The Impact of Mixed-member Districts on Legislators' Behavior: The Case of Bolivia

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ABSTRACT

Many studies suggest that mixed-member electoral systems produce different attitudes and behaviors among representatives. This article assesses how this type of electoral system shapes Bolivian legislators' perceptions of their roles as representatives, their district activities, and their relationships with their political parties. It examines these dimensions using elite survey data and interviews with legislators and their personal assistants. The results show that the electoral system does not produce a uniform impact. It shapes how legislators perceive their role as representatives and the nature of the relationship they build with their political parties, but it does not produce differences in the kinds of activities that both types of legislators carry out in their districts.

To what extent do different electoral arrangements shape legislators' roles and behavior in their relationships with their constituents and political parties? This article analyzes the differences and similarities between Bolivian legislators elected in single-member districts (SMD) and those elected by the proportion of party votes received in multimember districts (proportional representation, or PR). Electoral systems not only transform votes into seats but also have important impacts on many other elements of the political system (Cox 1997; Norris 1997). Among such impacts, electoral rules shape the relationships and types of ties between citizens and representatives (Carey and Shugart 1995) and influence representatives' behavior and attitudes (Searing 1985, Studlar and McAllister 1996). These influences ultimately will affect the quality and type of political representation that legislators provide to their constituents. In other words, legislators elected through different electoral systems might be expected to have different attitudes and behaviors in their role as representatives. More specifically, the traditional expectation is that legislators elected in SMDs will orient themselves toward constituency service, whereas PR legislators will focus on their parties.

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Using data from various sources (interviews with legislators and their assistants) and focusing on the case of Bolivia, a case that often is left out of the studies of mixed-member electoral systems, this article assesses the extent to which the electoral rules influence legislators' orientations and behavior, paying special attention to their work in their districts and their relationship with their political parties. Results show that electoral rules do not have a uniform impact. The mixed-member electoral system has an impact on some of the perceptions legislators have of their role as representatives, but when looking at their behavior, this impact disappears. In other words, both types of Bolivian legislators conduct the same type of work in their districts regardless of the tier into which they were elected. This finding questions the normative assumption that legislators elected in single-member districts have more incentives to build close ties with voters in their districts in order to guarantee the success of their political careers.

This study argues that this lack of significant differences in the behavior of legislators elected under different rules is explained by the finding that both types of representatives need to show that they are efficient in their representative tasks, either to benefit their own careers or to favor the party they represent. This indicates that electoral rules do not produce direct and clear effects but instead interact with other elements of the political context that shapes the final outcome. In the case of Bolivia, certain elements of the political system should be taken into account when analyzing the effects of the electoral system, such as the role that parties play in nominating candidates, the low legislative re-election rates, and the strong presence of sectorial, local, and regional interests.

Apart from this finding, another main contribution of this article is the use of multiple types of interview data to test the impact of the mixed-member electoral system on legislators' behavior and attitudes. Studies of this kind of electoral systems use different types of data, such as interviews with legislators (Heitshusen et al. 2005), roll-call data (Kerevel 2010), or institutional and district-level data (Ferrara et al. 2005). However, few of them combine data from different sources and actors, which helps understand legislators' behavior from different points of view. First, we rely on data from interviews with parliamentary staff assistants. These assistants offer firsthand information about legislators' behavior, given that they take care of their agendas and schedule their daily activities. The results from these original data are complemented by legislator interviews from the Parliamentary Elites of Latin America (PELA) project, which gathers legislators' opinions, perceptions, and attitudes about their own role as representatives. In addition, we take into account qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews with legislators in Bolivia carried out by one of the authors of this article. Before presenting the data, methods, and findings in greater detail, the next two sections provide further discussion of the theories of mixed-member electoral systems and present a more thorough introduction to and justification of the case of Bolivia.

Mixed-member Electoral Systems and Their Impact on Legislators' Orientations and Behavior

Institutions shape political interactions (North 1991) and therefore play a systematic and important role in the process of political representation. Grounded on this premise, an extensive body of literature has focused on the analysis of electoral rules and their effects. It has shown that electoral rules shape the incentives of political actors in ways that affect political competition, party organization, and the kinds of ties between representatives and constituents, among other outcomes (see, e.g., Duverger 1954; Rae 1971; Taagapera and Shugart 1989; Carey and Shugart 1995; Lijphart 1999).

The nature of districts is one of the electoral system elements most highlighted in the literature and is known as having the largest impact on legislators' behavior and the role they adopt. Multimember districts offer few incentives for developing a personal relationship in the district. Single-member districts, because there is an implied geographical overlap among several legislators (Heitshusen et al. 2005), generate a series of incentives that bring representatives closer to their constituents. Additionally, in single-member districts, the representative is identified as the spokesperson for the constituency's interests (Vallés and Bosch 1997), and he or she might be more likely to engage in pork-barrel activities than representatives elected in multimember districts (Lancaster and Patterson 1990). Moreover, in these cases, the candidate plays a fundamental role: election depends on the candidate's own character and abilities more than on the political party to which he or she belongs. Parliamentary groups under these circumstances will be poorly disciplined; each member will be more concerned about the impact of their vote in their district than about the instructions of the party (Duverger 1950).

Mixed-member electoral systems are a subcategory of electoral systems that combine both single-member districts and multinomial ones. More specifically, they are electoral systems in which "seats are allocated in two (or more) overlapping sets of districts, such that every voter may cast one or more votes that are employed to allocate seats in more than one tier" (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001). Among the advantages of such electoral systems is that they generate incentives for close relationships between citizens and their representatives and accountability between them at the single-member district level, while keeping disciplined and policy-consistent parties with a fair representation at the national level (Colomer and Negretto 2005). Therefore, mixed electoral systems have the potential of bringing "the best of both worlds" together: the PR tier allows the formation of a strong national party system while the SMD tier allows the representation of local interests (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001).

In such a system, it could be expected that both types of legislators would adopt distinct roles and behavior. It is likely that representatives elected under single-member districts have more incentives to establish a more personal and closer relationship with their voters, adopt a role focused on their constituency, and bring

local interests to the parliament. Proportional legislators, in contrast, might have more incentives to push national issues on the legislative agenda and to engage in activities that show their loyalty to the party at the national level. This type of electoral system can also shape candidates' behavior during electoral campaigns. It can be the case that candidates on the proportional list take advantage of the resources provided by the party, while single-member candidates have to appeal to their electorate directly using a candidate-centered strategy. Furthermore, mixed electoral systems might shape not only legislators' behavior but also the way citizens perceive individual representatives and Congress in general; citizens might display different levels of trust depending on the type of legislator.

Nevertheless, other scholars have found that mixed-member electoral systems do not always activate the best incentives of SMD and PR systems evenly; instead, outcomes vary from case to case, and some mixed-member electoral systems yield skewed results toward the SMD or the PR system (Bawn and Thies 2003). Also, some research has shown contamination effects between the PR and SMD tiers, given that both tiers are not independent; this generates incentives that differ from those generated in separate and independent tiers (Ferrara et al. 2005; Cox and Schoppa 2002; Herron and Nishikawa 2001). Contamination would be present if the behavior of a legislator elected in one tier is affected by the electoral rules in the other tier (Ferrara et al. 2005). If that is the case, contamination would violate the assumption that mixed-member electoral systems "serve as crucial experiments" (Shugart et al. 2005) and offer the opportunity to conduct controlled comparisons (Moser 2001; Moser and Scheiner 2004). This traditional point of view claims that mixed-member electoral systems allow us to hold institutional and cultural characteristics at the national level constant while introducing some variance at the level of electoral rules. However, contamination would blur the effect of that variance.

One of the elements that "contaminates" legislators' behavior is the presence of dual candidacy; that is, when systems allow candidates to run in both tiers at the same time. Although this feature is limited in the case of Bolivia, dual candidacy is very common in most mixed systems, and it prevents legislators from specializing in either SMD or PR (Kerevel 2010). If specialization occurs, it could be expected that PR legislators would vote in line with the party more often than SMD representatives. However, some studies have found that in some countries that is not the case (Ferrara et al. 2005).

Therefore the study of mixed electoral systems poses some challenges. On the one hand, there might be contamination effects that are hard to isolate. On the other hand, it is not only the electoral rules that influence legislators' behavior but also how political parties respond to those rules (the nomination process, coalition and campaign dynamics, etc.).

These difficulties might partly explain why analyses of the effect of mixed-member electoral systems on legislative behavior show somewhat inconclusive results. For instance, on the one hand, some scholars find that in Western democracies, representatives elected in single-member districts have more of a constituency focus than parliamentarians chosen in multimember districts (Heitshusen et al.

2005) and that they are more likely to be members of committees that allow them to focus on their local constituencies (Stratmann and Baur 2002) than those elected through proportional representation. On the other hand, analyses of new democracies show a less clear impact of mixed-member electoral systems on voting behavior (Haspel et al. 1998; Herron 2002a, b; Smith and Remington 2001) or party discipline (Kerevel 2010).

In the case of Latin America, only a few countries have mixed-member electoral systems—Mexico, Venezuela, and Bolivia—and few studies have addressed the effects of this kind of electoral system in the region. For instance, Kerevel (2010) assesses the impact of the mixed-member electoral system on legislators in Mexico. Although he finds that PR legislators are more likely to have control over key leadership positions, there are few differences in party discipline between single-member representatives and proportional ones. The same null effect on party discipline has been found in Venezuela (Crisp 2007).

In the case of Bolivia, this kind of electoral system was applied for the first time in the 1997 elections as a reaction to the lack of responsiveness, accountability, and confidence in the political system (Mayorga 2001a, b). Yet we still know little about the impact of this change on the political system and, more specifically, on the role of representatives and their behavior both in Congress and in their districts.

Bolivia's Mixed-member Electoral System

Bolivia's political system has experienced many changes in recent decades. The traditional party system created after 1985 suffered a crisis of dissatisfaction during the 1990s, a decade characterized by economic crisis, feelings of social exclusion, inequality, and structural poverty (Domingo 2005). The twenty-first century began with a series of social protests and political instability that would end years later with the restructuring of the political system. Traditionally excluded sectors asked for inclusion in the political arena, while traditionally included actors had difficulties forming a government.

The 2002 elections reflected the exhaustion of the old system and the first signs of tangible political change. The Movement for Socialism (MAS) emerged as a major player, channeling indigenous and other dissatisfied sectors' demands. After years of political unrest and uncertainty, in 2006 Evo Morales became president, inaugurating a new period marked by new rules that would affect Bolivia's economic and political development. (For a description of the transformations in the political system see, e.g., Alcántara 2013; Araníbar 2009; Haro González 2011.)

The political and institutional reforms carried out in the 1990s tried to respond to citizens' demands to increase voters' involvement in the selection of candidates and to correct the vices of a representative system in which legislators were more responsive to party leadership's interests than to those of their constituents (Lazarte 2008). The constitutional reform of August 1994 that introduced the mixed-member electoral system sought to improve not only representation but also legiti-

macy and accountability within the system, which were seriously damaged after vote manipulation in the 1989 election (Mayorga 2001a, b). Also, it was thought that the creation of single-member districts would balance the growing gap between voters and representatives and increase legislators' independence from political parties (Blanes Jiménez 2012).

Since the implementation of the mixed-member electoral system and its subsequent reforms, only a few studies have addressed their effects in Bolivia. One of the consequences that these studies point out is the emergence of local issues, due to the impact of single-member districts (Mayorga 2001b). Additionally, and contrary to what could be expected, single-member districts have not increased the number of personalistic political organizations in Congress.[1] They have, however, brought a change in how legislators started to conceive of their tasks: SMD legislators started getting closer to voters, and voters started expecting SMD legislators not only to perform traditional functions (legislative, oversight, and representation) but mostly to execute basic infrastructure works in their districts (Ardaya 2003). A more recent study by Centellas (2009) focuses on some of the impacts on the political system as a whole, highlighting how the electoral system has aggravated the existing regional cleavages in Bolivia, increased the regional polarization, and contributed to the instability of the party system.

However, none of these studies focuses on the most recent years, in which the Bolivian system has experienced profound institutional, social, and economic transformations. This article presents an analysis of the consequences for legislators' behavior of the mixed-member electoral system, focusing on the Legislative Assembly constituted after the general elections of December 2009.

Bolivia's mixed-member electoral system creates a congress comprised of legislators elected by two different sets of electoral rules. That is to say, 70 members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected in single-member constituencies using the "first past the post" rule and 53 in multimember districts through a proportional election rule.[2] Law 026 of June 2010 describes the main features of Bolivia's mixed-member electoral system.[3] In each of the nine departments, half the legislators are elected in single-member districts and half in proportional districts. The 2010 legislature comprised 130 deputies, of whom 70 were elected in single-member districts, 53 in multimember districts, and 7 in special indigenous districts. The magnitude of proportional districts varies according to the population of the department. It ranges from 13 in La Paz to 1 in Pando. Table 1 shows the distribution of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly by the type of district.[4]

The Bolivian case presents a context and a series of characteristics that make the study of the effects of mixed-member electoral systems especially interesting. First among them is the presence of sectorial, regional, and local interests in national politics. Evo Morales and his party, MAS, have been especially successful at bringing together different social movements and sectors, such as coca growers, indigenous groups, miners, and urban associations, and this has shaped the dynamics of parliamentary representation (Vergara 2011). In this regard, it could be expected that

Table 1. Distribution of Seats in the Bolivian Chamber of Deputies, 2010–2015

Department	Single-member Districts	Proportional Representatives	Special Circumscription	Total
La Paz	15	13	1	29
Santa Cruz	13	11	1	25
Cochabamba	10	8	1	19
Potosí	8	6	1	14
Chuquisaca	6	5	0	11
Oruro	5	3	1	9
Tarija	5	3	1	9
Beni	5	3	1	9
Pando	3	1	1	5
Total	70	53	7	130

Source: Cámara de Diputados de Bolivia (www.diputados.bo/)

both SMD and PR legislators have to focus to some extent on regional and local politics. Also, the fact that candidate nominations are party-centered has important implications for how SMD and PR legislators behave. The fact that candidates in both tiers need the parties' support might play against differentiated behaviors between SMD and PR legislators. On the other hand, unlike many other systems, candidates in Bolivia do not run in both tiers, which might contribute to some specialization and open room for distinct behavior between SMD and PR legislators. Yet another particular characteristic of Bolivia's parliamentary politics is that, at least in recent years, few legislators run for re-election, and this also shapes their behavior. Legislators seek other careers in local politics or in the executive branch, which may make them focus on local and party issues while in Congress.

In sum, the mixed-member electoral system has become a key element in the Bolivian political system. Despite several institutional reforms, its mixed nature has not been changed, which shows its high level of acceptance among politicians and citizens, especially if we take into account the widespread tendency to reform electoral rules in Bolivia and Latin America in general. Here we will assess the extent to which the Bolivian electoral system generates different incentives for single-member district legislators and proportional ones and thus produces different behaviors and orientations between legislators in both tiers.

Data and Methods

As mentioned earlier, one of the main contributions of this study is the use of data from different sources: survey data from interviews with legislative staff assistants; elite surveys conducted by PELA; and qualitative data obtained from semistructured author interviews with legislators. All these data allow us to analyze legislators' behaviors, opinions, and attitudes about their role as representatives and to assess

any differences between legislators elected in SMD and PR tiers. The three types of sources refer to the 2010–15 Congress.

To analyze legislators' behavior, we used data from surveys conducted among 47 parliamentary staff assistants between February and April 2013.[5] Interviews focused on the MAS and Plan Progress Bolivia–National Convergence (PPB-CN), resulting in 21 interviews with SMD legislators' assistants and 26 with PR representatives' assistants.

Staff members were asked about the activities their legislator carried out in their constituency and the relationship between the legislator and the political party. This way we incorporate a new point of view into the study of representation and the way it works. Although legislative assistants do not carry out representative tasks, they are preferential observers of the representative role of legislators. Also, it is likely that assistants provide more objective information than legislators, who might tend to inflate their reported activities due to a social desirability bias. These assistants keep the legislators' agendas and have firsthand knowledge about how legislators spend their time, what type of activities they perform, and with whom they meet.

These data focus on behavior, while the PELA survey focuses more on legislators' opinions and attitudes.[6] PELA conducted 91 interviews among legislators in the lower chamber in the fall of 2010.[7] We complement the analyses with qualitative data obtained from more than 45 semistructured interviews with legislators in Bolivia carried out during the summer of 2011.

Assessing Legislators' Behavior and Attitudes

Based on the information from the legislators' assistants, we assess the degree of legislators' relative autonomy in relation to both their parties and their districts. We define relative autonomy as the level of independence that legislators have or perceive with respect to their party, leadership, and members. Using Ruiz's 2012 definition of district activity, we evaluate the array of actions that legislators carry out in their districts. District activity comprises the typical tasks of "constituency services," but also other activities that do not formally provide any service or support to the voter.[8] They would be activities to promote, directly or indirectly, the candidate or the party, such as unveiling a public work, organizing meetings with associations or groups of voters, or participating in district events.

To assess the similarities and differences between Bolivian legislators elected in single-member districts and proportional lists, we ran a homogeneity analysis, HOMALS, an exploratory technique of nonlinear multivariate analysis that uses nominal variables (Gifi 1990).[9] The main objective of this technique is to identify a low-dimensional space that allows summarizing and representing the association of structures between two or more nominal variables, as well as the similarities among the subjects belonging to those categories.

We used this technique because it offers many advantages over other statistical techniques, especially with a small sample whose responses might be highly dis-

Table 2. Discrimination Measures for Figure 1 (District Activity)

	Dimension	
Legislator Activities	1	2
Participated in opening ceremonies for public works with local authorities	.590	.628
Organized an event with voters	.458	.278
Participated in opening ceremonies for public works with national authorities	.703	.766
Participated in public presentation of a public plan or program	.465	.401
Ability to implement public policies	.410	.144
Popular in district	.341	.054
Type of district	.099	.015
Political party	.121	.057

Source: Los vínculos entre electores research project

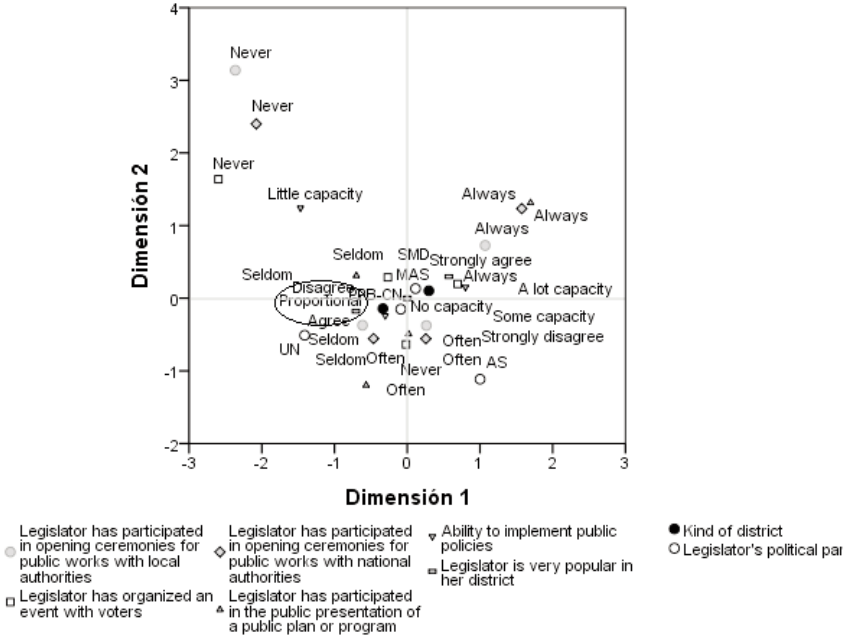
persed within groups, and in which, in some cases, only one respondent was positioned in a given option. The main advantage of this technique is that it allows us to test the hypothesis by visualizing similar and dissimilar tendencies among groups with high levels of reliability.

HOMALS results are shown as a graph in which respondents who selected the same category of response in a given set of variables will appear close to each other, while those who select different categories will appear distant. Each individual will be as close as possible to the set of categories he or she selected. Therefore, using this technique, we will be able to detect similarities and differences between SMD and PR legislators regarding their district activities and their relationship with their parties.

The first analysis corresponds to the district activity of Bolivian legislators. This analysis assesses the extent to which legislators in both tiers conduct different types of activities in their districts, such as unveiling public works with local or national authorities, organizing events with voters, implementing public policies, or presenting public programs or plans to the public in their districts. For the analysis of homogeneity using these district variables, 34 iterations were required to reach a converged solution. The percentage of adjustment achieved is 69.1 percent, with eigenvalues of 0.398 on axis 1 and 0.293 on axis 2.

Table 2 shows the discrimination measures per variable per dimension. The larger the discrimination measures for a variable, the better the categories of that variable discriminate among legislators. We observe that the most discriminating variables are participating in opening ceremonies for public works in the district, either with national or local authorities, with a discriminant score of 0.703 on axis 1 and 0.628 on axis 2, respectively. When we look at figure 1, type of district is the nondiscriminating variable, with a discriminant score of 0.099 on axis 1 and 0.015 on axis 2. And we get these results independently of the political party, whose discriminating power is virtually nonexistent (0.121 on axis 1 and 0.057 on axis 2).

Figure 1. Homogeneity Analysis (HOMALS) for Variables Related to District Activity



These results confirm the idea that the impact of the electoral system is not uniform across all dimensions. In this case, district activities performed by both SMD and PR legislators are not significantly different. We can observe that categories SMD and PR are very close, and close to the intersection of both axes, with most of the responses around them, which indicates that there are no differences among the types of activities that legislators conduct. In other words, the responses to the questions on district activities do not differ based on the electoral tier, given that both categories are in the center of the graph.[10]

Next we focus on the analysis of the relationship between legislators and their parties, assessing the extent to which this relationship varies by the type of tier in which legislators were elected. This analysis is based on a series of questions that asked assistants about who was more likely to influence legislators' behavior, the extent to which their party or their constituents influenced their vote in Congress, with whom they spent more time, and what reasons explained why their legislators were elected. These questions allow us to assess legislators' autonomy. The homogeneity analysis needed 38 iterations, out of the 100 available, to reach a convergence solution. The percentage of adjustment achieved by the model is 69.90 percent, with eigenvalues of 0.409 on axis 1 and 0.290 on axis 2.

Again, table 3 shows the categories that most discriminate in each dimension, which allows us to talk about similarities and differences between the responses pro-

Table 3. Discrimination Measures for Figure 2

	Dimensions	
	1	2
Person(s) to whom legislator relates the most when in district	.775	.767
Who influences legislator's decisionmaking the most	.551	.492
Who/what influences legislator's vote in the assembly	.274	.448
Activity in which legislator invests most time	.091	.021
Reason legislator was elected	.428	.202
Type of district	.536	.042
Political party	.208	.058

Source: Los vínculos entre electores research project

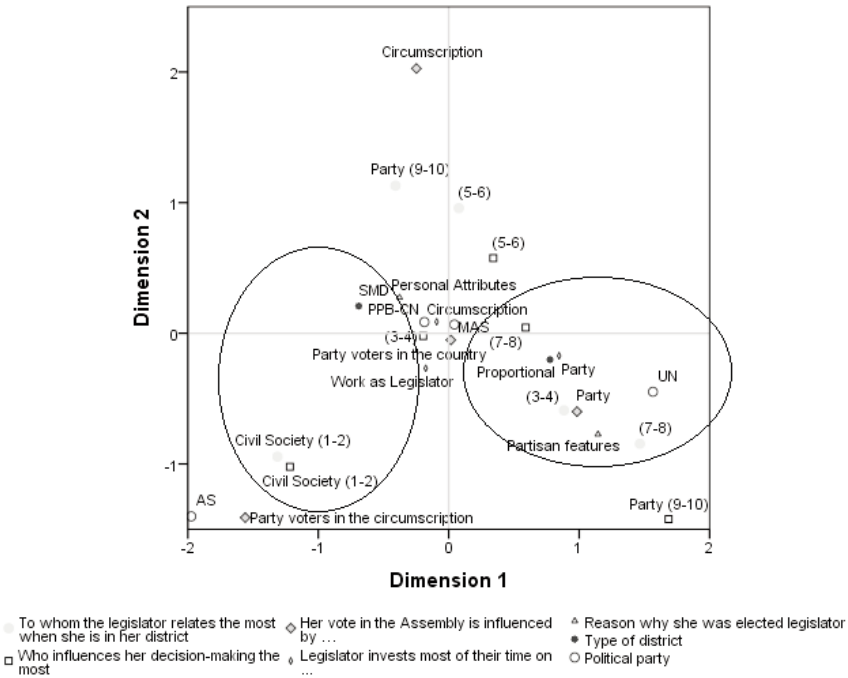
vided by the legislative assistants. Axis 1 and axis 2, in that order, represent the persons with whom the legislator establishes tighter relationships in the district and who influence their decisions the most. On both axes 1 and 2, the tier of the mixed-member electoral system discriminates. Again, political party is one of the variables with less discriminant power in the analysis.

Figure 2 confirms the hypothesis that legislators elected under different rules build different relationships with their parties. The figure shows that the responses provided by PR assistants to the questions listed in table 2 refer to the party (lower right quadrant of the graph). By contrast, responses given by SMD assistants mention the importance of civil society and legislators' electoral district rather than the importance of parties (lower left quadrant of the graph).

So far, the results seem to indicate that the mixed electoral system does not always lead to differences between legislators elected in the SMD and PR tiers. Both types of legislators conduct the same type of activities in their districts, but the party plays a larger role in influencing PR's voting behavior in Congress or explaining their election, while SMDs are more influenced by civil society and rely on their own personal attributes to get elected. As we will see below, these results are confirmed using the data from the interviews with legislators themselves.

The PELA data allow us to assess the extent to which SMD and PR legislators differ in various aspects of their functions as legislators. Some of the questions asked to staff assistants that were analyzed above are contained in this survey. When asked about which groups or individuals were more influential when they had to make political decisions, 46.4 percent of legislators said that voters in their districts were the most important to them, followed by 27.38 percent who said that public opinion in general was the most influential. However, when looking at the responses by the type of legislator, we observe some interesting differences. As Figure 3 shows, the mixed-member electoral system leads to significant differences with respect to taking into account the opinion of the district. Legislators elected in single-member districts were more likely to say that they listened to the citizens in their districts the most, in comparison to those elected in proportional districts (57.45 percent versus

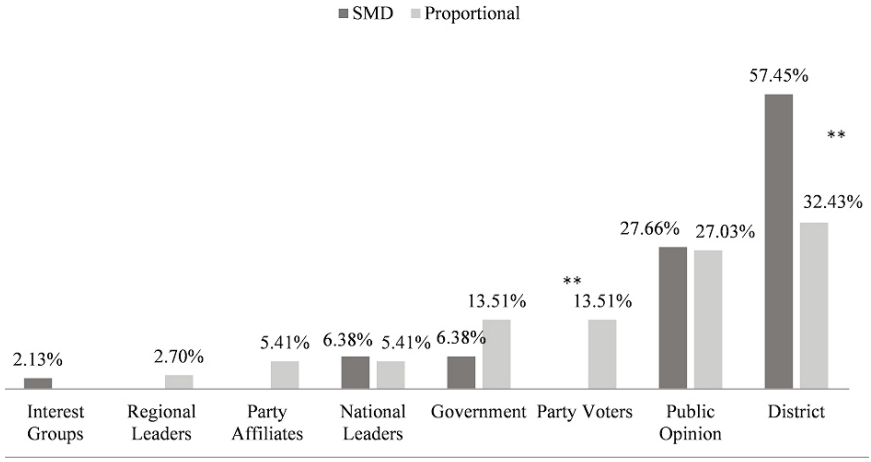
Figure 2. Homogeneity Analysis (HOMALS) for Variables Related to Legislator's Autonomy



32.43 percent). That difference is statistically significant when running a two-sample test of proportions. The kind of electoral district is also important in terms of the influence of political parties. Proportional legislators were more likely to say that they paid attention to party voters than were SMD legislators. In fact, no single-member district representatives said they took their party into account, whereas 13.51 percent of those elected in proportional districts said their party was the actor they took into account the most.

The same way assistants were asked about what explains legislators' election, legislators were asked about the factors that explained how they were elected to Congress. Figure 4 shows the distribution of responses to this question. Out of seven factors, respondents had to choose one as the main factor. Although the main factor mentioned by both single-member district and proportional legislators was their past experience, we observe statistically significant differences by type of legislator when we compare the proportion of those who mentioned the electoral campaign. Twenty-eight percent of SMD legislators said that their own campaign was what explained their election while only 7.3 percent of PR legislators mentioned the campaign as the main reason. Also, when we combine the percentage of responses related to the political party (party ideology, party program, and image of the party

Figure 3. Constituents Most Influential to Legislators



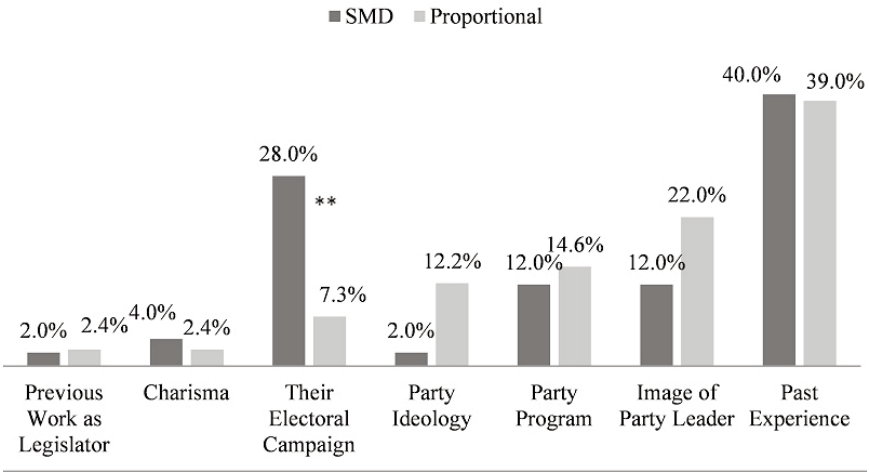
**Significant at $p < 0.05$, two tails
Source: PELA 2010

leader), we observe statistically significant differences between SMD and PR legislators. PR legislators are more likely to select factors associated with their party than SMD representatives.

In sum, single-member district legislators are more likely to point out their own electoral campaign as a key factor in their electoral success than PR representatives. In fact, this element was frequently raised during the qualitative interviews. When asked about the differences between single-member district and proportional legislators, almost all of the representatives elected in single-member districts pointed out how they had to organize their own campaigns, which involved spending many more resources than those spent by proportional legislators. "Proportional legislators go under the umbrella of the president and they do not need to do a political campaign, but citizens elect us directly, they look for our picture on the ballot, and therefore we have to spend more time and resources on our own campaign if we want to be elected," said one of the legislators. They highlighted how proportional legislators took advantage of appearing on the same list as the presidential candidate: "in some areas where our presidential candidate had a lot of supporters, legislators did not even bother to campaign or to show up in electoral events, while I had to walk to the last corner of my district looking for votes," complained one of the SMD representatives. Proportional legislators were also aware of this situation, as one of them mentioned: "single-member district deputies have more duties with citizens; I can go unnoticed, but they cannot."

However, it could be said that there is a counterargument, which is that different types are simply drawn toward different rules, so it is a selection issue and not an institutional one. This argument might hold; however, institutions are still

Figure 4. Factors that Explain Legislators' Election to Congress



**Significant at $p < 0.05$, two tails
Source: PELA 2010

important to the degree that they allow this type of sorting and self-selection into roles to take place. Also, parties know where to locate their candidates (on the ballot or in a district) so that they can secure the seats. In fact, the interviews with legislators underlined differences in the selection process for SMD and proportional legislators. Ninety percent of the legislators explained how SMD candidates go through a bottom-up process in which social organizations at the local level have great influence in nominating them; in contrast, proportional legislators go through a top-down process in which the party structures or even the party leader has the largest influence on selecting them.

Put succinctly, on the basis of the evidence reported here and this logic, we cannot deny the impact of the mixed electoral system on creating some distinctions between legislators, especially when considering whom they take into account and how they face electoral campaigns. Additionally, the majority of SMD legislators, when explaining the differences between the two kinds of legislators, highlighted how they are more legitimate (in their words), given that they are elected directly whereas the proportional ones are presented on the same list as the president. As some of them said, they are more independent from the party, are closer to the voters, and have more responsibilities given the direct vote from the people.

The evidence in this section demonstrates that the mixed-member electoral system does not have a uniform impact on legislators' opinions and behavior. While legislators conduct the same type of activities in their district regardless of the tier in which they were elected, SMD and PR representatives differ on how they perceive the electoral campaigns and on how they see the role of their parties when making decisions in Congress.

Table 4. Legislators Who Wish to Continue a Career in Politics (Percent)

	SMD	PR
Yes	89.74	81.25
No	10.26	18.75
N	39	48

Pearson chi2 (1): 1.2213. p = 0.269
Source: PELA 2010

These analyses have focused on the role of the mixed-member electoral system on legislators' behavior and attitudes. However, we have not assessed the role of other factors that might be shaping those behaviors and opinions, like "ambition" or the desire to be re-elected. In fact, classic works by Mayhew (1974) and Fenno (1978) highlight how legislators' main goal is to seek re-election, this being the main force that conditions their behavior in office. However, as noted, re-election rates in Bolivia are extremely low, and most legislators express no desire to run for Congress after their first term is finished. Under this particular scenario, we have no reason to believe that legislators' behavior responds to their ambition to be re-elected. Nonetheless, as the PELA survey data show, legislators in Bolivia express a desire to maintain a career in politics after one term in Congress. Looking at the data for the 2010–15 Congress, an average 85 percent of legislators want to keep working in politics after 2015, and there are no differences by the type of legislator, as table 4 shows.

Among those who wish to keep working in politics, only 12 percent want to run for re-election, while 37.8 percent want to seek a career path into municipal or regional politics and 10 percent into the executive branch. Again, there are no significant differences in the type of career path between SMD and RP legislators.
We find the same results when looking at legislators' previous political careers. Only 38.64 percent of the legislators had served as elected officials before the 2010–15 Congress. Furthermore, there are no differences between SMD and PR legislators in having been an elected official, with percentages of 32.5 percent and 43.7 percent, respectively (chi2 = 1.16, pr = 0.28). What's more, only 15 legislators had been mayors or members of municipal councils, 7 of whom were PR and 8 SMD. Therefore, there are no differences between the two types of legislators either in their previous political careers or in the kind of political career they are seeking.

The fact that a good number of both PR and SMD legislators are willing to seek a career in local or regional politics might help explain why both of them conduct the same kinds of activities in their districts. In sum, political ambition has the same impact on both types of legislators, which makes it easier to isolate the effects of the electoral system.

Conclusions

This article has addressed the extent to which the mixed nature of the electoral system in Bolivia generates differences between the legislators elected in each tier. Results have shown that the electoral system does not have a uniform impact across all the dimensions examined. While the electoral rules have an impact on how parties influence legislators' decisionmaking in Congress and on how they perceive political campaigns, we do not observe differences among the kinds of activities that representatives perform in their districts.

One of the main contributions of this study is the use of different data sources in the particular context of Bolivia, where, unlike other countries, re-election and candidates running in both types of tiers play a limited role.

It seems that the incentives to develop district activities are very similar if we take into account that both kinds of legislators will want to show their efficacy in the management of district affairs. In the case of SMD legislators, the electoral connection is clear, but that same connection can be found in the case of PR members. It is reasonable to think that both the party and the PR legislator want to keep their voters in a given district satisfied in order to ensure future electoral loyalties. Furthermore, PR legislators have incentives to capture and create their own political space, especially if they want to build a career in local politics, and one way to achieve that is by working with their voters in the district. In other words, if we do not find systematic differences between PR and SMD legislators, especially when assessing district activities, it might be explained by the need of both types of representatives to show that they are efficient at the district level, either to advance their own careers or to benefit their parties.

Regarding the greater autonomy that SMD legislators show with respect to their parties, it is worth noting that this does not have to mean resistance or opposition to their own parties. These legislators are people with specific political and social power in the district, and therefore they can afford a larger share of independence from the political organization and its leadership. Moreover, sometimes SMD legislators hold important positions in the party, which allows them to maintain greater leeway.

By contrast, the results of this study show how PR members tend to mention their parties as very important while working in Congress, and therefore this type of legislator tends to nurture the relationship with the party more than those elected in single-member districts. We know that proportional legislators depend more on political parties, given that they decide candidates' order on the ballot. On the other hand, single-member district candidates depend more on their own campaign, abilities, and charisma to be selected, as all types of data have shown.

All of these results clearly show that it is necessary to keep the context and nature of other institutions in mind when analyzing the effect of mixed-member electoral systems. Many studies ignore the role of political parties or the idea that electoral systems also affect parties and not only individual legislators. The presence of a hegemonic party in a political system, such as MAS in Bolivia, affects the behav-

ior of voters and representatives alike, reducing split voting or causing the legislators not to work at the margin of the party in their districts. Furthermore, we must keep in mind the power of the president in presidential systems and the plebiscitary characteristic that certain electoral processes can take on. A strong president might have enough power and influence to make SMD and PR legislators behave similarly.

This study shows that many of the suppositions that spring from the analysis of Western democracies do not help to predict legislators' behavior in new democracies in a clear fashion. We cannot predict legislators' behavior just by looking at the type of electoral tier. Therefore, we must be more cautious when recommending this type of electoral system as a solution to the crisis of representation in the region.

This study has found opportunities for future research on this topic in new democracies; the combination of different data and the use of more than one case would help advance our knowledge about the impact that mixed electoral systems have had, not only on representatives but on the way voters perceive them. Furthermore, it could be interesting to assess the extent to which SMD legislators in Bolivia develop personalistic or clientelistic relationships with their voters and whether those relationships differ from the ones developed under open lists, like those in Brazil.

Notes

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1. In the 2001 elections, the number of political parties in Congress was seven, and the only ones with representatives from single-member districts were Movimiento Bolivia Libre (MBL) and Izquierda Unida (IU) (Ardaya 2003).

2. Bolivia has nine districts corresponding to the country's nine departments. Seven other seats are reserved for indigenous populations elected in seven special districts using majority rule. For more details, see Ley n 026, Ley de 30 de junio de 2010.

3. Although this electoral rule was first established in 1994, the law of 2010, taking into account the new constitution of 2009, introduces some new features, such as the inclusion of the seven special districts reserved for indigenous populations.

4. The Plurinational Legislative Assembly is composed of two chambers: the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. This article focuses on the latter, given its greater political relevance.

5. These data were collected as part of the project "Los vínculos entre electores y partidos: la actividad distrital de los diputados de Chile, Perú y Bolivia" (CSO2011-24344). This project is funded by the Spanish Comisión Interministerial de Ciencia y Tecnología (CICYT) and it is directed by Professor Leticia M. Ruiz Rodríguez from Complutense University of Madrid.

6. It could be the case that some of the interviewed staff members are part of the interviewed legislators' staff, but due to the anonymous nature of both surveys, it is hard to know the extent of such overlap.

7. The sample was drawn from the Bolivian Chamber of Deputies, which was stratified according to the number of political parties. Representatives were divided into three strata (MAS, PPB, and Others), establishing a proportional allocation. Legislators in each stratum were randomly selected without replacement. The distribution of surveys was as follows: 50

surveys correspond to SMD legislators and 41 to PR. The distribution by party was 61 (MAS), 25 (PPB), 2 (UN), 1 (AS), 2 (Convergencia). Project directed by Professor Manuel Alcántara of the University of Salamanca.

8. Constituency services are the formal allocation of resources to assist needy voters by senators and representatives in the United States. There are ad hoc facilities where specialized staff, under the legislators, guides voters in areas such as veterans' pensions, federal programs, and healthcare (Ruiz 2012).

9. We used HOMALS version 1.0, a module developed by Data Theory Scaling System Group (DTSS), Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Leiden, The Netherlands.

10. Including other sociodemographic variables, such as age or gender, does not change the results.

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