VOTE:

PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL PARTY VOTE IN MEXICO IN THE WAKE OF THE APRIL 2007 FEDERAL DISTRICT DECRIMINALIZATION OF ABORTION

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PRESENTER DISCLOSURES

Sarah Jane Holcombe

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose.

VOTE presentation outline

1. Research question

2. Significance for public health

3. Political context

4. Hypotheses

5. Methods

6. Results

7. Limitations

8. Conclusions

9. Implications for policy

VOTE research questions

- [ ] Is there an emerging relationship between Mexican voters' views on social issues and their selection of political party for which to vote?

- [ ] What is the nature of the relationship between Mexican voters' views on abortion and their choice of political party for which to vote?

VOTE significance for public health

- Public policy has the potential to improve public health
  - Policy liberalizing abortion access has the potential to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity

- Public policies ultimately rest on public support, expressed in democracies through voting and support for political parties

- Abortion law reform - case where relationship between party platform and voter policy preferences is exposed
  - Do political parties lead or follow voter opinion?

VOTE political context

- Currently three major political parties dominate (Left → Right)
  - Partido de la Revolución Democratica (PRD)
  - Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)
  - Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN)
- Traditional predictors of party vote in Mexico have <u>not</u> included views on social issues, but rather cleavages based on:
  - Political order (preference for democratization vs. order)
  - Economic issues (preference for state redistribution vs. free market policies)
  - Religion & government (lay secular state vs. church-state blending)
- 2000 election marked end of 71 years of one party rule (PRI) in Mexico
- 2007 Mexico City liberalization of abortion law was enacted by **<u>PRD</u>**

VOTE hypotheses

- Voters' policy positions on social issues are becoming associated with their party vote choice. In particular,

  - Hypothesis 1: voters with more expansive views on abortion will have greater odds of voting for the left of center political party, the PRD

  - Hypothesis 2: voter residence in the nation's capital, the Federal District, will interact with voter views on abortion, leading to even greater support for the PRD among those in the Federal District

VOTE methods: conceptual framework

☐ 'Funnel of causality' vote choice model*

- ▣ 3 stages or blocks of variables
    1. **Stable social and economic characteristics**
    2. **Policy-related predispositions**
    3. **Current policy preferences and perceptions of current conditions**

*Campbell et al. 1960; Miller & Shanks 1982, 1996

VOTE methods

□ Data from the 2007 Latinobarómetro survey

□ Variables

- Dichotomous <u>dependent variable</u>: intention to vote for the PAN (reference group) or for the PRD in the next election

- Dichotomous <u>independent variable</u> of interest: viewing abortion as 'never justifiable' (reference group) or 'sometimes justifiable'

- <u>Interaction</u> variable: interaction of opinion on abortion and residence

- <u>Control variables</u> (3 stages or blocks of variables):
    1. Stable social and economic characteristics
    2. Policy-related predispositions
    3. Current policy preferences and perceptions of current conditions

VOTE results – abortion opinion

**Table 4.5   Abortion opinion among PAN and PRD voters,
by residence**

Justifiability of Abortion	PAN	PRD
Outside the Federal District		
Never Justified	**63%** (163)	**55%** (62)
Sometimes Justified	**37%** (95)	**45%** (51)
Inside the Federal District		
Never Justified	**54%** (13)	**28%** (11)
Sometimes Justified	**46%** (11)	**72%** (39)

Latinobarómetro 2007

VOTE results

Table 6C   Effects of Independent Variables on Vote Choice (PAN vs. PRD)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2 (interaction)	95% C.I. (Model 2)		p-value
STAGE 3: Current policy preferences and perceptions of current conditions					
Abortion Justifiability (ref=never)	1.76 (0.45)*	1.38 (0.38)	0.80	2.38	0.25
Interaction term for views on abortion and living in the FD or not	-	4.73 (3.38)*	1.19	18.78	0.03
Crime most important problem for Mexico (ref=not)	0.55 (0.23)	0.55 (0.23)	0.24	1.23	0.15
Economy most important problem	0.65 (0.3)	0.68 (0.32)	0.28	1.66	0.40
Corruption most important problem	1.60 (0.54)	1.59 (0.55)	0.79	3.21	0.19
Social and economic inequality most important problem	1.6 (0.67)	1.57 (0.66)	0.70	3.54	0.27
Unemployment most important problem	1.32 (0.48)	1.26 (0.45)	0.59	2.68	0.55
Number of Observations	431	431			
Pseudo R2	0.23	0.24			

^p<0.1, *p<.05, **P<.01, ***p<.001

VOTE results

- Hypothesis #1
  - After controlling for the three blocks of socio-demographic, predispositional, and policy position variables, individuals viewing abortion as sometimes justifiable had 1.76 greater odds of voting for the PRD than did those who saw it as never justifiable (95% confidence interval,1.07 - 2.9, p=0.026).

VOTE results

□ Hypothesis #2

◻ Holding all other variables constant, the odds ratio for the interaction term is 4.73 and significant (95% confidence interval from 1.16 to 18.2, p=0.03)

VOTE results – Federal District only

Stratified sub-analysis

Table 7   Reduced model of party vote choice for Federal District residents (PAN vs. PRD)

Variable	Odds Ratio	Rob. Std Error	95% C. I.		p-value
Socioeconomic Status (ref. = low)	0.44	0.26	0.14	1.42	0.17
Age	1.04	0.02	0.99	1.09	0.084
Female (ref. = male)	0.54	0.32	0.17	1.75	0.306
Support for Private Enterprise (ref. = low)	0.46	0.30	0.13	1.65	0.233
Support for Catholic Church (ref. = low)	1.31	0.81	0.39	4.42	0.666
Abortion Justifiability (ref. = never)	4.83	3.11	1.36	17.09	0.015
N=63					
Pseudo R2=0.14					
Prob > chi2 = 0.0601					

VOTE results – non Federal District

Stratified sub-analysis

Table 8   Reduced model of party vote choice for <u>Non</u>-Federal District residents (PAN vs. PRD)

Variable	Odds Ratio	Rob. Std Error	95% Conf. Interv.		p-value
Socioeconomic Status (ref. = low)	0.52	0.14	0.31	0.89	0.016
Age	0.99	0.01	0.98	1.01	0.506
Female (ref. = male)	0.80	0.19	0.51	1.26	0.339
Support for Private Enterprise (ref. = low)	1.03	0.25	0.65	1.65	0.894
Support for Catholic Church (ref. = low)	0.40	0.11	0.23	0.67	0.001
Abortion Justifiability (ref. = never)	1.39	0.33	0.87	2.21	0.164

N=371
Pseudo R2=0.05
Prob > chi2   =   0.0016

VOTE limitations

- Cross-sectional study

- Key variables less than ideal
  - Dependent variable
    - Captures voter <u>intention</u> rather than <u>actual behavior</u>
  - Independent variable of interest ("justifiability" of abortion)
    - Not specifically related to legalization
    - Compromised question ordering on survey

- Omitted variable bias (a.k.a. confounding) possible

  - E.g.: missing a variable indicating the party controlling voters' locality

- Small sample size in the Federal District

VOTE conclusions

- A political party out front of its national membership
  - PRD seems to have adopted a policy in advance of its supporters nationally and survived to have told the tale
- Social views linked to party identification (even among non-elite populations), but only in the Federal District
- Finding potentially has longer term implications, given the likely staying power of this issue

VOTE conclusions - implications for policy at state and national levels

- ☐ Likely an issue that will remain on the Mexican national and state political agenda, defining party agendas, for some time to come
  - ⊡ Backlash: 17 of Mexico's 32 states have passed amendments to their constitutions defining human life as starting at conception
    - ■ PAN, PRI, and RCC leadership
    - ■ Party assumptions that this stance aids electoral success at state levels
  - ⊡ Supreme Court failure to achieve super-majority vote to rule state amendments unconstitutional (7–4 vs. required 8–3) – October 2011
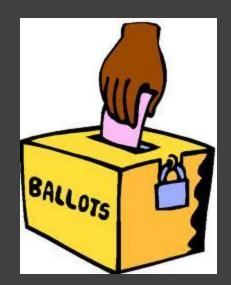
VOTE next steps

- Conduct an analysis over time on the relationship between voter opinions and party vote to determine whether views on abortion and other social issues play an increasing role in party vote choice (2007 – 2011)
  - Inside the Federal District
  - In other states

Thank you!

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