

**INSTITUTIONAL VARIATION, BALANCE OF POWER AND AGENDA
CONTROL: EVIDENCE FROM THE ARGENTINE SUBNATIONAL
LEGISLATURES**

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Doctor of Philosophy

By

Marina P. Lacalle

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates how patterns of legislative competition (i.e. partisan fragmentation and the majority/plurality party) are likely to affect the effect of rules and practices that govern the legislative process.

These different patterns of legislative competition, I argue, will have an impact on the agenda-setting prerogatives of majority, plurality and minority parties; determining which bill initiatives are given consideration by the plenary floor and will win final approval in a state legislature. That is, my research will show how the gatekeeping prerogatives of majority, plurality, and minority parties; affect the relative success of individual legislators and the type of state's legislation being approved.

The data to test these hypotheses come from a promising yet unexplored source: the local legislatures of Argentina's provinces over a twenty five year period, 1984-2009. My research will not only contribute to the literature on comparative legislatures but also to the knowledge of subnational legislative success in federal countries.

I expect my research to show that changes in the partisan environment within local legislatures shapes the selection and use of gatekeeping prerogatives by majority parties e.g. distribution of authority posts and committee assignments. To explore the ability of the majority, plurality, and minority parties to set the legislative agenda, I distinguish rates of introduction and success by type of party, legislative bloc, and year (1983 to 2009). I expect variation in the partisan make-up of the legislation reaching the floor to provide critical information on the use of gatekeeping institutions by majority, plurality, and majority parties.

The findings generated in this project will contribute to the discipline by furthering our understanding of subnational legislative politics in federal polities. Moreover, this project will disentangle institutional and contextual determinants of legislative success, which are critical to understand the organization of local legislatures. The data collected for this project will prove a valuable contribution to future scholars interested in furthering comparative legislative studies. Such research should also prove valuable to assess the performance of legislative bodies and improve the levels of transparency and accountability in emerging democracies.

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INTRODUCTION

*“Nobody has a majority right now, isn't that what you guys wanted?
If you want to appoint the Speaker, do it. We can survive without any position.
It's fine if they want to kick us out from all committees. We'll find some office...
We've the people's streets, we've the microphones, we've got lots of places to talk.”*

Former Argentine President Nestor C. Kirchner

First speech after the opposition took control of the majority of committee positions

Buenos Aires, November 25th, 2009.

The Inquiries

Just like electoral parties compete to gain seats in the legislature, legislative parties compete to enjoy the benefit of controlling influential offices such as the chairmanships of committees. The results of the latter will depend on the rules that shape the contest. The legislature's internal rules of procedure are typically endogenous, and thereby affected by the type of political configuration of the legislature, i.e. two-party or multiparty composition. In this regard, the literature has stated that the allocation of committee chairs is strongly related to the partisan configuration on the plenary floor and to overall legislative success.

This dissertation studies the relationship between electoral rules, legislative authority, and legislative success. It does so by focusing on subnational legislatures

which have not been previously studied. In doing so, it answers important questions about the organization of subnational legislatures and their effect on politics.

As I advance this research agenda, readers will find the answer to four different issues that are of general relevance to the discipline: firstly, how majoritarian or proportional allocations of seats lead to biases in the allocation of committee assignments. Secondly, how majoritarian and proportional allocations of seats lead to biases in the allocation of authority positions. Thirdly, how committee composition affects the consideration and passage of legislation. And, fourthly, how authority roles affect legislative success. In answering these questions, I provide quantitative, qualitative, and historical evidence to provide the first comprehensive analyses of legislative success in subnational legislatures of Latin America.

Since distant times, legislatures have been recognized as a central institution in democratic countries. In presidential democracies, the literature argues, legislatures have four main goals: to represent, to control the executive office, to produce legislation and to add legitimacy to the democratic system. Given its importance in every country's democratic life, scholars have dedicated multiple books and articles to exploring and disentangling their internal functioning; specifically, how legislatures are organized, why legislatures are set up the way they are, and what the effects of the different types of organizations legislatures might adopt are. Theoretically, the organizational issue is central to comprehending legislatures, principally due to a main problem they have to overcome: the management of a scarce and finite resource like time (Cox 2005). The large amount

of bills usually introduced into legislatures in combination with the dearth of time tends to generate bottleneck problems. Therefore, in order to make an effective use of time, legislatures need to be organized in dividing tasks through the committee system. This congressional institution is vital in the division of the labor and the decision making process of legislative activity, since holding a position of authority in the committee system constitutes an important resource in the process of passing legislation. Following this argument, two central questions have guided most studies on legislatures' organization and legislative success: First, **who participates in committees and holds committees' positions of authority**; second, **how does this distribution of power affect legislative success?** These two inquiries constitute the backbone of this dissertation.

Theories on legislative organization have devoted years of investigation to explain how the American Federal Congress works, as the pioneer case among those with separation of powers. Several studies provided compelling evidence that political parties matter and specifically, that the majority party tends to cartelize, controls key posts in the committee system, manipulates the agenda and, finally, increases the passage of its members' priorities to the plenary floor (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). This assertion has been largely tested in the case of the United State Congress, where the composition of Congress never differs from a two-party system, and where conditions always give rise to majoritarian party able to cartelize the legislative agenda. In such a case, theoretical expectations and empirical implications for the legislative process tend to be clear and straightforward. However, other political systems might offer other types of scenarios where the size

and dynamics of the cartel may vary. These dissimilar settings make the investigation of the performance of legislative cartels more interesting and challenging.

Theoretical Argument

The literature has stated that the allocation of committee chairs is strongly related to the partisan configuration on the plenary floor (Carroll et al 2006). Just like electoral parties compete to gain seats in the legislature, legislative parties compete to enjoy the benefit of getting a chairmanship position. The results of that competition will depend on the type of rules that shape the contest. In parallel, given that institutions are endogenous, these rules are affected by the type of political configuration of the legislature, i.e. two-party or multiparty composition. Therefore, in proportional legislatures we will expect to see a proportional distribution of committee chairs.

On the other hand, the legislative cartel fills mega-seats with individuals from within to maintain party cohesion and to control the flow of legislation that reaches the plenary floor. Given the prerogatives that these positions of authority entail, it is reasonable to think that these committee heads and the speaker have comparative advantages vis-à-vis a single backbencher in the delivery of their own policy priorities. Therefore, committee chairs should be systematically more likely to get the bills they sponsor passed. Moreover, if plurality legislative parties are able to control key positions of authority and if those posts are used to filter the set of bills that will reach the plenary floor for discussion; we should expect the plurality cartel to be successful in approving the pieces of legislation submitted by its members. When

political parties face a majority loss, I argue, they tend to adapt and make use of the institutional arrangements to advance their interests. Therefore, plurality cartels should not have a substantively different legislative performance than parties who hold a majority on the floor.

Looking Beyond the US

During the past three decades, a considerable number of countries have set out on the road from authoritarian rule towards democracy. Many of these countries are presidential systems. Such an increase in the number of presidential democracies provided extensive variation to the analysis of legislatures. Countries with different types of electoral rules, varying organizations of the legislative power (i.e. bicameralism/unicameralism), dissimilar types of party systems (i.e. fragmentation), different levels of party cohesion and discipline, presidents with varying institutional prerogatives (i.e. decree power, veto power, initiation power) and legislatures with different rights to overcome presidential initiatives (i.e. number of hands required to insist on the approval of legislative projects initiated in congress or to reject a veto) have awakened the interest of comparative scholars. The impressive variation among presidential cases lets researchers test preexisting theories of legislative politics and legislative organization that were originally thought to explain the American case. Therefore, the comparative politics literature has contributed to this research area by analyzing legislatures' organizational features and legislative success in a variety of countries. However, despite the research opportunity these systems offer, most contributions are either centered on single case studies, binary or cross-country

comparisons, and are hardly generalizable. Furthermore, even though there are a number of large-N contributions, none of them performed analyses in controlled environments, nor empirically assessed agenda control processes utilizing extensive empirical information.

This dissertation seeks to overcome some of these weaknesses and contribute to the comparative analysis of legislative institutions by “*scaling-down*” (Snyder 2001) and exploring the central questions of interest in subnational systems in a federal country: Argentina.

Why study subnational systems? With the decentralization processes implemented during the 1980s and 1990s in Latin America, where responsibilities, authority and resources were transferred from higher to lower levels of government (Falleti 2010); there has been a reawakening of federalism (Gibson 2005) and the study of state politics started to capture the attention of researchers. The rising interest in the analysis of subnational legislatures reveals that this is a fruitful field where preexistent assumptions and hypotheses can be tested. In spite of the methodological and empirical benefits of state level analyses, they have rarely been implemented outside of the American case. Exploring subnational systems in other federal countries besides the United States is not only a fruitful strategy in methodological terms, but also an important empirical contribution to the literature on legislative politics.

The Argentine subnational legislatures provide a context that offers a long period of democratic life (1983-2013). It was already mentioned that diversity in institutional and political variables offers researchers an outstanding opportunity to

test established theories on unique settings. In this regard, the Argentine case is remarkable since Argentine provinces show considerable degrees of variation in several institutional and political aspects (i.e. electoral systems, legislative format, legislatures' size, and sociodemographic characteristics, among others).

To test my arguments, I chose five legislative chambers that capture considerable political and institutional diversity within Argentina: the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies (1995-2012) and Senate (1992-2011), the Senate of Mendoza (1998-2010), Misiones' Chamber of Deputies (1983-2009) and the Senate of Santa Fe (2004-2011). These political units offer an opportunity to examine the effect of institutional rules (i.e. electoral systems, legislatures' internal rules) on legislative composition and legislative outcomes in cases with dissimilar electoral rules, legislative compositions, internal rules (among others); while holding many other important aspects, like cultural and historical variables, constant.

Central Contributions

Given the importance of legislatures' composition on the distribution of power within legislatures and in consequence, on legislative outputs; this analysis contributes to the study of legislatures by adding empirical evidence of the direct effect of allocation of power on the legislative process. Increasing our understanding about committee composition in other political settings will enrich our knowledge on the role of parties in the organization of legislatures and in consequence, their role in the process of agenda control. Moreover, this project also contributes to the literature on legislative politics and subnational governments in different ways. First, I test

existing arguments regarding political parties' legislative success in dissimilar political scenarios across time. Second, I investigate how patterns of political composition (i.e. partisan fragmentation and majority/minority governments) are likely to impact the rules and practices that govern the legislative process; something usually omitted in most comparative analyses about the topic. Third, I collect an original data set to test these hypotheses in a promising but unexplored area: the Argentine provinces. My research will not only contribute to the literature on legislative politics, but also to our knowledge regarding subnational units in federal countries.

Additionally, the research question benefits from this case selection for several different reasons. First, the analysis of subnational political systems has been shown to be a fruitful field to test existing theories of legislative performance and behavior. However, even though subnational governments have been widely studied in the United States, they have been poorly investigated in other political settings; where higher variation can be found. Second, Argentine subnational units offer an invaluable opportunity to compare political systems which differ in several institutional and political aspects (i.e. electoral systems, legislative format, legislature size, and sociodemographic characteristics). Third, even though the Argentine federal system has been widely analyzed by different scholars, a paradoxically low number of studies have focused on subnational legislatures. In consequence, the data generated for this project will enable other scholars to test additional hypotheses and/or investigate more in depth not only the legislative performance of political parties, but also the functioning of subnational governments in federal countries.

Finally, this analysis will also make an empirical contribution to the discipline in general. This dissertation will increase our knowledge regarding legislative studies by using the comparative method to investigate legislatures with very dissimilar characteristics, in very different political contexts. This study will contribute to the political science discipline by furthering our understanding of legislative politics, and creating other research opportunities. I collected original data to test preexistent as well as innovative hypotheses. This will add value to the understanding of legislative politics, and it will also open a space for future research. Given the importance that subnational governments have in multi-tier systems, the original data generated in this project will also create a reference for other scholars interested in testing their hypotheses and/or investigating more in depth not only political parties' legislative performance, but also subnational governmental performance in federal countries.

Outline of the Study

Chapter 2 reviews different perspectives presented by the literature about the role of political parties in the legislative process and specifically, about the involvement of parties in the process of influencing the legislative agenda. This chapter provides a detailed description of the theoretical arguments discussed in the literature on legislative organization, specifically regarding the role of the majority party and the committee system, in a comparative manner. Moreover, this chapter introduces the two central questions that guide this study and enumerates the different contributions of this analysis to the study of diverse types of legislatures.

Chapter 3 provides theoretical tools to comprehend different aspects of the study of subnational political systems, and also defines the strategy utilized to select the cases that will be tested in the subsequent sections. This chapter also presents an institutional and political description of the five legislative chambers selected to test the hypotheses: the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies (1995-2012) and Senate (1992-2011), the Senate of Mendoza (1998-2010), Misiones' Chamber of Deputies (1983-2009) and the Senate of Santa Fe (2004-2011).

Chapter 4 explores the first question to be investigated in this study: who receives positions of authority in the committee system in legislatures with a majoritarian and proportional composition? In other words, this section explores the extent to which proportionality on the plenary floor is reflected in the selection of committee chairs and in the allocation of committee members. The empirical evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates that regardless of strong majoritarian biases on every legislatures' floor, the first hypothesis is not verified. The allocation of committee members in every single legislature in this study (including the most majoritarian one) is revealed to be almost perfectly proportional. However, estimations demonstrate that there is a majoritarian bonus in the selection of mega-seats. All things considered, the findings offered in this chapter trigger the formulation of other critical questions regarding the process of agenda control in different types of legislatures (i.e. with and without majority parties).

Chapter 5 explores the second inquiry formulated in this study: the probability of legislative success in majoritarian and proportional legislatures or in other words, the probability of legislative success in legislatures where there is a majority cartel

and in legislatures where the larger party does not hold the majority of legislative seats (plurality cartel). Due to its capacity to adapt and control key posts in the committee system (despite its size), I expect the larger party to have higher probabilities of passing legislation than other minor parties. Moreover, given that individual legislators that occupy a position of authority enjoy extra benefits in deciding the agenda, I expect chairs to be more successful in passing the pieces of legislation they prefer than their counterparts. Empirical findings partially confirm my expectations. The size of the party is a central factor to explain legislators' legislative success, in contrast with the null effect of chairmanship positions. The set of provinces analyzed here offer some interesting particularities to highlight. Some of these differences (analyzed throughout the chapter) have to do with the particularities of each case, which open a space for further in-depth research.

Finally, Chapter 6 offers a summary and discussion of the main findings for this study, as well as final remarks and thoughts for further research.

THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM AND THE CONTROL OF THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review different perspectives presented by the literature about the role of political parties in the legislative process and specifically, about the involvement of parties in the process of influencing the legislative agenda. When discussing agenda control, it is important to consider two institutions that are vital to this process: the majority party and the committee system. This chapter provides a detailed description of the theoretical arguments discussed in the literature on legislative organization in a comparative manner. The discussion about the empirical findings provided by the literature will shape the central argument of this thesis. In general terms, partisan theories have argued that the majority party cartelizes itself and controls key posts in the committee system, which facilitates the passage of its agenda to the plenary floor. Political parties, I argue, also adapt to the eventual loss of their majoritarian status and make use of the institutional arrangements to advance their interests.

The literature has contributed to this research area analyzing legislatures' organizational features and legislative success in a variety of countries. Nevertheless, most contributions are either centered on single case studies or binary comparisons. Even though there are several large-N contributions, none of them perform analysis in controlled environments, nor assess agenda control processes utilizing extensive

empirical information. This dissertation seeks to overcome some of these weaknesses and contribute the cross-national analysis of legislative institutions.

The chapter is organized as follows: Section 2 introduces the two central questions that guide this study. The third section discusses the principal theories of legislative organization. Sections 4 and 5 describe the centrality of the study of the committee system and legislative success in a comparative manner. Section 6 presents the analysis and the hypothesis to be explored in the next chapters. Finally, Section 7 enumerates the different contributions of this analysis to the study of diverse types of legislatures.

2.2. Theoretical Argument

To assert that rules and institutions are neither obsolete nor neutral is not new. The adoption of a set of rules usually improves the position of some actors, leaves others out of the game, or encourages strategic behavior. The legislative arena is far from being the exception. One of the central premises of neo-institutional approaches in the study of legislatures is the majoritarian postulate. This asserts that every legislative choice (i.e. organizational, procedural, and those regarding substantive issues introduced into assemblies) is made by majorities. This majoritarian postulate, Shepsle and Weingast (1994) say, stresses that institutions are effectively endogenous.

Given that institutions themselves are the product of choices, institutional arrangements that frustrate the will of the majority cannot be expected to survive long (Krehbiel 1991, Shepsle and Weingast 1994). Moreover, with the passage of

time, legislatures create offices (i.e. committee chairs, cabinet ministers) endowed with special agenda-setting powers as a solution to the plenary bottleneck and the inalienability of plenary sovereignty problems (Cox 1994). Even though legislators remain equal in voting power, the creation of these offices implies that they are unequal in terms of agenda-setting power.

As Cox states, this issue brings to the forefront two main questions. On the one hand, **who is going to integrate these offices?** On the other hand, **how do different structures of agenda power affect legislative outcomes?** In this regard, theories on legislative politics have presented different standpoints about the role and degree of relevance of parties and committees in the legislative process. In general terms, while some scholars consider committees just a mean to an end (i.e. good public policy, Krehbiel 1991); others argue that both the majority party and the committee system are more than that, given that these institutions have veto prerogatives and constitute the main columns of the U.S. Congress legislative system (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005).

I propose to start discussing the **composition of committees** and the **role of the majority party** in the legislative process, which are central to this thesis, by exploring the views of the four predominant theories on legislative politics.

The next section of the chapter reviews, in order of appearance, the principal assumptions and arguments posited by the main theories of legislative organization. It is important to mention that these theories have been developed with the goal of disentangling the motivations of individual actors (i.e. legislators, legislative authorities) and parties throughout the policymaking process in the United States.

Aside from the plethora of studies analyzing the U.S. Congress in particular, several attempts (discussed in the next section) have been made to test the validity of these theories in other presidential democracies. For the sake of organization, I consider that revising the main arguments of the four principal theories of legislative organization is the best way to start the discussion on committee systems and the role of the majority party in influencing the legislative agenda.

2.3. Theories of Legislative Organization

Distributive Theories

Distributive theories refer to the so called “floor models”. Scholars working on the U.S. House of Representatives, where legislators are elected under majoritarian rules and reelection rates are high, have argued that, in an environment where political parties do not have a big say in collective decisions, individuals need to extract resources and pass targeted policies to satisfy their voters and succeed in their reelection attempts every two years. Following Groseclose (2000), the problem in the American Congress can be illustrated as “*a collection of minority special interests trying to divide a pie*” and “*because the division is not a zero-sum game, the process is more like dividing up a pie that contains slices of many different flavors*”. So, some members of Congress prefer a “larger slice” of one committee over others. Thus, the committee system tends to channel ambition and interests, and contributes to the enforcement of prior agreements among members of Congress.

An important implication of distributive theories is that committees are unrepresentative of the chamber given that each of them is filled by preference

outliers (Shepsle and Weingast 1994, Groseclose 2000), which means it is individuals with a high level of personal interest about their respective policy area who mainly have extractive goals. To get their policies enacted, committees proceed to trade, logrolling to get the policies they care about enacted. One relevant implication of this theory is that committees should have gatekeeping powers. This means that committees can prevent bills from reaching the plenary floor.

In addition, the seniority system is seen as contributing to this arrangement. Seniority becomes the main principle upon which to establish intra-committee hierarchies and to secure prior commitments. The argument is that if a majority of the members of the chamber can get rid of the most intensely interested committee members at any time, then members of committees are unable to protect prior commitments (logrolls). Moreover, since the most intensely interested members will stay in a committee the longest, the seniority system also helps to ensure that they become chairpersons (Groseclose, 2001). Long-lasting members also tend to influence the selection of newcomers in cases of vacancies.

Finally, regarding legislative success, the distributive theory posits that bills reported out of committees are likely to be passed on the floor, as systematic rejections would prevent members from cooperating and getting benefits, and therefore the giant logroll would lose its efficacy.

Informational Theories

An alternative perspective within the literature that analyzes the U.S. Congress is the informational theory (Gilligan and Krehbiel, 1987, 1989; Krehbiel

1991). One of its main sources of disagreement with distributional theories lies in one of the basic assumptions of legislators' motivations: aside from reelection and progress in the legislative hierarchy, informational models explicitly state that good public policy is a major goal of each representative. Such an axiom relies on the idea that voters, apart from not caring about parties, are going to evaluate legislators' performances based on outcomes, rather than position takings and proposals. Legislators, in turn, are uncertain about the consequences of laws, which creates an incentive for developing rules that promote expertise (Krehbiel 1992). According to this theory, committee members are better informed about the implementation and consequences of a policy than the full membership. Once they have joined the committee of their preference, legislators tend to gather information and exchange it with their peers. Out of such interactions, the best feasible policy (understood as technically reliable) is going to be reported out of the committee.

Every time committees report a bill, they send important pieces of information to the plenary floor, which can amend the bill in order to make it closer to the plenary floor's interests (Groseclose, 2001). The committees' interests are expected to be aligned with the floor members' interests. The committee sends all the necessary information and, in consequence, the floor learns all the information committees have developed. In this regard, as Groseclose (2000) explains, Gilligan and Krehbiel demonstrate in a formal model that *"if the committee's preferences differ from the floor's, it will want to exaggerate its information in such a way to cause the floor to write a bill that ends up being very similar to the bill that the committee would write if it had sole authority. But the floor recognizes the committee's incentives to exaggerate, and it discounts*

the information the committee provides accordingly.” So, the greater the differences between floor and committee preferences, the less information the committee will be able to transmit successfully.

As long as the policy succeeds in persuading the median voter of the floor that it is accurate, it should be approved. As a result, committee reports are likely to mirror the floor’s median member preferences. An endogenous explanation of this outcome is related to committee composition: members are likely to be moderates (not policy outliers) that represent the whole political spectrum. The literature predicts that if committees are instruments of the legislatures, then the floor has some control over the allocation of committee members, which implies, contrary to what distributive theories establish, that committees should not be composed of preference outliers (Groseclose, 1994).

Seniority (understood as continuous service) is also key for this theory, especially within committees. Legislators that remain in the committee system for an extended period of time increase their expertise in specific issues. The informational theory states that legislators come to treat service on a committee as a long-term investment, and the more senior they become, the less likely they are to leave the committee (Groseclose, 2000). Following this argument, the relevance of parties in terms of their size (i.e. the majority party) and seniority seem to be inconsistent with the informational theory. The argument is straightforward: if legislators with more expertise and longevity belong to the minority party, why can’t they become chair? Moreover, proportional representation of the minority party in committees is also consistent with the informational theory because if committees were composed only

of legislators from the majority party, it would be very difficult (almost impossible) for the committee median to have the same preferences as the floor median. On the contrary, a committee system where the majority party also has a majority in every committee would not be representative to the floor median and it would be unlikely that the committee would provide an informative signal to the median of the chamber floor (Groseclose, 2000).

Conditional Party Government

The conditional party government thesis (Rohde 1991; Aldrich 1995; Aldrich et al 2002; Aldrich and Rohde 1995, 1997, 2000a, 2000b, 2004) emerged in the light of the lessons from the U.S. Congress in the 1980s, when the majority party leadership became more important in influencing legislators and used special rules to structure floor action on major bills (Smith 2007). Therefore, Rohde (1991) states: *“Parties are consequential in shaping members’ preferences, the character of the issues on the agenda, the nature of the legislative alternatives, and ultimate political outcomes, and they will remain important as long as the underlying forces that created this partisan resurgence persist”*. (pp. 192).

For this thesis, legislation is considered to exist in a multidimensional space where many possible majorities could be constructed to pass or oppose legislation (Smith 2007). Because parties are better organized, they have a considerable advantage in the process of building these majorities. However, collective action dilemmas are still likely to emerge. In this regard, party organization and party leadership offer (at least) a partial solution to collective action problems. The more

power delegated to partisan institutions, the better able they are going to be to overcome collective action problems (Smith 2007). Only those issues that divide and polarize the electorate and candidates on partisan lines motivate legislators to increase the power of party organs within Congress (Smith 2007). Legislators' willingness to delegate power to a central party authority (leaders) increases as the homogeneity of their policy preferences rises or if their policy preferences become more differentiated from legislators from the opposition party. In other words, legislators would prefer to delegate power to their central party leaders in situations of intraparty cohesion and interparty polarization. Under these conditions, legislators would delegate authority to an external enforcer if there are guarantees that policies are going to be in line with their interests and ideas. Otherwise, restricting their margins of maneuver for a collective goal that is far from their interests would not be a smart move. As an implication, decisions reported out of committees are going to be not only close to the preferences of the median party member, but also quite coherent at the aggregate level.

For the conditional party theory, majorities decide to behave as majorities in order to enjoy the distributive benefits of controlling the whole set of resources in a zero-sum environment; which implies controlling the committee system. This theory recognizes committees as filters and gatekeepers whose composition is going to be the product of party decisions. As long as the condition is met (cohesive and differentiated parties), then every single majority party member should respect party mandates, and no bill that works against the interest of the majority party as a whole should reach the plenary. Two main devices are utilized for that goal: positive

(opening the gates of the committee system to the floor) and negative (preventing harmful bills from being reported) agenda setting powers. Members' commitments are managed via stick and carrot mechanisms, effectively increasing the probability that everyone is going to win as long as stable cooperation is achieved.

Cartel Theory

Other authors who also believe that parties matter tend to adopt a different standpoint than the advocates of the conditional party thesis. The main difference between the Cartel theory (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005) and the conditional party government is that for the first perspective, delegation from members to party leaders is unconditional, simply because each individual will be worse off if she belongs to the minority. Thus, when members of a majority party reach the 50% threshold, they are going to create a cartel that will manage the body at its discretion.

According to the Cartel theory, a majority cartel will be the product of the delegation from individual legislators to the party leadership, which will coordinate collective action administering prizes and punishments. Among those, committee appointments and removals are central assets. In other words, committees are part of a reward system for the majority party, and the most loyal party members are rewarded by being more likely to get the committee assignments they request (Groseclose 2000, pp. 5). The empirical evidence that Cox and McCubbins present to support their argument about majority party control of committee assignments shows that the preferences of committee members from the majority party do not differ much from the preference of the median member of the majority party on the floor

(the entire party). The authors argue that if the committee system was an irrelevant and powerless institution, the majority party would care about neither the preferences of committees nor the distribution of seats in the committee system. Contrary to the informational theory, this thesis assumes the exclusion of the minority members from the committee chair allocations because the main goal of the committee system is not the production of technical public policy but to safeguard the interests of the majority party.

Committees have different types of powers to restrict the legislative agenda. They have gatekeeping power, informational advantages, and proposal power to ensure that the majority party has an advantage in setting the legislative agenda. The basic technique the majority party uses to secure agenda control is to place its members favorably in all the key offices in the House that wield special agenda setting powers; then do its best to ensure at least a minimum degree of fiduciary behavior on the part of its office-holders (Cox and McCubbins, 2004).

As mentioned, preferences of the majority-party members of a committee are typically not much different from the median preference of the entire majority party (Groseclose 2000). If a majority of the committee does not prefer a bill to become law, the committee can refuse to report it to the floor and in consequence, prevent the plenary floor from considering it. So, as party *soldiers*, no extreme deviation from party lines should be expected at the committee and the floor levels; however, deviations could be coordinated from above, in order to protect certain individuals from facing electoral punishments in the future.

Researchers have devoted considerable efforts to developing measures regarding the effective power of leadership and parties in influencing others' behavior and consequently, controlling the agenda. One of the most used measures is roll-rates. As Krehbiel explains, "... *to be rolled is to be excluded from a winning coalition or, more concretely, to be on the opposing side of a victorious motion. For example, a committee is rolled when the parent body passes amendments against the committee's recommendations or wishes*" (Krehbiel 2005: 03). Several authors have applied this concept to the study of the majority party power in the U.S. and all over the world (Amorim Neto, Cox and McCubbins 2003, Cox, Masuyama, and McCubbins 2000; Cox and McCubbins 2002, 2004; Cox, McCubbins and Shepard 2002; Finocchiaro and Rohde 2002; Jones and Hwang 2003a, 2003b, Masuyama and McCubbins 2000; Roberts 2003; and Stewart 2001). In this regard, the units of analysis are not committees but political parties. Thus, a *majority party roll* is an instance in which "... *the majority party opposes but does not defeat a motion or proposal*" (Krehbiel 2005: 03)¹. From the view of Cartel theory, only those bills that tend to benefit most members of the cartel or those that are costly to be rolled (i.e. presidential public claims) are going to reach the plenary floor. Cartel theory expects unconditional power to be negative rather than positive. That is, the cartel acts to prevent bills disliked by a majority from passing. However, it is less clear about positive power since the Cartel theory does not state that only those bills preferred by the majority party are the ones that are going to reach the

¹ Majority (or minority) party rolls are operationalized by calculating the proportion of final-passage roll calls in which (1) the bill passes, yet (2) a majority within one party votes against passage.

floor. Nevertheless, the fact is that the majority party is expected to block those bills that would divide (“hurt”) the majority cartel on the plenary floor.

Still, majority rolls on the floor could take place even when the bill of consideration does not harm the core interests of the majority. To the degree that it can secure cooperative behavior from its office-holders, the majority party is in a position to control the flow of bills to the floor by (1) influencing which bills committees will report; (2) selecting from among the committee-reported bills those which will be considered on the floor; and (3) influencing the content of bills that come back to the House from conference (Cox and McCubbins, 2004). The idealized agenda control model assumes that the majority party can control the legislative agenda without paying considerable costs.

2.4. The Committee System

The investigation of the committee system is central to the analysis of legislative politics. Committees constitute a vital institution in the division of the labor and the decision making process. As the literature has stated, every legislator interacts with $N-1$ peers who have heterogeneous preferences in a world frequently governed by majority rule. The uncertainty over outcomes derived from these varying ideas and interests provides multiple opportunities and dilemmas for each individual, but also creates risks associated with bottlenecks on the floor, majority rule cycles, and collective losses for the absence of cooperation. As described above, theories on legislative organization have largely analyzed the role of committees in the policymaking process. Explanations range from the importance of committees in

advancing legislators' constituency issues (Weingast and Marshall 1988), to committees as channels of the interests of the majority party, which play a leading role in the process of setting the agenda either consistently over time (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005), or just in times of polarization when parties have high levels of cohesion (Rohde 1991, Aldrich and Rohde 1997, 1998); to other types of explanations that emphasize on committees as instruments of legislators in the sense that they provide the parent chamber with valuable information (derived from committee members' expertise and experience) regarding public policy (Krehbiel 1991).

Analyses of settings different from the United States offer researchers the potential to shed light on the validity of these theories when some of their main axioms, like variance on the party structure, need to be relaxed. Given that standpoints and empirical evidence regarding the role and relevance of parties and committees in the policymaking process of other countries vary, I review what the literature has found until now in a comparative manner. The two subsequent sections discuss the empirical evidence found in the literature centered on different political settings around the world.

2.4.1. The Committee System in Presidential Systems outside the US

The literature on legislative politics has identified two fundamental engines in the internal organization of assemblies: political parties and the committee system. In the case of the United States, committees play a key role in legislative organization, since membership on key committees is a highly valued political resource

(Morgenstern 2002). Research on legislative politics in the United States has offered extensive contributions regarding the committee system (Bullock III 1985; Krehbiel 1991, 1993; Rohde 1994, Carsey and Rundquist 1999), committees' decision making (Shepsle and Weingast 1987, Hall 1987), committees' jurisdictions (King 1994, Baumgartner, Jones and MacLeod 2000), subcommittees' allocation and performance (Adler 2000) and even committee structure at the subnational level (Francis 1995; Wright and Schaffner 2002; Aldrich and Battista 2002; Overby, Kazee and Prince, 2004; Wright and Clark 2005; Battista 2006; Masket 2007; Shor, Berry and McCarty 2008; Berry and McCarty 2008).

On the other hand, based on its diversity, Latin America offers a fertile ground to test the validity of the main theories on legislative organization. To begin with, countries in this region of the world have experienced their last wave of democratization in different years (i.e. Argentina in 1983, Brazil in 1985, Chile in 1990, Uruguay in 1985, Bolivia in 1982, Paraguay in 1989, México in 2000, to mention some examples), which implies that they experienced different levels of democratic development in different periods. Latin American democracies also differ in their territorial division of the power. Some countries like Uruguay, Colombia and Chile have a centralized organization, where the principal political and institutional decisions are taken by the central authority, and the units have very little autonomy. Other countries like Argentina, Brazil, México and Venezuela constitute federal nations where the power is decentralized into provinces or states with considerable autonomy regarding important issues like taxation, public policy, electoral rules, and economic affairs, among others. Additionally, in institutional terms, one of the

principal differences among Latin American democracies has to do with rules to elect their national congresses and presidents. In this regard, the region offers a wide variety of institutional frameworks. Settings range from proportional representation, like the Argentine, Brazilian, Colombian or Uruguayan congresses, to mixed systems like in México, Bolivia and Venezuela and majoritarian environments like in the Chilean congress. Latin American presidents are also elected by different majoritarian formulas (i.e. a majority formula with runoff in most cases, the double complement rule in Argentina and Costa Rica, or a simple plurality in Mexico and Paraguay). However the most important difference lies in their formal prerogatives (i.e. veto power, partial veto power, legislative initiative in determined exclusive areas, decree power) and partisan powers of the president (Carey and Shugart 1992; Cox and Morgenstern 2001), which affect her power vis-a-vis the legislature. On the other hand, even though Latin American legislatures have been generally described as reactive assemblies (Cox and Morgenstern 2001), there is some degree of variation in terms of how they play their roles based on differences in reelection, party structure, ideology, ties between the president and the parties, the electoral system and the federal structure (Morgenstern 2002).

Returning to the main aim of this section, it is noteworthy that despite the described richness of this area for carrying out empirical investigation, relatively few works have explored the role of committees in the legislative process. More specifically, the power of committee chairs and its effects over the legislative process still remain understudied.

A remarkable issue to bring to the discussion is that, although in lower degrees than in the United States, Latin American legislatures usually endow committees with considerable parliamentary rights. For example, in the case of Brazil, bills must be referred to a committee before any floor action and, moreover, under certain conditions, committees can approve laws with no need of the floor's agreement. This makes the Brazilian committee system a potentially powerful legislative institution. Moreover, as Pereira and Mueller (2004) state, committees also have an important informational and gatekeeping role, given that they can send legislation directly to the plenary floor circumventing consideration just by urgency requests from central party authorities. In other cases like Argentina, Chile, México and Venezuela (until late 1990s), for example, party leaders are actors in the legislative process (Jones 2002; Siavelis 2002; Nacif 2002). These leaders affect legislators' careers by controlling the candidate selection processes (specifically the access to and positions on the ballots) and important resources for incumbents like positions of power in Congress. For the specific cases of Argentina, Costa Rica and Venezuela, Crisp et al (2009) investigate if differences in incentives for legislators correlate with differences in committee rules and committee assignments. What these scholars have found is that, despite considerable variation across these cases and individual careers, candidate selection procedures and types of electoral rules create incentives that will affect the allocation of committee members. In general terms, although not consistently across cases, legislators use their positions in committees to serve diverse constituencies (Crisp et al, 2009); specifically, *"Some legislators seek to enhance their personal reputations most efficiently by getting access to targeted bills while others*

stay out of the way of low magnitude legislators and serve their party's reputation by taking committee assignments that involve less access to targeted legislation.” (Crisp et al, 2009: 48).

The Brazilian case presents a puzzle in terms of the role of party leaders. While some authors argue that leaders are powerful and capable of coordinating legislative voting on the plenary floor (Figueiredo and Limongi 2001), others posit that they have just a marginal role in the legislative process (Ames 2001, Samuels 2002). In this regard, a piece by Santos and Renno (2004) sheds some light on the discussion by verifying how party loyalty affects the distribution of positions of authority in the Chamber of Deputies. The authors focused on two historical periods with different political scenarios to test the influence (or lack thereof) of party loyalty on the allocation of committee chairmanships. The contrast between a period with deep intraparty divisiveness and decentralization (1946-1964) and another with considerably higher levels of congruence between Congress and the executive office, along with more centralization in the decision-making process (1989-1998), let them conclude that party loyalty is a good predictor committee chairmanship allocations when parties are oriented by a factional logic and where the distribution of power between party leaders and committee chairs is more equal.

From another standpoint, Finocchiaro and Johnson (2010) analyze the degree to which the bill referral process is institutionalized, and the factors which affect the probability that bills will emerge from committees. The first inquiry is derived from the assumption that committees offer legislators the possibility of specializing in the US Congress, unlike in Latin America, where legislatures are usually reactive to presidential initiatives (Morgenstern 2002), reelection rates are low, and committees

do not have as much staff as in the American case. Moreover, Latin American multipartism offers a rich variation that let them conclude that partisanship, ideology, and institutional power are virtually inseparable (Finocchiaro and Johnson 2010: 151). They also explore the strategic and jurisdictional dynamics by which chamber leaders assign bills to committees and the factors that affect presidential and partisan success within committees. Empirical evidence on committees and bill referral in Colombia, Costa Rica and Venezuela lead the authors to conclude that committees have strong property rights and that the characteristics of bills and their sponsors strongly influence the survival of legislation in committees.

Among the set of literature that investigated committees in other comparative settings, the piece by Langston and Aparicio (2009) explicitly puts focus on rules and procedures that affect the selection process in one case. Their argument states that the no-reelection rule of the Mexican Federal Congress makes seniority an obsolete prior for caucus leaders when they select committee leaders. Thus, previous political experience can serve as a good proxy to party leaders to reduce adverse selection. Other analyses on the subject have emphasized legislators' preferences over policy outcomes in individuals' attitudes on certain organizational features (Remington and Smith 1998, for the Russian case), changes in strategic behavior by committee chairs when majority control on the plenary floor is lost (Calvo and Sagarzazu 2010, for Argentina), and the significance of committees as arenas of legislative deliberation in parliamentary systems (Strom 1998).

Having already stated how important committees tend to be, and considering the expected behavioral change as a function of variation in rules, we need to

mention a basic axiom raised extensively in the literature: political parties are the ones in charge of selecting the rules under which the electoral game is going to be played in electoral democracies (Carroll, Cox and Pachón 2006). Once these rules are in place, they exert their own effects on both individual and collective actors' behavior. Thus, as Carroll et al state, there is a "symbiotic relationship" between the rules regulating the electoral contest and the players in that competition, each affecting the other's survival. Once the process to elect representatives is over, competition is not finished for political parties, as a second round of contest begins in the legislative arena. In this regard, the same logic of electoral competition can be extrapolated to the legislative setting: legislators act as voters and party leaders act as candidates to occupy mega-seats. The concept of mega-seats, adopted by Carroll et al (2006), refers to key positions of authority within any legislative body (i.e. a Congress or a Parliament) that are elected by, or whose appointment is influenced by, the assembly. In fact, they constitute important political resources in the process of passing legislation. Depending on variation in the existing assemblies, examples of mega-seats are positions such as those held by the chief executive, cabinet ministers, the presiding officer, members of the directing board, and chairs of permanent committees (Carroll et al 2006), the last of which being the most important mega-seat in legislatures for systems of separation of powers.

All in all, as it can be seen, even though important efforts have been made to comprehend patterns of committee allocation, the appointment of authorities and committee members' behavior; there are still too many questions that need to be

answered. In this sense, comparative analyses of committee effects over legislative performance build up a promising research agenda in contemporary political science.

2.5. Bill Approval

Cox and McCubbins have committed two books and a considerable amount of research articles to the description of an institutional (and political) resource present in modern legislatures that allows legislators to prevent undesired policy changes: the control of the legislative agenda. The central issue of their model revolves around the majority party's ability to control the legislative agenda, understood as the set of bills that are going to be considered, deliberated on and voted for on the plenary floor (Cox and McCubbins, 2005; pp. 19). The process of agenda control involves two main implications. First, controlling the agenda affects the policymaking process, because only the bills preferred by the agenda setters are likely to find legislative treatment; in consequence, these bills are more likely to reach the floor and find legislative approval. Second, agenda control affects governance, understood as the possibility of the executive getting its legislation passed. Whenever the preferences of the agenda setters in the legislature differ from those of the executive, there should be higher probabilities of inter-branch gridlock that might endanger the governments' performance and even its stability. There is probably no better evidence of the validity of these claims than observing the shutdown that paralyzed some of the functioning of U.S. government during October 2013.

Thus, following Cox and McCubbins' definition, a procedural cartel party is a coalition of legislators who constitute a majority in the assembly, share a common

label (at least in the United States), and cartelize the agenda creating a set of offices endowed with special agenda setting powers (Ibid, pp. 24). The majority party can use positive and negative agenda setting powers to influence the legislative agenda. Positive agenda setting powers “*allow their wielders to push bills through the gauntlet of legislative stages to a final-passage vote on the floor*” while, on the other hand, negative agenda powers “*allow their wielders to block bills from reaching a final-passage vote on the floor*” (Cox and McCubbins 2005: 222). So, the majority party uses its prerogatives to select which bills are going to receive legislative treatment on the plenary floor and which ones are sentenced to die in a drawer of the committee system. The expectation is that those legislators appointed to agenda-setting offices will comply with the party leadership (“*whip*”), which is in charge of solving collective action problems by the use of incentives and punishments in order to maintain cooperation and coordination within the cartel. So, at the committee level, chairs prevent rolls of the majority-party contingent on their committee, just as the majority party leaders prevent party rolls on the floor (pp. 151). In consequence, no bill should be reported from a committee against the wishes of the majority of its majority-party contingent. Those bills that successfully reach the floor are the ones that do not put the cohesion of the majority members of the majority party at risk or in other words, the set of bills that does not divide the Majority Cartel.

Some authors argued that political parties in the United States Congress act like firms. Legislators delegate to central agents (party leaders) in order to reduce transaction costs and solve collective action problems (Cooper and Brady 1981; Sinclair 1983, 1995; Stewart 1989; Rohde 1991; Maltzman and Smith 1994; Binder

1997; Cox and McCubbins 1993; Döring 2001; Gamm and Smith 2002). According to the Cartel Theory, this parallelism is an accurate way to describe U.S. political parties' role because, just like organizations, political parties face a variety of collective action dilemmas that can be solved if the organization works effectively. Political parties offer legislators the opportunity to cooperate within an organization that will facilitate the passage of the pieces of legislation they need. Furthermore, legislators' reelection depends not only on their individual characteristics but also on the activities of the members of their political parties. Political parties can be conceived of as political brand names. Thus, a party's reputation (based on its record) is a public good for all legislators in the cartel (pp. 123). Given that parties' performance affects individual legislators' success, representatives' best strategy is to tie their hands with their copartisans and cooperate because rationally, legislators are in a better position to reach their goals if they collaborate with the party than if they shirk (Aldrich 1995).

2.5.1. Agenda Control in Presidential Systems outside the US

Analyses concerned with agenda control were originally intended to explain the U.S. Congress. In this regard, the Cartel theory has done a good job explaining how political parties perform in the U.S. Congress in order to maximize their advantages in the legislative process. Legislators' individual goals (i.e. reelection, internal advancement, good public policy, advancement in hierarchy of political offices) put political parties in a prominent position despite an institutional framework that induces a personal-vote, encouraging strong linkages among candidates and their

constituencies (i.e. a system with primaries and single-member districts). Thus, in a two-party legislature like the U.S. Congress, it is expected that the majority party would act as a cartel controlling the rules of the game and, in consequence, legislative results. Nevertheless, once we move beyond the boundaries of the United States, we have to deal with political systems with diverse institutional and political arrangements (i.e. scheduling rights also granted to minority and opposition parties, for example) that can affect political outcomes differently.

In this regard, specialists have made several efforts to investigate and disentangle the role of both legislative institutions and parties in the process of agenda setting and legislative approval. Mostly, the central conclusion of the analyses focused on both parliamentary and presidential democracies is that the authority to define the legislative agenda is concentrated in the hands of the majority party or in the governing coalition (Amorim Neto et al. 2003; Cox et al. 2000; Chandler et al. 2006; Campbell et al. 2002; Cox, Heller and McCubbins 2008). On the one hand, comparative studies on parliamentary democracies emphasizing the advantages of scheduling authority have argued that, effectively, cabinet control over the legislative timetable and a near monopoly of both the information and the drafting skills needed to prepare bills prevent the legislature from imposing specific policies on a reluctant cabinet (Laver and Shepsle 1994: 295). So, under these conditions, governments that are able to preserve the confidence of the majority in parliament should proceed at their will. Other studies focused on variation in formal powers (i.e. centralized or decentralized control of the government) across parliamentary democracies in

Western Europe, found that when the government controls the agenda, the amount of “important” bills approved increases (Döring 1995).

On the other hand, Latin American presidential democracies have also nourished the literature with its considerable institutional and political variation to test preexistent hypotheses about agenda control. Generally, Latin American legislatures have been described as institutions with modest policy-making power (marginal or “rubber stamp” legislatures) vis-a-vis powerful presidents in terms of institutional prerogatives and partisan powers (Mezey 1979, Taylor-Robinson and Diaz 1999, Cox and Morgenstern 2001). So, the role of the executive office has been an important variable included in different studies on legislative politics and interbranch relationships in Latin America (Alemán and Navia 2009, Alemán and Tsebelis 2005, Santos and Renno 2004, Crisp and Botero 2004). The literature has demonstrated that the presidents of this region are important legislative actors, even more so than in the United States (Crisp and Botero 2004, Alemán and Tsebelis 2005). Amendatory observations (additions, deletions, and substitutions) and partial veto prerogatives by which the president can amend or redraft bills give presidents considerable power to affect legislation at the last stage of the legislative process. Specifically, these prerogatives provide the executive office with positive power to alter congressional decisions (Alemán and Tsebelis 2005).

Nevertheless, even though it has been demonstrated that Latin American presidents are powerful actors with strong influence in the policymaking process; scholars have demonstrated that in the reality of Latin American politics is far more sophisticated, and that legislators can be essential actors in the legislative process,

too, especially those representatives that control the congressional agenda. Explicitly, Alemán (2006), in his analysis of agenda-setting rules in 26 Latin American chambers, demonstrated that majoritarian leaders in some assemblies, like the Argentinian, the Mexican and the Chilean, have successfully blocked the passage of legislation that went against the interests of most of their copartisans. In the specific case of México, even though no party has benefited from the gatekeeping rights since 1997, they did benefit from occupying key positions in the committee system, given that this privilege allows them to prevent bills they dislike from reaching the plenary floor. This piece's central finding is that "*majority parties that are organized well enough to exert control over the scheduling of legislative proposals can monopolize the direction of policy change, even in the absence of codified gatekeeping rights*" (Alemán 2006, pp. 151).

Contributing to the study of legislatures in comparative politics, Cox, Masuyama, and McCubbins (2000) go a step further and investigate the ability of a government to enact its political agenda in a country from a different region: Japan. Specifically, this research explores two institutional features, bicameralism and committee system, that can potentially lessen the ability of a government to get its way. The authors explain that the upper house can hinder the government's ability to push through its legislative agenda if the governing party lacks a majority in the upper house (or its majority is small) and if the Senate has the ability to block or delay legislation. Moreover, a strong committee system can block or slow a government's legislative progress if, for example, some committees are headed by the opposition and if chairs have significant agenda powers² (ibid, pp. 2).

² These findings have even a stronger impact considering that Japan is a country that uses a confidence system

Along these lines, other studies, like Amorim Neto, Cox and McCubbins' (1995) analysis on the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, have put the focus on other features such as the political confirmation of government offices and the size of the majority party. They investigated the probability of cartels allocating a controlling share of official posts with substantial agenda-setting powers to their own members (i.e. ministers, committee chairs, speakers, conferees). Given that this country allows the joint tenure of legislative and executive posts and has also had both majority and minority governments; it constituted an outstanding case to investigate whether a majority government indeed entails cartelization of the agenda³.

Just like Brazil and Japan, the Argentine federal Congress is also a valid reference and can potentially constitute a good contribution for comparative knowledge. The literature specializing in the case has disentangled how the national Congress works, what the role of the majority party has been across time, and how the internal rules of the federal Congress and the committee system tend to affect the control of the legislative agenda (Jones, Saiegh, Spiller and Tomassi 2002; Jones 1997, 2001, 2005; Alemán 2006; Alemán and Calvo 2007; Jones, Kaplan, Calvo and Alemán 2009). The need to generalize the scope of the Cartel Theory has led researchers to investigate cases, like the Argentinean, that are very different than the United States. In this regard, the work by Jones and Hwang (2005) constitutes one of the first efforts to test this theory in other presidential democracy. The case they analyze, Argentina, differs from the United States in the sense that parties can control a legislator's future by influencing the candidate selection process (legislators are elected in closed-lists).

³ The application of cartel theory to Brazil helped solve important controversies in the literature, especially regarding the alleged chaotic (Ames 2000, Samuels 2003) or controlled (Figueiredo and Limongi 2000) behavior in the House.

In addition, subnational party bosses (i.e. governors), are key actors in Argentina's politics given that these actors control the future careers of subsets of the party's legislative delegation, the authors say. Their main finding is that, despite these differences with the U.S. case, Cartel Theory can be adapted to explain the process of agenda control in a political system where subnational party bosses and not individual legislators, appear to be the most relevant political actors in the policymaking process.

Additionally, comparative research has shown that while majority parties tend to have an effective control over the legislative agenda in other democracies, this power might not be an exclusive prerogative of the majority party but a shared privilege with minority and opposition parties (Cox 2005, Ferretti 2010). Particularly, the right to block bills' access to the plenary agenda can vary as a function of the degree to which blocking power is concentrated or dispersed among the parties in the legislature (Ferretti 2010). This last form of organization of power within a legislature is at the other extreme of the U.S. case and has been conceptualized as the consensus model (Cox 2005; Cox and McCubbins 2004, 2005; Cox, Heller and McCubbins 2008). The central feature of this model is that minority and opposition parties also have a say regarding the organization of the legislative agenda. This prerogative transforms these parties into veto actors that are able to stop policy changes by blocking the access of bills to the plenary floor (Ferretti 2010).

One of the most interesting empirical opportunities that presidential democracies offer is, precisely, the possibility to explore bill approval and agenda control in scenarios with the feasible absence of a majority party on the plenary floor. Due to

the high levels of competition in fragmented legislatures, it may be difficult for parties to reach the 50% plus one of the seats, making it necessary to relax one of the main components of this theoretical framework. Nevertheless, largest parties can also benefit from legislatures' internal rules of procedure no matter their size, and can determine the organization of the legislative agenda (Jones 1995; Cox 2005; Cox and McCubbins 2004, 2005; Cox, Heller and McCubbins 2008). In this regard, Calvo and Sagarzazu (2010) investigate the determinant factors of legislative success in plurality-led congresses. Their research demonstrates that even though the largest party or coalition may fall short of controlling a majority of plenary seats; congressional rules generally endow the largest party with extensive agenda setting prerogatives, even if plenary majorities are lacking. Their analysis constitutes the first effort to examine the behavior of legislators in the committee systems of fragmented legislatures. Nevertheless, the extent to which this contribution can be generalized deserves further work, especially in settings that offer consistent variation in terms of institutions and patterns of competition. This thesis looks to shed light on this notion investigating what parties are benefited in the chairmanship selection process (depending on the composition of the plenary floor) and how this affects political parties' probabilities of legislative success.

2.6. The Analysis

The goal of this thesis is to investigate two central questions in the study of legislative politics:

- (i) Who is appointed to the offices endowed with special agenda-setting powers? (i.e. allocation of committee members and committees chairs)
- (ii) How does the distribution of committee chairs affect legislative outcomes? (i.e. legislative success)

2.6.1 Allocation of Committee Members and Committee Chairs

As many relevant studies have emphasized, there is an interaction, or an endogenous process, between rules (or institutions) and actors (Krehbiel 1991; Aldrich, 1995; Cox, 1997; Boix, 1999). The reason is that rules affect behavior and even the survival of those actors that designed and adopted them; who at the same time are able to modify those rules. Political parties that win representation in the legislative arena have two different opportunities to alter the rules on their behalf. In electoral democracies, Carroll et al (2006) say, political parties are the ones in charge of selecting the rules under which both the electoral and legislative games are going to be played. First, political parties determine the rules under which votes are going to be transferred into seats. They select the type of electoral system that is going to determine the political composition of a legislature. Second, political parties also define the legislative institutional framework. The importance of these rules resides in the fact that they establish the distribution of power within the legislative body, affect the type of legislation each legislator produces, enhance the legislature's policy bargaining power *vis-a-vis* the executive and have an impact on legislators' future political careers (Crisp et al, 2009). As mentioned above, once rules are in place, they exert their own effects on both individual and collective actors' behavior. In this

regard, Carroll et al (2006) analyzed the impact of legislative internal rules, which they perceived to be more majoritarian or more proportional given the composition of the legislature. In systems with PR electoral rules, the composition of the legislature tends to be proportional; in consequence we would expect more proportional internal rules, whose impact would be reflected in the allocation of mega-seats or key positions within the legislative body. In other words, there should be a high correlation between electoral rules and legislative internal rules in terms of their political impact.

Differences in committees' composition and committees' chairmanships generate disparities in the capabilities of political parties to influence the legislative agenda, which has political impacts not only on legislators' congressional performance, but also on their political careers (Crisp et al 2009). Pushing Carroll et al's (2006) argument a step forward, if we evaluate different legislative rules "with an eye on their own success", then because of the endogeneity of rules, we should expect to see proportional allocation of committee members in those legislatures where representatives were elected by proportional institutions. In contrast, we should recognize higher majoritarian bonuses in settings with strong disproportional electoral rules.

Nevertheless, electoral institutions usually involve some minimal deviation from perfect proportionality. Majoritarian biases reflect asymmetries in the seat-vote relationship that are present on the floor of almost every single collective body

worldwide.⁴ If the logic of electoral competition is also reproduced in the legislative arena, then similar degrees of bias in the allocation of legislative posts should be expected. In other words, asymmetries in seat distribution should be also reproduced in the committee assignments (an issue that is not investigated in Carroll et al's piece). For this reason, I hypothesize that, the greater the bias in the allocation of seats given the share of votes, the greater the bias in the allocation of seats inside legislative offices with procedural authority, such as committees (H1).

Furthermore, even though it is desirable for individual legislators to be assigned to an important permanent committee; this condition does not guarantee any leading role in the process of setting the legislative agenda. In this regard, chairmanships (or mega-seats) are what the literature has highlighted as key posts in the agenda setting process. These spots of authority technically make a given legislator a "*primus inter pares*", which means, an actor with increased prerogatives vis-à-vis her colleagues. In consequence, committee chairs are likely to be in a better position in comparison to other representatives in the assembly. According to the Cartel theory, what majority parties do in the pursuit of this goal, is occupy the chairmanships of the committees they consider essential (i.e. chamber directorate, budget, constitutional affairs, etc.). These posts are the ones that usually have the final word in the creation of the legislative agenda, specifically on the making of the order of the day.

Thus, if we believe that rules are used on the behalf of their creators, then we still expect to see legislatures' majoritarian biases reflected on the selection of

⁴ Some cases such as the extremely proportional system ruling in Israel (the 120-member unicameral Knesset is elected by a closed-list system using the entire country as constituency) are valid yet rare counterexamples

committee chairmanships. Therefore, Carroll et al (2006) expect that bias in the allocation of seats given the share of votes will be associated with bias in the selection of chairmanship positions. I replicate Carroll, Cox and Pachón (2006)'s task and test their hypothesis (H2) in a very different scenario (described in the next chapter).

2.6.2. Legislative Success

Following the statements of the theoretical section, we know that whenever there is a cartel, it fills mega-seats with individuals from within. Besides the endogenous explanation that they got the positions for being a part of the majority; it is reasonable to think that these committee heads and the speaker have comparative advantages vis-à-vis a single backbencher. Given that committees can open the gates to the floor, it is likely that those who have the keys will disproportionately enjoy the benefits of the position and privilege the delivery of their own policy priorities. If this is correct, then committee chairs should be systematically more likely to get the bills they sponsor passed (regardless of their partisanship).

In the empirical section of this dissertation I also test two theoretical assertions regarding the likelihood of bill passage. First, I examine whether the advantages typically found for bills initiated by members of the majority party also extend to contexts where the plurality party has less than 50% of seats. I expect that the probability of passage of a bill will increase when it is sponsored by a legislator of the largest party on the plenary floor (H3). Second, I expect that the probabilities of

legislative approval will increase more if the bill is sponsored by a legislator from the largest party who also occupies a mega-seat position in the legislature (H4).

The contribution of this analysis lies in the fact that it explores these two hypotheses of the legislative process in a novel set of legislatures with very different institutional and political features among them in a controlled environment (detailed in the next chapter).

2.7. Contributions

Given the importance of legislatures' composition on the distribution of power within them and in consequence, on legislative outputs; this analysis contributes to the study of legislatures by adding empirical evidence of the direct effect of allocation of power over the legislative process. To this end, comparisons among dissimilar scenarios and institutional features are necessary. The analysis of subnational political systems has demonstrated to be a fruitful field to test preexistent theories on legislative performance and behavior. However, even though subnational governments have been widely studied in the United States; contributions that include other political settings, where substantial differences across units can be found, are mostly absent.

The study of Argentine subnational legislatures offers an invaluable opportunity to compare cases with considerable degrees of variation in several institutional and political aspects (i.e. electoral systems, legislative format, legislature size, and sociodemographic characteristics, among others). Argentine subnational legislatures provide a context that offers a long period of democratic life (1983-2013).

This setting offers an opportunity to examine the effect of institutional rules (i.e. electoral systems, legislatures' internal rules) on legislative composition and legislative outcomes in cases with dissimilar electoral rules, legislative compositions, internal rules (among others); while holding many other important aspects, like cultural and historical variables, constant.⁵

I investigate the hypotheses stated above by making use of an original dataset of five argentine subnational legislatures: Buenos Aires (Deputies and Senate) for 1992 to 2011, Mendoza (Senate) for 1998 to 2011, Santa Fe (Senate) for 1996 to 2011, and Misiones (Deputies) for the 1984-2011 periods. I collected original data on the composition of these five legislatures, their allocation of committee members and chairmanship positions, the partisanship of each legislator, and bills introduced.

This study contributes to the literature on legislative politics and subnational governments in a number of important ways. First, I test preexistent findings on political parties' legislative success in dissimilar political scenarios across time. This research also contributes to our understanding of subnational legislatures in federal countries. Furthermore, this study will also contribute to our understanding of legislative politics by investigating chambers with very dissimilar characteristics, in very different political contexts in a comparative manner. Finally, this analysis will make an empirical contribution to the discipline in general. I collected original data to test preexistent as well as innovative hypotheses. This will make an important addition to the understanding of legislative politics. Given the importance that subnational governments have in multi-tier systems, the original data generated in

⁵ A detailed description of case selection and data is provided in next Chapter.

this project will also build a reference for other scholars interested in testing their hypotheses and/or investigating more in depth not only political parties' legislative behavior, but also subnational governmental performance in federal countries.

CASE SELECTION AND DESCRIPTION

3.1. Introduction

To test the hypotheses about committee assignments and legislative success described in the prior chapter, we need to examine legislatures that differ in terms of the electoral rules used to elect their members and governments that vary in terms of their status (majority vs. plurality). We need observations that offer enough variation to test these hypotheses in different contexts, but also share some common variables (controlled factors).

State level analyses offer a good setting, but have rarely been implemented outside the American case. Exploring subnational legislatures in other federal countries besides the United States is not only a fruitful strategy in methodological terms, but also an important empirical contribution to the literature on legislative politics. The goal of this chapter is to discuss some aspects of the study of subnational political systems, and describe the strategy utilized to select the cases that will be tested in the next sections.

This chapter is organized in the following manner: the first section explains the importance of studying subnational systems, the second section describes the criteria for selecting the provinces that comprise the sample of this thesis, the third section offers a detailed description of each of the selected provinces, and the last one offers final comments.

3.2 “Scaling Down”: the Relevance of Subnational Studies

Analyses concerned with the organization of legislatures were originally intended to explain the federal Congress of the United States (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). Over time, several methodological attempts have been made to improve the testing of preexistent hypotheses and to refine the scope of conventional legislative theories. Even though cross-national studies have become more common, most scholarly pieces on legislative studies have analyzed single-country legislatures. However, in recent years, a growing literature on subnational legislatures within the U.S. has gained attention in the discipline (Wright and Schaffner 2002; Aldrich and Battista 2002; Overby, Kazee and Prince, 2004; Wright and Clark 2005; Battista 2006; Maskett 2007, Shor, Berry and McCarty 2008; Berry and McCarty 2008, Hamm 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009; Clark 2012 and forthcoming; Clark, Osborn, Winburn and Wright 2009).

Research on subnational units can expand and strengthen the methodological set of choices available to social science researchers (Snyder 2001). Specifically, subnational comparative approaches offer important advantages in three core areas of the research process: research design, measurement, and theory building (Snyder, 2001: 103). In this regard, Snyder (2001) emphasizes two specific strengths of the subnational comparative method about research design: first, it can serve as a powerful tool for increasing the number of observations, and second, it makes it easier to construct controlled comparisons that increase the probability of obtaining valid causal inferences in small-N research because “*within a single country can often be more easily matched on cultural, historical, ecological, and socioeconomic dimensions than can*

national units.” (Snyder 2001: 96). Both advantages, increasing the number of observations and building controlled comparisons, help comparative scholars to manage the problem of “many variables, small N” (Lieberson 1991).

Additionally, subnational comparisons provide a “... *firm foundation for building theories that explain spatially uneven processes of political and economic transformation*” (Snyder 2001: 103). As King, Keohane and Verba (1994) have noticed, theories in comparative research usually have empirical implications at many levels of analysis. Thus, “*what may appear to be a single-case study, or a study of only a few cases, may indeed contain many potential observations, at different levels of analysis, that are relevant to the theory being evaluated.*” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 108). Therefore, a theory that has been originally thought to explain a national case can eventually be tested with the subnational units (i.e. provinces, states, counties, regions) that constitute that case (the national country). Moreover, “center-centered” approaches that treat the national level as autonomous, Snyder argues, mischaracterize the strategic context in which national politicians do their day to day work. Disaggregating the units that compose a national system along territorial lines facilitates the analysis of the interaction of the constituent parts of a political system.

On the other hand, subnational comparative analysis also contributes to the capacity of comparativists to code cases accurately and therefore, make valid causal inferences. Snyder states that comparativists usually rely on national-level means and aggregate data to study countries that have high degrees of internal heterogeneity; a problem identified decades ago by Stein Rokkan (1970) as “whole-nation bias”. Aggregate data can generate miscoding of cases that can consequently distort causal

inferences. Thus, by going through subnational units and considering states, provincial or regional specificities, researchers can make more accurate assertions and avoid providing biased conclusions.

As argued by Snyder (2001), the process of *scaling down* can offer the best of both worlds by considering substantive variation, while also keeping several general features constant (i.e. cultural, historical, ecological, and socioeconomic dimensions).

Despite these advantages, state level analyses of the legislative arena have been rarely implemented outside the United States (Desposato, 2001; González 2009). Nevertheless, because of the methodological and empirical benefits the subnational comparative method offers, the last decades have witnessed the proliferation of these types of analyses, but which focused on other research areas like quality of democracy and democratization (Fox 1994; Cornelius 1999; Snyder 1999; Gibson 2005; Montero 2007; Giraudy 2009; Gervasoni 2010; Benton 2012). This recent wave of studies on the quality of democracy has consistently relied on variation at the subnational level to further its agenda. One of the first contributions is Gibson's (2005) comparison of levels of democratization in the Mexican state of Oaxaca and the Argentinian province of Santiago del Estero, which constitutes a typical example of comparisons across subnational units from different countries (comparison between nations). Another example of the implementation of subnational comparative strategies, is Giraudy's (2009) study on democratic quality. In this analysis, utilizing a dissimilar strategy than Gibson (2005), she compares Mexican and Argentine subnational units as well as these two countries at the

national level. Gervasoni's (2011) examination of democratic quality in the 24 Argentine districts is another example.

Considering all the arguments stated above, through the analysis of Argentina's provincial legislatures, I propose to contribute to this growing research agenda, both in theoretical and empirical terms.

3.3. Selection of Cases

As mentioned before, one of the main benefits of studying subnational units is that these types of comparisons allow us to control for many potential confounding variables like national macroeconomic environment and cultural aspects (Desposato, 2001). The cases of Brazil and México have been two paradigmatic countries that interest comparative scholars. However, as we will see, not every federal country provides the same advantages.

In the case of Brazil, basic rules at the state level are directly defined by the national Federal Congress or Constitution. For this reason, subnational states are virtually identical in institutional terms. Specifically, they share the same electoral system, are subject to the same federal regulations on party formation, and have very similar internal rules and sets of checks and balances (Desposato, 2001).

Mexican subnational states depict a similar scenario. According to the Mexican National Constitution (Art. 116), the institutional environment at the state-level is relatively fixed across all 31 states, with the exception of the Federal District, which has gained recognition as an autonomous federal entity and is not governed by the same arrangement of separation of powers as the other states (González,

2010). Specifically, for state executive offices, the Constitution establishes governors' fixed terms (6 years, no reelection) and the mechanisms for their election (by popular and direct elections). Regarding the organization of states' legislative systems, the supreme law stipulates that all state legislatures have to be apportioned in line with their population (with a minimum of 7 deputies per state) and that immediate reelection for deputies is not allowed. Moreover, besides resemblances in institutional features, Mexican states are also very similar historically, culturally, and economically (González, 2010).

A lack of differences in the basic form of government and in institutional arrangements might be considered by some scholars as a fundamental opportunity to isolate other factors that could have an impact on political behavior, such as socioeconomic variation (González, 2010). This could be an advantage if we want to investigate, as an example, the effect of non-institutional factors on legislative behavior. But given that the goal of this analysis is to explore legislative performance under different institutional and political scenarios, similarities across states make Brazil and México suboptimal settings to conduct this research project.

As mentioned in the former chapter, one of the main goals of this analysis is to investigate committee assignments and legislative approval in scenarios with and without the existence of a majority party on the plenary floor. Because of that, a sample of legislatures with enough variation in their political composition is required. Contrary to Brazilian and Mexican states, Argentine provinces are far more autonomous in selecting the organization of their public offices at the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. In Argentina, each province has

complete autonomy to decide not only the legislative format (i.e. unicameral or bicameral), but also the electoral institutions for choosing the executive and legislative branches. Therefore, given that legislatures' political composition is directly related to the type of electoral rules, the Argentine subnational political systems offer an invaluable opportunity to test the validity of the Cartel theory in dissimilar institutional settings. In other words, provincial institutional variation makes the Argentine provinces an exceptional context in which to perform a systematic and comprehensive analysis of legislatures' performance given a wide variation of electoral rules and political composition over a considerably long period of time.

In addition, even though the literature has highlighted the crucial role of provincial executive governments in influencing legislative activity at the state and federal levels (Jones and Hwang 2005); there is almost absolute uncertainty about the internal functioning and the process of agenda control in the Argentine subnational legislatures. The present work seeks to contribute to filling that gap in the case-specific literature.

Scholars specializing in this country have highlighted the significance of the executive actors in the national and provincial arena. In the case of Argentina, governors have been defined as powerful actors who not only have control over provincial legislatures, but also have power within the national Congress (Calvo and Abal Medina 2001; Calvo and Micozzi 2005; Spiller and Tommasi 2007), primarily because they can exert influence on legislative careers of national and provincial congressmen (De Luca, Jones and Tula; Jones, Saiegh, Spiller and Tomassi 2002).

Even though several authors have highlighted how powerful governors are in comparison to legislative branches and how they interact with other political actors; no single piece has studied how provincial legislatures work, or more specifically, who controls the agenda within these legislative bodies⁶.

This dissertation makes use of a feature of the research design that tends to improve the quality of generalizations: the use of controlled comparison among subnational units. To test my arguments, I chose five legislative chambers that capture considerable political and institutional diversity within Argentina: the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies (1995-2012) and Senate (1992-2011), the Senate of Mendoza (1998-2010), Misiones' Chamber of Deputies (1983-2009) and the Senate of Santa Fe (2004-2011). Buenos Aires (as the capital of the country and the financial, economic and political center) and Santa Fe (due to its history, international geo-strategic position and its contribution to the national economy) are two of the most important provinces in Argentina. In contrast, the province of Misiones is one of the smallest and poorest provinces in this country. The economy of this province depends basically on the production of tobacco, sugar cane and yerba mate. The political life of Misiones, unlike that of Buenos Aires and Santa Fe, does not have much of an effect on national politics. Finally, I also include the province of Mendoza which represents some middle level of political and economic importance between Buenos Aires-Santa Fe and Misiones.⁷

Besides differences regarding their economic performance, size and prominence in national politics, the main criteria in the selection of these provinces

⁶ One exception, for example, is Lacalle and Micozzi's (2009) analysis of roll call behavior in the Legislature of the City of Buenos Aires.

⁷ A more detailed description of each case is provided in the next section.

was their different electoral rules. As Table 1 below shows, the selected sample provides cases with different legislative formats (i.e. bicameral or unicameral, congruent or incongruent), variation in the type of electoral rules depending on the district type (from multi member to single member districts), district magnitude (from 1 in the Senate of Santa Fe to 15 in the Senate of Buenos Aires), and electoral formulas (Hare formula, D'Hondt with and without electoral threshold).

[Table 3.1]

In sum, the sample offers one case of different institutional and political scenarios: unicameral and bicameral legislatures, a chamber with members elected under plurality rule, and chambers with members elected under proportional electoral rules with different formulas and thresholds.

Electoral institutions affect the likelihood that one party controls a majority of seats in the legislature. As it can be seen in Table 2, the five legislatures selected for this study offer a substantial degree of variation regarding the size of the largest party. Moreover, this variation should impact the partisan composition of the chambers, which in turn should affect the allocation of committee members and the selection of a central mega-seat: chairmanship positions, the other central issue of this analysis.

[Table 3.2]

The next section introduces the selected provinces, the main features of their political systems, and a description of their contemporary political experience.

3.4 Description of Cases

3.4.1 Buenos Aires

As the capital of the country, Buenos Aires is the most important of the 24 Argentinean provinces for different reasons. With its 15,625,084 residents (according to the 2010 National Census) in an approximate surface area of 307,571 km², Buenos Aires is not only the most populous province, but also the political, economic and financial center of the country. It comprises 35% of the national GDP and 37% of Argentina's electorate. At the national level, the province of Buenos Aires elects 70 deputies, which means that 1 out of 4 national deputies belongs to this district (Staffa 2000).⁸

The executive branch of the province of Buenos Aires is constituted by a governor and a vice-governor who are elected by popular vote every four years and can be reelected for only one consecutive period. The legislative body includes two chambers, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The former is constituted by 92 Deputies and the latter is composed of 46 Senators. The members of both chambers are elected for a period of four years and half of the chambers are renovated every two years. The vice-governor is the speaker of the Senate, but her vote counts only in a tie situation.

⁸ For this reason, it has been a commonplace to say that "God answers in Buenos Aires."

According to Article 104 of the provincial Constitution, both chambers have bill initiation powers. Moreover, both chambers are involved in the process of passing legislation. In this sense, we can say that, paraphrasing Arendt Lijphart, both chambers have symmetric powers.

From 1983 until the 1994 reform, members of both chambers of the Buenos Aires legislature had been elected by the same mechanism: proportional representation with a D'Hondt formula; since the reform, proportional representation with a Hare formula with largest remainders has been used. Constituencies have also been the same: eight regions of dissimilar size that group sets of municipalities. The only substantive difference between these bodies has been district magnitude, with the Senate choosing half the members of the House. Based on these attributes, we can state that Buenos Aires' legislative system is not only symmetric but also congruent. Taking into consideration all these characteristics, this province's legislature can be characterized as having weak bicameralism.

In addition, the historical, legal and political development of the province of Buenos Aires has mirrored the nation as a whole. Two factors can be considered representative examples: first, the malapportionment recognized at the federal level⁹ can also be found in the province. Second, Buenos Aires has been a district of fundamental interest for the two main political parties in Argentina (the Union Civica Radical and Partido Justicialista), both for national politics and also for state-level concerns. In other words, during the periods of bipartisan competition, both the province and the nation followed the same patterns. Later on, fragmentation was a

⁹ See Samuels and Snyder (2001) for further empirical clarifications

simultaneous fact in both arenas. Moreover, most of the national third forces across time (i.e. Ucede, Partido Intransigente, MODIN, Frente Grande, PAUFE) have had their main sources of votes in Buenos Aires.

The province of Buenos Aires constitutes the clearest example of what has been acknowledged as the ‘hypertrophy of the Argentinean federalism’ (Malamud 1999), which refers to malapportionment (Snyder and Samuels 2000). This concept acknowledges the deviation from “one man, one vote”, by realizing how much more valuable votes tend to be in several districts than for others in the Argentinean federal Congress. Buenos Aires is, clearly, the most harmed district, not only because of the fact that it chooses three Senators like every other province (all of them smaller); but also as a product of distortions in the assignment of deputies for each constituency. As a residual of several regulations imposed by former authoritarian governments (5 deputies per province as a minimum) and the absence of reapportionment (allocation dates from the 70s), Buenos Aires is severely underrepresented. This particularity can be also found in Buenos Aires’ representation at the subnational level. Once again, and as a mirror of what happens at the national level, there is a high level of asymmetry regarding the allocation of the electoral representation in both legislative chambers of the province; which means that the areas that are far away from the urban areas (*‘Conurbano Bonaerense’*) and that consequently have less population, are politically overrepresented. Given that the Unión Cívica Radical tends to predominate in the periphery of Buenos Aires, this political party is usually overrepresented in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

The second factor that reflects the similarities between the province of Buenos Aires and the nation is that this district has been the strategic base of the two principal Argentinean political parties: the Partido Justicialista (which is one of the most important political parties in Argentina that has been historically linked to the worker class, the unions and the military) and the Unión Cívica Radical (an urban, middle-class political party; which is not a minor issue considering that Argentina's main national political actors have belonged to either of these two political forces. Politics in this province has always been a reflection of the national dynamic (with the exception of 1999 elections). Since the return to democracy, the election of 1983 has been the only electoral instance that brought to the executive office a political party other than the Partido Justicialista. In 1983 the Union Civica Radical won the executive election in the provinces of Buenos Aires. The Radical candidate, Alejandro Armendariz became governor of the province with 52% of the popular vote. However, after his period ended, the performance of the Union Civica Radical has been in an abrupt decline; remaining behind the Partido Justicialista in every single election since 1987 (Calvo & Escolar 2005) (Table 3.3).

[Table 3.3]

During the first legislative period after the democratic restoration in 1983, the Union Cívica Radical (also the party of the governor) had a majority of the seats in both chambers, which allowed it to pass all its preferred legislative projects without many complications. This situation of preeminence for the Union Cívica Radical continued for the next legislative period, even though it had already lost the majority

in both chambers. For the period from 1985-1987, the province of Buenos Aires was governed by a Peronist, Antonio Cafiero, who had to face a strong opposition in the legislative branch. This time, even though it lost the elections for the executive office, the Union Cívica Radical had a majority of representatives in the Senate and also controlled half of the chamber of Deputies. Thus, even though the Union Cívica Radical did not have a guarantee on the passage of its legislative projects, it had the capability of acting as a crucial veto actor in the legislative process.

After 1987 the Union Cívica Radical started to lose its legislative presence at the hands of the Partido Justicialista. With the exception of the period between 1997-2001, the Partido Justicialista has controlled both chambers since 1987.

There have been relevant third party forces in this district, a key feature of the province of Buenos Aires' party system (Calvo & Escolar 2005). For the most part, these minor parties have had their bases of support in the province's urban areas that surround the City of Buenos Aires, what is best known as the *Conurbano Bonaerense*. Some have had a strong presence in some municipalities of the province, like Unidad Bonaerense and Partido de Unidad Federalista led by Luis Patti (a former provincial sheriff) and Alianza Frente Popular Bonaerense led by Aldo Rico (a retired military member) (Calvo & Escolar 2005). Some of these third forces have also competed at the national level. A clearest example is the performance of the Frente País Solidario (FREPASO) (a center-left, urban political party) in the provincial executive elections in 1995, which got 21% of the votes in that year's provincial executive election, positioning itself in second place behind the Partido Justicialista and ahead of the Union Cívica Radical.

In 1997 the Union Cívica Radical and FREPASO created a political alliance named ALIANZA. Once again, in 1997 the political scenario in the province of Buenos Aires facing the elections was a mirror of the Argentine national politics. The Partido Radical and FREPASO constituted a political alliance that won the presidential elections and polarized the province of Buenos Aires. The ALIANZA and the Partido Justicialista reached 90% of the valid votes. This political alliance started to gain a leading role also in the province of Buenos Aires, getting in 1997 and 1999 legislative elections a majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies (56% and 51%, respectively) and a plurality of seats in the Senate (50% and 43%, respectively). These results complicated the administration of Peronist governor Carlos Ruckauf.

The financial and political crisis of 2001¹⁰ in Argentina caused the resignation of President Fernando De La Rúa and also the end of the ALIANZA. In the province of Buenos Aires, the Peronists started recovering their old position of preeminence in both chambers, especially in the Chamber of Deputies where they never got less than 50% of the seats from then on. In 2003, the alliance Frente para la Victoria (FPV) emerged to support the presidential candidacy of the Peronist Nestor Kirchner. He was elected with just 22% of the votes, due to the withdrawal of the runoff contender, Carlos Menem. Since 2005, this Peronist-based political coalition

¹⁰ The 2001 crisis in Argentina exploded in December 19th when spontaneous groups of people protested against the restrictions imposed to withdraw cash from fixed-term deposits, checking accounts and savings banks known as “corralito”. This situation plus the violence generated the day after caused the resignation of President Fernando De la Rúa in December 20th. The chaotic political situation after that catalyzed the ascension to the presidency of five presidents in one week. Finally, Eduardo Duhalde went into office in January 2nd of 2002 and stayed in office until 2003.

has had a prominent role in the province of Buenos Aires. In fact, it never got less than the 50% of the seats in either chamber.

3.4.2 Mendoza

The province of Mendoza is located in the geographical region of Argentina known as Cuyo. With a surface area of 148,827 km² and 1,741,610 inhabitants (according to the National Census 2010), it is the 4th most populated province in the country. Mendoza, like the other 23 provinces of the country, is autonomous of the national government in most of the political and economic issues with the exception of those with federal scope (National Constitution, Art. 21).

The Constitution of the Province of Mendoza was approved in 1916¹¹. It experienced different modifications, the last of which in 1997. The constitution establishes that the executive office is formed by a governor and a vice-governor who are elected by popular vote every four years and cannot be immediately reelected. The legislative branch consists of two chambers, both elected by proportional representation over the same representational base. The chamber of Deputies hosts 48 deputies (it cannot exceed 50 members) who remain 4 years in office and may be reelected. This chamber is partially renewed every two years, and constituencies are, like in Buenos Aires, four groups of municipalities with effective district magnitudes of 5, 5, 6 and 8 each. Like the national case, Deputies have the right to submit bills regarding taxation and the provincial budget. The Senate is composed of 38 legislators (with a maximum number of 40) who also remain in office for 4 years. Just like Deputies, this chamber is partially renewed every two years. Senators are

¹¹ The Provincial Constitution was modified in 1895, 1900, 1916, 1965 and 1985.

elected in 4 electoral sections with effective district magnitudes of 4, 4, 5 and 6 each. This chamber is in charge of impeachments and the appointment of judges and other public civil servants whose nomination requires the Senate's approval. The formula to allocate seats is the same in both chambers: D'Hondt with a 3% electoral threshold.

In strict political terms, Mendoza has been a very pluralistic province from many standpoints. On the one hand, it has been one of the few that has had frequent changes in the party affiliation of the governor, and also the legislature. On the other, it witnessed the relevance and survival of one of the oldest parties in Argentina, the conservative Partido Demócrata (aka "the geese"), which actually just survived in this district with any semblance of strength. The longevity of this party also tainted another feature of this province's political environment, which has been the traditional 2.5 parties' system. Both Peronists and Radicals have alternated in the governorship throughout the period (Table 3.4 below), but have had to develop a relationship with the legislature, as patterns of unified government have not been the norm at all.

Such distribution of institutional power goes hand-in-hand with another interesting feature that was almost an exception in the Argentine environment: Mendoza was not able to change its constitution in a substantive manner since the fifties. There have been minor reforms (i.e. use of Hare instead of D'Hondt formula) in the early eighties, but there was no consensus to modify several other rules, especially one that was incorporated in almost every supreme law in the rest of the provinces: consecutive reelection at the gubernatorial level. Since 1983, Mendoza has

been one of the few districts where no governor ever served more than one term, even though they can return after waiting a turn. This feature made the meaning of rotation genuinely true. Actually, other pieces have linked such rates of alternation with positive attributes of the political and institutional performance, such as increases in judicial independence (Bill Chavez 2004), in line with Gervasoni's (2011) characterization of Mendoza as one of the most democratic districts in the country.

In line with the wave of support for President Alfonsín and his Radical party in 1983, Felipe Llaver was elected as governor until 1987. Also following national effects, the *Renovador* (Peronist faction opposed to the traditional leadership of labor union leaders) Jose Octavio Bordón enjoyed the electoral punishment suffered by the national executive, and reached the provincial executive. In spite of the high popularity of this young governor, the rigidity of institutions made any constitutional reform impossible, and Bordón didn't have a better option than choosing his successor. As a consequence, a heterodox candidate, Rodolfo Gabrielli, the son of a much respected former Demócrata governor, reached the governorship in 1991. In the context of the historically high factionalism of every party in the province, Arturo Lafalla obtained the Peronist candidacy and therefore won the gubernatorial poll simultaneously with President Menem's reelection in 1995. After a notorious victory for the Demócratas in the midterm elections of 1997, there was absolute uncertainty about their prospects perspectives for 1999. In the context of an environment of Peronist decay in most of the country (President Menem had a very low popularity and failed in his attempts to reform the constitution again), the coattails effect of the

presidential election let the Radicals return to the governorship after sixteen years. Roberto Iglesias won the provincial executive simultaneously with the presidential election, replicating the alliance with Frepaso at the national level. In fact, vice-governor Juan Gonzalez Gaviola belonged to the mentioned center-left party. After the national crisis of 2001, the national party system burst, and so did the governing coalition.

In a highly uncertain context, in spite of the discredit of former president De La Rúa, his co-partisan Julio Cobos won the governorship in 2003, making Mendoza one of the few provinces under Radical control. Almost from the beginning, governor Cobos sought to build bridges with the new national government led by Nestor Kirchner. He became part of a core group of supporters of the president, closer to him than many other Peronist provincial executives. The maximum point of convergence was reached in 2007, when governor Cobos was selected as the vice-president of Cristina Kirchner, in the context of the so-called *Concertación*. Such an alliance publicly disappeared in 2009 for widely known reasons; however, the tensions associated with this coalition were previous in Mendoza, as the provincial branch of the Peronist party never accepted Cobos' leadership, nor did the Radical party officers assimilate the open incorporation to the national government. As a consequence, the PJ mayor Celso Jaque ran against the candidate blessed by Cobos, the Radical Cesar Biffi, and also against an *official* Radical, the former governor Roberto Iglesias. The division of the non-Peronist vote ended up benefitting Jaque, who was elected governor until 2011. In the meantime, Cobos moved to the opposition and his party massively won the midterm polls in 2009, which made him

almost a natural candidate for the next presidential election. However, another major event changed expectations and perspectives: Nestor Kirchner suddenly died in 2010, and his widow's popularity rose immediately, leaving her in an outstanding position for an eventual reelection. Divisions within the non-Peronist camp, along with presidential coattails effects, contributed to the victory of the Peronist Francisco Perez in 2011.

[Table 3.4]

3.4.3 Misiones

The province of Misiones is located in the North East part of Argentina. It extends across 29,801 km² (only 0.8% of the country) and holds 1,101,593 inhabitants. The executive office is occupied by a governor and a vice-governor, both of whom spend 4 years in office per term and are able to be reelected for one consecutive period. Between 1991 and 1997, the provincial executive was elected by the Double Simultaneous Voting ("Ley de Lemas") method¹², but after an electoral reform, plurality rule was restored.

On the legislative side, Misiones has a unicameral system. Until 2003, the Chamber of Deputies had been composed of 40 deputies elected for a 4 year period, allocated by the D'Hondt formula and no electoral threshold. The electoral reform of 2003 initiated the reduction of the chamber to 30 members elected by incomplete list (9 to the majority and 6 to the minority parties in each renewal).

¹² This new electoral system allowed the presentation of multiple candidates ("sublemas") within each party ("lema"), whose votes were accumulated at the *lema* level.

Since the return to democracy, with the exception of the first election, the Partido Justicialista has maintained control of the executive office (see Table 3.5).

[Table 3.5]

In spite of the dominance of the Peronist party at the gubernatorial level, the distribution of seats in the provincial legislature resembled a bipartisan environment for the first sixteen years after the transition to democracy. Since then the Peronist Frente Renovador has become electorally dominant.

During the foundational elections of 1983, Misiones replicated the trends at the presidential level, and elected the first and only Radical member for state executive, Ricardo Barrios Arrechea. The slight margins of that election (<3%) were replicated in the legislative elections. As a result, the 40-member legislature elected under a D'Hondt proportional formula was composed of 21 Radical and 19 Peronist deputies. The midterm elections of 1985, where 20 members were renewed, maintained a similar distribution of seats, extending the governor's period of unified government. In the 1987 election the Peronist candidate for governor, Julio Humada, beat the Radical Mario Losada by just 2,000 votes. The legislative elections gave ten seats to each party which allowed the UCR to keep its small advantage.

It was not until 1989, with the national victory of President Menem, that governor Humada enjoyed patterns of unified government. Yet his party became more fragmented. As a remedy, the governor and the national Minister of Internal Affairs agreed to release the typical device used in the early nineties for these circumstances: the *Ley de Lemas*, which allowed parties to present several lists in the

election and pool the votes of lists for the same party to determine the winner. In line with the incentives offered by these rules, both PJ and UCR offered a number of candidacies for the maximum provincial positions. Among them was a wealthy Peronist without strong party ties but with clear interests regarding the most popular good of the district (the owner of thousands of acres with yerba mate plantations), Ramón Puerta. He won a huge majority of the 52% of votes received by the Peronist lists, and became the first governor elected by this system. An unconditional ally of president Menem, Puerta promoted numerous privatizations that gave him funds to keep the province reasonably stable. His party then got 50% of votes in the midterm polls of 1993, which encouraged the governor to emulate his admired copartisan in the national executive and seek reelection. In 1995 he won with 49% of the vote.

Partisan parity in the legislature was reinforced in 1997, when the PJ suffered a defeat at the national level. In Misiones, the results could not be more on par: while Peronists got 47.36% of the vote, Radicals reached 47.30%. The close election raised expectations on the Radical side, anticipating possible coattails effects from a likely-to-win copartisan in 1999. However, Carlos Rovira, former mayor of Posadas (capital city) and blessed by Puerta, won the polls by 54% and extended the Peronist predominance. Peronists also won the 2001 midterm elections, but each party received 10 legislative seats.

The year 2001 marks the beginning of the end of politics as usual in Misiones. This is the result of two factors: changes in the national environment, and an open battle between the two biggest players in the province. With Nestor Kirchner's victory in 2003, the Peronists in the province began to realign. The old guard that felt

closer to former president Eduardo Duhalde and new groups of supporters of Kirchner started a silent battle that would last a couple of years. One of the first rounds of this clash took place in Misiones, where Rovira sought reelection backed by the national government, and Puerta tried to return to the seat he considered his own, supported by Duhalde and his allies. The first consequence of the fight was the expulsion of the governor from the Peronist party; an incident that gave birth to the predominant actor from then on: the Frente Renovador (FR), built up by dissident Peronists, rebel radicals (led by the powerful mayor Ramon Closs), and center-left parties that were backing the national government. Rovira got reelected by 47% of the vote, leaving his former friend with 32% of the vote, and the Radicals with 14% of the vote. Two years later Rovira's party received a 25% advantage vis-à-vis the other Peronist list, and emboldened the governor to try an audacious move: amend the constitution to erase term limits and run for a third straight period. Even though the legislature declared the need to reform the rules, the governor faced an unexpected pitfall: in the elections for delegates to the constitutional convention, an opposition front led by the provincial bishop, Joaquin Pina, won 56% of the votes, and buried Rovira's aspirations. This led the governor to support the son of his main Radical ally, National Senator Maurice Closs, who then became the next provincial governor with 38% of the vote in the 2007 election. Closs improved the party's performance in 2009 and won reelection with one of the highest shares in Argentine history, 75% of the vote, and probably the biggest gap ever witnessed in a subnational election (69 points ahead of the runner up, who got 6.24).

3.4.4 Santa Fe

The province of Santa Fe is located in the central region of Argentina. Due to its history, strategic location (it is situated at the convergence of two very important argentine rivers –Río Paraná and Río Salado) and contribution to the building of the national state, it is one of the most important provinces in the country. The principal economic activities in Santa Fe are agriculture and livestock. The GDP of Santa Fe represents 8% of the national GDP. This province is one of the three districts, along with Córdoba and Buenos Aires, that contribute the most to the national economy.

The governor of Santa Fe is elected by popular vote every 4 years, and no consecutive reelection is allowed. Between 1983 and 1991, when the electoral rules were reformed, the governor was elected by a simple plurality of the votes. Between 1991 and 2003, it was elected by Double Simultaneous Vote (“Ley de Lemas”); thereafter, plurality rule returned.

The legislative branch is bicameral. The Chamber of Deputies includes 50 members renewed every 4 years. Between 1983 and 1991, an incomplete list system allocated 28 seats to the plurality winner, and distributed the 22 remaining spots by D’Hondt formula with a 3% electoral threshold. The Senate consists of 19 members elected in single-member districts by plurality rule.

The province of Santa Fe is one of the so-called “four legs of the table” in national politics (along with Buenos Aires, Cordoba and the City of Buenos Aires). For fourteen years, the Peronist party controlled the governorship (Table 3.6 below) and both chambers of the provincial legislature, winning election after election and manipulating rules almost at its own will.

[Table 3.6]

In spite of the national mood favorable to the Radical party (President Alfonsín won by 8 points in the district), Peronists were able to win the governorship by a 0.3% margin (10,000 votes out of a million and a half) in 1983. This foundational victory created a trend that, with the exception of the 1985 midterm, gave the Peronist party control for almost fifteen years. Governor Jose Maria Vernet was the first among equals in a much factionalized environment where multiple bosses made and unmade specific temporary alliances.

The dominance of the Peronist *renovadores* in 1987 changed the winning coalition within the party, and made it more tolerable to the median voter. This fact, along with poor economic conditions, generated a drastic loss for the Radicals. Santa Fe was not an exception, and Peronist candidate Victor Reviglio won the governorship by a 16% margin. Corruption scandals triggered by Vice-governor Antonio Vanrell weakened party cohesion and put the party at risk. As a solution, the new president Carlos Menem ordered governors to adopt the so-called “Ley de Lemas” (see Tula 1995). While such systems minimize the effects of fragmentation and lets different parties collude and create broad alliances minimizing transaction costs; it has an underlying risk: that the candidate with the highest share of votes does not end up winning the office. This is exactly what happened in 1991, when the outsider and former Formula 1 driver Carlos Reutemann, endorsed by the president, won the governorship under the PJ, even though Horacio Usandizaga, the Radical

mayor of Rosario, had got about 100,000 votes more than him. In spite of the complaints about the unfairness of the system, the PJ had kept the governorship once again.

Reutemann used his popularity and federal funds to solidify his position within the province. He became a possible presidential candidate for 1995. In light of the constitutional reform of 1994 that allowed president Menem to run for reelection, and the prohibition on reelection at the provincial level, Reutemann decided to support the candidacy of Jorge Obeid, who easily won the post. In 1999, after a short tenure as a senator, Carlos Reutemann returned to the governorship winning with 52% of the vote. Again he became a serious candidate for the presidency. But again, he did not run. Following De la Rúa's resignation from the presidency, Reutemann appeared to be the consensus candidate of most sectors within Peronism but surprisingly, he withdrew his candidacy. Subsequently, Jorge Obeid won the governorship again, backed by Reutemann and the brand new president Nestor Kirchner. The Ley de Lemas made his victory possible, as the most voted candidate was the popular Socialist mayor of Rosario, Hermes Binner.

As support for the electoral system dwindled, Argentina adopted the Uruguay-inspired mandatory and simultaneous primaries. Such a mechanism not only triggered uncertainty in terms of the effects over parties and competition, but also with regards to the next gubernatorial elections. Without the Ley de Lemas it was not clear that Peronists would be able to coordinate and line up with a single candidate anymore. The Frente Progresista, a coalition of Radicals, Socialists, Progressive Democrats, and other minor parties challenged the Peronists. Its most

popular figure, Hermes Binner, quickly became the head of the alliance and easily won the gubernatorial election. Under the new rules, Binner became the first non-Peronist governor of Santa Fe, which made him a serious presidential candidate. He subsequently finished second in the presidential race. Antonio Bonfatti, supported by Binner, was the winner of the governorship race, followed closely by the actor Miguel Del Sel. Even though it arrived third in the executive race, the PJ got most of the votes for the Chamber of Deputies, and also retained a majority in the Senate.

3.5 Final Remarks

Research of subnational units presents particular advantages to comparative politics. The two central benefits of this research strategy have to do with the possibility they offer to palliate the small-N problem (because this type of research increases our number of observations within a single country); and to allow for controlled comparisons (since these analyses involve a number of factors i.e. culture, history, that are common to all the observational units). Moreover, subnational research allows the researcher to take into consideration the particularities of the units that constitute a country. Therefore, it makes refining theories and statements that have been developed with an eye on the national level and that are (maybe) biased by subnational realities possible.

Subnational research in the area of legislative studies has flourished in the United States. Nevertheless, and despite the impressive variation that Latin America offers, the investigation of legislative politics in this region of the world is limited with the exception of some studies on Mexico (Gonzalez 2010) and Brazil

(Desposato 2001). In this regard, studying legislative success in the Argentine provinces should contribute to an increase in our knowledge of legislative politics in federal countries and should also generate novel datasets.

The next two chapters present empirical evidence about the five legislatures presented above regarding the two principal questions posited in this investigation: who integrates committees and committee chairs; and how do positions of authority affect legislative success?

TABLES

Table 3.1: Electoral Rules Variation in Selected Legislatures

Province	Format	Chamber	District Type	District Magnitude	Electoral Formula	Electoral Threshold	Type of Bicameralism
Buenos Aires	Bicameral	Senators	8 Multi Member districts	6 to 15	PR (Hare)	Electoral Quot	Congruent
		Deputies	8 Multi Member districts	3 to 9	PR (Hare)	Electoral Quot	
Mendoza	Bicameral	Senators	4 Districts	5, 6, 8	PR (D'Hondt)	3%	Congruent
		Deputies	4 Districts	4, 5, 6	PR (D'Hondt)	3%	
Misiones	Unicameral	Deputies	Province Wide District	20	PR (D'Hondt)	No	-
Santa Fe	Bicameral	Senators	19 Single Member Districts	1	Simple Plurality	-	Not congruent
		Deputies	Province Wide District	50	Fixed Allocation & PR	3% (maj. guaranteed)	

Source: Calvo et al in “*El Federalismo Electoral Argentino: Sobrerrepresentación, reforma política y gobierno dividido en la Argentina*”.

Table 3.2: Variation of Political Composition in Selected Legislatures

Province	Majority Periods	Plurality Periods
Buenos Aires	1992-1997	1998-2002
Deputies 1995-2012	2003-2005	2006-2007
	2008-2009	2010-2012
Buenos Aires	1992-2009	2010-2011
Senate 1992-2011	2012	
Mendoza	-	1998-2011
Senate 1998-2010		
Misiones	1984-2000	2001
Deputies 1983-2009	2002	2003-2004
	2005-2006	2007
Santa Fe	2004-2011	-
Senate 2004-2011		

Table 3.3: Governors of the province of Buenos Aires 1983-2015

PERIOD	GOVERNOR	POLITICAL PARTY
1983-1987	Alejandro Armendáriz	Unión Cívica Radical
1987-1991	Antonio Cafiero	Partido Justicialista
1991-1995	Eduardo Duhalde	Partido Justicialista
1995-1999	Eduardo Duhalde	Partido Justicialista
1999-2002	Carlos Ruckauf	Partido Justicialista
2002-2007	Felipe Sola	Partido Justicialista
2007-2011	Daniel Scioli	Partido Justicialista
2011-2015	Daniel Scioli	Partido Justicialista

Table 3.4: Governors of the province of Mendoza 1983-2015

PERIOD	GOVERNOR	PARTY
1983-1987	Santiago Llaver	Unión Cívica Radical
1987-1991	José Octavio Bordón	Partido Justicialista
1991-1995	Rodolfo Gabrielli	Partido Justicialista
1995-1999	Arturo Lafalla	Partido Justicialista
1999-2003	Roberto Iglesias	Unión Cívica Radical
2003-2007	Julio Cobos	Unión Cívica Radical
2007-2011	Celso Jaque	Frente para la Victoria
2011-2015	Francisco Pérez	Frente para la Victoria

Table 3.5: Governors of the province of Misiones 1983-2011

PERIOD	GOVERNOR	PARTY
1983-1987	Ricardo Barrios Arrechea	Unión Cívica Radical
1987-1987	Luis María Cassoni	Partido Justicialista
1987-1991	Julio César Humada	Partido Justicialista
1991-1995	Federico Ramón Puerta	Partido Justicialista
1995-1999	Federico Ramón Puerta	Partido Justicialista
1999-2003	Carlos Eduardo Rovira	Frente Renovador
2003-2007	Carlos Eduardo Rovira	Frente Renovador
2007-2011	Dr. Maurice Closs	Frente Renovador de la Concordia

Table 3.6: Governors of the province of Santa Fe 1983-2011

PERIOD	GOVERNOR	PARTY
1983-1987	José María Vernet	Partido Justicialista
1987-1991	Víctor Reviglio	Partido Justicialista
1991-1995	Carlos Reutemann	Partido Justicialista
1995-1999	Jorge Obeid	Partido Justicialista
1999-2003	Carlos Reutemann	Partido Justicialista
2003-2007	Jorge Obeid	Partido Justicialista
2007-2011	Hermes Binner	Partido Socialista
2011-2015	Antonio Bonfatti	Partido Socialista

MAJORITARIAN BIASES IN LEGISLATURES

4. 1 Introduction

Just like electoral parties compete to gain seats in the legislature, legislative parties compete to enjoy the benefit of controlling influential offices such as the chairmanships of committees. The results of the latter will depend on the rules that shape the contest. The legislature's internal rules of procedure are typically endogenous, and thereby affected by the type of political configuration of the legislature, i.e. two-party or multiparty composition. In this regard, the literature has stated that the allocation of committee chairs is strongly related to the partisan configuration on the plenary floor. Therefore, in proportional legislatures we will expect to see a proportional distribution of committee chairs.

This chapter investigates committee assignments in legislatures with a majoritarian and proportional composition. In other words, this section explores the extent to which proportionality on the plenary floor is reflected in the selection of committee chairs and in the allocation of committee members. This assignment of members to committees and the selection of chairs is important because the committee system is a vital institution in the division of labor and the decision making process of legislatures. Holding a position of authority in the committee system constitutes an important political resource in the process of passing legislation and, consequently, legislative outcomes can vary depending on who controls key

mega-seats. These issues have been not been investigated in depth in the literature regarding legislative organization. Increasing our understanding about committee composition in other political settings will enrich our knowledge of the role of parties in the organization of legislatures and in consequence, their role on the process of agenda control.

There are two main findings in this chapter. First, the allocation of committee members in every single legislature in this study (including the most majoritarian one) is almost perfectly proportional. Second, there is a majoritarian bonus in the selection of mega-seats. The rest of this chapter is organized in the following manner: section two explains the theoretical argument and the hypotheses to be tested. Section three describes the variables and the data used in the empirical analysis. Section four shows and describes the empirical results. The fifth section discusses the empirical findings and finally, section six offers some final remarks.

4.2 Principal Argument and Hypotheses

As mentioned in Chapter 2, in electoral democracies, parties select the rules under which both the electoral and legislative games are going to be played. In the first game, electoral parties compete for votes to get seat-shares and in the second one, legislative parties compete for positions of authority within the legislature. Once rules are in place, they exert their own effects on both individual and collective actors' behavior. Given that rules are shaped according to parties' preferences, we should expect to see proportional allocation of committee members in those legislatures where representatives were elected by proportional institutions.

Electoral institutions usually involve some minimum deviation from perfect proportionality. Majoritarian biases reflect asymmetries in the seats-votes relationship and manifest themselves on the floor on the floor of almost every legislature.¹³ If the logic of electoral competition is reproduced in the legislative arena then we would expect to see bias in the allocation of legislative posts. In other words, floor asymmetries resulting from seat allocation procedures are likely to be reproduced in the distribution of committee members.

The goal of this chapter is to explore two central hypotheses:

H1: The greater the bias in the allocation of seats given the share of votes, the greater the bias in the assignment of legislators to permanent committees.

H2: The greater the bias in the allocation of seats given the share of votes, the greater the bias in the assignment of committee chairmanship positions.

For legislators, committee assignments are important because they are relevant assets to further their individual and collective-level goals. As Krehbiel (1991) mentioned with regard to the United States, committees provide opportunities for specializing at a low cost. Legislators can utilize the expertise they gain as committee members as a resource for communicating their skills and capabilities to

¹³ Some cases such as the extremely proportional system ruling in Israel (the 120-member unicameral Knesset is elected by a closed-list system using the entire country as constituency) are valid yet rare counterexamples

their supporters. Implicit in this idea is the assumption that policy expertise provides legislators with an edge when proposing bills that fall within their respective policy areas.

Being a committee member increases legislators' probabilities of introducing bills within their area of expertise into the legislative agenda vis-a-vis legislators from other committees. For example, legislator A is a member of the Health committee and legislator B joins the Education committee. If both legislators introduce a bill about a health issue, the bill that has a higher chance of being approved by the committee is the one sponsored by legislator A because Health is the committee of her expertise. Therefore, she has more of a chance to influence committee members' decisions. This might increase the chances of legislator A's project being incorporated at the top of the committee's agenda. Consequently, if the project finally gets approval at the committee level, it is going to be a part of the order of the day. Given that time is scarce and finite, a limited amount of projects will join the set of bills that are going to be treated on the plenary floor. Thus, a bill reaching the order of the day will indirectly increase its chances of final approval. For these reasons, I argue that committee membership is a relevant variable to take into consideration in the study of legislative success.

Legislators can claim credit when their bills become laws, and thus improve their reputations for whatever their next career goal might be. In a related vein, it can be assumed that legislative approval (a quite rare event, indeed) involves prestige, too. Anecdotal evidence from the Argentine federal Congress indicates that specific laws generated deep social recognition for their sponsors, up to the point that some

of them are well known by the name of their authors (i.e. sports law is mentioned as “Ley De la Rúa”, open information law is called “Ley Carrió”).

Committee membership can also contribute to enhancing the party brand, which is considered to be another electoral resource in the case of U.S. parties (Cox and McCubbins 1993). If legislators actually behave in a consistent manner that lets the party deliberate, vote and submit their preferred bills to the floor, then the party as a collective actor should enjoy the credit for having pushed for and approved those policies. As a consequence, rank and file members should enjoy the recognition of party leaders as a result of their committee’s behavior and improve their opportunities to reach higher positions in the Chamber or other more profitable offices (Ibid.).

Mega-seats such as chairmanships and the Speaker are typically considered key posts in the legislative process. In the Argentine provincial Senates the Speaker is the vice-governor. In the case of the Buenos Aires and Misiones Chambers of Deputies, Speakers are elected by majority and simple plurality, respectively. The principal feature that makes Speakers important actors in the legislative process is that they are in charge of determining the bills that will be included in the order of the day. Speakers decide which bills, previously proposed by the chamber directorate, are going to be discussed on the plenary floor.

Committee chairs’ prerogatives are not explicitly established in provincial legislatures’ internal rules of procedure (*Reglamentos Internos*). Nevertheless, two sources point to the relevance of these actors in the legislative process. First, informal conversations with the director of the staff of committees (Dirección de Comisiones)

of the Senate of Mendoza revealed that, even though it is not a formal rule, it is a norm that chairs lead the discussion within committees around the issues of their preference. Second, after having thoroughly read all provincial internal rules, I concluded that they are very similar to each other regarding prerogatives of legislatures' authorities (i.e. Speaker), committees' prerogatives and legislatures' functions,¹⁴ and that they tend to mimic the rules of the Argentine Congress. In the Argentine federal Congress committee chairs are important actors because they have the exclusive responsibility of drafting the committee schedule. Moreover, chairs might request feasibility studies on a particular bill, and their vote counts double for reporting decisions (Calvo & Sagarzazu, 2010: 05). For these reasons, and following the literature in comparative politics (Powell 2000), I assume that chairs in provincial legislatures tend to be relevant actors in the internal decision making of their respective committees.

4.3 Measuring Biases: Data Description and Variables

To investigate the central questions of this chapter I make use of an original dataset of five Argentine subnational legislatures: Buenos Aires (Deputies and Senate) from 1992 to 2011, Mendoza (Senate) from 1998 to 2011, Santa Fe (Senate) from 1996 to 2011, and Misiones (Deputies) for the period between 1984-2011. I collected original yearly data on the composition of these five legislatures and their committee seat allocations (including positions of authority), as well as the partisanship of each legislator.

¹⁴ It is important to note that legislatures' internal rules do differ in terms of rules to select committee members and the Speaker.

It is a difficult task to establish the partisanship of Argentine legislators. A key feature of the Argentine party system is the progressive denationalization of party competition. This has contributed to the creation and disappearance of many parties, and complex coalition building (Leiras 2007; Gibson and Suarez Cao 2010; Jones and Micozzi 2013; Calvo and Leiras 2013). One of the toughest stages of this project was the identification of legislators' party memberships. Dissimilar electoral systems at the local level provide different incentives to individuals and parties (Calvo and Escolar 2005; Calvo and Micozzi 2005). These incentives may encourage the creation of electoral alliances that usually last until elections end. Thus, legislators tend to compete in elections under a given party label and once they obtain their seat, four alternative outcomes might take place: they may remain in the same party, switch to another one, merge into a new legislative alliance or even build up a new legislative bloc that in some cases ends up being individual blocs (*'monobloques'*).¹⁵ Thus, the identification of the partisanship of a legislator at times $t_1, t_2 \dots t_k$ was, by definition, an important (and complex) issue faced in the data generation process. Given that my interest is focused on the competition within the legislature (second round) and not in the electoral contest, the partisanship is based on the party label by which each legislator was elected into the assembly.

The political science literature has used different operationalizations to capture the effects of electoral rules on the party system. Several studies have sought to explain how electoral rules promote party system fragmentation, and which

¹⁵ Even more, switches are not exclusive of subjects that may strategically leave their parties or coalitions attracted by the 'warmth of power'; instead, many different provincial factions, leaders, or individual politicians may also build new local parties, rent an existing party organization, or generate new political alliances over time and across provinces (Jones and Micozzi, 2013).

political parties benefit when disproportional mechanisms are in place. Party system fragmentation tends to reflect the electoral systems' permissiveness. It gives us information about the estimated number of parties competing in an election or holding seats in a legislature. Several studies have shown that proportional electoral rules (i.e., more permissive systems) tend to foster the proliferation of minor political parties.¹⁶ However, high fragmentation may still allow for a party that holds more than 50% of the seats (majority party), or host a party that holds the larger number of legislative seats but not the majority (plurality party) instead. A common measure for party fragmentation in the literature has been the index of effective number of political parties developed by Laakso and Taagepera.¹⁷ This measure weights the count of political parties by their relative strength, understood as their vote share (i.e. effective number of electoral parties) or seat share (i.e. effective number of legislative parties). When this measure is used, the number of parties is equivalent to the effective number of parties only when all parties have equal strength; otherwise, the effective number of parties will be lower than the actual number of parties (Laakso and Taagepera, 1979). Following the literature, I use this index to measure the fragmentation of the provincial legislatures studied.

No electoral system is completely proportional. Even the most equitable electoral institution has some degree of disproportionality. Since the focus of this study is on the benefits that political parties obtain from rules, we need to consider

¹⁶ Considering also other political variables like the way in which the executive office is elected and the timing of the elections, among others.

¹⁷ Laakso & Taagepera's (1979) formula $\left(\sum_{i=1}^n (v_i)^2 \right)^{-1}$, where v = share of votes

the degree of disproportionality that electoral systems generate in a given polity. The term disproportionality refers to the deviation of parties' seat shares from their vote shares (Lijphart, 1994). Despite differences in how to measure this variable, all authors agree on the same point of departure: the consideration of the differences between the percentage of the seats and the percentage of the votes received by the different political parties. The main disagreements reside in how the deviations should be aggregated (Lijphart, 1994). Rae's index uses the average of the deviations per party—it sums the absolute differences between the vote percentages and seat percentages and then divides it by the number of parties (Rae, 1971). Loosemore and Hanby's index reflects the total percentage by which the overrepresented parties are rewarded—it registers the total deviation instead of the average deviation from proportionality per party (Loosemore & Hanby 1971). On the other hand, as a methodological solution, Gallagher's least-squares index (LSq) lies between the two former indices. This index squares each party's share differences and, once added, it divides the results by two and then takes the square root of this last value. This way, many large deviations are much more strongly reflected than a lot of small ones (Gallagher 1991).

Another way to look at inequalities generated by electoral systems is to focus on the size of the “majoritarian bonus” (Carroll, Cox and Pachón 2006). The foundations of this measure are similar to those of disproportionality mentioned above, but the goal is different. The estimation of the majoritarian bias puts the emphasis on the size of the party benefited by the electoral system. Thus, when larger parties tend to receive larger bonuses, or there is an overrepresentation of the

winning party, we can state that the electoral system generates a majoritarian bonus or bias (Carroll et al 2006, Calvo 2000).

The majoritarian bias idea was originally thought up by Tufte (1973). He proposed what is known as the ‘*cube law*’, which states that in single-member plurality systems, the proportional relationship of votes obtained by the first and second political parties is equal to the cube of the seat (or chair) shares gained by each party. This mathematical formula (1) shows that it is “cheaper” (in terms of votes) for the winning party to get a legislative seat (chair position) than for its competitor (*rho* is set equal to three¹⁸).

$$\left(\frac{S}{1-S}\right) = \left(\frac{V}{1-V}\right)^{\rho} \quad (1)$$

This measure is only applicable to single-member plurality systems. In order to make this measure applicable to other cases with different district magnitudes, King and Browning (1987) include a bias parameter to equation 1. With this mathematical strategy, they adapted the original formulation to calculate representation and partisan bias in the same estimation (2). Their formulation stipulates that the parameter *rho* is the power to which the votes of a party *i* have to be raised in order to calculate how many legislative seats (in this case, how many chairmanships) it would obtain. This parameter does not depend on the results of any electoral election, but it describes the effective winning surcharge for a winning party as a function of all the variables of a particular electoral system (i.e. district

¹⁸ For technical explanations of the Cube Law see Tufte (1973).

magnitude, electoral formula, etc.) (Calvo 2001). In this estimation when $\beta=1$ there is no bias.

$$\left(\frac{S}{1-S}\right) = \beta \left(\frac{V}{1-V}\right)^{\rho} \quad (2)$$

In Tufte (1973) *rho* is estimated by running a linear regression given that at that time other techniques were less commonly used and because of the lack of extreme points in the data (King and Browning 1984). However, King and Browning posit that a nonlinear model is a more realistic way to measure bias, given that it allows for every possible degree of partisan bias and every possible form of democratic representation besides single-member plurality rule. So, with a nonlinear model, even systems with varying and extreme numbers of seats and votes can be incorporated into the model. They choose to use a modification of the dichotomous logit model, where $\ln\left(\frac{V}{1-V}\right)$ is a log-odds function of v , and there is no constant term. The values range from 0 to 1. Given that this transformation represents the inverse of a logit function, they called it BLOGIT functional form (3).

$$s = D \left\{ 1 + \exp \left[-\ln(\beta) - \rho \ln \left(\frac{V}{1-V} \right) \right] \right\}^{-1} \quad (3)$$

Given that, as stated, I am interested in assessing whether there are systematic biases in the composition of committees and the distribution of chairmanships, I

decided to utilize the measure of majoritarian bonus to estimate disparities generated by rules. It makes possible to compute the size of the “prize” (bonus) received by larger parties.

To estimate the majoritarian bias for the allocation of committee members and the selection of committee chairs, I adapted these equations to fit them to these different calculations. In the estimation of the majoritarian bonus for the allocation of committee members, ρ is a function of the number of committee members by party, the total number of members and the effective number of legislative parties. For the estimation of the majoritarian bias in the selection of committee chairs, ρ is a function of the number of chairs by party, the total number of chairmanships in play and also the effective number of legislative parties.

The method of estimating the majoritarian bias is BLOGIT, given that this procedure produces maximum-likelihood estimation on grouped data. The function in parenthesis in equation 3 is a logistic function wherein the parameter ρ is estimated without a constant (Calvo 2001). So, it estimates a binomial probability function that is between zero and one ($0 < p < 1$). We say that a system is strictly proportional when ρ equals 1. The higher the value of ρ , the higher the majoritarian bonus for larger parties is. Conversely, values under 1 represent counter-majoritarian systems.

4.4 Empirical Evidence

I divide the discussion of results into three parts. First I discuss bias in the allocation of seats after elections. Second, I discuss bias in the allocation of committee seats. Lastly, I discuss bias in the allocation of committee chairs.

4.4.1 Majoritarian Bias on the Plenary Floor

The hypotheses to be verified in this chapter are that the greater the bias in the allocation of seats given the share of votes, the greater the bias in the allocation of seats inside legislative offices with procedural authority (committee members); and that the greater the bias in the allocation of seats given the share of votes, the greater the bias in the selection of chairmanship positions. Table 4.1 shows the results for the estimation of majoritarian bias at three different stages in the five selected provinces.

[Table 4.1]

Looking at the third column of Table 4.1 above, we can see that, as expected, every system offers some kind of prize to larger parties. Nevertheless provinces using more proportional rules show less majoritarian biases, in other words, they are closer to proportionality (ρ is closer to 1).

Santa Fe's Senate has a majoritarian electoral system and the highest bonus in the sample (ρ : 3.03). Santa Fe is divided into 19 electoral districts, each of which elects one senator by plurality rule. Therefore, I expect that both electoral rules and internal rules of procedure that allocate committee members should produce high majoritarian biases.

Figure 4.1 below illustrates the majoritarian bias given different competitive contexts. The first quadrant shows that when electoral competition is low (ENCP: 1.87), political parties have to obtain more than 20% of the votes to win a seat. Parties that receive fewer votes do not receive any legislative representation, while parties that gain somewhere between 30% and 40% of the votes win approximately 10% and 20% of the seats, respectively. When a party wins 50% of the votes it gets 60% of the seats. The extreme case is represented in quadrant 3 of Figure 4.1 and illustrates how the electoral system for the Senate of Santa Fe works in a scenario of high electoral competition (ENCP: 3.43). This time, a party that wins 40% of the vote is predicted to win 60% of the legislative seats. In sum, what the graphs are showing us is that the majoritarian bonus gets larger as electoral competition increases.

On the other extreme we have Misiones. Members of the Misiones legislature are elected using proportional representation from one at-large district, which tends to grant small prizes to larger parties. This province elects its 20 legislators in a unique district with a D'Hondt formula without a minimum threshold for representation. Not surprisingly, this legislature has the lowest level of majoritarian bias in the whole sample. According to Figure 4.2, in order to get 60% of the seats, a political party needs to reach more than the 50% of the votes in scenarios of low levels of electoral competition (ENLP: 1.71), 40% of the votes when electoral competition is at a medium level (ENLP: 2.41), and 30% of the votes when it is high (ENLP: 3.9).

[Figures 4.1 and 4.2]

In the province of Buenos Aires, candidates for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate are elected in a similar way. Their representatives compete in eight electoral districts that have district magnitudes between 6 and 15 for candidates to the Chamber of Deputies, and between 3 and 9 for candidates to the Senate. The formula used for the distribution of seats is Hare, which is considered to provide a smaller bonus to larger parties than the D'Hondt formula (Gallagher and Mitchell 2005).

Variation regarding district magnitude explains the difference in majoritarian bias found in these chambers. Lower district magnitude tends to favor larger parties. The results show that the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies gives fewer advantages (regarding seats) to larger parties (ρ : 1.42) than the Senate (ρ : 1.82). Figure 4.3 shows majoritarian bonuses for the Buenos Aires chamber of Deputies estimated at three different levels: low levels of electoral competition (when it is equal to 2.44, which is the lowest level reached by this province for the period analyzed), medium level of parties' electoral competition (i.e. the effective number of competing parties is equal to 3.45) and high levels of parties' electoral competition (i.e. 5.28, which is the highest level reached by this province for the same period).

The graphs show that the electoral system begins to reward larger parties with a bonus more quickly when electoral competition is high. Actually, in this scenario, a party does not even need to reach 20% of the votes to start getting a bonus. When a given party reaches 40% of the votes, it gets more than the 60% of legislative seats.

On the contrary, when electoral competition is low, the majoritarian bonus begins after a party has reached the 40% of the votes.

[Figure 4.3]

For the Senate (Figure 4.4), patterns of electoral competition are set to 2.43, 3.66 and 5.78 for low, medium and high levels of electoral competition among political parties, respectively. The results show patterns that are quite similar to those found in the Chamber of Deputies.

[Figure 4.4]

Lastly, Mendoza's Senate is elected in four different electoral districts with effective magnitudes of 4, 5 and 6, by a D'Hondt electoral formula and a 3% electoral barrier. This last variable works against the election of small parties and appears to have some effect on the degree of disproportionality (*rho*: 1.65). In this case, the level of effective competition is set at 2.68 (low), 3.43 (medium) and 5.40 (high). I also included 2007 which was a particularly competitive year in which 10 parties competed in legislative elections. Nevertheless, despite this atypical increase in the number of competing parties, the number of parties represented remained the same (Figure 4.5). Moreover, we can also see from the graph above that larger parties need 50% of the votes to gain almost 60% of the seats when electoral

competition is low, while the larger parties get 65% and 70% of the seats in scenarios of medium and high electoral competition, respectively, with the same vote share.

[Figure 4.5]

4.4.2 Majoritarian Bias in the Allocation of Committee Members

The previous section examined the majoritarian biases generated by the electoral rules in the five legislatures included in the analysis. This one focuses on whether bias in seat allocation is reproduced in the allocation of committee members (H1). In other words, the greater the bias generated by electoral rules on the plenary floor, the greater the bias is in the allocation of committee members.

Results demonstrate that the first hypothesis cannot be confirmed. Contrary to expectations, estimations reported in Table 4.1 show that, despite biases in legislatures' plenary floors, there is a significant decrease in the level of majoritarian bias in the allocation of committee members in all the selected bodies. Even the most majoritarian legislature, Santa Fe's Senate, has a very highly proportional allocation of committee members (ρ : 1.10). Figure 4.6 shows that no matter what the level of electoral competition is, the bias is very small.

[Figure 4.6]

The same situation is reflected in the allocation of committee members in the legislatures of Buenos Aires, Mendoza and Misiones (Figures 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 below). Notice that these cases not only reflect very close to perfect proportionality in

the allocation of committee members, but also that two of them show a counter-majoritarian distribution of posts in the committee system (i.e. Buenos Aires and Mendoza' Senate have a ρ of 0.97 and 0.92, respectively). This means that minor parties are receiving representation in these committee systems at the expense of larger parties.

[Figures 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10]

These findings, however, should not be entirely surprising. Consider a hypothetical scenario where proportional rules let several parties get a couple of seats, somewhere between 3% or 4% of the seats. These small parties deserve seats in committees, as generally prescribed by the rules. Considering that most committees tend to have quite small memberships (an average of ten in the current sample); even a single seat would represent a tenth of the general composition. Thus, parties with three percent of legislative representation would triple their relative participation in specific committees. Such differences built up the roots of the previously mentioned counter-majoritarian results found in particular legislatures.

Thus, given these results we cannot argue that a legislatures' majoritarian bias correlates with a bias in the allocation of committee members. On the contrary, given that majoritarian biases decrease considerably for the distribution of these posts, there is an insignificant relationship between the levels of majoritarian bias in plenary floor and their committee systems.¹⁹

¹⁹ Notice that systems like those in Buenos Aires and Mendoza's Senate even show (albeit very small) counter-majoritarian biases in the allocation of committee members (ρ : 0.97 and 0.92, respectively).

4.4.3 Majoritarian Bias in the Selection of Committee Chairmanships

As argued, chairmanships are strategic posts in the agenda setting process. Legislators that occupy these positions increase their prerogatives vis-à-vis their colleagues because of their control over the flow of legislation that will be reported to the chamber directorate.

If we believe that rules are used on the behalf of their creators, then, regardless of the distribution of spots within committees, we would still expect to find legislatures' majoritarian biases reproduced in the selection of committee chairmanships. This section investigates the validity of the second hypothesis: The greater the bias in the allocation of seats given the share of votes, the greater the bias in the selection of chairmanship positions.

As Table 4.1 shows, prizes to larger parties appear to be reflected in the selection of committee chairs. Once again, like at the floor level, the assignment process in Santa Fe's Senate grants larger parties a higher prize in terms of chairmanship positions (ρ : 2.17). Figure 4.11 shows how in this legislature, it takes more than 20% of the seats to become competitive for a chair position, but once a party wins more than 40% of the seats the prize is huge. For instance, in a scenario of low party fragmentation (ENLP: 1.53), it is required for a given party to hold 40% of the seats in order to get 20% of the committee chairs. When the effective number of parties in the legislature is 3, the party that holds more than 50% of the seats is going to occupy almost 60% of the chairmanships, while the chances of a party with 20% of the seats getting a chairmanship position tend to zero. When the legislature is

quite fragmented (ENLP: 4.45), the party with 60% of the seats might obtain 80% of committee chairs. This is an important issue, given that it is a majoritarian legislature. In short, in the Senate of Santa Fe there is no majoritarian bonus reflected in the committee assignment process; however, in terms of the allocation of committee chairs there appears to be a significant majoritarian bias.

[Figures 4.11 and 4.12]

Mendoza's Senate is the second legislature in the sample in terms of granting larger parties bigger prizes (ρ : 1.36). Figure 4.12 shows that the system starts granting political parties bonuses when they have more than 40% of the legislative seats (it does not matter how fragmented the legislature is).

The case at the other extreme of the proportional-majoritarian continuum in the sample of legislatures analyzed here is Misiones (Figure 4.13). In this case, deviations from perfect proportionality are very small (ρ : 1.34), and only slightly higher than deviations from proportionality at the floor level (ρ : 1.28). We can see from the graph below that when a party in Misiones' legislature holds 40% of the seats it can get almost 60% of the committee chairs in the context of high fragmentation.²⁰

[Figures 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15]

²⁰ For the province of Misiones, the low level of legislative competition is set at 1.90, medium at 2.43 and high at 3.66.

Finally, majoritarian bonuses are smallest in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the province of Buenos Aires (Figures 4.14 and 4.15). The majoritarian bonuses in the allocation of lower chamber committee chairs (ρ : 1.31) is almost the same as the bonuses in the allocation of committee chairs in the Senate (ρ : 1.29).

4.5 Discussion

The evidence presented in this chapter brings different issues to the fore. First, if committee members emerge from a floor's decision, then why is the majoritarian bias not reflected in this stage? Second, and following the same logic, why is (almost) strict proportionality not maintained at the mega-seats level?

It does not matter which party holds more seats in the legislature, or even if there is a single-party majority: overall, parties dole out committees' positions according to the seats each legislative bloc has on the floor. There is no party supremacy in this regard. So, paraphrasing Krehbiel (1991), we could legitimately wonder where the party is. Neither the majority nor the plurality parties in these legislatures have sought to change these norms. However, results from column five of Table 4.1 put political parties at the center of the scene again. In terms of mega-seat competition, each provincial legislature gives some kind of prize to those parties that hold a higher number of legislative seats; including those which electoral systems try to grant proportionality.

4.6 Final Remarks

The goal of this analysis was to show empirical evidence regarding the relationship between a given legislatures' composition (originating from a specific set

of legislative rules), the allocation of committee members, and most importantly, the selection of committee chairs (mega-seats). According to the literature on the topic, rules (both electoral and legislative) affect the same actors that create them. In consequence, we should expect to see majoritarian biases generated by electoral rules on the plenary floor reflected in the allocation of committee members and committee chairs. In order to explore this issue I make use of an original dataset collected on Argentina. Thus, I investigate five different Argentine subnational legislatures which offer an original and dissimilar enough scenario with which to answer the questions raised in Chapter 2. For this part of the analysis I collected original data on the five legislatures' composition and allocation of committees (including positions of authority), as well as the partisanship of each legislator by year.

The empirical evidence presented in this chapter demonstrated the existence of a majoritarian bonus in favor of larger parties in all political systems but more so in those that have majoritarian triads. However, against any expectation, this scenario is not repeated at the committee level. The allocation of committee members in every single legislature in this study (including the most majoritarian one) turned out to be almost perfectly proportional. Nevertheless, the majoritarian bonus found on the floor is reflected in the distribution of committee chairs (mega-seats) which, according to the specialized literature, are the critical posts in any assembly able to influence the agenda-setting process. Even more, the most proportional legislature in the sample (Misiones) was showed to grant larger parties a higher prize for mega-seat selection than for the allocation of legislative seats.

The findings presented in this chapter trigger the formulation of other critical questions regarding the process of agenda control in different types of legislatures (i.e. with and without majority parties). Moreover, this chapter's empirical evidence paves the road to go more in depth on the analysis of the "kitchen" of the legislative system (committees), and on their final results (legislative bills to be discussed on the floor). These are the principal objects to be studied in the next chapter.

TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 4.1: Majoritarian Bias in Selected Provinces

Province	Chamber	Type of Electoral Rule	District Magnitude	Floor	Committees	Chairmanships
Buenos Aires	Deputies	Hare with largest remainder Threshold=quota	Total 92 8 sections with variable magnitudes between 6 and 18	1.42	1.01	1.29
Buenos Aires	Senate	Hare with largest remainder Threshold=quota	Total 46 8 sections with variable magnitudes between 3 and 9	1.82	0.97	1.31
Mendoza	Senate	D'Hondt With a 3% threshold	Total 38 4 sections with variable magnitudes between 4 and 6	1.65	0.92	1.36
Misiones	Deputies	D'Hondt Without threshold	Total 40 At large	1.28	1.06	1.34
Santa Fe	Senate	Plurality (Double Simultaneous Vote)	Total 19 Single Member Departments	3.03	1.1	2.17

Figure 4.1: Majoritarian Bias in Santa Fe' Senate

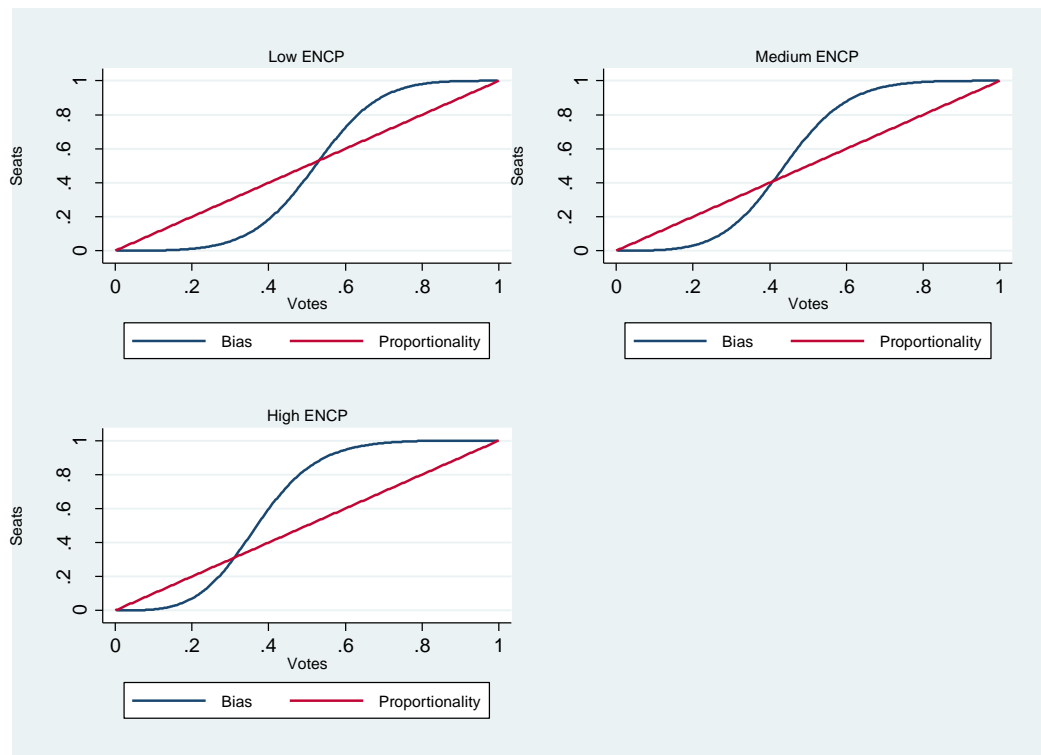


Figure 4.2: Majoritarian Bias Misiones Chamber of Deputies

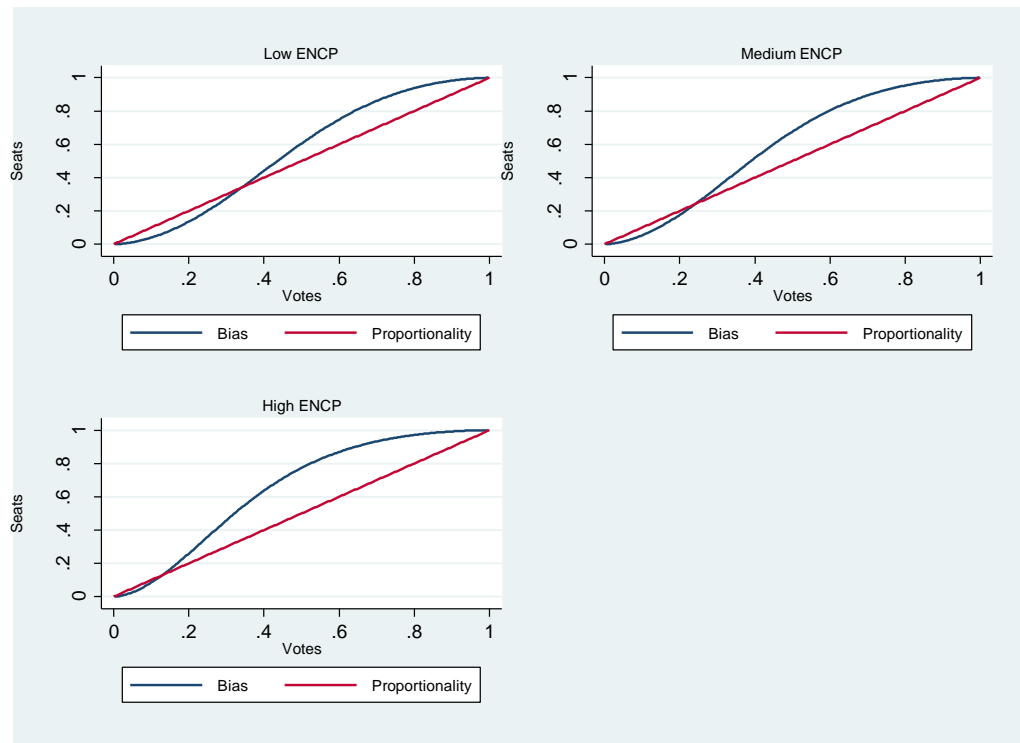


Figure 4.3: Majoritarian Bias in the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies

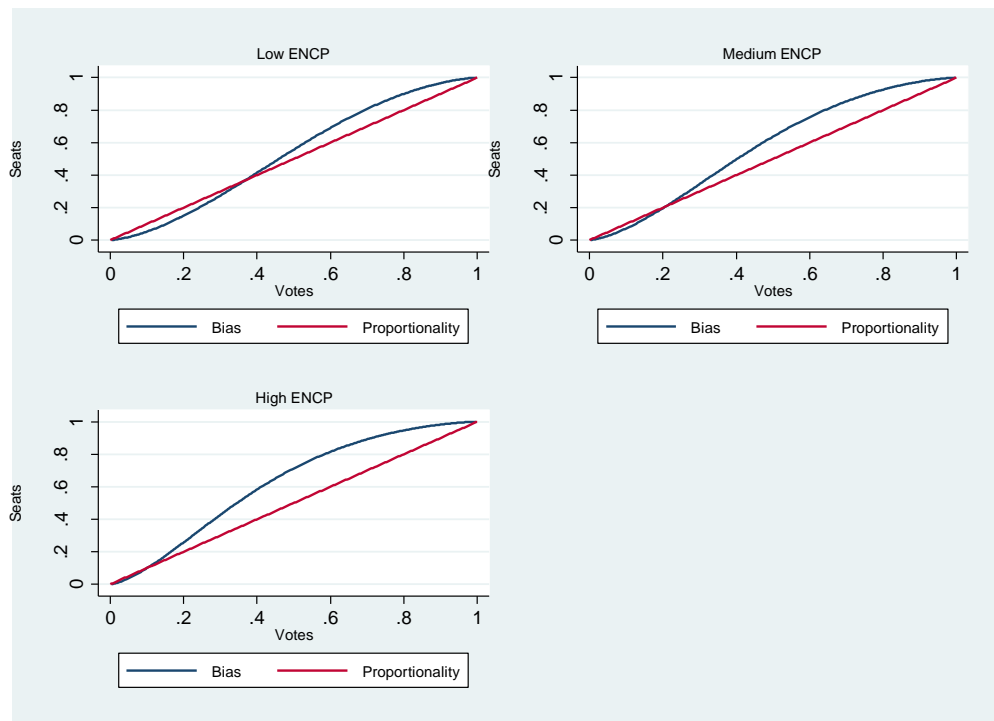


Figure 4.4: Majoritarian Bias in Buenos Aires' Senate

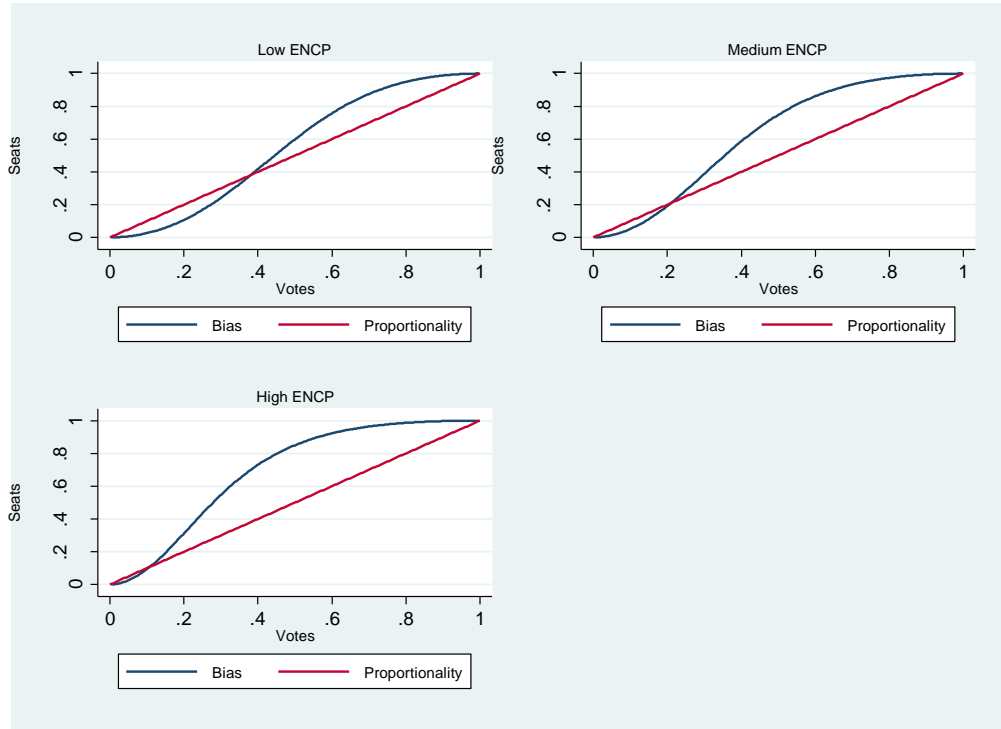


Figure 4.5: Majoritarian Bias in Mendoza' Senate

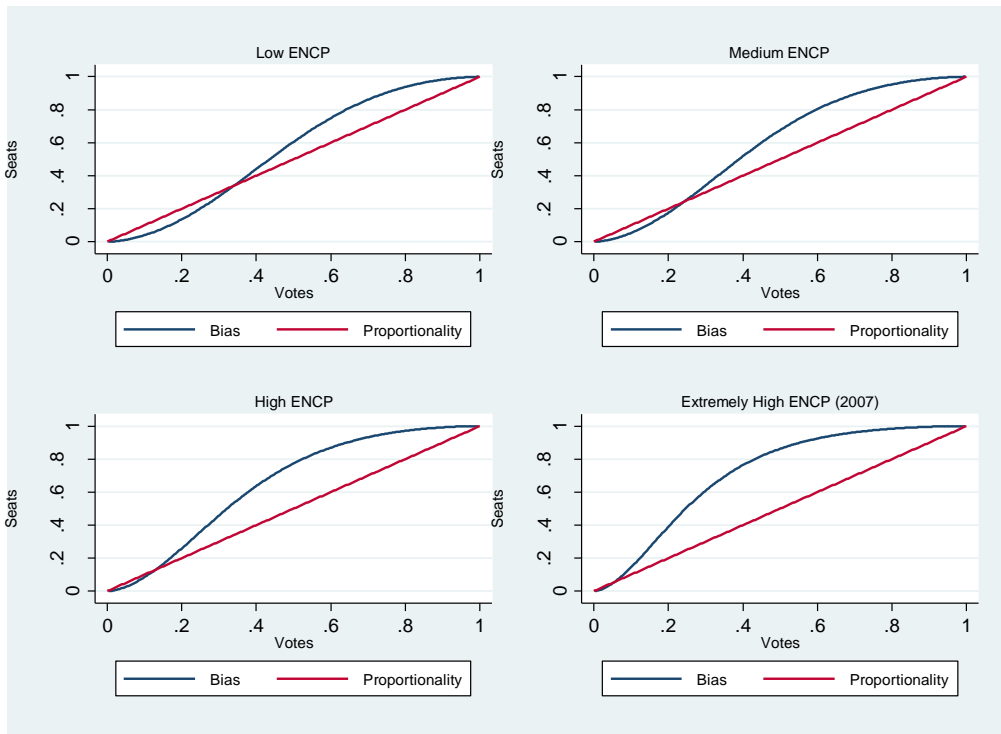


Figure 4.6: Majoritarian Bias in Santa Fe' Senate's Allocation of Committee Members

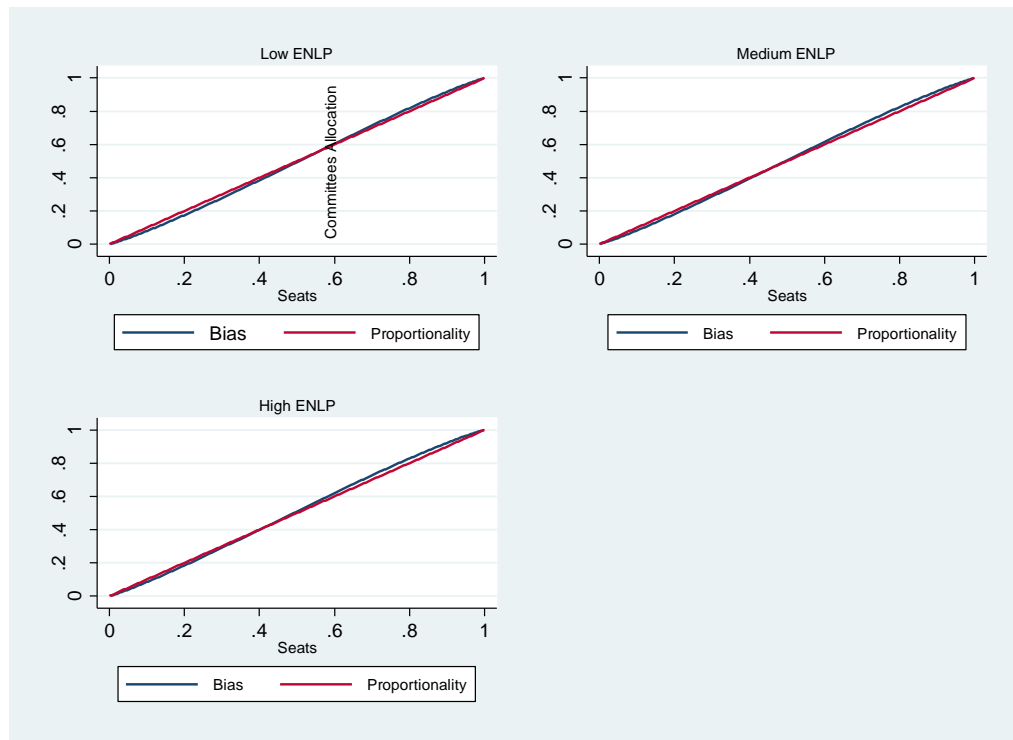


Figure 4.7: Majoritarian Bias in the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies' Allocation of Committee Members

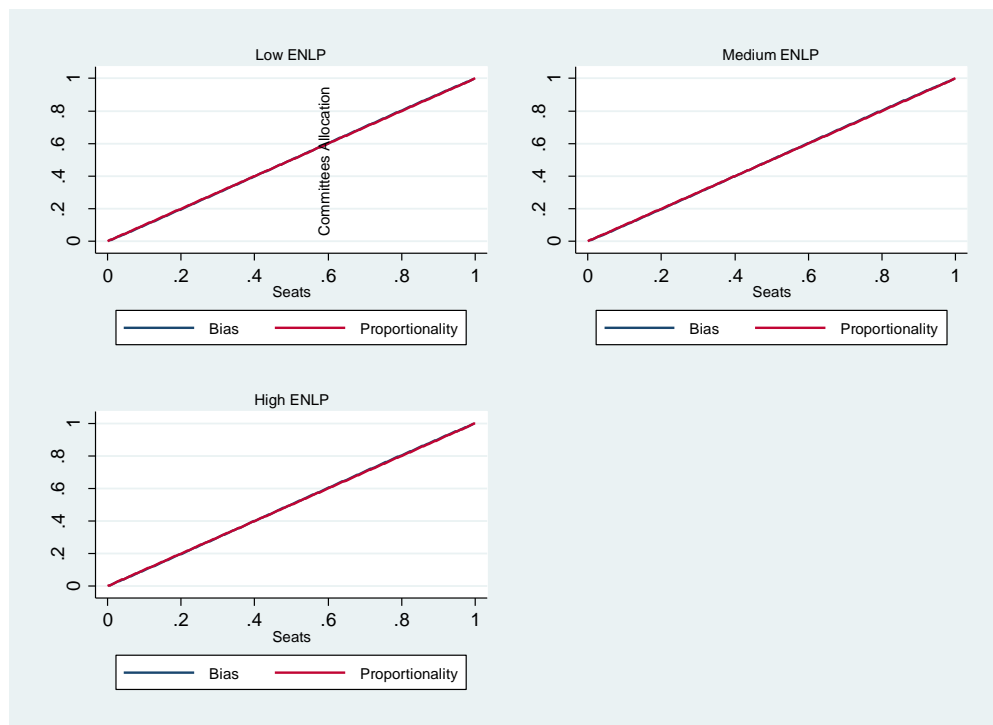


Figure 4.8: Majoritarian Bias in the Buenos' Senate's Allocation of CommitteeMembers

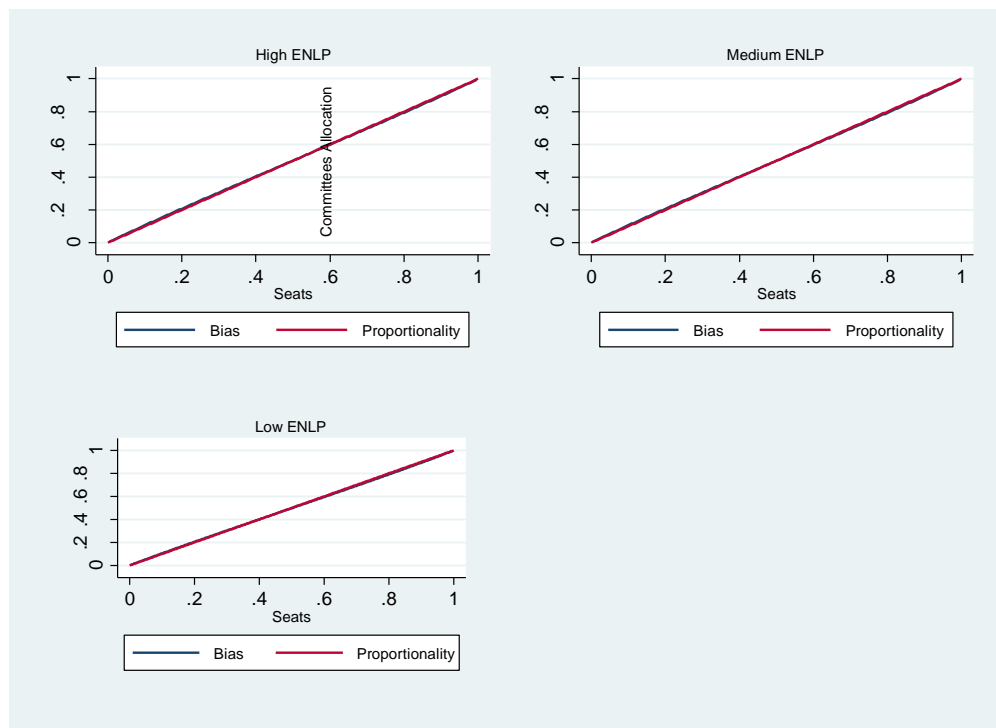


Figure 4.9: Majoritarian Bias in Mendoza’ Senate’s Committees Allocation

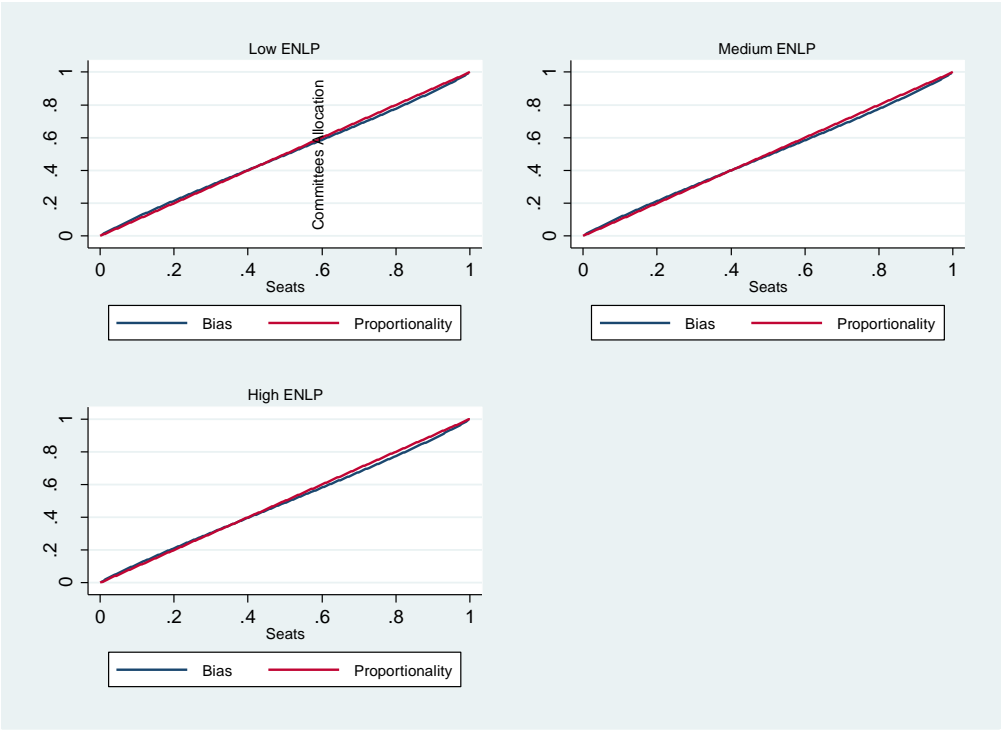


Figure 4.10: Majoritarian Bias Misiones Chamber of Deputies' Allocation of Committee Members

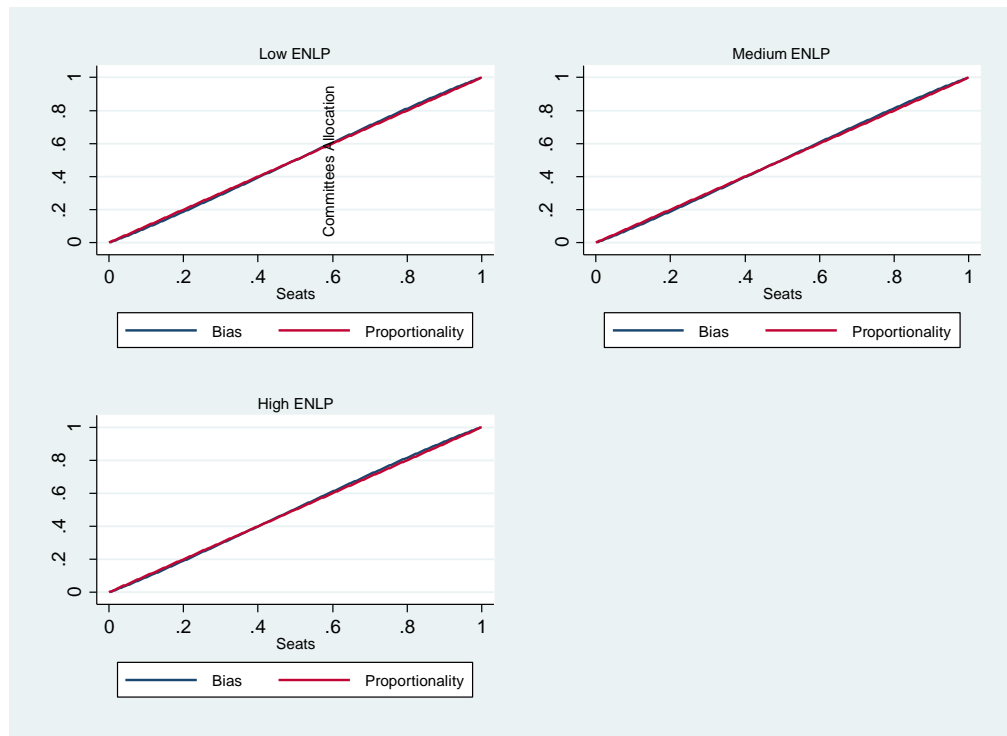


Figure 4.11: Majoritarian Bias in Santa Fe’ Senate’s Allocation of Mega-Seats

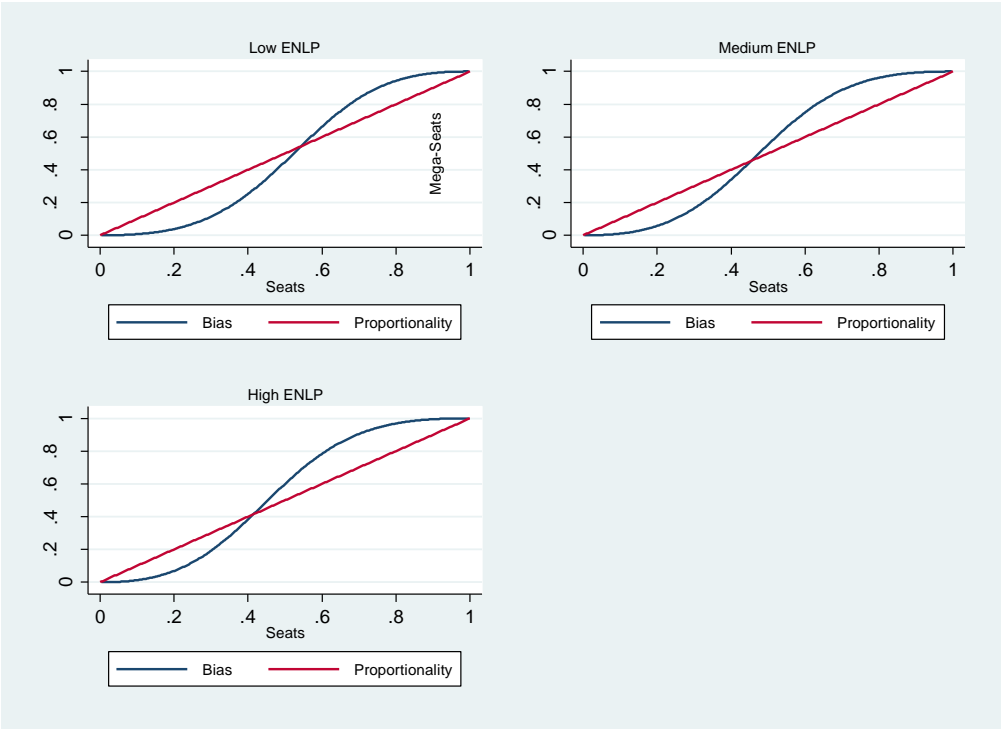


Figure 4.12: Majoritarian Bias Mendoza’ Senate’s Allocation of Mega-Seats

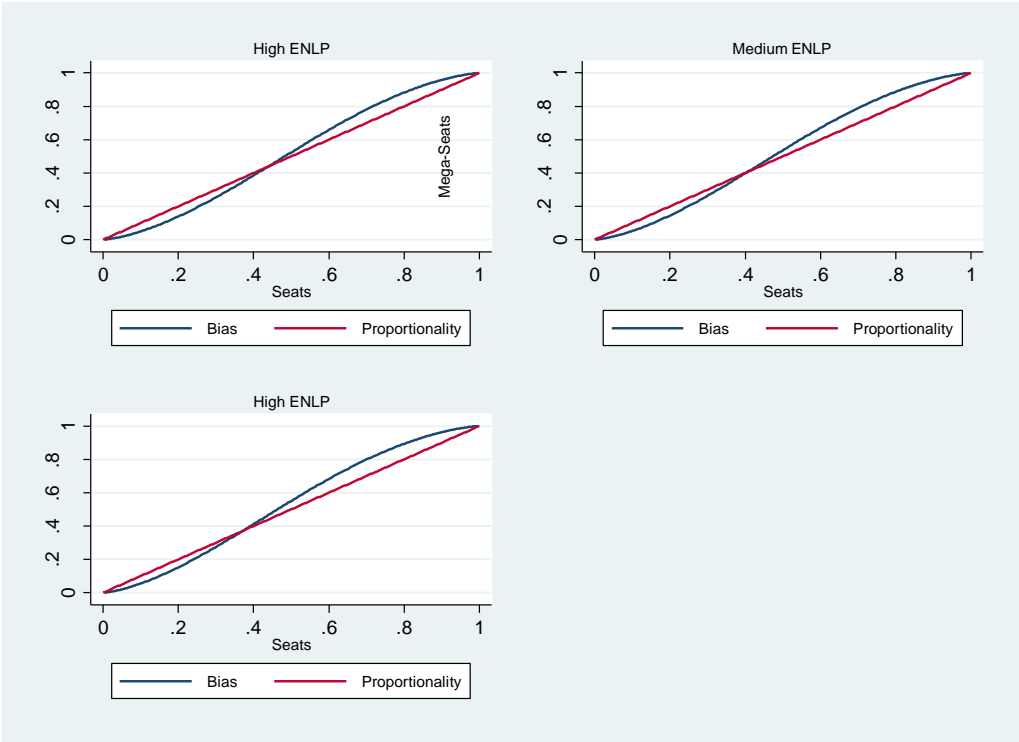


Figure 4.13: Majoritarian Bias Misiones Chamber of Deputies' Allocation Megaseat

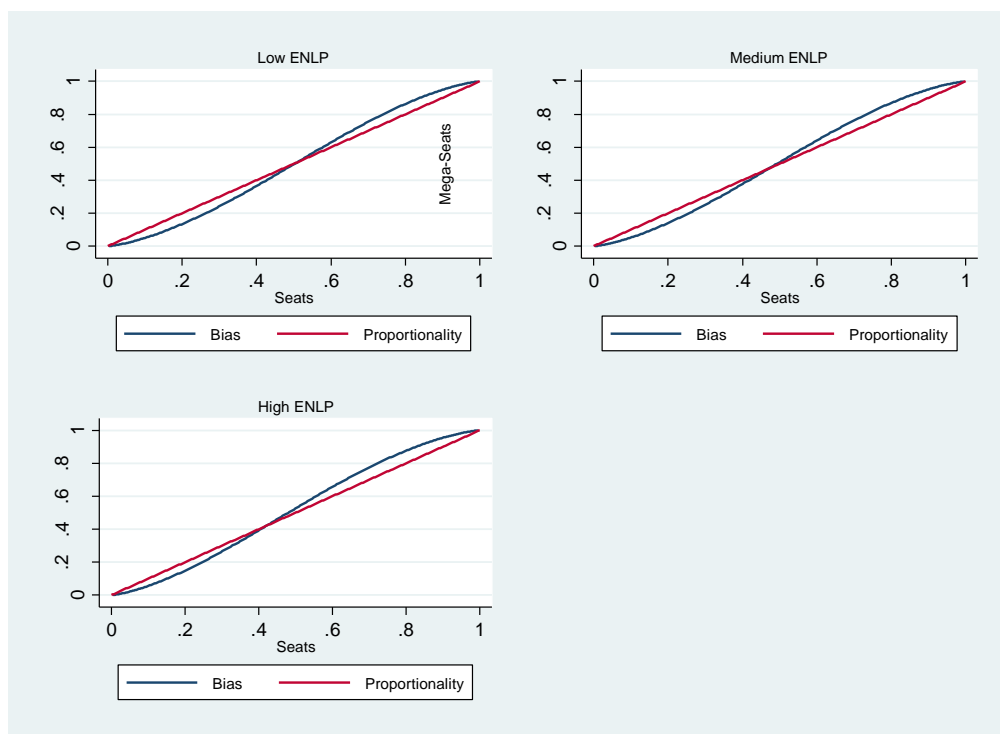


Figure 4.14: Majoritarian Bias in the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies' Allocation of Mega-Seats

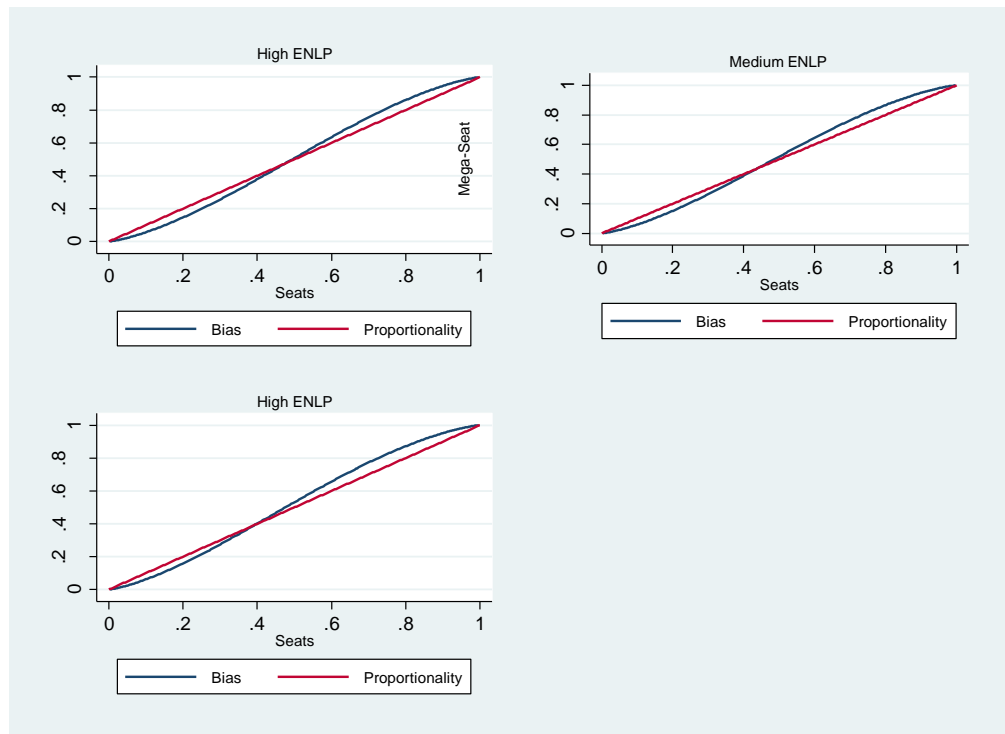
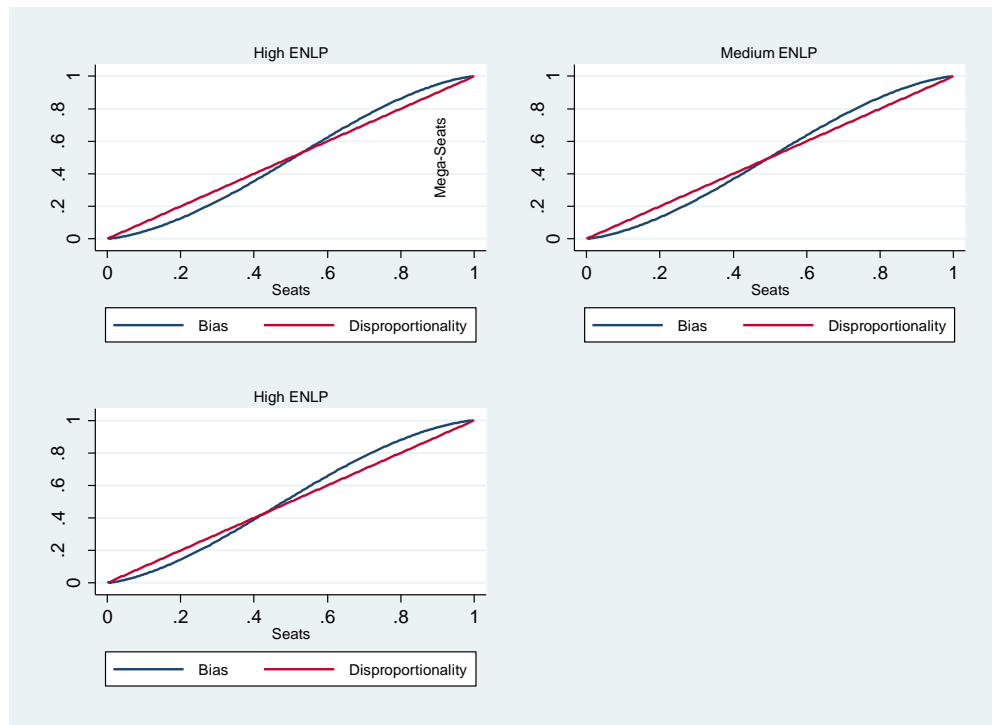


Figure 4.15: Majoritarian Bias in the Buenos Aires' Senate's Allocation of MegaSeats



POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY AND LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS

5.1 Introduction

The legislative cartel fills mega-seats with individuals from within to maintain party cohesion and control the flow of legislation that reaches the plenary floor. Given the prerogatives that these positions of authority entail, it is reasonable to think that committee chairs and the speaker would have comparative advantages vis-à-vis backbenchers in building support for their own policy proposals. Therefore, committee chairs should be more likely to get the bills they sponsor passed than other legislators. This assertion has been largely tested in the case of the United States Congress, a two-party system where there is always a majority party that cartelizes the legislative agenda (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005). In such a case, theoretical expectations and empirical implications for the legislative process are that the party with the majority of legislative seats is capable of controlling the legislative process by influencing the agenda with the use of their negative and positive prerogatives. The empirical evidence, however, is scant regarding how this plays out in fragmented party systems, where the size of the largest party varies.

Chapter 4 has demonstrated that even in proportional legislatures, the selection of committee chairmanships is biased in favor of large parties. If plurality legislative parties are able to control key positions of authority and if those posts are used to filter the set of bills that will reach the plenary floor for discussion, then we

should expect the plurality party to be successful in approving legislation submitted by its members. In other words, if they are able to retain control of agenda setting offices, then plurality parties should not have a substantively different legislative performance than parties who hold a majority on the floor.

To test these propositions, I investigate the probability of legislative success in the five subnational legislatures analyzed in this dissertation. Overall, the empirical findings confirm the hypotheses. Members of the majority or plurality party that hold a mega-seat have a greater probability of seeing their legislative proposals enacted into law than their counterparts. Differences across cases (discussed further into the chapter) have to do with the particularities of each case.

The chapter is organized in the following way: section 2 introduces the argument of the chapter and the hypotheses to be tested, section 3 describes the data and the variables used in the empirical section, section 4 presents the empirical evidence for each case, section 5 discusses the empirical findings, and section 6 concludes.

5.2 Argument and Hypotheses

In the case of the U.S. Congress, positions of authority in the committee system are important for exerting influence over the legislative agenda. In other legislatures organized under different institutional frameworks, this remains to be tested. Fragmented legislatures often have a plurality party, which holds the largest proportion of seat-shares but not the majority. Chapter 4 demonstrates that even proportional legislatures can have strong majoritarian biases in the selection of mega-

seats (i.e. chairmanships). I have also argued that in these subnational legislatures committees are important in determining whether a bill is reported to the floor. Because of its ability to control offices with agenda setting power, I expect that bills initiated by members of the largest party will have higher probabilities of passing than bills initiated by other minor forces in both majority and fragmented legislatures. Therefore,

H1: The probability of passage of a bill increases when it is sponsored by a legislator of the largest party in the plenary floor.

Additionally, those legislators who hold committee chairmanships should tend to privilege their own policy priorities. Besides the endogenous explanation that they got the spots for being loyal members of the majority, it is reasonable to think that these committee chairs and the speaker have comparative advantages vis-à-vis a single backbencher. In the case of speakers, they are in charge of deciding and selecting the bills that are going to be a part of the legislative agenda (the “order of the day”), based on a set of bills previously proposed by the chamber directorate²¹. Thus, they exert a direct influence on the bills that will ultimately be discussed on the plenary floor. Regarding committee chairs, even though it is not a formal rule, it is a norm that they lead the discussion within committees around the issues of their preference. Therefore, we can expect those legislators who lead these committees to privilege their own bills. Therefore, committee chairs should be systematically more likely to get the bills they sponsor passed than regular committee members. In this

²¹ The chamber directorate decides this set of bills based on the decisions previously made by each legislative committee.

way, this chapter explores whether committee chairs, advantaged by their office, have a higher likelihood of success.

H2: The probability of a bill's passage increases when it is sponsored by a committee chair from the largest party.

The next section describes the data used for the analysis as well as the operationalization of the variables.

5.3 Measuring Bill Approval: Research Design, Data Description and Variables

I rely on the fate of all the bills introduced and examine the likelihood that they are approved on the floor. The use of this empirical evidence makes it possible to assess my theoretical argument. If the largest party in the plenary effectively controls the agenda, then I expect that we should see bills sponsored by its members reported to the floor at a higher rate than bills sponsored by other legislators. I also expect that the largest party should be more successful than others at passing their bills. Given that only the bills that do not hurt the cartel party are supposed to be reported to the floor, we should expect to see lower rates of rejection for bills sponsored by the largest party.

Table 5.1 below shows a static snapshot of the data on legislative success for the five legislatures included in this study. I collected data on all the bills introduced in five Argentine subnational legislatures: the Buenos Aires' Chamber of Deputies (1995-2012) and Senate (1992-2011), Mendoza's Senate (1998-2010), Misiones'

Chamber of Deputies (1983-2009) and Santa Fe's Senate (2004-2011).²² Based on primary sources (webpages of the Secretaría de Información Parlamentaria and each legislature), I created an original database of legislation. Every observation is a bill i submitted by a legislator k from province j at time t . In addition to this information, databases include those committees that treated each bill, the number of cosponsors, its final stage, and a short description of each project's content. However, such rich information would not be enough to test my theory, as we do not know whether each sponsor was actually a mega-seat holder. In order to fill in this blank, I collected information on each committee member in each legislature, including information on chairmanships.²³

Due to the already mentioned complex federal structure, information at the subnational level was difficult to collect.²⁴ I also had other empirical and operational challenges. I realized that the identification of bills reported and those that remained in committees was not simple. Some legislatures, like the Misiones Chamber of Deputies, explicitly mention that a bill has been discharged with a majority report ("*con dictámen*"). In these cases, bills that died in the committee equal the difference between the whole set of legislation introduced and the set of bills discharged from

²² In this first approximation of the data I keep bills introduced by the executive office. However, estimations and analyses are done on the base of bills introduced by legislators only.

²³ Data was collected by primary source webpages of the Secretaría de Información Parlamentaria, each legislature itself, and "**Very Important People®**".

²⁴ My first intuition was to contact officers from the Secretary of Provinces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs but they did not have the information. As a second step, I tried to contact the legislatures themselves with the goal of having the information sent to me, but only Mendoza answered. I then found a private firm, "Very Important People®" that had systematically tracked the organization chart of all the public offices for the three branches of government and decentralized public firms at the national and subnational levels since 1992. Fortunately, their records include committee composition and positions of authority at the subnational level. After buying the information, I proceeded to one of the toughest parts of my project: to make all three databases (composition, bill drafting, and committee positions) of each of the five legislatures homogeneous. Such task consumed several months, but reached reliability close to 97%.

committee (approved and rejected in the plenary floor). Given that not every legislature provides this information, a suboptimal yet suitable strategy was to look at the flipside of the coin: those bills that died in the committee system. For instance, the Senate of Santa Fe does not mention majority reports from committees but it does reveal if a bill has expired –“*caducó*”- in committees, which actually refers to those bills that have not reached the plenary floor. Thus, in this case, the bills reported from committee equal the difference between the whole set of bills introduced in the legislature and those that expired in committees. Finally, the Senate of Mendoza constitutes an important and interesting case. According to testimonies of the Parliamentary Secretary -*Secretario Parlamentario*-, all committee reports are considered and voted on in the plenary session. Therefore, in order to identify those bills that did not get a committee report, I analyzed all the bills’ summaries to recognize their legislative status (i.e. either if they remain in committee -“*Queda reservado en Comité*”- or if they were discharged to the plenary floor). Thereafter, the number of bills reported from committee, like in Santa Fe, is the difference between all the projects introduced and these set of bills that remained in committee.

[Table 5.1.]

Table 5.1 above shows that the largest party appears to have a comparative advantage in moving legislation out of committees and having it approved on the floor of the chamber. However, this does not mean that the other parties do not have their proposals passed. As it becomes evident in the second row of each district

reported in Table 5.1, committees report more than 50% of proposals, and overall approval rates are also consistently high. This raises a fundamental question: what kind of agenda control are we talking about, if the *losing* parties also get their bills passed? To answer it, we need to remember that the majority's privileges do not necessarily imply wiping out the opposition. In other words, it is not necessarily a zero sum game wherein the other parties need to lose.

Cox (2004) reminds us that legislatures' time is scarce. Even if we assume that the largest party rules and pushes for their members' bills, there must be filters. Legislation is introduced for multiple reasons, and the floor cannot consider all proposals. Individuals may submit bills to improve their personal situations vis-à-vis voters, constituents, interest groups, bosses, or others (Mayhew 1974, Schiller 2001). Legislators may submit a bill as means of demonstrating responsiveness and reaction skills for a given event. Some may decide to send amendments to the status quo that actually overlap with others already submitted. Committees will then filter several, and may report a specific one, or a consensus project. For this additional reason, rates of reporting to the floor will never equal 1 even if every single member belonged to the majority. For all the mentioned reasons, we should not suppose that every single bill from the opposition should be prevented from passage.

This chapter investigates determinants of political parties' legislative success. I define legislative success rates as individual legislators' probabilities of bill

approval.²⁵ This variable will take the value of 1 in the case a bill that reached the floor and received the approval of the plenary and 0 otherwise.

The seat share of the largest party usually changes over time. There are wide differences among the chambers studied in this regard. There are majority parties (more than a 50% of the seats), plurality parties that are just short of a majority, and in two cases, plurality parties that had approximately 30% of seats. In order to account for this variation, I use a measure for the *largest party* in the legislature but also control for *majority party* (the party with 50% plus 1 of the seats) or *plurality party* (the party with the most seats when there is no majority party) in the cases that either of these two types exist.²⁶ I code the different scenarios regarding political forces' size in the following way: The *Largest Party* variable refers to the party with the most seats in the legislature no matter how many it has (either majority or plurality). Furthermore, I also control for the *size* of the largest party creating variables that capture the effect of either the majority or the plurality party when they are present. For example, in the case of Buenos Aires' Deputies, I include the variable *Majority Party* to capture the effect of this variable on the probability of passage for those years when there was a party holding more than 50% of the seats (i.e. 1992 to 1997, 2003 to 2005 and 2008 to 2009). For this case, the variable *Largest Party* refers to the effect of the plurality party on the probability of legislative passage. Using this strategy, I can take different political situations into account, which is essential for comparisons

²⁵ Political Parties' rate of approval is calculated in terms of bills' passage on the Chamber of interest. It does not imply bills' sanction.

²⁶ I made this decision following Calvo and Sagarzazu' strategy. I am thankful to Ernesto Calvo for long discussions about the issue.

among the extremely dissimilar political scenarios offered by the provinces analyzed in this study.

This variable *Committee Chair* takes the value of 1 if the legislator occupies this position and 0 otherwise. For the literature on U.S. legislative politics, specifically for the Cartel Theory, the role of the Speaker of the House is crucial in the legislative process. In the case of the provincial legislatures analyzed here, there are two issues to take into consideration. The first one is that the President of the Senate is the vice governor of the province, which weakens the position's influence because it is not elected by the majority or plurality of the chamber. The second and probably most important matter is that Speakers are not allowed to join any committee and their submission rates tend to be very low (Table 5.2 below). As a consequence, their role as agenda setters is unlikely to be reflected in this particular empirical analysis. Nevertheless, I decided to include the variable Speaker for the two Chambers of Deputies studied here (i.e. Buenos Aires and Misiones) first because it is the convention in the literature and second, because given that she is elected by her counterparts, she might be a relevant actor in the legislative process.

[Table 5.2]

Other control variables that are considered by the literature on legislative studies have also been included in the models. I take account of information at the bill level, information specific to each legislator (i.e. tenure and party membership), the log of the number of bills presented by legislator per year, and also a control for

fragmentation (the effective number of parties, measured according to Laakso and Taagepera's 1979 index).

Given that the dependent variable in all models is dichotomous (i.e. it takes the value of 1 if the bill has been approved by the plenary floor and 0 otherwise), I decided to implement a Logistic Regression Model.

5.4 Empirical Results

The results of the analyses are summarized below. I organize the discussion by province.

5.4.1 Province of Buenos Aires

The analysis for the Buenos Aires' Chamber of Deputies covers the period between 1995 and 2012. During this period legislators submitted a total of 55,282 bills. One of the main political features of this province is that since the return to democracy in 1983 there have been only four years where the Partido Justicialista did not govern the province.²⁷ Moreover, the Partido Justicialista has also been the largest party in the Chamber of Deputies. Specifically, the PJ has been the majority party in the Buenos Aires lower house from 1992 to 1997, 2003 to 2005 and in 2008.

The bills introduced by the legislators from the Buenos Aires' Chamber of Deputies have an impressive approval rate. Out of 55,282 bills submitted during the period analyzed here 37,613 bills (68%) were approved by the plenary floor. Table 5.3 shows a snapshot of the rates of legislative success by the main political parties.

²⁷ Alejandro Armendáriz from the Unión Cívica Radical won the elections for governor in 1983. He ruled the province until 1987 when he was succeeded by the Peronist Antonio Cafiero.

According to Table 2, the rate of approval for bills introduced in the Buenos Aires' Chamber of Deputies is very high. The Unión Cívica Radical has been the party that presented the highest number of bills in the period. Other minor parties like PAUFE (a center-right party), ARI (a center-left party), RECREAR (a center-right party) and Partido Socialista (socialist party) have had a reasonable performance during this period. Nevertheless, the Partido Justicialista is the party with the highest percentage of approval.

[Table 5.3]

Models 1 to 5 in Table 5.4 present legislative success estimates for the largest party and the majority party in the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies. Regarding the size of the largest party, during 1992 to 1997, 2003 to 2005 and 2008 to 2009 there was a majority force present in this Chamber, while during 1998 to 2002, 2006 to 2007 and 2010 to 2012 the largest party in the Chamber had the plurality of seats but less than a majority. The results show that the coefficients for these variables have a positive sign and are statistically significant. Bills sponsored by committee chairs and by the speaker of the chamber also have a higher chance of passing in the plenary than bills sponsored by backbenchers.

Models 2 to 5 introduced a series of interactions to capture the effect of occupying a mega-seat (i.e. chairmanship or speaker) and also being part of the largest party (either the majority or the plurality). Model 2 estimates the probability of bill passage when sponsored by legislators that occupy chairmanship positions and

that also belong to the majority party. Linear combinations show that the interaction is statistically significant (Coefficients of -0.17 at the $p < 0.01$ and 0.42 at the $p < 0.001$). Model 4 estimates the likelihood of the approval of bills introduced by legislators that occupy a chairmanship position and belong to the plurality party on the plenary floor. In this case, even though the interaction shows significant results in the estimations, the linear combination with the constitutive term *plurality party* is on the border of statistical significance (Coefficient of .080, $p < 0.1$). So, the probability of passage would not be affected by the fact that a legislator of the plurality party also presides over any committee in the legislature.

Models 3 and 5 show interactions between being Speaker of the Chamber and belonging either to the majority or to the largest party. Even though the interactions do not show significant results in the estimation, the linear combination of both variables and their constitutive components for both models did reflect positive and statistical significant results.²⁸ So, what these results tell us is that when a bill is submitted by the Speaker of the Chamber, who is also a member of the majority party or the plurality party, the probability of the bill's passage increases vis-à-vis other legislators' chances.

[Table 5.4]

²⁸ For the interaction in Model 3, the constitutive term *Speaker* has a coefficient of 1.38, $p < 0.001$, and the constitutive term *Majority Party* has a coefficient of 0.64, $p < 0.01$; while for Model 5, the constitutive term *Speaker* has a coefficient of 1.51, $p < 0.001$ and the constitutive term *Plurality Party* has a coefficient of 0.56, $p < 0.01$.

The results demonstrate that bills introduced by members of the party with the highest number of seats, either the plurality or the majority, are more likely to pass than bills introduced by members of other parties. Bills introduced by members that hold a position of authority in the legislature are also more likely to pass. Table 5.5 presents predicted probabilities under different scenarios.²⁹ Results show that bills introduced by legislators who belong to the majority party on the floor, even non-chairs, have a higher probability of passing than bills introduced by members of minority parties. Being a part of the majority party puts legislators in a privileged position. Legislators of the majority party who do not hold mega-seats have an 80% chance of passing their bills while those of the plurality party under the same conditions have a 73% chance. When the legislator of the plurality party sponsoring a bill holds a chairmanship position, her probabilities of passing the project (72%) is still below the probability of any legislator of the majority party not holding any mega-seat (80%). This finding puts higher emphasis on the role of the majority party over formal positions of authority.

[Table 5.5]

The high rates of legislative success for the plurality party showed in Table 5.5, as well as the results described above, suggest that in the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies the majority party has higher probabilities of passage vis-à-vis minority

²⁹ Predicted probabilities are calculated on the basis of these models that include the interactions for each mega-seat. Simulations have been estimated using Clarify.

ones. Besides chairmanship positions, another important mega-seat considered in the literature is the Speakership. In the case of the United States, the Speaker is a key actor in the negotiation over the legislative agenda. Results demonstrate that even though only 2% of the bills introduced are sponsored by the Speaker, they have a 90% probability of being approved if she belongs to the plurality party and a 92% if she belongs to the majority.

The analysis of the Senate of the province of Buenos Aires covers a period from 1992 to 2011. It includes a total of 11,688 bills submitted during this period.³⁰ The Senate differs slightly from the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies on some details of its floor composition over time³¹. After nine years of continuous Peronist majorities, the ALIANZA held the majority of seats in this legislature between 2000 and 2001. After 2001, the dominance returned to traditional Peronists' hands (PJ) until 2006, at which point the Frente para la Victoria took control until it lost the majority in 2010 (even though it still holds the plurality of legislative seats).

Like the Chamber of Deputies, the rate of approval of bills in the Senate of the province of Buenos Aires is high (63.58%). Out of the 16,415 bills submitted during the period analyzed (including those presented by the executive office, too), 10,436 bills were approved. Table 5.6 shows the rates of legislative success for the main parties.

[Table 5.6]

³⁰ Several bills could not be included in this study due to lack of information on key variables (i.e. Approval).

³¹ In the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies the Peronist party has been the majority party for most of the period between the return to democracy in 1983 and today.

Table 5.6 indicates that minor political parties (altogether) are the sponsors of most of the bills submitted to the Senate of Buenos Aires during the period analyzed (55.20%). Nevertheless, they have the lowest approval rate in the whole period in comparison to larger parties like the Partido Justicialista or its historical opponent, the Unión Cívica Radical. Despite the overall high rates of approval, differences between the important parties are still considerable.

At a first glance, the numbers might indicate that the largest party in this legislative body does not have a problem getting their preferred legislation approved, as 80% of the bills their members submitted passed on the plenary floor. Table 5.7 presents estimates for the probability of legislative passage in the Senate of the province of Buenos Aires as a function of different explanatory variables.

The coefficient for the plurality party is positive and significant, but the one for majority party does not reach statistical significance. This means that the approval rate of bills introduced by members of the majority party is not statistically different from the approval rate of bills introduced by members of minor parties.

[Table 5.7]

According results from models 1 and 3 in table 5.7, the hypothesis that bills initiated by the majority party have a higher probability of approval is not confirmed. Nevertheless, model 2 does confirm the hypothesis that bills initiated by members of the majority party that are also committee chairs are more likely to be approved.

Additionally, I include two models to test the interactive effect of the size of the largest party (whether it constitutes the majority or the plurality) and chairmanship positions. Models 2 and 3 provide estimations for each interaction: if the project submitted is sponsored by a chair that is a part of the majority or the plurality party, respectively. The interaction in Model 2 shows a positive direction and statistical significance, as well as the linear combinations of both constitutive terms. This means that being a member of the majority cartel and at the same time holding a mega-seat position increases the probability of passage. In contrast, the estimates for the interaction variable in Models 3 do not show any statistical significance

Table 5.8 below simulates different scenarios showing predicted variables for the three models to compare different political scenarios³².

[Table 5.8]

Estimations in Table 5.8 confirm that being a committee chair improves the likelihood of legislative success. Regardless the size of the party a legislator belongs to, what puts her in a better position to pass legislation is holding a mega-seat. In other words, committee chairs are far more successful in getting bills approved than others in the Senate.

³² Goodness of fit measures for the three models are: BIC=-139733.603, -139733.376 and -139724.473, respectively.

5.4.3 Province of Mendoza

The analysis of the Senate of Mendoza goes from 1998 to 2010 and includes 11,407 bills submitted. During this period, no party reached a majority of seats. Table 5.9 provides descriptive information regarding the percentage of bills submitted and approved in Mendoza's Senate by the principal political parties and the party of the governor. It shows that 55.56 percent of bills introduced were approved. The Partido Justicialista appears as the most active party in this legislature in terms of bill initiation, but its approval rate is lower than that of the two other major parties: the Unión Cívica Radical and the Frente para la Victoria. The latter had an approval rate of 74% during its two years as plurality party.

[Table 5.9]

Table 5.10 below shows statistical results from the model predicting legislative success. As in the case of Buenos Aires, belonging to the largest party and being a chair influences the passage of legislation on the plenary floor. In the Senate of Mendoza, being a legislator of the plurality party and being a committee chair increases the probability of legislative success.

Model 2 includes an interaction variable to capture the effect of being a legislator of the plurality party and a committee chair on the probability of bills' approval. Even though the estimates for this interaction do not show any statistical

significance, the linear combination estimation demonstrates that their constitutive terms are positively related.³³

[Table 5.10]

Tables 5.11 below displays the estimations for the plurality party's probability of legislative success depending on holding a chairmanship position and being the party in the executive office.

[Table 5.11]

Legislators from the plurality party that occupy positions of authority in the committee system have a 67% chance of passing legislation. Bills introduced by other members of the largest party have a 62% probability of passing. Members of the plurality party without positions of authority have more chances of having their bills passed than members of minor parties that do hold a position of authority in the committee system. Finally, the probability of the passage of bills introduced by members of minor parties that hold a position of authority is 61%, which means that they have lower probabilities than any other members in the Chamber.

³³ In fact, the constitutive term *plurality* has a coefficient of 0.262 at the $p < 0.001$ and the constitutive term *chair* has a coefficient of 0.223 at the $p < 0.01$.

5.4.4 Province of Misiones

The province of Misiones is the only one in the sample with a unicameral legislative format. According to official data, 14,608 bills were submitted between 1983 and 2009. The Unión Cívica Radical inaugurated the democratic transition governing the province for four years (1983 to 1987). Thereafter, the Partido Justicialista won the executive elections on 1987, remaining in the executive office for four periods (1988 to 2004). Finally, since 2004 the Frente Renovador has held Misiones' governorship.

Misiones has historically been a two-party province. Since the return to democracy, the Unión Cívica Radical and the Peronists (under different labels i. e. Frente Justicialista de Liberación, Frente Justicialista Popular, Frente Justicialista para el Cambio, Frente Renovador) have dominated the legislature, with a short interlude in 1997 where the ALIANZA held the majority. With the exception of 2001, 2003, 2004 and 2007, Misiones' Chamber of Deputies has had a majority political party.

The approval rate in the legislature of the province of Misiones is not as high as the ones analyzed before (44.42%). Moreover, as table 5.12 shows, the parties that have dominated the chamber in different periods have not been extremely productive in terms of bills submission. For example, the Peronists, who had the absolute majority in the chamber for twelve years (not considering the Frente Renovador which is a faction of the Partido Justicialista), have submitted 38% of the bills with a rate of success of 40%. On the other hand, its historical opponent, the Radical Party (UCR), has introduced 10% fewer bills, being successful 36% of the time. The

paradox regarding bills submitted by other political parties is that these parties are authors of the 18.17% of the legislation introduced and 55% have passed.

[Table 5.12]

The Speaker in Misiones' Chamber of Deputies is shown to be a little more proactive than her counterpart in Buenos Aires: 5% of the bills submitted into the legislature have been sponsored by this actor, and even though her approval rate is not impressive in comparison with other Speakers from other legislatures (see Table 5.1), it is still considerably high (50%).

Table 5.13 below shows estimates of the main factors affecting the likelihood of bill approval in Misiones. Just like for the cases described above, the main explanatory variables are the size of the party, positions of authority (i.e. Chairmanships and the Speaker), controls by parties, the fragmentation of the party system, the number of bills presented by legislators as well as their tenure in office.

[Table 5.13]

Estimations demonstrate that the majority party has higher chances of passing legislation than other parties in the legislature of Misiones, except when the interaction between speaker and majority party is introduced (Model 3). In this regard, both constitutive terms of the interactive variable are positive and statistically

significant (the constitutive term *speaker* has a coefficient of 1.40 and is statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$, and the constitutive term *majority* has a coefficient of 0.95 and is statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ too). On the contrary, being part of the plurality party does not have any effect on the probability of legislative success. Given that the effect of the variable *plurality* might be conditioned on the effect of others, like speaker or committee chair, I include interaction variables to capture this possibility (Models 4 and 5). Even though the statistical sign of the interaction is positive in both models, linear combinations between the constitutive terms of both interaction variables are not statistically significant. Thus, the effect of a plurality party on the probability of legislative success is not conditioned on a legislator being speaker or committee chair. This variable does not influence legislative approval.

On the other hand, estimations reveal that legislators that occupy a position of authority have more chances of passing their legislation than their counterparts. These results confirm the intuitions based on preliminary descriptive statistics about the role of the Speaker: she has a higher probability of passing legislation than other legislators. Models 2 and 3 introduced interactions to take care of the effect of particular relationships between the variables. Model 2 estimates the probability of legislative success depending on those cases when bills are sponsored by a legislator from the majority party that is also the head of a committee. The estimation for this interaction is statistically significant, even though its sign does not support the expected direction. Linear combination demonstrates that both constitutive terms are negatively related to the interaction term (committee chair with a coefficient of -0.25, statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ and majority party with a coefficient of -0.20,

statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$). This finding tells us that, contrary to my expectation, being a chair that belongs to the majority party decreases the chances of being successful in passing legislation. Model 3 takes into account the chances of success of the Speaker of the chamber when it is part of the majority party. The positive sign of the interaction and its $p < 0.001$ statistical significance means that the Speaker of this legislature has a privileged position when it belongs to the majority party, given that this increases her probabilities of legislative success vis a vis other legislators. Linear combination for this interaction is positive and statistically significant (speaker with a coefficient of 1.40, statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ and majority party with a coefficient of 0.95, statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$).

Table 5.14 estimates different scenarios calculated on the basis of the results from the models in Table 5.13 above to compare different scenarios as a function of the four interaction variables of interest.

[Table 5.14]

Table 5.14 estimates probabilities of success for legislators that belong to the largest party depending on whether they also occupy a mega-seat. According to the estimations, the probabilities of success are not influenced by chairmanships. The probability of passage for legislators of the majority party who also are committee chairs is 40% while legislators of the majority party that do not preside over any committee have a 46% chance of passing their legislative projects. Even though differences are not impressive, the same happens with legislators from the plurality

party. For this case, occupying a chairmanship position does make a difference, either. Nevertheless, committee chairmanship does matter when the legislator belongs to a minor party. The probability of approval for a committee chair that does not belong to the larger party is 42%. Without the chairmanship the probability decreases by 4 points (38%).

In sum, it can be stated that the size of the largest party is more relevant than holding a mega-seat. Among legislators who lack such appointments, those that belong to the majority party are most likely to see their bills pass by the chamber (46% probability of success). Being a committee chair seems to improve chances of approval for legislators who do not belong to the largest party in the plenary. In fact, committee chairs that belong to minor parties are more successful than legislators from the largest parties.

5.5.5 Province of Santa Fe

The analysis of the Senate of Santa Fe covers the period from 2004 to 2011 and includes 6,666 observations. During those years, the Partido Justicialista alternated in the executive office with the Socialist Party. Despite this alternation in the party of the governor, the Partido Justicialista had a majority of Senate seats during the period analyzed.

Table 5.15 below offers descriptive information regarding the percentage of bills submitted and approved in Santa Fe's Senate by the principal political parties for the period analyzed in this study. From all the pieces of legislation submitted to Santa Fe's Senate during these years, 65% have been approved.

[Table 5.15]

Control variables included in analyses of the former legislative bodies (i.e. party controls, effective number of parties, number of bills by legislator, tenure) are also included in the models. Table 5.16 shows estimations for the probability of success of the majority party in this Senate. A first snapshot of the coefficients and their statistical significance lets us see that Majority Party is a key explanatory variable to understand political parties' legislative success. Paradoxically, the variable referring to mega-seat positions, Chair, is demonstrated to be negatively related to legislative success.

Model 2 includes an interaction variable to capture the possible interactive effect of two of the main variables of interest: Majority Party and committee chair. Both the sign and the statistical significance of the interaction go in the expected direction. This means that majority legislators that also occupy a chairmanship position increase their probabilities of legislative success when they sponsor a bill. Linear combination for this interaction variable confirms the results.³⁴

Predicted probabilities in Table 5.16 below let us interpret the effect of the main variables of interest with the probability of success in a better way. Estimates show how the effect of the majority party is more important in the interactive relationship between this variable and holding a chairmanship position. Even when

³⁴ Both constitutive terms are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, even though *Chair* is negatively related to the interaction, with a coefficient of -0.40. ³⁴ The other constitutive term, *Majority Party* has a positive coefficient of 1.20.

legislators of the minority party hold a chairmanship position, they still have lower probabilities of passing legislation than their counterparts of the majority party (74 % versus 91%, respectively).

[Table 5.16]

5.5 Analysis and Final Remarks

The Cartel Theory works well to explain some relevant aspects of the U.S. Congress. According to this theory, the majority party and the committee system are key institutions with the ability to control the legislative agenda both in a negative and in a positive way. This means that by occupying key positions of authority within the legislatures (i.e. the Speaker or chairmanship positions –or in the case of the United States specifically, chairing the Rules Committee), the majority party can monitor the whole set of legislation introduced into the chamber. The result of this is the decision of which bills are going to enjoy the benefits of going out of the committee system and successfully reaching the plenary floor, and which ones are doomed to die in the drawer of some committee. In a majoritarian type of legislature where only two parties coexist and interact, it is pretty easy to identify the majoritarian force and the results of its actions. However, it is different in fragmented systems with other institutional frameworks.

This chapter focused on testing two of the hypotheses (#3 and #4) presented in chapter 2. The results lend support to hypothesis #3, which referred to the success of the largest party. In most instances, bills introduced by members of the largest parties have a greater probability of success than bills introduced by legislators from

smaller parties. Support from this expectation comes from the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies (both for majority and plurality); the Buenos Aires Senate (for plurality); the Mendoza Senate (for plurality); the Misiones Chamber of Deputies (for majority); and the Santa Fe Senate (for majority). The only anomalies are in the Buenos Aires Senate, where the coefficient for majority has the expected sign but does not reach statistical significance, and in the Misiones Chamber of Deputies, where the coefficient for plurality lacks significance and has the wrong sign.

My last hypothesis (#4), however, is not confirmed. Only in two chambers, the Senates of Mendoza and Buenos Aires, are chairs from the largest party more successful than other members of the largest party. In the lower chambers of Buenos Aires and Misiones, and in the Senate of Santa Fe, however, legislators from the largest party that chair a committee are not more successful than other members of the majority. Although my last hypothesis is not confirmed, the evidence suggests that being a chair increases the success of legislators from minor parties. Support for this last point is evident in four of the five chambers examined in this analysis.

One explanation of the results in the Senate of Santa Fe is the size of the legislature. The Senate of Santa Fe is a very small assembly, composed of 19 members elected in single member districts. The number of committees oscillates around 14 and 23, which implies two things: first, all members of the Senate necessarily head one committee; second, members that do not hold a chairmanship are probably authorities of the Chamber (i.e. Speaker) who cannot be part of any committee. In other words all the members of this Senate might have a formal

“privileged” position which put every member at basically the same level at the moment of voting on legislation on the floor.

TABLES

Table 5.1: Legislative Success in the Argentine Subnational Level

Province	Party	Bills Introduced	Bills Reported From Committee	Bills Approved
Buenos Aires Deputies 1995-2012	Largest Party	17,939	12,774	12,737
			71.21%	71%
	Others	37,353	24,950	24,876
			66.80%	67%
Buenos Aires Senate 1992-2011	Largest Party	6,254	4,432	4,415
			70.87%	71%
	Others	10,161	5,208	5,203
			51.25%	51.21%
Mendoza Senate 1998-2010	Largest Party	3,543	5,870	2,033
			69.23%	57.38%
	Others	8,479	2,462	4,856
			69.49%	57.27%
Misiones Deputies 1983-2009	Largest Party	5,005	3,458	2,477
			69%	49%
	Others	10,638	7,282	4,471
			68%	42.03%
Santa Fe Senate 2004-2011	Largest Party	6,002	4,631	4,501
			77.16%	75%
	Others	3,967	2,548	1,974
			64.23%	50%

Table 5.2: Speakers' Rate of Bills introduced and Rate Approved

Legislature	Bills Introduced	Bills Approved
Buenos Aires (Deputies)	1,085 1.96%	921 84.88%
Buenos Aires (Senate)	14 0.09%	14 100%
Mendoza	59 0.49%	4 6.78%
Misiones	778 4.97%	393 50.51%
Santa Fe	133 1.33%	118 88.72%

Table 5.3: Legislative Success in the Buenos Aires' Chamber of Deputies

Legislator's Partisanship	Bills Introduced	Bills Approved
PJ	10,627 19.22%	7,650 72.00%
UCR	17,398 31.47%	11,690 67.19%
FPV	8,532 15.43%	6,081 71.27%
Other Parties	18,735 33.88%	12,192 65.08%

Table 5.4: Legislative Success in the Buenos Aires' Chamber of Deputies 1995-2012

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Majority Party	0.553*** (-0.044)	0.719*** (-0.061)	0.551*** (-0.044)	0.564*** (-0.044)	0.550*** (-0.044)
Plurality Party	0.219*** (-0.039)	0.214*** (-0.039)	0.219*** (-0.039)	0.335*** (-0.046)	0.216*** (-0.039)
Committee Chair	0.0847*** (-0.023)	0.114*** (-0.024)	0.0845*** (-0.023)	0.156*** (-0.027)	0.0842*** (-0.023)
Speaker	1.316*** (-0.102)	1.318*** (-0.101)	1.296*** (-0.115)	1.315*** (-0.102)	1.170*** (-0.132)
UCR	0.196*** (-0.027)	0.195*** (-0.027)	0.196*** (-0.027)	0.194*** (-0.027)	0.198*** (-0.027)
FPV	0.0563 (-0.044)	0.0617 (-0.044)	0.057 (-0.044)	0.0441 (-0.044)	0.0564 (-0.044)
Law	-2.840*** (-0.026)	-2.838*** (-0.026)	-2.839*** (-0.026)	-2.837*** (-0.026)	-2.839*** (-0.026)
Effective Number of Parties	0.139*** (-0.022)	0.138*** (-0.022)	0.139*** (-0.022)	0.137*** (-0.022)	0.139*** (-0.022)
# Bills Legislators (ln)	-0.125*** (-0.013)	-0.124*** (-0.013)	-0.125*** (-0.013)	-0.127*** (-0.013)	-0.124*** (-0.013)
Tenure	-0.007 (-0.005)	-0.008* (-0.005)	-0.00696 (-0.005)	-0.010* (-0.005)	-0.007 (-0.005)
Committee Chair*Majority Party		-0.289*** (-0.074)			
Speaker*Majority Party			0.093 (-0.244)		
Committee Chair*Plurality				-0.235*** (-0.049)	
Speaker*Plurality					0.345* (-0.206)
Constant	1.332*** (-0.096)	1.323*** (-0.096)	1.332*** (-0.096)	1.329*** (-0.096)	1.330*** (-0.096)
Observations	55282	55282	55282	55282	55282

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5.5: Predicted Probabilities for Legislative Success in the Buenos Aires' Chamber of Deputies 1995-2012

Party	Committee Chair	
	Yes	No
Majority	0.77 (-0.010)	0.80 (-0.009)
Plurality	0.72 (-0.007)	0.73 (-0.007)
Others	0.70 (-0.005)	0.66 (-0.004)

Table 5.6: Legislative Success in the Buenos Aires' Senate

Legislator's Partisanship	Bills Introduced	Bills Approved
PJ	3,996 24.34%	3,167 79.25%
UCR	1,279 7.79%	930 72.71%
FPV	2,078 12.66%	1,589 76.47%
Other Parties	9,062 55.20%	4,750 52.42%

Table 5.7: Legislative Success in the Buenos Aires' Senate 1992-2011

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Majority Party	0.0259 (-0.050)	-0.133** (-0.064)	0.026 (-0.050)
Plurality Party	1.015*** (-0.204)	1.023*** (-0.205)	0.984*** (-0.244)
Committee Chair	0.185*** (-0.044)	0.007 (-0.063)	0.184*** (-0.044)
UCR	-0.282*** (-0.072)	-0.300*** (-0.072)	-0.282*** (-0.072)
FPV	-0.093 (-0.068)	-0.08 (-0.068)	-0.093 (-0.068)
Law	-1.224*** (-0.047)	-1.231*** (-0.047)	-1.224*** (-0.047)
Effective Number of Parties	0.148*** (-0.031)	0.153*** (-0.031)	0.148*** (-0.031)
# Bills Legislators (ln)	-0.470*** (-0.025)	-0.461*** (-0.025)	-0.470*** (-0.025)
Tenure	0.0505*** (-0.009)	0.0486*** (-0.009)	0.0504*** (-0.009)
Committee Chair*Majority Party		0.342*** (-0.086)	
Committee Chair*Plurality Party			0.092 (-0.404)
Constant	2.276*** (-0.117)	2.320*** (-0.118)	2.277*** (-0.117)
Observations	11,688	11,688	11,688

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5.8: Probabilities of Legislative Approval in the Buenos Aires' Senate
1992-2011

Party	Committee Chair	
	Yes	No
Majority	0.85 (-0.007)	0.79 (-0.009)
Plurality	0.92 (-0.027)	0.88 (-0.027)
Others	0.83 (-0.007)	0.79 (-0.008)

Table 5.9: Legislative Success in Mendoza' Senate

Legislator's Partisanship	Bills Introduced	Bills Approved
PJ	2,939 24.45%	1,603 54.54%
UCR	1,872 15.57%	1,073 57.32%
FPV	1,716 23.16%	1,279 74.53%
Demócrata	2,784 23.16%	1,315 47.23%
Other Parties	2,711 22.55%	1,409 51.97%

Table 5.10: Legislative Success in Mendoza' Senate

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2
Plurality Party	0.201*** (-0.046)	0.169*** (-0.057)
Committee Chair	0.160*** (-0.046)	0.129** (-0.056)
UCR	0.252*** (-0.059)	0.251*** (-0.059)
FPV	0.822*** (-0.071)	0.825*** (-0.071)
Law	-1.634*** (-0.057)	-1.637*** (-0.057)
Effective Number of Parties	0.679*** (-0.029)	0.675*** (-0.029)
# Bills Legislators (ln)	0.0979*** (-0.031)	0.0987*** (-0.031)
Tenure	0.280*** (-0.018)	0.279*** (-0.018)
Committee Chair*Plurality Party		0.094 (-0.097)
Constant	-3.389*** (-0.164)	-3.367*** (-0.165)
Observations	11,407	11,407
Standard errors in parentheses		
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

Table 5.11: Probabilities of Legislative Approval in Mendoza' Senate 1998-2010

Party	Committee Chair	
	Yes	No
Plurality	0.67 (-0.014)	0.62 (-0.012)
Others	0.61 (-0.011)	0.58 (-0.008)

Table 5.12: Legislative Success in Misiones Chamber of Deputies

Legislator's Partisanship	Bills Introduced	Bills Approved
PJ	5,937 37.95%	2,339 39.40%
UCR	4,289 27.42%	1,547 36.07%
FR	2,574 16.45%	1,506 58.51%
Other Parties	2,843 18.17%	1,556 54.73%

Table 5.13: Legislative Success in Misiones Chamber of Deputies

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Majority Party	0.111* (-0.065)	0.461*** (-0.078)	0.075 (-0.066)	0.109* (-0.065)	0.109* (-0.065)
Plurality Party	-0.0231 (-0.071)	-0.111 (-0.072)	-0.007 (-0.071)	0.058 (-0.081)	-0.009 (-0.071)
Committee Chair	0.170*** (-0.040)	0.417*** (-0.049)	0.162*** (-0.040)	0.202*** (-0.042)	0.174*** (-0.040)
Speaker	0.691*** (-0.092)	0.739*** (-0.094)	0.522*** (-0.103)	0.704*** (-0.092)	0.727*** (-0.093)
PJ	0.678*** (-0.069)	0.698*** (-0.069)	0.709*** (-0.069)	0.682*** (-0.069)	0.672*** (-0.069)
UCR	0.658*** (-0.066)	0.732*** (-0.067)	0.665*** (-0.066)	0.670*** (-0.066)	0.659*** (-0.066)
FR	1.097*** (-0.091)	1.064*** (-0.091)	1.130*** (-0.092)	1.102*** (-0.091)	1.099*** (-0.091)
Law	-0.111** (-0.044)	-0.125*** (-0.044)	-0.116*** (-0.044)	-0.117*** (-0.044)	-0.114*** (-0.044)
Effective Number of Parties	0.651*** (-0.044)	0.682*** (-0.044)	0.640*** (-0.044)	0.655*** (-0.044)	0.652*** (-0.044)
# Bills Legislators (ln)	-0.478*** (-0.019)	-0.508*** (-0.020)	-0.472*** (-0.019)	-0.486*** (-0.020)	-0.480*** (-0.019)
Tenure	0.0544*** (-0.012)	0.0698*** (-0.012)	0.0619*** (-0.012)	0.0565*** (-0.012)	0.0538*** (-0.012)
Committee Chair*Majority Party		-0.671*** (-0.080)			
Speaker*Majority Party			0.877*** (-0.247)		
Committee Chair*Plurality Party				-0.254** (-0.119)	
Speaker*Plurality Party					-1.040** (-0.435)
Constant	-1.348*** (-0.147)	-1.496*** (-0.148)	-1.368*** (-0.147)	-1.350*** (-0.147)	-1.339*** (-0.147)
Observations	14,608	14,608	14,608	14,608	14,608

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5.14: Probabilities of Legislative Approval in Misiones Chamber of Deputies

Party	Committee Chair	
	Yes	No
Majority	0.4 (-0.015)	0.46 (-0.015)
Plurality	0.38 (-0.027)	0.39 (-0.020)
Others	0.42 (-0.009)	0.38 (-0.007)

Table 5.15: Legislative Success in Santa Fe' Senate

Legislator's Partisanship	Bills Introduced	Bills Approved
PJ	6,002 60.21%	4,501 75.00%
UCR	886 8.89%	836 94.36%
FPC	650 6.52%	580 89.23%
SOC	2,431 24.39%	558 22.95%

Table 5.16: Legislative Success in Santa Fe' Senate

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2
Majority Party	0.627*** (-0.19)	0.370* (-0.205)
Committee Chair	-0.624*** (-0.133)	-1.231*** (-0.237)
UCR	0.699*** (-0.217)	0.861*** (-0.228)
SOC	0.188 (-0.255)	0.103 (-0.259)
Effective Number of Parties	-0.34 (-0.439)	-0.371 (-0.442)
# Bills Legislators (ln)	0.369*** (-0.065)	0.352*** (-0.066)
Tenure	-0.0554** (-0.024)	-0.0660*** (-0.024)
Committee Chair_Majority Party		0.831*** (-0.277)
Constant	1.415* (-0.752)	1.638** (-0.762)
Observations	6,666	6,666
Standard errors in parentheses		
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

Table 5.17: Legislative Success in Santa Fe' Senate

Party	Committee Chair	
	Yes	No
Majority	0.91 (-0.005)	0.94 (-0.009)
Others	0.75 (-0.043)	0.91 (-0.010)

APPENDIX

The committee system of the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies is composed of 36 standing committees. The number of members varies by committee, Constitutional Affairs, Budget and Municipal Affairs being the ones with more members (15 members each). With the exception of the Chamber Directorate, members of standing committees are proposed by the different legislative blocs and ultimately designated by the Speaker of the House (Art. 47).

On the other hand, Buenos Aires' Senate is composed of 24 standing committees of which Constitutional Affairs and Budget have more members (15 each). Committee members' renovation coincides with the chamber renovation (every 2 years). The election of the members is a little ambiguous, given that the chamber's regulations state that once the legislative period is officially started, the designation of committee members is in the hands of the Speaker, on the condition that the floor does not oppose (Art. 155).

Mendoza's Senate is composed of 13 standing committees all of which are made up of a minimum of 7 members or a largest (odd) number. According to the chamber's regulations the allocation of committee members, as well as the election of committees authorities, has to be done in a manner that guarantees political parties representation commensurate to what they have on the floor (Art. 87).

Misiones' legislative system is composed of 12 standing committees. According to the chamber's regulations, committee members annually elect committees authorities (i. e. president and vice-president) by simple plurality of votes, with the possibility of reelection (Art. 50).

Finally, Santa Fe's Senate is composed of 14 standing committees. Each committee is composed of 5 members with the exceptions of Constitutional Affairs, Legislation, Municipal Affairs, Regional Development and Emergency Squad which are composed of 7 members, Budget which is composed of 9 legislators and Foreign Trade that is composed of 11 representatives. Each committee member remains in her position for 2 years (Art. 80).

According to legislatures' rules of procedures ("Reglamentos Internos"), the Speaker position in Senates is a post occupied by the vice-governor, the three Senates of my sample bring the opportunity to study the particularity of an external actor influencing the legislative process.

We do find variation regarding the election of the Speaker in both Buenos Aires' and Misiones' Chambers of Deputies. In the case of the first one, the Speaker of the House is elected by absolute majority. However, in the case of no absolute majority or parity situations, then this post will be occupied by one of the two most voted candidates in the floor. Finally, if no candidate emerged from these two former stages, the last option established in the chamber's regulations to elect the speaker of the House is a raffle (Art. 14). The chamber's regulations do not make any mention of the duration of the chamber's authorities in their posts. The case of Misiones is more straightforward: all the authorities of the chamber are elected by simple plurality of the votes (Art. 16) and remain in their posts for one year. However, if the expiration date arrives and no new authorities have been elected, they will continue on their functions until new authorities are finally elected (Art. 17).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main goal of this dissertation has been to provide empirical evidence for two central questions about legislatures. The first one refers to legislatures' organization, specifically who occupies positions of authority within the assembly? The second investigates how the distribution of these positions of authority affects legislative success. Both questions constitute central inquiries in the field of legislative politics. As explained in Chapters 1 and 2, the organizational issue – specifically, the organization of the committee system- is central to comprehending how legislatures work, given that the division of labor throughout the committee system helps solve the principal problem legislatures have to overcome: the scarcity of time and the consequential bottleneck problem (Cox 2005). In this regard, it is argued in Chapter 2, positions of authority, like chairmanships and the speaker of the chamber, constitute an important resource in the legislative process. In the case of committee chairs, they usually lead the discussion within committees around the issues of their preference. Speakers are in charge of determining which bills, previously proposed by the chamber directorate, will be included in the order of the day and then discussed on the plenary floor. Therefore, holding a position of authority in the committee system constitutes an important resource in the process of passing legislation because these posts increase legislators' probability of introducing their bills into the order of the day.

The third wave of democratization nurtured the field of comparative politics with an important number of new presidential democracies to analyze. One of the interests of the discipline has been to disentangle the functioning of legislatures in settings other than the United States. However, even though these efforts have enriched our knowledge about the performance of different legislatures around the world, some of their findings are potentially generalizable and some of them are not. Additionally, in parallel with the increase in the number of cross-sectional analyses, the processes of decentralization implemented during the 1980s and the 1990s have favored the resurgence of scholars' interest on federalism and, with it, the interest in subnational studies. Exploring subnational systems constitutes a fruitful strategy in methodological terms; specifically, subnational comparative approaches offer important advantages in three core areas of the research process: research design, measurement, and theory building (Snyder, 2001: 103). Likewise, Snyder (2001) explains that the resource of *scaling down* can offer the best of both worlds by considering substantive variation, while also keeping several general features constant (i.e. cultural, historical, ecological, and socioeconomic dimensions).

This dissertation implemented subnational comparisons to investigate the questions of interest. In this regard, the Argentine case is remarkable since Argentine provinces show considerable degrees of variation in several institutional and political aspects (i.e. electoral systems, legislative format, legislatures' size, and sociodemographic characteristics, among others). Thus, to test my arguments, I chose five legislative chambers that capture considerable political and institutional diversity: the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies (1995-2012) and Senate (1992-

2011), the Senate of Mendoza (1998-2010), Misiones' Chamber of Deputies (1983-2009) and the Senate of Santa Fe (2004-2011). These political units offer an opportunity to examine the effect of institutional rules (i.e. electoral systems, legislature's internal rules) on legislative composition and legislative outcomes in cases with dissimilar electoral rules, legislative compositions, internal rules (among others); while holding many other important aspects, like cultural and historical variables, constant.

A central empirical contribution of this study is the data collected during fieldwork. To investigate the first research question, I collected original information on the five legislatures' compositions and allocation of committee members and chairmanships, as well as legislators' partisanship by year. To explore legislative success, I gathered data on bill introduction and final stages, cosponsorship, and type of project, among other variables. The datasets used in this research make an important contribution to our knowledge of subnational units in federal countries and also open a space for future research.

Chapter 3 shows empirical evidence regarding the relationship between legislatures' composition (originating from a specific set of legislative rules), the allocation of committee members, and most importantly, the selection of committee chairs (mega-seats). The intuition is that given that rules (both electoral and legislative) affect the same actors that create them, we should expect to see assemblies' majoritarian biases reflected in the committee system, specifically in the allocation of committee members and committee chairs. Empirical evidence presented in this chapter demonstrated the existence of a majoritarian bonus in favor

of majority/plurality parties in all political systems. However, this situation is not repeated at the committee level. The allocation of committee members in every studied legislature (including the most majoritarian one) was shown to be almost perfectly proportional. Nevertheless, larger parties indeed receive a majoritarian bonus in the distribution of committee chairs (mega-seats). Mega-seats, such as chairmanships and the Speaker, are considered key posts in the legislative process by the literature. Legislators that occupy these positions have prerogatives that put them in a more prominent place, in comparison to their colleagues, to decide which bills are going to be a part the day-to-day legislative agenda. The empirical evidence showed in chapter 3 triggers the formulation of other critical questions regarding the process of agenda control in different types of legislatures (i.e. with and without majority parties). In this regard, the other central inquiry formulated in this study is about the determinants of legislative success in proportional and majoritarian legislatures. This question is investigated in chapter 5.

According to the U.S.-based Cartel theory, the majority party and the committee system are key institutions with the ability to control the legislative agenda both in a negative and in a positive way. This means that by occupying key positions of authority within the legislatures (i.e. the Speaker or chairmanship positions –or in the case of the United States specifically, chairing the Rules Committee), the majority party can monitor the whole set of legislation introduced into the chamber. Consequently, this increases its probability of legislative success.

Fragmented legislatures might have parties with a considerable number of seats but not the majority. If the Cartel theory still holds even when we change the

type of legislature, then we would expect to see some empirical regularities like larger parties' high shares of bills reported to the floor, high shares of bills approved, and low shares of bills rejected. Thus, the central goal of Chapter 5 is to investigate whether or not the proliferation of other minor parties diminishes larger parties' ability to control the agenda. As shown in Chapter 4, the Cartel fills mega-seats with individuals from within. Besides the endogenous explanation that they got the spot for being a part of the majority; it is reasonable to think that these committee heads and the Speaker have comparative advantages vis-à-vis a single backbencher. Given that committees can open the gates of the floor, one can argue that those who have the keys will disproportionately enjoy the benefits of the position and favor the delivery of their own policy priorities. Therefore, committee chairs should be systematically more likely to get the bills they sponsor passed. This hypothesis (#4) however, is not confirmed. According to the results, the size of the party seems to be a more accurate factor to explain legislators' legislative success than positions of authority. Nevertheless, the empirical evidence suggests that committee chairmanships do increase the success of legislators from minor parties. Support for this last point is evident in four of the five chambers examined in this analysis.

These pieces of evidence, along with the data collected, open future avenues of research in many different ways. One of the first extensions of this agenda is to incorporate the role of the executive office into the analysis of legislative process to investigate whether or not governors, with different types of formal prerogatives, exert an influence on the legislative process. Depending on the formal prerogatives governors have they can ignore the legislative majority in divided government

situations. This argument has been already tested by Alemán and Calvo (2010) in the Argentine federal congress. The variation among the Argentine provinces offers an outstanding scenario not only to test this preexistent hypothesis but also to investigate new and potentially unknown political scenarios across time.

A second parallel line of research will be centered on a particular test of conventional statements about Argentine legislative politics. Many contributions (Jones and Hwang 2004; Calvo and Escolar 2005; Micozzi 2009) showed that subnational politics make a difference in legislators' behavior at the federal level, and that political activities are multilevel. In spite of their compelling evidence no study has empirically demonstrated whether legislative behavior at the national and subnational levels have points in common, which would be an outstanding test for many discussions (i.e. the role of preferences or party constraints over explicit behavior, or legislators' congruence in their performance at both levels). Using bridging techniques already implemented in American politics with enormous success (Bailey 2007; Shor 2008; Shor, Berry and McCarty 2010), I plan to gather roll call votes for subnational legislatures and create a common space among these bodies at different levels.

A separate agenda will further the comparison of legislatures at the subnational level in different countries. One of the most important features of Argentine federalism is the level of autonomy that the provinces have in deciding their institutional frameworks; something that is not shared by other federal countries like Brazil or Mexico where state institutions are determined by the National Constitution. In this regard, a central question that emerges is how political actors

respond to changes in systems where institutions are endogenous and in systems where institutions are a result of external imposition. Do parties generate other types of mechanisms to foster legislative majorities? Do we find similar agenda control mechanisms in subnational units of countries with homogeneous ruling institutions, or do they vary according to other differences?

Finally, another study will analyze the links between non-legislative shocks and congressional performance. In particular, using the Mexican experience as a reference, I will try to verify whether increases in violence taint the kinds of bills legislators draft, along with patterns of cosponsorship. Do environments of perceived threats bring legislators closer to each other? Is legislation more centered on the solution of such a risky situation, or does violence deter representatives from taking strong public positions on the issue, considering existing risks? In light of the recent rise of the drug traffic issue in the Argentine press, the binary comparison seems more than fruitful.

In sum, this dissertation explored a specific dimension of the legislative process in a set of subnational legislatures, an attempt that was not performed too frequently until this piece was released. This work intends to add another brick to the vast wall of evidence regarding policymaking in legislatures across time and space. As a positive externality, this piece enables the development of several related agendas that are going to nurture my research portfolio for the coming years. However, regarding the current project, I prefer to highlight, as a final remark, the main finding: even in environments where parties do not hold a strict majority, institutions tend to make congressional activity much easier for the largest party.

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