

Speech in Mexico's Cámara de Diputados*

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Abstract

Text as data: speeches in lower chamber of Mexico's federal Congress. Analysis covers three pre-midterm election legislative terms since 2006. Argument, findings.¹

Keywords: Speech, Congress, presidentialism, Mexico

1 Introduction

[max 500 words]

Interest in the Mexican Congress arrived with democratization.

Was more or less a rubber stamp, presidential super-majorities.

Then came divided government. Constitutional powers scrutinized, descriptive studies of relative influence by president, his party, and opposition parties. Roll call voting = cohesion, gubernatorial influences.

Debate has been overlooked. I could find no reference to anything. Chapter explores. Institutions and members' access to the floor to deliver speeches.

Argument.

*Financial support ITAM, SNI. For shedding light on some parties' internal rules of debate in the period, I am grateful to Fernando Rodríguez Doval, Lupita Vargas Vargas, and one former deputy who wished anonymity. Vidal Mendoza, Eugenio Solís, Sonia Kuri K, and I for research assistance.

¹Data and supporting materials necessary to reproduce the numerical results in the article are available in the following repository (<https://github.com/emagar/legdeb>). Supplementary material for this article is available in the appendix in the online edition.

2 Case selection

Due to a hard time constraint, I leave out the Senate from analysis and focus on three out of eight Cámara terms since democratization. I examine the 60th (2006-09), 62nd (2012-15), and 64th Legislatures (2018-21). All are pre-midterm election terms for comparability. Data for the 64th runs up to the end of the second ordinary year only (March 19th, 2020, with more than one full year remaining), enough to investigate effects of electoral reform and majority status in debate, as we will see.

3 Institutional and party system background

[ca 500-1000 words]

Mexico is a presidential democracy. For most of the 20th century a hegemonic party, the PRI, held the strings of political influence in a tight grip nationwide. While the PRI's electoral fortunes suffered from societal change (Scott 1959)(ref) and from formidable economic setbacks in the 1980s, it was not until 1997 that competitive politics became the norm. The PRI lost control of the lower house of Congress in that year's midterm election, the first in six decades. Then in 2000 the country's long-standing right-of-center opposition beat the PRI in the presidential race.

Congress is bicameral. The only asymmetry in the chambers' authority over legislation is important: the Cámara de Diputados adopts the federal budget without Senate intervention.

64 partial included because it is the first instance of single-party unified government. And, importantly, first Congress where incumbents allowed to be on the ballot in midterm. Plus clear mutation of governing groups after 2+ decades of the partidocracia party system (Magar 2015; Magar, Estévez and Rosas 2010).

Mexico has a presidential constitution. For most of the 20th century a hegemonic party, the PRI, controlled the strings of political influence nationwide. While the PRI's electoral fortunes suffered from societal change and from formidable economic setbacks in the 1980s, it was not until 1997 that competitive politics became the norm (Cornelius 1996; Cosío Villegas 1981; Molinar 1991).

The PRI lost control of the lower house of Congress in that year's midterm election, something unseen in over six decades. Three year later the country's long-standing right-of-center opposition, the PAN, beat the PRI in the presidential race.

With democratization, two decades of divided government ensued. The executive's control of the legislative process ended abruptly, inaugurating relative balance between the branches (Lujambio and Vives 2000; Weldon 1997). The president retained a prominent role in lawmaking, but genuine negotiation with the opposition was required to get things done (Béjar Algazi 2012; Casar 2013).

Competitive politics blended a - three party system (local two-party systems mostly) with - entry barriers - but weak links to society - bunch of opportunistic parties - two dims of competition

Partidocracia came crashing down in 2018.

3.1 parties in camara

| party | 60th % | 62nd % | 64th % |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| pan | 41 | 23 | 16 |
| pri | 21 | 43 | 9 |
| prd | 25 | 20 | 4 |
| morena | | | 51 |
| opportunistic w/ president | | 8 | 14 |
| other opportunistic | 13 | 7 | 6 |
| Total | % | 100 | 100 |
| | N | 500 | 500 |
| president's party | pan | pri | morena |

Mandarins quote here. Frontbenchers pull the strings. Single-term limits with centralized nominations. Will change in 2021.

The Cámara's electoral system is mixed member plurality (Weldon 2001). Three-hundred members elect by first-past-the-post in single member districts (SMDs) and two-hundred members by closed-list proportional representation. All members have three year terms. All seats are

contested in races that are concurrent with the presidential election, then again at the presidential midterm.

Reliance in primaries for SMD candidate selection—mostly by the PAN (Ascencio and Kerevel 2021), on occasions by the PRI (Poiré 2002)—opens some exceptions, but in general ballot access is controlled by national and state party leaders (Langston 2008; Rosas and Langston 2011). With this feature, systems with SMDs (the large portion of the mix) and closed-list PR (the other portion) belong at the bottom of Carey and Shugart's (1995) ordinal rank of incentives to cultivate personal vote.

Another feature of importance are single-term limits, which the constitution set on all elected officeholders. Ambition was perforce progressive (Schlesinger 1966) and centralized nominations acted as a potent agent for discipline to party leaders. But, in a surprising recent development, single-term limits were eliminated for selected offices, including federal deputies (Magar 2017). The 2021 midterm election will be the first since the 1930s where incumbents will be allowed on the ballot.

Deputies elected in 2018 and hereafter have four-term limits instead. Reform should introduce a degree of personal vote seeking among a subset of deputies with static ambition. While reformers further centralized nominations by keeping the ban on consecutive reelection for party switchers in general, this might not fully reign in competitive incumbents: parties removing previous winners of elected office, dynastic candidates (Enríquez González 2018), and what (Zaller 1998) refers to as "prize fighters", in order to secure nomination of docile newbies, risk losing those districts. I investigate effects of reform on debate.

Another extraordinary event was the critical election of 2018, marking the demise of the three-party system that brought democracy. After decades of infighting the left finally split. The faction loyal to AMLO successfully launched a new party, Morena, overcoming formidable entry barriers (Magar 2015), a feat that placed him in the way of winning the presidential election by a landslide. For the first time in over two decades, the president's party enjoyed majority status in Congress. The effects of electoral reform and party system change, if any, will be confounded...

Unclear in past. Reelection should change things, incumbency times static ambition should matter more. Mention candado partidista?

4 The institutional setting of legislative debate in the Cámara

[ca 1500 words]

An overview of the structure of legislative debate shows members who have abdicated most formal speech rights to their parties. The Cámara's Rules (Reglamento 2019) set most prescriptions for debate, with general guidelines in Congress' Organic Law (Orgánica 2019).

Casar (2016) examination of agenda setting puts the focus on results (passage of legislation). Her mention to debate characterizes it as party-centered: "[governing] bodies have the power ... to conduct floor debates, including assigning turns and time to speakers" (p. 154). This, we will see, is not in alignment with formal institutions, which establish individual member rights to be recognized by the presiding officer.

Proksch/Slapin here? the apradox is explained by parties...

4.1 The boards

There are two key actors in the legislative process, the Junta and the Mesa. The *Junta de Coordinación Política* is the Cámara's top decision-making organ. The leaders of all parties with no fewer than five deputies are represented. The majority leader presides the Junta throughout the term. In the absence of a majority party, however, the leaders of the top-three seat holding parties preside the Junta, alternating one year each. The Junta appoints and replaces committee members, prepares each session's order of the day (/orden del día/), and in general reaches and enforces party leader agreements. It decides by majority rule, with members' votes weighted relative to group sizes in the plenary. So majority status is crucial to control the Junta (cf. Cox and McCubbins 2005).

The *Mesa Directiva* is the chamber's steering board. The Mesa chair is the Cámara president

ex-officio. The Mesa makeup has consensual traits, regardless of there being a majority party or not. It is elected yearly by two-thirds supermajority of Cámara members from candidates proposed by the Junta. While Mesa members can reelect, the chair must rotate between the top-three seat-holding parties, one year each.

Agenda control is frail. First, every committee report is guaranteed floor consideration and must be included in the order. If committees were adequate agents of the Junta majority, they might serve as gatekeepers by denying unwanted bills a report. But the Junta is required to distribute committee chairs (as well as committee seats) proportionally among the parties, so some committees are bound to be preference outliers.

Second, the open rule is the default for bill consideration in the floor. Debate takes place in two stages. The entire bill is first examined */en lo general/*, then articles are considered individually for amendment or deletion */en lo particular/* (see Heller and Weldon n.d.). Members can always reserve articles for deletion or amendment, denying the Junta a useful procedural tool common in other assemblies: the closed rule (eg., Cox 2006; Magar, Palanza and Sin 2021; Weingast 1992).

Third, and most relevant, speakers can self-select. Individual members are entitled to take the floor when recognized by the presiding officer, for a duration set by rules or by party agreements. Party leaders allocate speaking time to a list of speakers but cannot preclude others from adding their names to that list, making debate resemble first-come-first-serve once parties have spoken.

4.2 The structure of debate

Rules set limits for different kinds of debate summarized in the Table. The first entry refers drafters of new legislation, who who get first recognition to take the floor in order to persuade fellow lawmakers. The time limit is ten minutes when the draft is a new law, five minutes when it amends existing statutes. Deputies who wish to debate then get five minutes each. Bills that cannot be presented before the session ends migrate to the next day's order upon author's request */viva voce/* (otherwise they are referred to committee.) The rightmost columns report who selects the speaker—self-selection by drafting a bill, in this case—and who, if anyone, can veto the speaker's

| Debate type (in Spanish) | Goal | Durat. | Selector | Veto |
|---|---------------|--------|------------|------------|
| 1. Introduce legislation (iniciativa) | Author | | | |
| - a new law | presents | - 10' | - member | - no |
| - amend a law | the bill | - 5' | - member | - no |
| 2. Committee report (dictamen) | Move | | | |
| - Debate en lo general vs SQ, chair | for floor | - 10' | - comm.maj | - pres.^1 |
| - " " " others | consideration | - 5' | - members | - pres.^1 |
| - Amendments (debate en lo particular) | | - 5' | - members | - no |
| - negative report | | - 3' | - comm.maj | - pres.^1 |
| 3. Resolutions (puntos de acuerdo) | Position | | | |
| - standard, author | taking | - 10' | - member | - comm.maj |
| - urgent, author (obvia resolución) | | - 5' | - Junta | - floor |
| - other speakers | | - 3' | - party | - no |
| 4. Current events (agenda política) | Position | < 2hrs | | |
| - Junta proponent | taking | - 10' | - Junta | - no |
| - other speakers | | - 5' | - member | - no |
| ^1 = President can delay/prevent speech by granting recommit. | | | | |

Table 1: Types of debate

recognition—no one here.

Other speech types grant right of first recognition differently. Debate /en lo general/ grants it to the reporting committee chairperson or designated handler of the report for ten minutes (fifteen in constitutional amendments). The Cámara president can delay debate by recommitting the bill—and possibly prevent it if the committee kills the bill. /En lo particular/ amendments and Cámara resolutions grant it to the proposing member.

Party-appointed speakers get five minutes each, in reverse-size order, after the first /en lo general/ speech. Then members who request it then get five minutes each, the president arranging them in rounds, one for one against. After six such rounds, the floor can either proceed to vote, or continue with blocks of three such rounds. When the report deals with issues of great interest, debate can go on for several hours.

Cámara resolutions (/proposiciones con punto de acuerdo/) are tailor-made for members' position-taking needs, conditional on party leader support. If adopted, resolutions become the opinion of the chamber on some specific issue. But they require urgent status (/urgente u obvia resolución/) in order to avoid committee referral and move directly to the floor; only the Junta can request that

the floor grants urgent status to at most two resolutions per session. If granted, the proposer takes the floor for five minutes. Parties then appoint one speaker each, for three minutes. The floor can then decide to vote, or open a rounds of debate with self-appointed speakers.

Current events (/agenda política/) are party leaders' position-taking venue. The Junta determines up to two themes for debate before consideration of reports and bills, party leaders appointing one speaker each. The promoting party speaker gets first recognition for 10 minutes, others 5 minutes each, and talk in reverse-size order. Current events debate cannot exceed two hours per session.

4.3 Recognition-granting motions

Debate under such rules becomes a succession of punctuated, mostly uninterrupted short speeches. Members can approximate back-and-forth talk, at least occasionally, by catching the president's eye from their seats in order to interrupt with a motion. The president has discretion to deny, or grant up to three minutes to elaborate. Such motions are distinct from points of order (which members can also make, see Reglamento art. 114 for typified motions). They grant recognition to speak. One (/cuestionamiento al orador/) to interrogate the speaker, who must also accept the question be made. Another is (/alusiones personales/), to give right of reply to alluded members by recognizing them right after the speaker ends. And (/rectificación de hechos/) wind up an additional name at the end of the list of speakers.

4.4 Party discipline as alternative to centralized agenda power

The Cámara's debate rules are ill-designed to prevent plenary bottlenecks (Cox 2006). Even in the presence of a majority party, individual members retain speaking rights that water down attempts by the Junta to cartelize the legislative process. So how does the Cámara prevent dilatory motions to get things done? The answer is parties. Party discipline operates as an alternative to agenda cartelization in many systems (Prata 2001).

Cohesion is near perfect across parties. Téllez del Río (2018) computed frequencies with which

deputies voted against a majority of their party (excluding unanimous votes). The mean he reports for the 1997–2018 period stands at 2 percent, 3.4 percent when abstentions are coded as votes against the party majority (p. 25).

Three former deputies from the larger parties offered quick impressions on internal party speech rules upon request. One commonality (at least in this very small sample) is the informal erosion of formal individual members' debate rights in favor of centralized speech allocation (cf. Cox 1987). The PAN relies on a debate whip (subcoordinador de debate parlamentario) in charge of selecting speakers in debates. When two members wish to speak at once, the whip would let them figure who would get the party's slot in the debate, who would then speak for or against.² The PRI leadership sets apart issues of party interest, appointing every speaker when debated. Members would communicate their wish to speak on unwhipped issues to their state caucus leader, who would seek authorization with party whips.³ Rules give parties one speaking slot each in many debates, regardless of size. Distributive conflict over speech is therefore more acute for larger parties, with longer speaker lists. A must for a member dissenting from "party mandarins" is a solid knowledge of the Rules. That member can thus make individual speaking rights effective by introducing suspensive motions or amendments, both of which come equipped with recognition to take the floor./footnoteEmail exchange with a former deputy from the left, who answered on condition of anonymity, June 17th, 2020.

Party leaders move the strings of lawmaking. Their influence, however, derives almost exclusively from party discipline (near-perfect across the board) and not from agenda power (which is quite diffuse).

4.5 Continuum

Proksch and Slapin's (2015) scheme, used across chapters in this volume, compares assemblies according to how members gain access to take the floor in order to deliver speeches (p. 79).

²Email exchange with Fernando Rodríguez Doval, June 17th, 2020.

³Email exchange with Lupita Vargas Vargas, June 17th, 2020.

A continuum connects two extremes: party-controlled access and individual member-controlled access. Formal rules place the Cámara towards the individual member-controlled access limit of the continuum; but partisan rules pull it towards the party-controlled access side. The removal of single term limits ought to make this tension between formal and de facto institutions harder to manage for all parties.

(EMM quizás debo conectar continuum y bottlenecks/minority rights en sección Mexico?)

4.6 Minority rights

Arg here: While parties sit atop the status pyramid, their agenda power is relatively limited. Two problems: can't easily prevent unwanted speeches as members retain right to talk; can't easily remove unwanted motions as committee reports proceed automatically to floor discussion. So negative agenda power is diffuse. Parties in fact rely on discipline towards leadership to avoid plenary bottlenecks and get legislation done.

suspension of rules typified only for discharge, two-thirds

The constitution sets the quorum at half chamber membership.

Reglamento amendments by 2/3 vote

Suspension of rules by Conferencia always a choice, but only typified for committee of the whole. Art 77 cpeum. Risks toma de tribuna.

Presiding officer can summon police to restore order. Can summon public force, but in practice never used. Can kill the mike, but others can raise their voices

4. Para atender una situación no prevista en el Reglamento, el Presidente podrá dictar una resolución de carácter general, siempre que haya la opinión favorable de la Mesa Directiva y de la Junta. En caso contrario, este tipo de resoluciones sólo tendrán efecto con la aprobación de la mayoría simple del Pleno.

5 The role of intra- and interparty politics in legislative debates?

[ca 2500]

5.1 Data and The dependent variable

Digitized speeches come from the stenographic service (scraped from <http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/>).

I relied on regular expressions to de-htmlize the text and identify speakers and their speech, turning text into data for analysis.⁴

The **dependent variable** is a member's participation in plenary debate during legislative periods (see the appendix for terminology). The 60th, 62nd, and 64th Legislatures had six, eight, and five periods, respectively, totaling nineteen. Three are extraordinary periods, the rest ordinary. Mean days per period was 6.7 for the former, 31.4 for the latter, so the debate models control for period length.

I use two specifications of the dependent variable, one absolute, one relative. The absolute is **words(i,p)** equal the number of words that member *i* spoke in period *p*. Days when deputy *i* spoke fewer than 50 words are arbitrarily considered non-debate and dropped, adding zero towards the member's aggregate. Since officers do not participate in legislative debate, all steering speech, as when the president recognizes a deputy or the secretary calls a voice vote to dispense reading of the bill, was also removed. So was speech by non-deputies, as in cabinet member hearings. Everything remaining is considered debate, members' daily totals added across sessions in the same period to produce aggregates for analysis.

The relative specification is **words(i,p)/exposure** equal the absolute words divided by the days that member *i* served as a proportion of all session days in period *p* (members can take

⁴Data analysis was performed in R (R Dev. Core Team 2011), all code is available at <https://github.com/emagar/legdeb>. I relied on libraries lme4 (Bates, Mächler, Bolker and Walker 2015), lubridate (Grolemund and Wickham 2011), margins (Leeper 2018), MASS (Venables and Ripley 2002), plyr (Wickham 2011), stargazer (Hlavac 2018), and zoo (Zeileis and Grothendieck 2005).

Part A: Continuous variables

| | min | median | mean | sd | max | N |
|------------------------------|-----|--------|------|--------|-------|------|
| Total words (DV1) | 0 | 593 | 1366 | 2682.3 | 50291 | 9494 |
| Total words / exposure (DV2) | 0 | 607 | 1391 | 2716.3 | 50291 | 9494 |
| Days in office (exposure) | 1 | 30 | 26.7 | 11.2 | 40 | 9494 |
| Party share | 0.4 | 25 | 29.2 | 15.9 | 51 | 9494 |
| Seniority | 0 | 1 | 1.7 | 2.2 | 17 | 9494 |
| Previous terms | 0 | 0 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 4 | 9494 |
| Age | 21 | 46 | 45.9 | 10.1 | 78 | 7332 |

Part B: Dichotomous variables

| | 0 | 1 | tot | N |
|----------|------|------|-----|------|
| Spoke | 37.6 | 62.4 | 100 | 9494 |
| Majority | 86.6 | 13.4 | 100 | 9494 |
| Leader | 98.3 | 1.7 | 100 | 9494 |
| Chair | 90.6 | 9.4 | 100 | 9494 |
| SMD | 39.3 | 60.7 | 100 | 9494 |
| Suplente | 94.2 | 5.8 | 100 | 9494 |
| Extraord | 84.5 | 15.5 | 100 | 9494 |
| Female | 64.2 | 35.8 | 100 | 9494 |
| 60th | 68.2 | 31.8 | 100 | 9494 |
| 62nd | 57.6 | 42.4 | 100 | 9494 |
| 64th | 74.2 | 25.8 | 100 | 9494 |
| PAN | 72.8 | 27.2 | 100 | 9494 |
| PRI | 72.8 | 27.2 | 100 | 9494 |
| Left | 70.0 | 30.0 | 100 | 9494 |

Table 2: Variable descriptives

leaves of absence). So the denominator for a member who spoke 2 thousand words and served uninterrupted throughout period p is one, and both specifications are equivalent. If she had served only half of the period instead, then the denominator would be 0.5, making her relative words equal $2000/0.5=4000$ in that period.

Table 2 has a summary of the dependent variable along others of interest. Member-period observations total 9494. The median member spoke 593 words per period, 607 when measured relative to days in office. At nearly 1400 words per period, means are substantially higher owing to a right-skewed speech distribution portrayed in Figure 1. Relevant to the choice of estimation methods, data appear to be over-dispersed (the standard deviation doubles the mean), so negative binomial appears the method of choice over poisson regression; and the nearly two out of five members who uttered not a single word in the period (37.6 percent) suggest adoption of a zero-inflated approach.

Debate quantities are easier to grasp when expressed as daily totals instead of the period totals

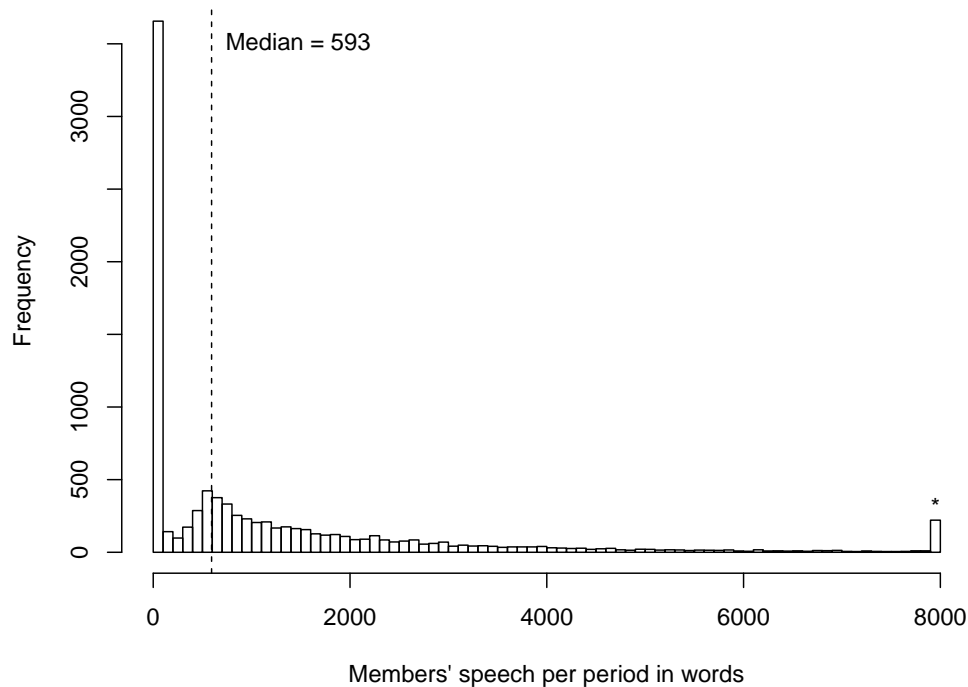


Figure 1: The dependent variable, absolute specification. The rightmost column under a star is fictitious, reporting 217 member-periods with 8 thousand words or more (2.2 percent of all, the actual distribution spreads these observations, with increasing sparseness, from 8000 to 50291).

analyzed. In the median session, 36.5 different speakers contributed to daily debate, and six days had over 100 speakers. Figure 2 portrays member daily aggregates across the periods analyzed. For clarity, this plot includes speakers only (non-speakers are included in the period aggregates analyzed below.) Solid points report median daily speech length in words. With few exceptions, period medians are much the same as the overall median daily speech length of 599 words. Mild term effects show up too, the 60th medians slightly above and the 64th slightly below the overall median. Horizontal lines report the spread of the central portion of the density—the thicker line is the inter-quartile range, the thinner connects the first and ninth deciles. Period distributions are, in general, similar. The clearest exceptions are extraordinary periods, drawn in gray. The models therefore include controls for Legislature and ordinary session effects.

Hollow points are minima and maxima. Diputada Valentina Batres holds the record for delivering the longest speech in the three terms examined. At 15,932 words, her speech delivered March 11th, 2008 is 50 percent longer than the runner-up and has about as many words as *Don*

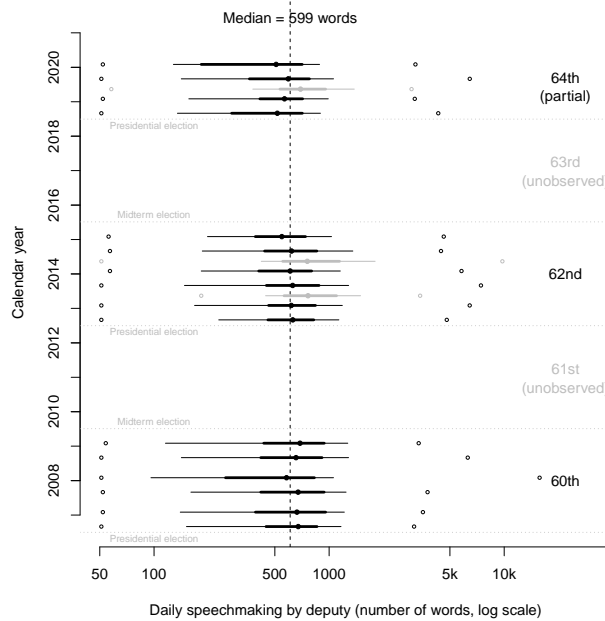


Figure 2: Daily speech length by legislative period observed. The plot excludes non-speaking members. Solid points indicate the median speech length in the period. Thick and thin lines connect the 25–75 and 10–90 percentiles, respectively. Hollow points are minima and maxima. Ordinary periods in black, extraordinary periods in gray.

Quijote de la Mancha’s chapters 1 through 7 (forty-five pages in the edition I own). Batres and legislators close to AMLO used dilatory tactics throughout that session, delaying the vote of a national geostatistics law. I suspect that filibustering was probably aimed at a bill down the line, with plainer distributive effects (cf. Wawro and Schickler 2007). A systematic study of filibustering in the Cámara is worthy of further study. The names associated with extreme member-periods (those grouped in Figure 1’s starred column to the right) are few: only nine deputies repeatedly surpassed 20 thousand words per period, mostly in the 62nd term. They are routine filibusters.

5.2 Independent variables

Two quantities of interest across chapters are the intersections of gender and seniority with floor access. Of 1710 members observed, 39 percent are women. Owing to stricter quotas, 47 percent of the 64th Legislature members were women, up from 28 in the 60th (Piscopo 2016). While disproportional among committee chairs and party leaders, the gender split among Cámara presidents

| | % women | of |
|---------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| Members | 39 | 1710^ |
| -60th | 28 | 603 |
| -62nd | 41 | 640 |
| -64th | 47 | 531 |
| Cámara presidents | 35 | 31 |
| Committee chairs | 25 | 143 |
| Party leaders | 21 | 24 |
| - major party | 0 | 12 |
| - opportunistic | 42 | 12 |
| Speechmakers | 37 | 5926 |
| Words spoken | 41 | 17.5M |
| ^Returning members counted once only. | | |

Table 3: Women representation and debate

is about proportional relative to women’s numerical presence. So is access to the floor in terms of speakers (37 percent), but women are over-represented in terms of words (41 percent). Women delivered longer speeches.

Single-term limits offer little leverage to evaluate how seniority impacts floor access. Members wishing to return had to wait one term at least. Still, of 1710 members observed, 14 percent had previous federal deputy experience. This suggests that the removal of single-terms will not be irrelevant due to lack of static ambition (as in Argentina, for instance). Freshmen spoke 1212 words on average in the period, compared to 1966 for members with one past term or more as deputies. Deputy-periods with one past term spoke 48 percent more words than those with none; those with two past terms spoke 61 percent more words than those with one; but members more than two past terms spoke 25 percent less words than those with two. This drop could be attributable to earlier recruitment of senior members, antedating competitive politics; or it could be due to the higher probability that senior members occupy leadership posts that might depress willingness to speak despite floor access possibilities. The multivariate analysis might shed some light.

5.3 A model of debate

To analyze participation in floor debates, I fit multivariate event count models to words spoken. In the right side are status variables, member characteristics, and controls. Units are member-periods.

| Past terms | Mean words by period | Member- periods |
|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 0 | 1212 | 7558 |
| > 0 | 1966 | 1936 |
| 1 | 1796 | 1523 |
| 2 | 2892 | 330 |
| > 2 | 1413 | 83 |

Table 4: Seniority and floor access, member-periods

5.3.1 Status variables

A dummy for **majority** status indicates members from Morena in the 64th Legislature—the only party controlling over 50 percent of seats. If debate is an (imperfect) substitute for legislative outcomes, then minority members demand more frequent floor participation (Proksch and Slapin 2015). On the contrary, if members put value on debate per se, the majority may demand it as much as others, possibly with better access to the floor. Next, a dummy for committee **chair** status. When producing a report, the chair has privileged access to the floor, and this should translate into more speech. A dummy for party **leader** status completes this set. Leaders allocate party speakers. Whether or not they take advantage of this privilege remains an open question, a good leader ought to distribute the goodies, or risk removal.

5.3.2 Member variables

Aside from **woman** and **seniority**, the right side includes **smd**, a dummy equal one for members elected in single-member districts. The method of election is behind systematic differences in members’ pork requests (Kerevell 2015), which may also translate into higher demand for access to the floor. I also interact this regressor with a dummy indicating the 64th Legislature, which dropped single-term limits (**smd x reelection**). The more personal vote should generate higher demand for floor access. **Party size** is the percentage of seats the member’s party holds. Larger parties must divide the slot that all parties get to take the floor among more members, and this should show up as a negative regression coefficient. And a dummy **suplente** controls for substitute members. Regressors not in the right side include members’ ages due to incomplete data, and

party ideology, which made no difference in the estimates. Replication material is available.

5.3.3 Other controls

Also in the right side are dummies for the *62nd* and *64th* terms (the 60th is the baseline) and another for *extraordinary* periods. Finally, with the option to take leaves of absence and have suplentes take over, some members served incomplete periods. The *exposure* is the number of days that the members served in the period, logged. Higher exposure offers more opportunities for floor access.

Table 5 reports the estimation of six different model specifications. In the left side are both flavors of the dependent variable. Models of words relative to tenure (1, 2, and 3) were fit with ordinary least squares, models of the absolute words (4, 5, and 6) with negative binomial regression. Specifications vary the regressors. Models 2, 3, 5, and 6 include fixed term effects, capturing any heterogeneity between Legislatures that are pooled together. Model 3 estimates separate error terms for each member, capturing individual heterogeneity. And model 6 accounts for the zero-inflated distribution seen in Figure 1. The overall fit is correct across models, likelihood ratio tests (not reported) reject the intercept-only model with much confidence.

Interesting patterns emerge. Party size exerted a negative and significant across effect in the words members spoke in the session across specifications. This is easier to interpret from OLS coefficients: other variables constant, changing the party size from large (40 percent of seats) to small (15 percent) associates with a predicted drop of 1,600 words by member in the period. Martin Luther King took 16 minutes to deliver his famous "I have a dream" speech, which approximates that word count. There also appears a positive, significant, and large effect of majority status, which acts against size. Far from letting legislative accomplishments only speak for themselves, majority members take the floor systematically more than those of similar-sized parties. Figure 3 demonstrates the discontinuity through simulation with model 5 parameters.

eric x

Note that the relative equals absolute words divided by the share of period p 's duration that

| ===== | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| DV = Words/exposure in period | | | | | | |
| ----- | | | | | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| ----- | | | | | | |
| Exposure (logged) | | | | 0.93*** (0.04) | 0.95*** (0.04) | 0.34*** (0.02) |
| Majority | 1,029.48*** (91.07) | 1,489.83*** (137.37) | 835.24*** (226.39) | 1.03*** (0.09) | 1.04*** (0.14) | 0.78*** (0.06) |
| Party leader | 2,186.15*** (206.55) | 1,972.75*** (205.36) | 1,309.31*** (310.46) | 0.40* (0.21) | 0.33 (0.21) | 0.28*** (0.07) |
| Comm. chair | 247.65*** (89.79) | 139.20 (89.29) | 88.01 (152.24) | 0.37*** (0.09) | 0.32*** (0.09) | 0.14*** (0.04) |
| Seniority | 145.30*** (48.19) | 180.04*** (47.59) | 203.98** (85.93) | 0.16*** (0.05) | 0.17*** (0.05) | 0.12*** (0.02) |
| Woman | 164.02*** (54.92) | 125.84** (54.94) | 17.03 (99.85) | 0.08 (0.06) | 0.07 (0.06) | 0.03 (0.02) |
| Party size | -67.81*** (2.00) | -72.36*** (2.26) | -63.36*** (3.85) | -0.05*** (0.002) | -0.05*** (0.002) | -0.04*** (0.001) |
| SMD | -38.64 (55.93) | -106.08 (65.04) | -121.47 (115.72) | -0.03 (0.06) | -0.10 (0.07) | -0.03 (0.03) |
| SMD x reelect | | 267.50** (120.97) | 3.43 (189.85) | | 0.26** (0.12) | 0.11** (0.05) |
| Suplente | -310.36*** (110.62) | -379.09*** (109.03) | -354.13** (140.76) | -0.35*** (0.11) | -0.36*** (0.11) | -0.35*** (0.05) |
| 62nd Leg. | | 689.82*** (63.01) | 825.22*** (96.98) | | 0.18*** (0.06) | 0.08*** (0.03) |
| 64th Leg. | | -118.71 (114.65) | 523.90*** (165.78) | | -0.09 (0.12) | -0.21*** (0.04) |
| Extraordinary | | -1,101.73*** (73.24) | -1,109.15*** (48.29) | | | |
| Constant | 3,119.59*** (70.98) | 3,122.09*** (86.15) | 2,829.41*** (144.04) | 5.22*** (0.14) | 5.09*** (0.16) | 7.26*** (0.08) |
| ----- | | | | | | |
| Fixed effects | no | term | term | no | term | term |
| Random effects | no | no | member | no | no | no |
| Estimation method | OLS | OLS | linear mixed-effects | negative binomial | negative binomial | zero-inflated count data |
| ----- | | | | | | |
| Observations | 9,494 | 9,494 | 9,494 | 9,494 | 9,494 | 9,494 |
| R2 | 0.15 | 0.18 | | | | |
| Adjusted R2 | 0.15 | 0.17 | | | | |
| Log Likelihood | | | -85,190.54 | -60,825.36 | -60,818.74 | -55,503.49 |
| theta | | | | 0.16*** (0.002) | 0.16*** (0.002) | |
| Akaike Inf. Crit. | | | 170,411.10 | 121,670.70 | 121,663.50 | |
| Bayesian Inf. Crit. | | | 170,518.50 | | | |
| Residual Std. Error | 2,506.13 (df = 9485) | 2,467.49 (df = 9481) | | | | |
| F Statistic | 208.32*** (df = 8; 9485) | 168.54*** (df = 12; 9481) | | | | |
| LR test intercept-only | | | | | | |
| ===== | | | | | | |
| Note: | | | | *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 | | |

Table 5: Models of legislative debate. Standard errors in parentheses.

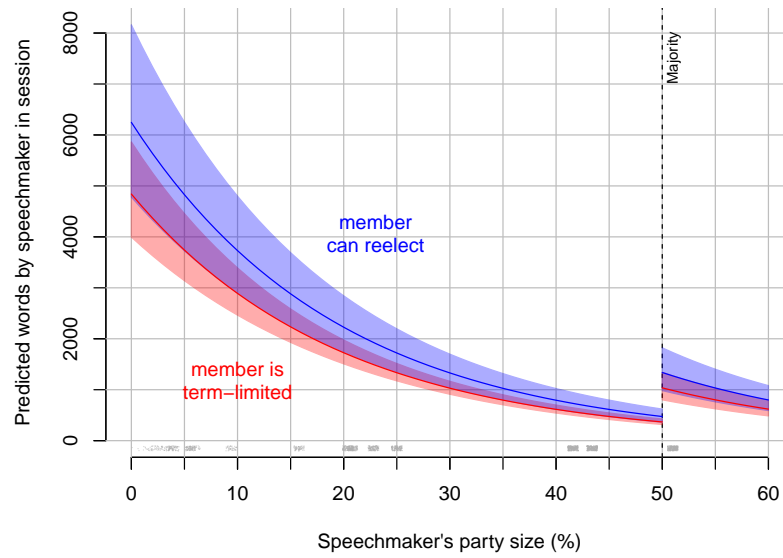


Figure 3: Predicted speech length. Lines report point predictions using model 5.

member i served, so the **exposure** is in the left side of OLS models and not in the right.

Figure 4 reports changes in the average predicted number of words associated with unit changes in explanatory variables. This exercise uses model 5 estimates. By translating into interpretable quantities, marginal effects are a convenient way to gauge negative binomial regression coefficients. It is clear in the plot that the largest effect is attributable to majority status. Other things constant (at mean values), members in the majority party each spoke between about 1,000 and 1,900 more words per period than the rest of the chamber. Multiplication of that average by Morena's 254 members in the 64th Legislature produces 372 thousand additional words—47 percent of all words in the median ordinary period.

5.3.4 Predicted words

6 Country-Specific Section

[ca 1000 words] In this section, you can feel free to make model extensions that have interest in the light of the chapter you are exploring. Please do not forget to explain the variables in use, as well as why they are important for your country. Include a table of results plus a plot for marginal

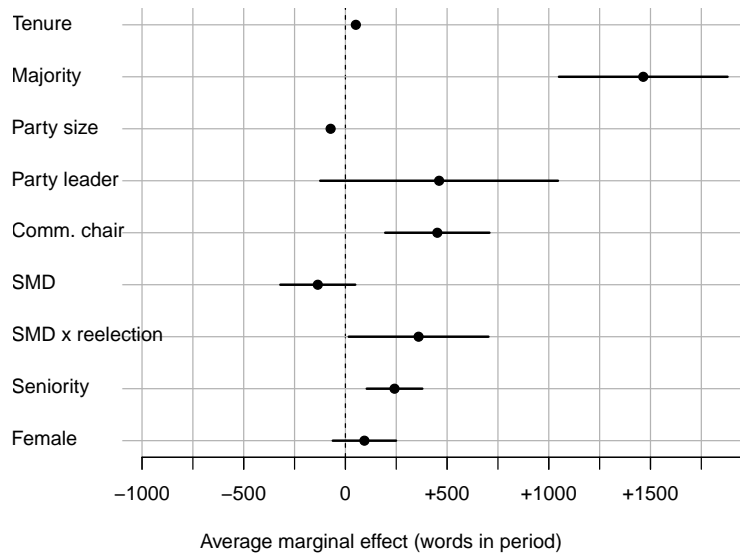


Figure 4: Average marginal effects from model 5. Dots report the effect in expected period speech length of a unit change in each independent variable, all else at mean values; bars are 95-percent confidence intervals.

effects.

7 Conclusions

[ca 500 words] concluding discussion of general patterns of speechmaking (institutions and empirical results in terms of background variables)

Stuff to add to EMM's text DONE 3. In terms of window of observation/time period under study: we don't have a particular guideline for this. Please use the window of observation that you believe is more representative of the politics of legislative debate in your country. Ideally we would like each chapter to include several legislative periods, but we are pragmatic here, considering data availability. EMM: Terminology - A Legislature (with Roman numerals for reasons I ignore) is an elected chamber for a legislative term, called a Congress in the U.S. Concurrent with presidential elections the chamber of deputies renovates in whole, and again at the presidential mid-term. Diputados remain three years in office and were single term-limited up to 2021. The 2021 mid-term election will be the first since 1932 to allow incumbents on the ballot, a major change in

Mexican legislative politics. - Legislative years break into two "ordinary periods", one covering the months of September through December, inclusive, another February through April, also inclusive. "Extraordinary periods" may be convened during the recess in order to consider a specific bill. Analysis aggregates each member's speeches in the duration of a given period (merging together all extraordinary periods that year, if any). So members in a legislative year like 2012-13 (that had no extraordinary periods) have two word aggregates in the dataset, one for each ordinary period; in a year like 2013-14 (that did), they have three word aggregates in the data. Periods are the units of aggregation in the analysis. - A plenary session is a specific date in the calendar when diputados met. During ordinary periods, sessions are usually held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and may be scheduled in other weekdays if the Jucopo so decides. Diputados met on forty and thirty-one days in the first and second ordinary periods of 2013-14, respectively, and nine days in extraordinary periods, for a yearly total of eighty session days. (A session in North-American legislative parlance is a Mexican period.)

8 Appendix: Terminology

- A **Legislature** is an elected chamber for a legislative term, called a Congress in the U.S. Concurrent with presidential elections the chamber of deputies renovates in whole, and again at the presidential mid-term. Diputados remain three years in office and were single term-limited up to 2021. The 2021 mid-term election will be the first since 1932 to allow incumbents on the ballot, a major change in Mexican legislative politics. Analysis includes the 60th, 62nd, and 64th Legislatures (the Mexican Congress relies on Roman numerals to distinguish Legislatures since the second half of the Nineteenth century).

- Legislative years break into two **ordinary legislative periods**, one covering the months of September through December, inclusive, another February through April, also inclusive. **Extraordinary legislative periods** may be convened during the recess in order to consider a specific bill. Analysis aggregates each member's speeches in the duration of a given period (merging together all extraordinary periods that year, if any). So members in a legislative year like 2012-13 (that had no extraordinary periods) have two word aggregates in the dataset, one for each ordinary period; in a year like 2013-14 (that did), they have three word aggregates in the data. Periods are the units of observation in the analysis.

- A **plenary session** (or simply a session) is a specific date in the calendar when diputados met. During ordinary periods, sessions are usually held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and may be scheduled in other weekdays if the Jucopo so decides. Diputados met on forty and thirty-one days

in the first and second ordinary periods of 2013-14, respectively, and nine days in extraordinary periods, for a yearly total of eighty session days. (A session in North-American legislative parlance is a Mexican period.)

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