositions outlined in chapter 3 are both micro-level changes in the behavior of individual members of congress as a result of the incentives they face and macro-level changes in the institutional behavior of the legislature as a whole in response to changes in the state-level political context. Therefore, this chapter looks at both individual district-level changes in electoral competitiveness and changes in aggregate electoral competitiveness at the state level. Micro-level electoral competitiveness is measured in terms of the actual level of competition each legislator faced in his or her district when elected. Macro-level competitiveness is measured by the overall level of competitiveness in the state. Thus, even in a largely noncompetitive state, there are usually some competitive districts where legislators are elected in close races. These members are expected to act differently from their colleagues in the same state who were elected in noncompetitive districts with large margins of victory. Theory suggests that both the general electoral environment in the state and the individual level of competitiveness faced by legislators matter. It is expected that district-level electoral patterns will influence the behavior of the individual members of congress, whereas the general state level of

electoral competition will be most important for understanding macro-level institutional changes in the legislatures.

Three questions from the survey provide measures of legislative activity and constitute the dependent variables in the following analysis. The first dependent variable is a ratio variable and is therefore estimated with ordinary least squares regression (OLS). The last two dependent variables are ordinal variables, which create problems for estimation with OLS (Greene 1993)[6] and are therefore estimated with ordered probit.

The first dependent variable (LAWSDEP) is a measure of the law-making activities of the congresses. Theoretically, the main purpose of a legislature is to make laws. In the Mexican states, however, the legislature is not the only institution with the constitutional power to propose new laws. Most of the state constitutions also allow the executive, the judicial branch, and the municipal governments to propose laws. Traditionally the executive has written and proposed most of the laws, and the legislature has merely acted as a rubber stamp to approve them. As the legislature becomes a more relevant institution, it is expected that the legislators will begin to take a greater role in producing legislation.

To measure the extent of the legislatures' lawmaking activities, each deputy was asked, "Approximately what percentage of the laws passed in your state were initiated by a deputy?"[7] The individual responses of each legislator are used at the dependent variable. The responses vary from 0 to 100 percent of the initiatives. Obviously, there is a "correct" answer to this question, and the actual data of legislative initiatives could be used instead of survey data. Most state legislatures, however, do not keep records of this type of information, making collection of real data impossible. Moreover, the vast majority of laws passed by local congresses are largely irrelevant politically, dealing with issues such as the transfer of land titles. Hence, the percentages of actual bills introduced by legislators may not be as useful an indicator as the perceptions of the legislators about the percentage of bills introduced by members of the congress.

The dependent variable is regressed against two measures of electoral competition. The first indicator, Vanhanen's index, is the same competitiveness index used in the previous regression of legislative expenditures. It is calculated using aggregate state-level data. Because the following analysis employs individual-level data, a second indicator of individual-level electoral competitiveness that is calculated with district-level data is also used. The district-level indicator is the margin of victory in the local congressional election of each legislator; thus, each legislator's responses on the survey are matched up with the election results from his or her district. The margin of victory is calculated by subtracting the percentage

vote for the runner-up party from the percentage vote for the winning party. The district-level indicator is calculated separately for each deputy using the electoral results for the congressional district in which the surveyed member was elected. This indicator assesses the individual-level causes of legislative behavior by examining the electoral incentives that face each legislator. As in the national electoral system, all of the Mexican states have a mixed electoral system in which 25 to 45 percent of the state congressional seats are distributed via proportional representation. The aggregate state margin of victory is used for survey respondents with seats distributed through proportional representation, since their district is essentially the entire state. Vanhanen's index is expected to be positively related to legislative initiatives, while the margin of victory is expected to be negatively related to legislative initiatives because the higher the margin of victory, the lower the electoral competition.

Since the district-level indicator measures the electoral conditions under which each legislator is elected, it is expected to be most effective in predicting the behavior of individual legislators. The state-level indicator is an aggregate measure of the general level of competitiveness in the state and is therefore expected to be more successful in predicting the institutional behavior of the congress as a whole rather than the behavior of individual members. In fact, however, both indicators are quite powerful in explaining both individual and aggregate behavior. This seems to be because the two measures are quite highly correlated.

Since the legislative initiatives variable is measuring the legislator's perception of the institutional behavior of the congress rather than the individual-level behavior of members, aggregate rather than individual-level control variables are used. The independent variables are the same as those used in table 4.3. State GDP (INEGI 1996, 2000), state GDP per capita (INEGI 1996, 2000; Nacional Financiera 1995, 13–15), the number of legislators in each congress (Crespo 1996), the presence of a divided government, the level of urbanization in the state (Nacional Financiera 1995, 13–15), and the total population (Nacional Financiera 1995, 13–15) are included as controls.

Table 4.4 presents the results of the OLS regression using the reported percentage of initiatives proposed by deputies as the dependent variable.

Both of the competitiveness indicators are statistically significant with 99 percent confidence. As expected, Vanhanen's index is positive and the margin of victory is negative, indicating that the greater the level of electoral competitiveness, the higher the percentage of legislative initiatives originating with legislators (as perceived by the legislators themselves). Again, the divided government dummy is positive and significant,

Table 4.4.   The Impact of Interparty Competition on Legislative Initiatives (OLS)

	Dep. Var. = LAWSDIP	
Vanhanen's index	1.384	
	(2.61)**	
District margin of victory		−0.373
		(3.20)**
Divided government dummy	16.343	16.250
	(3.66)**	(3.66)**
GDP	0.004	0.003
	(5.68)**	(4.97)**
GDP per capita	−3.296	−2.564
	(2.03)*	(1.66)
Number of legislators	−0.443	−0.116
	(1.02)	(0.27)
Urbanization	40.292	36.493
	(2.20)*	(1.94)
Total population	−0.020	−0.017
	(4.50)**	(4.15)**
Constant	11.592	23.101
	(0.48)	(0.91)
Observations	136	130
R^2	0.38	0.40

Note: Absolute value of *t* statistics in parentheses.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

suggesting that the legislatures are more active where the legislature is not controlled by the same party as the executive. The state GDP is positive and highly significant in both of the estimations, suggesting that the larger the economy of the state, the more active the legislature is. Strangely, after total GDP is controlled, GDP per capita is negative. Population is also negative and significant in both of the equations. Thus, the higher the standard of living in the state and the more populous the state, the less active the legislature is. The number of legislators is insignificant in both equations. The overall fit of the model is respectable, with R^2s of 0.38 and 0.40.

The second dependent variable (SPEAKCOM) is a measure of the activity and importance of the congressional committees. Each deputy was asked, "How often do you speak in a committee meeting during a typical month of a legislative session?"[8] The answers were coded 1 = never, 2 = one or two times, 3 = between three and ten times, 4 = more than ten times. The higher the value of the SPEAKCOM variable, the greater the discussion and activity of the legislative committee system. The third dependent variable (RADIOTV) indirectly measures congressional activity through media coverage of the congress. The amount of coverage of congressional activities in the media indicates how relevant the legislature is by measuring public interest in the legislature's activities. Each deputy answered the question "How many times have you been interviewed for a radio or television program in the past year?"[9] The answers were coded 1 = one to five times, 2 = five to ten times, 3 = ten to twenty times, 4 = twenty to fifty times, and 5 = more than fifty times.

Both the aggregate state-level Vanhanen's index and the district-level margin of victory are used to measure electoral competition. The dependent variables SPEAKCOM and RADIOTV measure individual-level behavior rather than institutional behavior: how often each legislator speaks in committee and how often each is interviewed by radio and television programs. Therefore, I expect that the district competitiveness indicator will be a better predictor of these two variables than the aggregate measure. The control variables are also individual-level variables rather than statewide variables. The level of education of each deputy is included because it is expected that legislators with more education will be more active than those with less education. Members who are trained as lawyers are also expected to be more active than others, as are those who have held elected positions in the past. Therefore, dummy variables for lawyers and past elective experience are also included as controls.

Table 4.5 presents the results of the ordered probit analysis of SPEAKCOM and RADIOTV.

In model 1, Vanhanen's index is positive, as expected, but not significant. The district-level margin of victory is negative, as expected, and statistically significant with 95 percent confidence. These results indicate that the smaller the margin of victory by which a legislator wins his or her election, the more often he or she will speak in committee meetings. Thus, legislators elected in more competitive elections are more likely to be active in committee meetings. Education level is also a powerful predictor of participation in committees. Congress members with more education speak in committee more often than those with less education. Training as a lawyer and past experience in elected office do not seem to matter.

Again in the RADIOTV regressions, Vanhanen's index is positive and the district-level margin of victory is negative, as expected, though neither

Table 4.5. The Impact of Interparty Competition on Legislative Activity (Ordered Probit)

	Model 1: Dep. Var. = SPEAKCOM		Model 2: Dep. Var. = RADIOTV	
Vanhanen's index	0.024		0.019	
	(1.09)		(0.95)	
District margin of victory		−0.013		−0.008
		(2.42)*		(1.64)
Education level	0.345	0.416	0.237	0.222
	(3.13)**	(3.51)**	(2.46)*	(2.19)*
Elected position	−0.015	0.030	−0.144	−0.021
	(0.08)	(0.15)	(0.87)	(0.12)
Lawyer	0.105	0.039	−0.013	0.087
	(0.49)	(0.18)	(0.07)	(0.45)
Observations	161	147	167	153
Pseudo-R^2	0.04	0.07	0.02	0.02
Log-likelihood	−148.78	−131.12	−256.37	−233.07

Note: Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

of the competitiveness indicators is statistically significant at conventional levels of confidence. The district-level indicator, however, is statistically significant with 90 percent confidence. Again, education is positive and significant, but the other control variables are not significant. The pseudo-R^2, a measure of goodness of fit in ordered probit models, is very low in all of the estimations. Admittedly, the independent variables are not explaining very much of the variance. Nevertheless, as I am just testing statistical relationships and not trying to make predictions from this model, the low pseudo-R^2 is not of great concern.

In sum, the positive statistical relationship between electoral competitiveness and legislative activity found in the survey data provides further evidence that competitive elections matter for legislative behavior. The specific electoral context facing an individual legislator has a significant impact on the way the legislator behaves. These results provide micro-level evidence of the relationship between competition and legislative development and support the findings from the case studies in chapter 3.

Autonomy

Congressional autonomy from the executive is a fundamental aspect of developing a viable system of checks and balances. The legislature must be able to act autonomously from the executive if it is to serve its function as an agency of horizontal accountability. In this section I examine the relationship between legislative autonomy and electoral competition.

To assess the relative independence of the congress, I examine legislators' perceptions of their responsibilities and their relative time commitments to various activities. In particular I use the survey data described above and focus on questions that measure the relative importance that legislators place on oversight, lawmaking, and supporting the governor. The three variables used to measure congressional autonomy come from one question in which the legislators were asked to rank nine legislative activities according to how much time they dedicated to each. Among the activities the members were asked to rank were "Oversee the activities of other government agencies" (OVER), "Propose laws" (LAWS), and "Support the governor" (SupGov).[10] As argued in chapter 3, strong oversight is an indicator of legislative autonomy. The ranking of "Propose laws" when compared with "Support the governor" is also a good indicator of legislative autonomy. In a more autonomous congress, we would expect that legislators would spend more time proposing laws than supporting the governor.

Each of the dependent variables is an ordinal variable, so each model is estimated with ordered probit. I use the same two indicators of electoral competition as in the previous regressions: the state-level Vanhanen's index and the district-level margin of victory. These two measures are inversely related: the higher the margin of victory, the lower the electoral competition. Since the dependent variable measures the individual behavior of legislators, the district-level indicator is theoretically more relevant and is therefore expected to be a better predictor for these models. Legislators elected in competitive elections are expected to be more concerned with fulfilling the legislative responsibilities of oversight than legislators elected in noncompetitive districts. Therefore, the coefficient of the margin of victory variable in the equation using OVER as the dependent variable is expected to be negative, indicating that the higher the margin of victory by which the legislator was elected, the less time he or she spends on oversight. Similary, the coefficient for Vanhanen's index is expected to be positive.

Legislators elected in noncompetitive elections are more likely to have been appointed by party leaders and the governor and are therefore more

likely to be concerned with pleasing the governor than with making laws. Hence, the coefficient of the margin of victory in the regressions of LAWS is expected to negative, and in the regression of SupGov it is expected to be positive. Vanhanen's index is expected to be positive in the regression of LAWS and negative in SupGov. The aggregate level of competitiveness in the state is less directly associated with the individual behavior of legislators. Therefore, Vanhanen's index is expected to have a weaker influence in these models than the district margin of victory.

The other independent variables used in these equations are education level, past political experience, legal training, and a dummy variable that takes on a value of 1 if the governor and the deputy are from the same party and 0 if the governor and the deputy are from different parties. I expect that education, past political experience, and legal training will be positively related to the measures of lawmaking and oversight and negatively related to the measure of subservience to the governor. It seems likely that more educated and experienced legislators will be more independent and autonomous. The final independent variable controls for the party affiliation of the governor and the legislator. I anticipate that a legislator from the same party as the governor will be more likely to support the governor and less likely to oversee the behavior of the governor. Therefore, I expect the coefficients of the same party dummy to be negative when regressed on OVER and positive when regressed on SupGov.

Table 4.6 presents the results of the ordered probit estimations of legislative autonomy.

Model 1 estimates the impact of electoral competition on the amount of time each legislator dedicates to oversight. Vanhanen's index is positive but not statistically significant. The district-level margin of victory is negative, as expected, and statistically significant with 95 percent confidence. None of the control variables is statistically significant. Contrary to the original expectations, more educated legislators are no more likely to spend time overseeing other government agencies than less educated deputies. Past political experience in elected offices and training as a lawyer also have no significant impact on the oversight activities of individual congress members. Likewise, the same party dummy is insignificant in both regressions.

The dependent variable in model 2 measures the amount of time each legislator dedicates to proposing laws. As anticipated, Vanhanen's index is positive and the district margin of victory is negative. Both the state and the district competitiveness indicators are statistically significant with 99 percent confidence. Therefore, both legislators in generally competitive states and legislators elected in competitive district elections spend more

Table 4.6. The Impact of Interparty Competition on Legislative Autonomy (Ordered Probit)

	Model 1: Dep. Var. = (10 − OVER)		Model 2: Dep. Var. = (10 − LAWS)		Model 3: Dep. Var. = (10 − SupGov)	
Vanhanen's index	0.003		0.058		−0.003	
	(0.15)		(2.78)**		(0.13)	
District margin of victory		−0.010		−0.013		0.014
		(2.15)*		(2.69)**		(2.77)**
Education level	0.009	−0.030	0.078	0.038	0.064	0.043
	(0.09)	(0.30)	(0.76)	(0.35)	(0.60)	(0.38)
Elected position	0.050	0.071	0.099	0.020	0.029	−0.023
	(0.30)	(0.41)	(0.57)	(0.11)	(0.16)	(0.12)
Lawyer	−0.118	−0.107	−0.119	−0.119	0.063	0.117
	(0.63)	(0.56)	(0.62)	(0.59)	(0.32)	(0.57)
Same party	−0.237	−0.211	−0.002	0.032	0.861	0.795
	(1.41)	(1.20)	(0.01)	(0.17)	(4.56)**	(4.04)**
Observations	161	147	159	146	151	139
Pseudo-R^2	0.004	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.05
Log-likelihood	−331.04	−300.34	−307.84	−277.84	−275.29	−249.15

Note: Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses.

$*p < .05$; $**p < .01$.

time proposing laws than deputies from less competitive states and districts. Again in model 2, none of the control variables are significant.

Model 3 estimates the impact of electoral competition on the relative importance each legislator places on supporting the governor. The coefficient of Vanhanen's index is negative but not statistically significant. The coefficient for the district margin of victory is positive and statistically significant. Therefore, the data suggest that the level of competition each individual legislator faces influences the legislator's relationship with the governor. Legislators representing competitive districts are less likely to spend the bulk of their time supporting the governor, whereas legislators elected with large margins of victory are more likely to spend time supporting the governor. The only control variable that is statistically significant is the same party dummy. The coefficient is positive, indicating that deputies from the same party as the governor are likely

to dedicate more time to supporting the governor than deputies from other parties.

The individual-level survey data illuminate the micro-level foundations of legislative autonomy in competitive contexts. Legislators from competitive districts are more likely to spend time on oversight, suggesting that deputies who were elected to congress in competitive elections face greater incentives to take oversight seriously than those who ran in noncompetitive elections. When the results of model 2 and model 3 are compared, it seems clear that electoral competitiveness also creates incentives for legislators to spend more time making laws and less time supporting the governor, thereby enhancing the independence of the congress.

Constituency Relations

In addition to the questions on legislative development and institutionalization, which are the main focus of this book, the survey of the legislators asked a battery of questions about legislators' relationship with their constituency. Understanding this relationship is important because in the end it is the relationship between a government and its citizens that matters most to democracy.

Unfortunately, however, it is difficult, both theoretically and empirically, to disentangle the differences between constituency service and patronage. On the one hand, increased electoral competition should result in stronger ties between legislators and their constituents because legislators will attempt to both improve their own chances for reelection (or election to another post when reelection is not permitted) and to improve their position within their party by securing the party's future victory in the district. On the other hand, in Mexico many traditional ruling party legislators are either leaders in a corporatist organization such as the CTM and the CNC or members of prominent cacique families.[11] A strong relationship between a legislator and his or her district may be the result of the traditional clientelistic bargain in which caciques distribute material benefits in exchange for votes. As competition increases, this relationship may break down if opposition parties attempt to reorient elections around policy platforms and good governance rather than patronage. This has certainly been the case with the PAN in Mexico. The PAN has struggled to devise new strategies of mobilization while rejecting traditional exchanges of patronage for political support (Mizrahi 1998, 108). The result of the PAN's rejection of clientelism has often been an apparent detach-

Table 4.7. The Impact of Interparty Competition on Constituent Relations (Ordered Probit)

	Model 1: Dep. Var. = PUBAUD	Model 2: Dep. Var. = MEETING	Model 3: Dep. Var. = SPEECH	Model 4: Dep. Var. = SERVICE	Model 5: Dep. Var. = GODF	Model 6: Dep. Var. = RETURN
District margin of victory	0.009 (1.81)	0.004 (0.84)	0.007 (1.50)	0.005 (0.93)	0.013 (2.27)*	0.008 (1.52)
Education level	0.078 (0.73)	0.236 (2.22)*	0.255 (2.36)*	0.200 (1.79)	0.213 (1.55)	0.154 (1.33)
Elected position	0.128 (0.70)	0.151 (0.81)	0.115 (0.62)	−0.036 (0.19)	0.176 (0.80)	0.332 (1.62)
Lawyer	−0.067 (0.33)	0.029 (0.14)	0.047 (0.22)	−0.076 (0.35)	0.115 (0.47)	0.186 (0.80)
Observations	140	142	135	144	136	132
Pseudo-R^2	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.02
Log-likelihood	−187.37	−169.23	−167.27	−142.93	−103.46	−142.77

Note: Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses.
*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

ment of the PAN from a mass base. In interviews with local deputies, members from the PAN tended to stress their policies and their record of effective administration, whereas members from PRI were more likely to point to their success in distributing material benefits. Given these problems, it is not too surprising that the survey data show no clear association between electoral competition and constituency service.

Table 4.7 presents the results of various measures of constituent relations. The models test the impact of electoral competitiveness on the frequency with which legislators have public audiences with their constituents (PUBAUD), attend meetings in their districts (MEETING), give speeches in their districts (SPEECH), provide services for a voter (SERVICE), go to Mexico City to solicit support for their district (GODF), and return to their districts (RETURN).[12] The only regression in which the margin of victory is significant is the GODF model. Members from competitive districts are less likely to go to Mexico City to solicit support for their districts

from the federal government. The intention of this question was to tap the legislator's connectedness to the national political elite, as opposed to the state political elite. Deputies from less competitive areas were better connected to the PRI-dominated federal government than were their counterparts in more competitive districts.

This chapter used multivariate statistical techniques to test the conclusions of chapter 3 across a larger set of cases. It presented aggregate state data in a cross-sectional time series analysis to demonstrate a positive relationship between electoral competition and legislative resources. The chapter then provided individual-level data from a survey of local congress members. The survey data demonstrated that the competitiveness of the elections in which each legislator was elected had a significant impact on the legislator's behavior. In particular, legislators elected with small margins of victory were more likely to speak in committee meetings and be interviewed on the television or the radio. They also spent more time overseeing other government agencies and making laws and less time supporting the governor. Thus, the data support the general conclusion that increasing electoral competition generates a more active and autonomous legislature with more resources.

More highly educated and experienced legislators were expected to be more active and autonomous. The data suggest that more highly educated deputies tend to be more active but not more autonomous. Therefore, we can expect that if future members of the local congresses are more educated, the legislatures will be more active but not necessarily more autonomous from the governor.

The most important finding of this chapter is the consistent positive relationship between electoral competition and the measures of legislative resources, activity, and autonomy. These results buttress those found in chapter 3 and have important implications for the future of Mexican politics. It seems likely that as competition continues to take root and grow across Mexico, the legislative branch will increase its influence in the states of Mexico. Legislative development, in turn, is expected to improve horizontal accountability and thereby have important consequences for the quality of democracy.