

Working Class Inclusion

Evaluations of Democratic Institutions in Latin America

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Chapter 1

In October 2019, massive demonstrations erupted across Chile to protest inequality and out of touch political elites who pushed for a transportation fare hike that would have placed a substantial burden on a working class already in a precarious economic situation. These protests unfolded in one of the most unequal countries in the world (Pérez-Ahumada 2014; Posner, Patroni and Mayer 2018), where labor representatives are often excluded from policymaking and political parties with historical ties to labor unions have a poor track record at successfully passing reforms to benefit the working class (Barría Traverso, Araya Moreno, and Drouillas 2012; Frank 2002). This economic landscape has produced a crisis of representation and increasing disenchantment with formal institutions of representation in Chile, especially among the working class (Olavarria 2003; Siavelis 2016).

As in Chile, citizens across Latin America are disillusioned with democracy. This discontent with the way democracy works is fueled by persistently high levels of economic inequality and a perception that political elites are disconnected from the daily concerns of the poor and working-class majorities. It is no wonder that higher levels of poverty and inequality are associated with lower support for democratic norms across the region (Carlin 2006). In fact, Latin America is one of the most unequal regions in the world (ECLAC 2018). Economic inequality has produced political inequality (Boulding and Holzner 2021; Cole 2018; Solt 2008), where the majority of working-class people are poorly represented across Latin America. In Chile, more than 75% of the population is working class, while barely 1% of legislators are. Indeed, Latin American legislators are drawn from a narrow set of elites who are largely out of touch with the everyday lives of average citizens (Taylor-Robinson 2010).

It is no surprise that in one of the most unequal regions of the world, some of the most enduring political figures of the last two decades, like Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, and Evo Morales of Bolivia, rose up from poor, working-class backgrounds (Hunter 2010; Ellner and Hellinger 2003; Anria and Cyr 2017). Although these presidents garnered substantial attention worldwide, political inclusion and representation of poor and working-class citizens is not the norm. The ability of members of the working class to rise to the presidency in several countries is exceptional in a region where politicians typically hail from the economic elite (Barnes and Saxton 2019; Carnes and Lupu 2015; Taylor-Robinson 2010). In Latin America, where working-class citizens make up anywhere from sixty to eighty percent of the labor force, fewer than five percent of legislators have a working-class background as seen in Figure 1.1 below.

[Insert Figure 1.1 here]

Figure 1.1: Share of Working-Class Legislators in Latin America

Note: Bars represent the percentage of deputies with working-class backgrounds in the legislature. Data come from the authors' coding of the University of Salamanca's Survey of Parliamentary Elites, which asks, "what was your occupation prior to being elected deputy?" Figure reflects waves 4 and 5, the most recent PELA data used in our analysis for each country.

This political marginalization of the working class undermines one of the fundamental norms of democracy: inclusion. The principle of inclusion suggests that those directly affected by the policy outcomes of democratic governments should be included in the decision-making process (Young 2000). In the example from Chile above, political elites made a policy decision without including the perspectives of the working-class people most affected by it. This lack of inclusion

raises the question: *How does the exclusion of the working class from political power influence citizens' perceptions of representation?*

We argue the exclusion of the working class contributes to a crisis of representation. At its root, the crisis of representation in Latin America, as well as in other democracies around the world, is a story about disenchantment with political parties and legislatures (Luna 2016; Mainwaring 2006; Mair 2013; Przeworski 2019; Tanaka 2006). Despite the importance of these institutions in Latin America, they are generally viewed with distrust (Mainwaring et al. 2006; Seligson 2007). When political institutions “become discredited in the eyes of citizens, populist presidents may displace these institutions as representatives of the people” (Taylor-Robinson 2010, 14). It is also no surprise the poor and working class will turn to populist leaders who can claim to more authentically represent the working class when politicians drawn from the upper classes often fail to address the interests of the majority, even if these leaders have questionable democratic credentials.

This book examines how the near exclusion of working-class citizens from legislatures affects how citizens perceive political representation. In doing so, we tackle three important questions. Our first question is: *Do citizens want to be represented by members of the working class?* We argue that yes!—voters want to be represented by working-class political representatives. The reason is twofold. One: the presence of working-class legislators may signal a more inclusive policy-making process. That is, simply having more workers in office conveys to citizens that policymakers care about their experiences, preferences, and policy needs. Two: given that working-class legislators often have different policy preferences and advance different policy agendas than middle- and upper-class representatives from the same political party, working-class representation may also enhance policy responsiveness. Using survey data from across Latin

America, and original survey data from Argentina and Mexico, we demonstrate that voters want to see more workers in office; that the presence of workers in office is associated with better evaluations of legislatures and political parties; and that many voters believe workers are better suited to represent the policy needs of working-class citizens.

On its face, this may seem intuitive. Upon closer inspection, however, the above argument raises two additional questions. The presence of workers in office can only foster better perceived representation via policy responsiveness if working-class legislators advocate on behalf of the working class. That said, legislators face a number of competing incentives and demands. Not all working-class legislators have the same motivations or opportunities to represent the working class. Consequently, we ask: *will any worker do?* In other words, how do citizens evaluate workers who do not represent working-class policy interests? Likewise, simply having more working-class legislators in office can only alter how voters feel represented if voters are actually aware of working-class representation. For workers' presence in office to signal a more inclusive policy-making process, citizens must be able to identify members of the working class in office. Yet, working-class status is arguably more difficult for citizens to observe than characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or gender. Thus, we ask: *How do citizens know workers are in office?*

Will any worker do? We explain that even though workers all come to office having unique lived experiences that better position them to represent the needs of working-class citizens, once in office workers are faced with a range of competing incentives and opportunities that sometimes preclude their desire and ability to represent working-class interests. We argue that for working-class legislators to effectively improve evaluations of representative institutions they should have strong relationships with the disadvantaged group they represent and be committed to advocating for their policy interests (Dovi 2002). Where working class politicians enter office and defect—

prioritizing their party or other economic interests instead of the working-class—we anticipate working-class representatives will invoke backlash and diminish evaluations of institutions. In contrast, where workers strive to cultivate working-class support and represent workers’ policy interests, we posit that working-class politicians will improve perceptions of institutions. Drawing on an original dataset on the class backgrounds of Argentine and Mexican national deputies over a 20-year period, survey data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), and original survey experiments in Argentina and Mexico, we demonstrate that where representation of the working class is accompanied by policy representation of workers’ interests, working-class representation improves evaluations of representative institutions. Absent policy representation, however, workers’ presence in office only moderately improves evaluations of democratic institutions, and in some cases, generates backlash.

This leads to our final question: *How do voters know workers are in office?* We argue that even if voters do not have perfect information, there are a number of ways that citizens learn about working-class representation (Bernhard n.d.; Bernhard and Freeder 2020; Hinojosa and Kittilson 2020). Since parties and candidates have political incentives to make politicians’ working-class status known, news sources and governments make information about legislators available and digestible, and people are surprisingly adept at inferring class status from readily available heuristics such as facial images and speech patterns, we explain that citizens have a number of opportunities to learn about the presence—or absence—of workers in office. Leveraging examples from news sources, surveys of government websites and a unique experiment in Argentina and Mexico that tests voters’ abilities to classify the class status of deputies based only on facial images, we provide strong evidence that voters are capable of detecting workers’ presence in office. Latin American citizens know workers are in office because they learn about the class status

of politicians through numerous information sources, and can infer class from images of their representatives. Furthermore, using survey data from across Latin America we demonstrate that the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations of institutions is strongest among individuals who are most likely to be aware of legislators' class status—i.e., citizens with high levels of political interest and avid news followers.

Evidence of Working-Class Representation and Citizens' Evaluations

We leverage a combination of innovative qualitative and quantitative data to answer these three pressing questions. Our empirical analysis is situated in Latin America, where we analyze citizens' evaluations of representative institutions—namely legislatures and political parties—across the entire region to capture variation in working-class representation. We draw on quantitative evidence from elite surveys with legislators and mass public opinion surveys across 18 countries from 2008 to 2014 for a total of 48 country-years. We bolster this cross-national evidence with original survey experiments and novel survey questions that we fielded in Mexico and Argentina in 2019, and a newly constructed dataset of the class-backgrounds of over 4,400 Mexican deputies serving from 1997 to 2018 and about 1,800 Argentine deputies from 2002 to 2016.

The qualitative evidence comes from multiple sources as well. First, in 2019 more than 5,000 individuals in Argentina and Mexico responded to open-ended survey questions explaining their perceptions of class representation. We utilize this rich collection of citizen-level responses throughout the book to contextualize many of the empirical findings from our quantitative analyses. Second, we provide in-depth case studies of the history of working-class representation in Argentina and Mexico to explain key variation in workers' ties to political parties and in

representatives' track record of policy representation. Finally, throughout the book—and particularly in Chapters 5 and 6—we draw heavily on historical examples and vignettes to illustrate our findings and bolster our conclusions. Although we do not rely on the open-ended survey responses or examples to make inferences or empirical claims—all our conclusions are drawn from the quantitative analyses—they help to illustrate our empirical results.

Leveraging Cross-National Data from Latin America

To empirically test our expectations about working-class inclusion, we utilize a variety of cross-national data sources. From a research design perspective, cross-national data are important for several reasons. First, by drawing on elite and public opinion survey data across 48 country-years, we leverage far more variation than would be available if we were only looking at one or two cases in depth. The elite data come from the University of Salamanca's Survey of Parliamentary Elites (PELA) which conducts anonymous surveys of a representative sample of legislators in each legislative session from all 18 countries included in our cross-national analysis. Mass public opinion data come from the Latin American Public Opinion Project's *AmericasBarometer*, which has been conducting nationally representative surveys across Latin America since 2008. Using these two sources of cross-national survey data, we capture important variation across space and time in working-class representation from the PELA surveys (our key independent variable), as well as citizens' evaluations of political institutions from the LAPOP surveys (our key dependent variable). This variation is critical for empirically testing our expectations and drawing valid causal inferences (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994).

Second, cross-national data is important for demonstrating the generalizability of our findings. In particular, we demonstrate that working-class legislators improve citizens' perceptions

of representation across a variety of economic contexts and institutional arrangements, including different electoral rules, party systems, levels of development, and labor union density. In addition to elite and mass public opinion survey data, we also draw on vignettes and journalistic accounts from across the region to contextualize our statistical analysis and to demonstrate the generalizability of our findings.

Original Surveys from Argentina and Mexico

Scholars interested in understanding the relationship between representation and people's evaluations of institutions are plagued with the challenge of identifying causality. Even when taking the best of care to measure variables sequentially, maximizing variation in both the dependent variable and the independent variables, and considering potential sources of endogeneity, scholars studying political behavior and public opinion are thwarted with threats of endogeneity—particularly reverse causality and omitted variable bias. With respect to reverse causality, it is entirely plausible that where citizens feel better represented by parties and legislatures, workers are more likely to pursue political office. Of course, in our cross-national analysis we attempt to address this with a careful research design that measures working-class representation in the time period before citizens are asked to evaluate institutions, but both trends in citizens' attitudes and workers' access to office tend to change slowly over time. Thus, it is possible that this process is reversed.

As for omitted variable bias, most social scientists (and curious people in general) can easily think of a number of factors that may theoretically improve *both* workers' access to office and people's evaluations of representative institutions—thus potentially explaining away the link we observe between these two factors. Although we do our best to address potential omitted

variables by controlling for observables in our cross-national analyses, there may be unobservable factors we cannot account for—a known limitation of correlational studies. Beyond these limitations, the questions we can ask are constrained by data availability in publicly available surveys and respondents are constrained in their answers by pre-defined multiple-choice options.

To address these challenges and improve our ability to draw inferences, we designed and fielded original surveys in Argentina and Mexico that contain a series of novel survey experiments, original survey questions, and open-ended survey questions.¹ In particular, we designed two survey experiments: one to assess the causal mechanism linking higher levels of working-class representation to individuals' perceptions of representation, and a second to evaluate citizens' ability to identify working-class representatives. We developed new questions to assess individual evaluations of working-class deputies, and we incorporated open-ended survey questions to provide insights into the underlying factors that individuals claim inform their perceptions of working-class deputies.

Observing Working-Class Representation

How do we identify a member of the working class? The concept of class can be somewhat ambiguous, although fortunately a number of researchers have developed numerous ways to conceptualize and operationalize which legislators come from the working class. Similar to various other studies on the class backgrounds of political elites, we rely solely on legislators' occupational

¹ Our survey experiments in Argentina and Mexico were fielded as part of a larger survey addressing a wide variety of topics. Each experiment was separated by a battery of other unrelated questions. For a description see Appendix 4.3.

status, rather than relying on income or some other measure of socioeconomic well-being. Although most legislators would be coded as belonging to the same (elite) class if we relied on income-based measures of class, the reality is that people with different occupational backgrounds have different life experiences, opportunities, social circles, and economic and political interests (Evans and Tilley 2017; Hout, Manza, and Brooks 1995; Mood 2017; Stephens, Markus and Phillips 2014; Weeden and Grusky 2005).²

Occupation-based conceptualizations of class are fundamentally different from socioeconomic-based approaches to class (Kitschelt and Rehm 2014). This distinction between socioeconomic-based and occupational approaches is paramount for evaluating both legislators' ties to citizens and the policies they represent when in office. Above and beyond a person's income bracket, the work people do to earn a living establishes their position in society (Manza and Brooks 2008). Indeed, the theory of occupational socialization argues that time spent in an occupation should shape political preferences and behavior (Barnes, Beall, and Holman 2021; Barnes and Saxton 2019; Best and Cotta 2000; Carnes 2012, 2013; Oesch and Rennwald 2018; O'Grady 2019; Vivyan et al. 2020). People who work in the same industry have shared experiences that both

² In this book we focus on the difference between the working-class and the middle/upper-class.

As compared to middle- and upper-class citizens, workers have unique lived experiences and distinct policy interests. That said, workers are not a monolith. Their policy interests may vary, for instance, by industry, level of skills, and whether they work in a formal/informal or gender-segregated sector (for a discussion see Hummel 2021; Owen 2015; Menendez, Owen, and Walter forthcoming; Barnes, Beall, and Holman 2021; Barnes and Holman 2020b).

define what they see as the range of potential political concerns and also influence their preferences and priorities.

In terms of shared experiences, the socialization that members of different social classes receive in their occupations plays a fundamental role in shaping distinct sets of preferences and priorities. Individuals employed in working-class occupations often have lower incomes, face heightened employment insecurity, and are more likely to depend upon social safety net programs, such as unemployment insurance, that are funded via redistributive policies and require state intervention in the economy (Evans and Tilley 2017). It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that individuals' occupations often correlate with their social policy preferences (Kitschelt and Rehm 2014). This same relationship between voters' occupations and policy preferences is evident among legislators as well. When legislators hail from working-class backgrounds, they too experience a similar socialization process from their occupations, and thus have fundamentally different policy preferences, especially regarding economic issues, than their colleagues with white-collar occupational backgrounds (Barnes, Beall, and Holman 2021; Carnes 2012; O'Grady 2019).

While we identify members of the working class based on their occupation, we do not further subdivide workers between those who work in the informal and formal sectors of the economy in the present study. In Latin America, anywhere from a quarter to around half the population in most countries is employed in the informal sector. It is possible that members of the working class from the informal and formal sectors have distinct preferences based on their occupational socialization. Access to social safety net policies, like unemployment insurance or health insurance, is sometimes limited to formal sector workers, although reforms have been made

to increase access to these benefits for informal workers in several countries (Posner, Patroni and Mayer 2018).

However, research that examines differences between the political preferences of formal and informal sector workers in Latin America finds very few differences (Baker and Velasco-Guachalla 2018; Palmer-Rubin and Collier 2022). The reason there appears to be few differences in the political preferences of formal and informal sector workers is that these two sectors of the economy in Latin America are highly integrated. Workers may shift from one to the other over time, with many workers “participate[ing] in a mix of formal and informal activities” in the labor market (Hummel 2017, 1525). Like formal workers, informal workers organize in most countries, they are often unionized, and they bargain directly with the state over self-regulation (Holland 2015; Hummel 2017; 2021). The adoption of neoliberal reforms across Latin America has made formal sector employment much more precarious and unstable, lessening differences across sectors. Thus, policy preferences are unlikely to vary between workers in formal and informal sector occupations.³

By taking occupational socialization as our starting point for examining working-class inclusion, we gain a clearer understanding of whether representatives will advocate for and promote the policy interests of working-class citizens. As Brooks and Manza (2008, 204) explain, “[w]orkplace settings provide the possibility of talking about politics and forging political identity,

³ As a practical matter, it is also very hard to identify whether or not legislators from working-class backgrounds work in the formal or informal sector. We assume most are from the formal sector since most gain representation through union affiliation. While informal sector workers are often not unionized, some informal sector workers are represented by unions.

and work also provides a springboard for membership in organizations where class politics are engaged: unions, professional associations, business associations, and so forth.” Phillips (1995) further explains in her theory of the politics of presence, shared life experience is a critical anchor for understanding the representation that constituents receive from their legislators. In other words, an occupation-based conceptualization of class is critical for understanding how class identity shapes representation.

Following this increasingly accepted convention for conceptualizing and operationalizing class (e.g., Barnes and Saxton 2019; Barnes, Beall, and Holman 2021, Barnes and Holman 2020a; Best 2007; Best and Cotta 2000; Carnes 2013; Carnes and Lupu 2015; 2016a; Grumbach 2015; Johannessen 2019; Manza and Brooks 2008; Matthews and Kerevel 2022; Micozzi 2018; Vivyan et al. 2020), we consider legislators as belonging to the working class if they previously earned a living working in manual skilled and unskilled labor, as a small artisan, in service-industry occupations, in entry-level secretarial positions, as rural laborers/small farmers (*campesinos*), and as union officers prior to entering politics. Due to the wide variety of unionized occupations, we classify all deputies with backgrounds in union leadership as workers, even if they lead teacher unions or public sector unions. Deputies who are teachers, bureaucrats, or nurses who belong to unions, but are not in union leadership, are not classified as workers. In order to distinguish between farmers who may also be large landowners, and rural laborers or poor farmers on small plots of land, we classify all deputies in the rural sector with ties to peasant organizations as workers, and all others as farmers. Throughout this study, we use the terms ‘worker’ and ‘working-class’ interchangeably when we refer to legislators with working-class occupational backgrounds.

Region-wide data on working-class representation are available from the PELA surveys. We rely on these surveys in our cross-national analyses, but these data are limited in two respects:

first, in their time span, and second, in only including information on legislators' most recent occupation. These two limitations pose a risk of biasing our results toward the null if legislators with working-class backgrounds are not coded as such. Thus, we bolster our cross-national investigation with an in-depth look at Mexico and Argentina. Here sufficient resources are available to accurately estimate the numeric representation of workers in legislative office across time using official biographical data of federal legislators. These data allow us to engage in more detailed time-series analysis of the effect of working-class representation on citizen evaluations of their political institutions.

Observing Citizens' Evaluations of Representatives

The primary purpose of this book is to understand how the exclusion/inclusion of working-class legislators in office shapes citizens' perceptions of representative institutions. Since we are interested in citizen perceptions about the quality of political representation they receive, we necessarily must rely on some public opinion measures that capture these perceptions. Conceptually, we are interested in measures that can be clearly interpreted as evaluations of the quality of representation citizens receive from their elected representatives in legislatures and political parties. There is, however, little consensus among scholars about how to measure the extent to which citizens feel represented.

Our strategy is to rely on multiple evaluative measures of individual legislators, political parties, and legislatures, such as the level of trust individuals have in legislatures and political parties, congressional job approval, and how well parties and individual legislators represent or listen to voters. Our original survey directly asks respondents the extent to which they feel working class/white collar legislators understand their problems and promoting projects to improve the

quality of life of all citizens, followed with open-ended questions. The qualitative responses allow us to further probe why respondents feel the way they do about representation. Throughout the book, we refer to this collection of measures as evaluations of representatives or perceptions of representation interchangeably. If we find that the class backgrounds of legislators have similar effects across multiple evaluative measures of representation, then we can be more confident in our findings.

Other work often refers to perceptions of representation as “symbolic representation,” a term derived from Pitkin (1967), and which is generally concerned with the symbolic effects that representatives have on the represented. While our work is similar to much of the symbolic representation literature, we shy away from this term here, since it has been used to encompass a wide range of outcomes including political interest, discussion, and participation (Alexander and Jalalzai 2020; Barnes and Burchard 2013; Desposato and Norrander 2009; Kerevel and Atkeson 2017; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2010; 2012; Stauffer; Song, Shoub 2022), feelings of political efficacy (Atkeson and Carrillo 2007; Stauffer 2021), political empowerment (Alexander and Jalalzai 2020; Dos Santos and Jalalzai 2021; Jalalzai 2016), evaluations of one’s own identity group (Badas and Stauffer 2019) general systemic support for democratic institutions (Badas and Stauffer 2018; Hinojosa and Kittilson 2020; Hinojosa, Fridkin and Kittilson 2017; Schwindt-Bayer 2010), and evaluations of institutions (Clayton 2015; Karp and Banducci 2008; Lawless 2004; Zetterberg 2009).

A Closer Look at Argentina and Mexico

As noted above, we fielded original surveys in Argentina and Mexico and collected an extensive new dataset on national deputies’ occupational backgrounds in these two countries. Why

focus on Argentina and Mexico? Mexico and Argentina are excellent cases that reflect general trends of economic inequality in the region. In both cases class identity is highly salient, as it is across much of Latin America. Finally, a crisis of representation exists in both cases, where large parts of the population are disillusioned with representative institutions. Given that in both Argentina and Mexico we observe trends that are taking place across Latin America, these two cases are useful for drawing some more general conclusions about the influence of working-class descriptive representation on citizen attitudes.

In addition, for our research, we needed to identify cases where: 1) data were available on working-class representation, 2) there was a sufficient number of working-class representatives in office to study, and 3) there was variation in our primary explanatory variables of interest. Our theory focuses on the combined effect of working-class inclusion and working-class policy representation on how citizens evaluate government. To study the effects of both inclusion and policy representation, we need to select cases where there is some variation on these two factors (i.e., variation on our two independent variables, working class representation and policy representation). Both Argentina and Mexico address these needs better than other cases in the region.⁴

⁴ The two other cases where data availability exists, Brazil and Chile, are not ideal cases owing to the limited share of workers in office (see Figure 1.1). Chile has very few legislators from working-class backgrounds, which presents a problem in terms of empirically analyzing the effect of numeric representation on citizen attitudes. Brazil also has very few workers in office, although somewhat more than in Chile. Brazil, however, presents the added problem of a highly polarized political climate surrounding the Worker's Party (PT). We felt the current political

Few Latin American legislatures have extensive accessible databases on the biographical characteristics of their members. The advantage of focusing on Argentina and Mexico, however, is that individual-level biographical information exists in both countries for roughly a twenty-year period, and other scholars have been studying these institutions for decades. The availability of secondary sources that also focus on the occupational background of legislators—allowing us to code the class status of deputies—is an important supplement to our cross-national analysis. We constructed original datasets on the occupational backgrounds of national legislators in Mexico and Argentina over a more than 20-year period.⁵ Drawing on candidate biographies and more extensive professional profiles means we do not have to rely exclusively on the job they held immediately prior to running for office, which helps us overcome one of the limitations of the cross-national PELA data. Instead, we are able to use information from the course of a legislator’s career before entering politics.

In Argentina, we draw on data compiled by the *Directorio Legislativo* – a nongovernmental organization which began cataloguing national deputies’ self-reported professional backgrounds in 2000 (Barnes and Holman 2019; 2020a; Carnes and Lupu 2015; Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Micozzi 2018). Specifically, legislators are asked to report their prior political offices, professional occupations, and party experience, as well as educational background and some personal information.

climate did not make it a good case to ask citizens about how they feel about working-class representation, due to the probability citizens may conflate attitudes about the PT and legislators with working-class backgrounds.

⁵ Our data on Mexico covers 1997 to present, and for Argentina, from 2002 to present.

In Mexico, we rely upon information from the *Sistema de Información Legislativa*—a government website maintained by the Interior Ministry, which archives legislative profiles for national deputies. For Mexico, these data were originally compiled in 2010 and have been maintained since (Kerevel 2015; 2019). The website reports deputies’ previous political, public, and private careers, educational attainment, and some personal information. For both Argentina and Mexico, we also rely upon other published biographies and publicly available data when there was no other information recorded for a given deputy.

Having adequate data on the occupational background of legislators in Argentina and Mexico would not be particularly useful for this study if there were hardly any working-class deputies in office. Fortunately, in both countries there is a substantial history of workers in office, a sufficient number of identifiable working-class representatives in recent years, and substantial variation in working-class representation across space and time within cases. While working-class representation is slightly higher in Mexico and Argentina than in several other countries in Latin America, the percentage of workers in office in both countries is similar to the average rate (5 percent) of working-class representation across the region (see Figure 1.1 above).

Figure 1.2 shows how the percentage of legislators with working-class backgrounds has changed over time in Argentina and Mexico from the early 20th century to the present.⁶ The first

⁶ In Mexico for the 1917-1997 period, occupational background information was compiled from a variety of sources, but the estimates in Figure 1.2 are primarily based on individual biographical information (Basurto 1975; Cámara de Diputados 2008; Camp 1991; 1995a; 2011; Gordillo y Ortiz 1999; Musacchio 2002; Pérez Franco 2008; Ramírez Marín and Santiago Campos 2018). In Argentina, the estimates are more uncertain, but are also drawn from

thing to notice in Figure 1.2 is that with the brief exception of the 1940s and 50s in Argentina, workers have been present in higher numbers in the Mexican Congress. The decline in working-class representation in Mexico's Chamber of Deputies parallels an increase in the representation of those from the business sector, and an increase in professional politicians and government bureaucrats.

[Insert Figure 1.2.a here] [Insert Figure 1.2.b here]

Figure 1.2 Percentage of Elected Workers

Unfortunately, available data on the class backgrounds of Argentine legislators prior to 2000 is less reliable than in the Mexican case due to the lack of systematic sources of biographies of elected legislators.⁷ However, based on the best available estimates, workers' presence in the

secondary sources. For 1932, Matsushita (1983, 100) states 13 of 43 Socialist Party deputies were of working-class origin. The 1946 estimate in Figure 1.2 is from Cantón (1964), who suggests 11 percent of the Chamber was from the working class (and 25 percent of the Partido Laborista was of working-class origin). This 1946 estimate differs from Horowitz (1990) who suggests 34 labor leaders were elected, which would push the estimate up to 21.5% of the total Chamber. For the 1948-1951 elections, we rely on Buchrucker (1987) who suggests nearly 50% of Peronist Party deputies were affiliated with labor unions. The 1973 estimate is from Klipphan (2019). For 1983-1999, we use Micozzi's (2018) figures on the percentage of union-affiliated deputies. The 2019 estimate is from Escudero and Moreno (2019).

⁷ The record of class representation in the Argentine legislature is also less complete due to a number of military interventions that closed the legislature from 1930-1932, 1943-1946, 1955-

Argentine Congress has steadily declined since the 1970s. Currently, the representation of the working class in the Argentine Chamber of Deputies ranges from 2 to 4 percent over the 2002-2018 period compared to over 70 percent in the population; in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies working-class representation ranges from 6 to 12 percent from 1997-2018 compared to making up over 80 percent of the population (Carnes and Lupu 2015).

In addition to variation in working-class representation over time in Argentina and Mexico, both countries also currently exhibit variation across states or provinces. Figure 1.3 illustrates this spatial variation in working-class representation. For each subnational unit, we calculated the average percentage of working-class deputies elected during each legislative session in our dataset. Darker colors indicate subnational areas with more workers historically elected, and lighter colors correspond to fewer (or no) workers elected to the legislature. Figure 1.3 reveals that in Argentina, some provinces have elected either no or few workers to the National Congress over the last two decades, whereas others like Buenos Aires have led the pack, electing around 10 percent workers on average. In terms of spatial patterns in Argentina, the highest concentrations of working-class

1958, 1966-1973 and 1976-1983. Moreover, during the 1958-1966 period, the party most closely allied with organized labor, the Peronist Party, was proscribed from electoral participation. While legislators from other parties during the periods for which we do not have data may have come from the working class, we simply lack reliable estimates. However, there is little indication in the literature the working class was well represented in the Chamber prior to the rise of Perón in the 1940s (Cantón 1964; Smith 1974), nor is there evidence many working class deputies were elected in the 1958-1966 period due to the proscription of the Peronists and high levels of organized electoral abstention from labor unions (James 1988).

deputies are in the middle of the country, including Buenos Aires province which is where most of the country's population and industry are located (Buenos Aires province accounts for nearly 50 percent of the country's total GDP). The other large concentration of workers is in southern Argentina, particularly in some of the Patagonian provinces where oil and natural gas production dominate the local economy.

[Insert Figure 1.3.a here]

[Insert Figure 1.3.b here]

Figure 1.3 Subnational Distribution of Working-Class Deputies, Argentina and Mexico

Note: Figure 1.3 shows the average percentage of deputies from the working class in each state/province during the period our dataset covers.

In Mexico, many elected workers are from teachers unions and public sector unions, which are active in every state. Thus, the representation of workers across Mexico is much more even than we observe in Argentina. However, we do observe higher concentrations of workers in some states over others for two principal reasons. One, the agricultural sector and the oil sector both concentrate in certain states and lead to more peasant and oil worker representatives elected. Agricultural states like Sinaloa and Nayarit on the Pacific coast (in the darker shades), and Veracruz and Puebla (the two darkest shaded states, with 14 and 13 percent working-class deputies, respectively, in Figure 1.3), elect a higher percentage of workers. In addition, the oil sector concentrates in the Gulf of Mexico, and we see higher percentages of workers in nearly every state along the Gulf, such as Tamaulipas, Veracruz, and Campeche.

Two, we observe more workers elected in states where the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) has historically performed well. In the previously mentioned states with higher working-class representation, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Veracruz, Puebla, Tamaulipas and Campeche,

anywhere from 55 to 63 percent of all elected deputies were from the PRI. In contrast, Tabasco, along the Gulf Coast and involved in the oil sector, has seen greater representation from the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and other parties. Only 42 percent of deputies from Tabasco are from the PRI, which decreases opportunities for oil workers affiliated with the PRI-aligned oil workers union. Other states with proportionally fewer workers, such as Zacatecas, Baja California, Yucatan and Quintana Roo, are all much more competitive for the PRD and the National Action Party (PAN), with large majorities of deputies from these states coming from these two parties.

The final reason we focus on Argentina and Mexico is that both cases present variation in the policy representation of the working class. Drawing on an extensive literature (e.g., Bensusán 2016; Burgess 1999; James 1988; Levitsky 2003; McGuire 1997; Middlebrook 1995; Murillo 2001; Posner, Patroni, and Mayer 2018), which we discuss in detail in Chapter 5, both cases exhibit variation in how well the working class is represented in the policy-making process. This variation exists across time within cases, and also across cases where generally the working class is better represented in the policy-making process in Argentina compared to Mexico. Had we selected cases where workers are always represented well in the policymaking process, or always represented poorly in the policymaking process, we would be unable to say much about the importance of working-class policy representation due to the lack of variation on this key independent variable.

Specifically, we explain in Chapter 5 that several features of union organization across the two cases structures unions' abilities to effectively extract policy concessions that advance workers' rights (Chambers-Ju 2021; Collier and Collier 2002; Collier and Chambers-Ju 2012; Murillo 2001). In addition, the larger set of institutions that govern union-state relations and linkages between political parties, labor leaders, and workers shapes unions' incentives to either represent workers' policy concerns or to abandon workers in favor of representing party, state,

and/or business interests. This variation in incentives to represent the working class is critical for allowing us to address how variation in the policy responsiveness of working-class legislators influences citizen perceptions of representation.

The Importance of Studying Working-Class Representation in Latin America and Beyond

Although workers are dramatically underrepresented in democracies around the world, Latin America is an ideal setting to investigate our questions related to representation of the working class and citizens' evaluations of political institutions. Although political institutions draw their members from the upper strata of society in democracies the world over, the gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” is particularly evident in Latin American politics. Indeed, the political consequences of persistently high economic inequality are magnified in a region where class is one of the most politically salient social cleavages. Despite the widespread incorporation (cooption) of organized labor in Latin American party systems (Collier and Collier 2002) and thriving civil societies that tether poor citizens to the political system (Boulding and Holzner 2020; 2021), policy outcomes continue to fail at remedying massive economic inequalities in the region. Moreover, the policy shift towards neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s weakened unions and party ties to organized labor (Levitsky 2003; Silva and Rossi 2018), leading to declines in the election of workers to public office. In this section, we elaborate on why Latin America is an excellent region in which to situate our study, while also highlighting how the questions we ask are relevant beyond just Latin America.

While the political importance of class varies to some extent across Latin America (Roberts 2002), Carnes and Lupu (2015) find substantial overlap between citizens' class identity and

political preferences in the vast majority of Latin American countries. Nevertheless, seats in Latin American legislatures are predominantly occupied by upper-class politicians whose class-based political preferences do not align with the majority of citizens. Indeed, the average gap between the percentage of legislators with working-class backgrounds and the percentage of working-class citizens in a given country is around 70 percent (Carnes and Lupu 2015). These figures reinforce findings from more developed countries like the United States and much of Western Europe where economic policy does not reflect the interests of the “median voter,” because policy is not made by the median voter. Instead, policymakers are most responsive to constituents who share their own policy interests – members of the upper class (Bartels 2016; Gilens and Page 2014; Piketty 2020; Cagé 2020).

In many ways, the political salience of class across the region makes Latin America an ideal case for examining the connection between economic and political inequalities (Boulding and Holzner 2021). The vast majority of citizens in Latin America favor state intervention to correct for economic inequalities (Barnes and Córdova 2016). The Latin American Public Opinion Project routinely asks respondents to indicate their agreement with the statement: “The state should enact firm policies to reduce inequality.” In the 2016/17 wave of the LAPOP survey, the average level of support for this statement was 71 percent. We argue that the near exclusion of the working class from legislatures in Latin America contributes to this disconnect between mass public opinion and redistributive policy outcomes. Indeed, prior research on attitudes about inequality in Latin America finds that the “masses” and “elites” have differing perceptions about the causes of inequality, as well as different policy preferences when it comes to combating inequality (Blofield and Luna 2011; Reis 2011). This Latin American disconnect between public opinion about inequality and actual policy outcomes parallels trends in other democracies such as the United

States (Bartels 2016; Gilens 2012; Hacker and Pierson 2010) and across Europe (Kaltenthaler, Ceccoli, and Gelleny 2008; Piketty 2020). It thus appears that citizens across a wide variety of countries would prefer governments to address economic inequality, while political elites often continue to promote policies that increase inequality.

In addition to enduring class divides and persistently high economic inequality, Latin America is suffering from what scholars have called a “crisis of representation” that is often characterized by widespread disillusionment with representative institutions (Luna 2016; Mainwaring 2006; Mair 2013; Przeworski 2019; Tanaka 2006; Hinojosa and Kittilson 2020; Boulding 2014; Boulding and Nelson-Núñez 2014). Institutional trust is vital for democratic legitimacy and stability (Cleary and Stokes 2006; Linz and Stepan 1996). Although democratic governments can withstand short-term periods of dissatisfaction with specific political institutions (Hetherington 1998), prolonged periods of distrust can erode citizens’ support for democratic principles in the long run (Easton 1975). Recent research demonstrates political parties in Latin America are able to adopt their preferred policies while appealing to poor and working-class voters through the use of clientelism and “non-policy endowments”, such as access to patronage resources (Calvo and Murillo 2019; Nichter 2018; Oliveros 2012). While this strategy helps political parties appeal to working-class voters during elections, the inability or unwillingness of successive governments to actually address economic inequality results in widespread disillusionment with representative institutions (Mainwaring 2006).

Recent scholarship has highlighted declines in democracy in consolidated regimes from India to the United States, as well as around the globe more generally (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Przeworski 2019). Przeworski (2019) explains, for instance, that in many countries, democratic declines are gradual, with elected officials slowly subverting democratic norms and institutions.

In Latin America, these global trends have become especially acute. Between 2016 and 2018, 11 out of 18 Latin American countries experienced declines in their “Electoral Democracy Index” score, as measured by the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project. Following the completion of the 2018/19 Latin American Public Opinion Project, researchers at Vanderbilt University published the *Pulse of Democracy* report and highlighted several other troubling trends (Zechmeister and Lupu 2019). In particular, the report’s authors explain that support for democracy declined significantly in 2016, and then continued to decline in the 2018/19 public opinion survey. In 2008, nearly 70 percent of respondents in Latin America agreed that “despite its problems, democracy is the best form of government.” By 2018, that figure had reached a low of 58 percent. Similarly, less than 40 percent of Latin Americans in 2018 said they were satisfied with the way their country’s democracy functions (down from a high of nearly 60 percent in 2010), and trust in both political parties and the legislature in 2018 were both at their lowest levels since LAPOP began collecting public opinion data.

This erosion of support for democratic institutions is perhaps unsurprising. High levels of inequality are associated with decreased satisfaction with democracy not only in Latin America (Saxton 2019), but in democracies more generally (Anderson and Singer 2008). Some scholars have even gone so far as to say that inequality acts as a “referendum” on democracy and thus erodes citizens’ attachments to democratic principles (Krieckhaus et al. 2014). We contend that issues around class politics can further help us understand the ongoing crisis of democratic representation in Latin America. When large segments of the population, such as the working class, are excluded from political representation, this signals that democracy is not functioning as it was intended and is “intrinsically unfair” (Williams 1998). Moreover, when white-collar legislators are

left to make policy for working-class citizens, it is less likely the interests of working-class citizens – or average citizens for that matter – will be meaningfully represented (Mansbridge 2015).

For these reasons – the salience of class identity, high inequality, and a crisis of democratic representation – Latin America is an ideal setting to test our expectations about working-class inclusion and citizens' evaluations of political institutions. Nevertheless, the trends we observe in Latin America are global trends. Class divisions exist in most societies, and economic inequality is increasing around the world. Moreover, disenchantment with the present form of liberal representative democracy exists nearly everywhere. Thus, while Latin America is an ideal setting to answer the questions we pose, the trends in the region are certainly not unique to the hemisphere.

Our findings and conclusions should be of relevance outside Latin America. However, there are a number of contextual factors unique to the region that may limit the generalizability of our findings. First, Latin America is one of the most unequal regions in the world where workers make up the large majority of the population. We expect our findings will extend to places where economic inequality is higher, while they may be weaker in countries with greater economic equality as there may be fewer unmet policy needs by the poor and working class. Second, class has historically been a central political cleavage in Latin America. In countries where other identities and cleavages may be more salient than class, the presence of workers in office may not have similar effects on citizen attitudes. Finally, Latin America has a unique political culture (Inglehart and Welzel 2020), with high levels of support for government policies that promote economic redistribution (Barnes and Córdova 2016). In cases where citizens are more skeptical of state involvement in the economy, there may be a weaker relationship between the class backgrounds of politicians and evaluations of democratic institutions. Future research will need to determine the extent to which our findings travel outside the region.

Our Contributions

In the face of rising global inequality, questions surrounding the link between class and unequal access to government representation are paramount. This book makes several contributions to our understanding of inequality and democratic representation. There is a growing body of work examining the link between political inequality and economic inequality (e.g., Bartels 2016; Cagé 2020 Hacker and Pierson 2010; Page and Gilens 2017; Piketty 2020; Solt 2008). While numerous studies have demonstrated the overrepresentation of economic elites in politics has numerous policy consequences, only recently has some experimental work specifically addressed the issue of whether or not the poor and working class want to be represented by other poor, working-class citizens (e.g., Barnes and Saxton 2019; Carnes and Lupu 2016a; Vivyan et al. 2020). Our findings provide new evidence that clearly demonstrates citizens know workers are dramatically underrepresented, and they would like to be represented by more workers, not by the upper class. Our findings also lend empirical support in favor of Julia Cagé's (2020) policy proposal to adopt socio-economic quotas to address the political marginalization of workers and the poor.

Much of the existing research has focused on the policy implications of the near exclusion of working-class legislators. Earlier work had concluded that the dominance of the upper-class in legislatures had little influence on policy outcomes (e.g., Putnam 1976; Matthews 1985; Norris and Lovenduski 1995). However, more recent work has challenged these earlier conclusions. For instance, Carnes (2013) shows that legislators' class background has profound consequences for the policy-making process in the United States, as working-class legislators vote differently on economic issues compared to those from other class backgrounds, even compared to legislators from the same district and party. Similarly, Bartels (2016) demonstrates that economic policy

outcomes in the United States disproportionately benefit upper-class citizens and have contributed to growing inequality since the mid-20th century. In U.S. state legislatures, Barnes, Beall, and Hollman (2021), show that legislatures with more women representatives from low-status occupations allocate larger shares of their budget to education and healthcare services. Kirkland (2021) finds that white-collar mayors in the US are more likely to reduce redistributive spending.

Outside the United States, O’Grady (2019) shows that even in the highly disciplined UK Parliament, working-class MPs give different speeches and vote differently compared to co-partisans from other class backgrounds. Micozzi (2018) shows that union-affiliated legislators in Argentina sponsor more bills related to working-class interests. Alexiadou (2022) finds the presence of cabinet ministers from working-class backgrounds, as well as those who were teachers and social workers, leads to increased generosity of social welfare benefits across parliamentary democracies.

Whereas much of the existing work on working-class legislators focuses on their behavior in office and the policy consequences of their actions, our work examines the previously overlooked implications of working-class representation for citizens evaluations of and attachments to democratic institutions. Indeed, one of our core theoretical contributions is to argue the descriptive *and* policy representation of the working class is likely to have the greatest effect on improving evaluations of representative institutions, more so than either descriptive or policy representation alone. The literature on working-class policy representation cited above does not consider the symbolic effects workers in office have on citizens, while the literature on symbolic effects legislators have on citizens tends to focus primarily on the descriptive characteristics of legislators, while ignoring the importance of policy representation. In general, there is much less empirical work that considers the combined effect of descriptive and policy representation on

citizen attitudes (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005), and our book is the first to consider this relationship with respect to the underrepresentation of the working class.

This work also contributes more generally to literature on the symbolic effects legislators may have upon citizens based on their descriptive characteristics. Many studies have considered how legislator characteristics such as gender, race, or ethnicity influence how citizens feel they are represented (e.g., Dos Santos and Jalalzai 2021; Hinojosa and Kittilson 2020; Karp and Banducci 2008; Barnes and Burchard 2013; Atkeson 2003; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Clayton, O'Brien and Piscopo 2019; Gay 2002; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005; Pantoja and Segura 2003; Stauffer 2021). To date, little research has considered how the class backgrounds of representatives influence citizen attitudes.

Earlier research asserted the exclusion of the working class from legislatures was likely to influence how citizens felt represented and the legitimacy of legislatures, but little empirical work was ever conducted (Putnam 1976, 44; Norris and Lovenduski 1995, 224). The rare exceptions come from recent work on the UK that suggests voters there have perceived changes in the descriptive representation of the working class over time, and that these changes have impacted vote choice and the extent to which they perceive policy differences across parties (Evans and Tilley 2017; Heath 2015). We contribute to this literature by not only expanding the types of characteristics that citizens are likely to consider in evaluating the quality of representation they receive, but by also providing substantial evidence that class is a visible characteristic of which voters are aware, in addition to gender, race and ethnicity.

Similarly, this research makes a key addition to work that seeks to understand citizens evaluations and trust of democratic institutions. There are a number of potential factors that may influence evaluations of democracy and democratic institutions, such as the presence of consensus

or majoritarian political institutions (Lijphart 1999), whether or not citizens support losing parties in previous elections (Anderson et al. 2005; Conroy-Krutz and Kerr 2015), a government's economic performance (Booth and Seligson 2009; Dalton 2004; McAllister 1999), perceptions of corruption (Dahlberg, Linde, and Holmberg 2015; Anderson and Tverdova 2003), and the level of economic inequality in a society (Zmerli and Castillo 2015; Córdova and Layton 2016; Saxton 2021). Prior work found the greater representation of women or racial and ethnic minorities increases levels of trust in democratic institutions (Alexander and Jalalzai 2020; Badas and Stauffer 2018, 2019; Barnes and Taylor-Robinson 2018; Dos Santos and Jalalzai 2021; Jalalzai and Dos Santos 2015; Karp and Banducci 2008; Liu and Banaszak 2017; Ulbig 2007; Hayes and Hibbing 2017; Tate 2001). Despite a wide body of work dedicated to explaining variations in evaluations of democratic institutions, few previous studies have identified a link between the class backgrounds of representatives and trust in democratic institutions prior to our work (Barnes and Saxton 2019).

Our book also contributes to a growing body of work on crises of representation and growing dissatisfaction with democracy (Claassen 2020; Magalhães 2014; Wike and Fetterolf 2018). While some scholars are skeptical that growing disenchantment with democracy has much effect on the stability of democratic institutions (Przeworski 2019), recent work demonstrates public support for democracy does help democracy endure. While few scholars have linked this growing crisis of democracy to the overrepresentation of the upper class in politics, we argue the continued exclusion of the working class is a critical factor that erodes satisfaction with key agents of representation (such as the legislature and political parties) and contributes to the crisis of democracy. Our findings show that more workers in office will help, in part, to increase support for democracy.

Finally, several scholars suggest rising inequality around the globe has contributed to populist movements on both the political left and right as illiberal, and sometimes authoritarian politicians draw on ordinary citizens' political dissatisfaction and economic insecurity (Inglehart and Norris 2017; Mudde and Kalkwasser 2017; Norris and Inglehart 2019). Whereas populism of the left in Latin America promises to redistribute resources from the top of the income distribution, populism of the right in the United States and Europe simultaneously attacks cultural changes and the political "establishment." Moreover, some work suggests that it is primarily these new populist parties that have incorporated working-class candidates to attract voters, while traditional parties have increasingly nominated career politicians from middle class backgrounds (Evans and Tilley 2017; Matthews and Kerevel 2022). Our work suggests incorporating more workers as candidates may help traditional parties draw support away from populist parties and movements and potentially arrest or reverse the crisis of representation which previously led many citizens to either abstain or vote for radical alternatives to mainstream parties.

Organization of the Book

Chapter 2 develops our theory of working-class inclusion. The chapter is structured around the three central questions that we tackle in this book: 1) Do citizens want to be represented by members of the working class? 2) Will any worker do? Or, how do citizens evaluate workers who do not represent working-class policy interests? 3) How do voters know workers are in office? In answering these questions, we develop new expectations that we evaluate in the following chapters.

Chapter 3 empirically addresses the question: *Do citizens want to be represented by members of the working class?* We demonstrate, using novel survey data from Argentina and

Mexico and publicly-available cross-national data from LAPOP, that citizens do prefer to be represented by legislators from the working class. To do this, we first examine patterns of support for working-class representation using a series of original survey questions in Argentina and Mexico. We asked citizens about their preferences for working-class representation and show that the average citizen in Argentina and Mexico both want more working-class deputies to occupy seats in congress. Then, we introduce data on the class background of legislators obtained from elite survey data, and present descriptive information about the occupations, gender, and race/ethnicity of working-class deputies. Finally, using cross-national survey data and these data on legislators' class background, we demonstrate that citizens have better evaluations of representative institutions (e.g., more trust in congress and political parties, higher approval of congress, and stronger beliefs that parties listen to and represent people like them) when working-class deputies hold a higher share of seats in the national assembly. We also show this relationship holds when accounting for a number of potential cofounders, and for both men and women and across racial/ethnic groups. Together, our original survey data combined with data from across Latin America demonstrate support for our argument that citizens do want to be represented by working-class legislators.

Chapters 4 and 5 turn to our second question: *Will any worker do?* Our theory argues that for working-class legislators to effectively improve evaluations of representative institutions, they should have strong ties to workers and a track-record of advocating for their policy interests. Otherwise, the presence of working-class deputies is expected to trigger backlash. Chapter 4 examines working-class deputies' propensity to engender positive evaluations of representative institutions conditional on the policy proposals of working-class deputies. We first show, using our original survey data, that the average citizen believes working-class deputies are more likely

to understand the problems they face, and promote policies to address them compared to upper-class deputies. Then, consistent with our theory of working-class inclusion presented in Chapter 2, we show that citizens represented by working-class deputies who propose specific pro-worker policies, are much more likely to positively evaluate their representatives and political institutions. To make this case, we use an original survey experiment fielded in Argentina and Mexico wherein we directly manipulate deputies' class background and whether working-class numeric representation is or is not accompanied by policy representation designed to improve the lives of workers. Overall, we find that both the inclusion of working-class representatives, combined with policy representation of workers, has the largest effect on improving how well citizens feel represented. Numeric representation without policy representation, or policy representation without inclusion, only has minor effects.

Chapter 5 turns to an examination of the ties between working-class representatives and constituents, by taking an in-depth look at the relationship between labor unions, political parties, and workers in Argentina and Mexico. Drawing on prior research we explain how the evolution of unions and parties throughout history lead to working-class deputies in Argentina having stronger ties to workers and a better track-record of policy representation than working-class deputies in Mexico. Then, we leverage an original dataset of working-class representation over-time and across states in Argentina and Mexico to show empirically, that whereas increases in working-class representation in Argentina are associated with citizens evaluating their representative institutions more positively, the increased presence of working-class legislators in Mexico leads to backlash and more negative evaluations of legislatures and political parties.

Chapter 6 is the first of two chapters to address our final question: *How do voters know workers are in office?* Our theory argues that even though citizens are unlikely to know the exact

share of seats workers occupy in office, they are generally aware of working-class representation. Drawing on campaign material, candidate websites, and social media websites we show that both parties and individual politicians have an incentive to showcase politicians' class status. Then, we present qualitative evidence from publicly available data, coupled with an inventory of government websites, to show that even absent these political incentives, information on candidates' class background is publicly available and—at least some of this information—makes it into the hands of citizens thanks to popular press. Then, we turn to evidence from two survey experiments from Argentina and Mexico that were designed to evaluate whether citizens can infer information about deputies' class status from facial images alone. We demonstrate that participants can correctly identify the class background of the national deputies depicted in photographs at a rate significantly better than chance. The results hold regardless of whether the respondent claims to recognize any of the images, for both black and white and colored images, and even after controlling for the deputy's skin tone.

Finally, Chapter 7 examines how the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations of representative institutions varies among citizens who are more or less likely to be aware of working-class representation. Even though voters can learn about working-class representation through political campaigns, news, and paying attention to politics, we show that levels of political interest and news consumption vary dramatically among citizens within the same country—implying that not all voters are equally likely to be aware of working-class representation. Then, using survey data from across Latin America we demonstrate the positive relationship between working-class representation and better evaluations of representative institutions is strongest among citizens with high levels of political interest and those who are avid news followers.

Chapter 8 summarizes our theory and central findings, and synthesizes findings from the cross-national analyses, in-depth case studies, and original survey data. We show how the different pieces of evidence from across the five empirical chapters fit together to explain that voters do want to be represented by workers, that voters are aware of working-class representation, and that both numeric and policy representation produced by working-class representation is necessary to engender trust in institutions. We conclude by discussing the broader implications of our theory for growing dissatisfaction with the way democracy functions across the region and the world, and for the political inclusion of marginalized groups.

Chapter 2

A Theory of Working-Class Inclusion

Workers' representation in the National Argentine Congress has been declining precipitously over the past four decades. Nonetheless, the workers who do gain access to office work hard to develop a reputation for championing workers' rights and advancing the interests of the average citizen. For example, National Deputy Facundo Moyano comes from a union family, and played a formative role in organizing a new labor union of highway tollbooth workers before entering Congress. In 2017, while Deputy Moyano was in office, the center-right government in Argentina led by former businessman and mayor of Buenos Aires, President Mauricio Macri, sent Congress a labor reform proposal that among other things, would have reclassified part-time work, making certain workers ineligible for overtime, and made it easier for businesses to fire employees and contract out some jobs. In other words, the labor reforms were designed to alter the relationship between employers and workers in a pro-business manner (Gasalla 2017). In multiple televised interviews, Deputy Moyano rejected changes to the current labor contract law (La Nación 2017), taking to Twitter to declare that "The Government's labor reforms eliminate protections for workers," and that neither he, nor any other Peronist, could vote on these reforms.⁸ In 2019,

⁸ "La reforma laboral del Gobierno elimina mecanismos de protección a los trabajadores. Ningún peronista puede votar estas reformas."

https://twitter.com/Facundo_Moyano/status/936651133824765952 (Accessed January 6, 2022).

Moyano recognized a need for labor reform, and claimed that to suggest otherwise is “stupid,” and reiterated that any updates to the labor system need to help workers, not harm them (Ámbito 2019). These examples from Deputy Moyano illustrate not only the energy these working-class legislators devote to developing their reputation and establishing trust among their constituents, but also the critical role that working-class legislators can play in supporting legislation that disproportionately benefits the lives of working-class citizens.

Despite the need for working-class representation, not all workers are willing or able to represent workers’ interests once they get into office. Instead, workers face competing demands from political parties and union leaders who control the fates of their careers. As a result, rather than advocating for workers’ rights, we sometimes observe working-class legislators act against workers’ best interests. In Mexico for example, during the legislative debates over major energy reforms which opened private investment into the oil sector in 2014 proposed by President Peña Nieto (PRI), Senator Carlos Romero Deschamps (PRI), the national leader of the oil workers union, never took the floor to speak about how the reform would affect oil workers. Moreover, on a vote regarding reforms to the collective contracts of oil workers, Deschamps failed to show up. Even though Ricardo Aldana Prieto, another member of the oil workers union and deputy of the PRI, argued in the Chamber of Deputies this same contract reform would negatively impact workers, Aldana voted in favor of the reform with his party (Montalvo 2014).

More commonly, working-class legislators in Mexico are criticized for their lack of legislative activity (Rosas 2018). For example, Esdras Romero Vega (PRI, 2015-2018), and Fernando Navarrete Pérez (PRI, 2015-2018) are representatives of the oil worker’s union but have not sponsored a single bill during their terms. Ricardo Aldana (PRI), another oil worker’s union representative, served six years as a senator (2000-2006), followed by two terms in the Chamber

of Deputies (2006-2009, 2012-2015). In all that time, Aldana co-sponsored one bill. Similarly, Victor Flores Morales (PRI), a three-term deputy and longtime leader of the railroad worker's union, has only sponsored one bill.

In some cases, working-class legislators advocate for workers' rights, whereas in other cases it appears they abandon their working-class base and align with business interests or political party elites. These differences between Argentina and Mexico illustrate why representation from the working class could promote trust in representative institutions in some contexts, while fostering skepticism and backlash in others.

In this chapter, we develop a theory of working-class inclusion that links the numeric representation of the working class and working-class deputies' commitment to representing and advocating for workers' rights, to explain when and how inclusion of the working class improves citizens' evaluations of their representatives and democratic institutions. This chapter is organized into three parts. First, we tackle the question: *Do citizens want to be represented by the working class?* Then, assuming citizens do want to be represented by workers, we ask: *Will any worker do?* In other words, how do voters evaluate workers who do not represent the working class? In the last part, we turn to the question: *How do voters know workers are in office?*

In the section that follows, we first explain why—in theory—working-class representation should foster trust in and positive evaluations of political institutions. In brief, increases in working-class representation may promote better evaluations of institutions by signaling a more inclusive policymaking process and through procedural fairness. This argument raises two additional questions that we address in the remainder of the chapter. First, to the extent that working-class descriptive representation improves evaluations of political institutions, *will any worker improve perceptions of representation, even if they do not represent working-class*

policy interests? Second, if the presence of working-class legislators can improve evaluations of political institutions, *how do citizens know workers are in office?*

Do Voters Want to be Represented by Workers?

We argue working-class representation should improve evaluations of representatives and foster trust in political institutions for several reasons. First, the inclusion of working-class legislators may signal a wider range of perspectives are included in the policymaking process. That is, simply having more workers in office conveys to citizens that policymakers care about working-class experiences, preferences, and policy needs. Second, at the decision-making stage, the presence of working-class legislators signals procedural fairness. Even if the outcome of the policymaking process does not favor working-class interests, workers were present to make their voices heard when decisions were made. Finally, working-class inclusion in the legislature signals to citizens that not only are they capable of governing, but that their participation in the policymaking process is valued by other elites.

Working-class representation signals inclusive policymaking

In Latin America, class is one of the most salient and defining societal cleavages. Working-class citizens have fundamentally different life chances than upper-class elites, and they remain on the margins in politics (Boulding and Holzner 2021; Hout, Manza, and Brooks 1995). Workers' dramatic underrepresentation in Latin America has created an unequal political playing field. This legacy of elite, upper-class political dominance signals that politics does not work for lower-class citizens, thereby promoting a "political apathy and fatalism that is hard to overcome"

(Taylor-Robinson 2010, 12). Moreover, when political institutions draw their members from only the elite or dominant strata of society, this signals that the democratic process is not inclusive, that members of historically underrepresented groups such as the working class are incapable of governing themselves, and that the political class does not care about the average citizen's needs and policy interests.

Efforts to remedy this underrepresentation should be seen as a democratic good. Previous work on the exclusion of the working class from the political elite was largely motivated by the perspective that this exclusion matters for responsiveness and democratic legitimacy (Camp 1995b; De Imaz 1970; Domhoff 1967; Lipset and Solari 1967; Mills 1959; Miliband 1969; Putnam 1976; Smith 1974; 1979; Norris and Lovenduski 1995). Moreover, prior research suggests substantive representation (i.e., policy responsiveness) alone may be insufficient to improve how well citizens perceive they are represented, and that descriptive representation provides additional benefits beyond the election of individuals who may be more likely to advocate for certain policy interests (Mansbridge 1999). Excluded groups may often be perceived, including by themselves, to lack the ability to rule (Alexander 2012, 2015; Morgan and Buice 2013). The inclusion of previously marginalized groups into legislatures, such as members of the working class, suggests they are capable of governing (Alexander and Jalalzai 2020).

In theory, any representative *should* be able to attend to any constituent's needs, but in reality, this is where the representative process often falls short (Mansbridge 1999; Pitkin 1967; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). Even though anyone—in theory—can learn about the policy needs of working-class citizens (Mansbridge 2015), people with the best intentions are still unlikely to be intimately familiar with the nuanced ways policy solutions uniquely affect the working class. Just as policy solutions designed to promote women's well-being fall short when

they only incorporate the perspectives from white, elite women (Key 1951; Bassel and Emejulu 2010; Crenshaw 1991; Hancock 2007a; 2007b; Harris-Perry 2011), when designing policy to improve the daily lives of workers, the omission of working-class perspectives may also result in policy failure. To be sure, even the best-designed policies often come with unintended or unforeseen consequences, which has the potential to breed disillusionment with representation. For these reasons, the average citizen is likely to want more workers in office, as it signals that working-class perspectives were taken into account during the policymaking process, and that workers are capable of governing. *Consequently, we expect that where workers are numerically under-represented in office, citizens will prefer more workers in office compared to the current or perceived status quo.*

The systemic exclusion of identifiable groups from decision-making is likely to be viewed as procedurally unfair (Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo 2019; Mansbridge 1999). In a democratic society where all citizens are expected to participate, democratic procedures that exclude the working class from political power may lead citizens to be skeptical of democratic institutions, regardless of the policy decisions they make. However, when workers are in office and visible to the public, citizens may be more likely to think the democratic process is fair and be more trusting of their representative institutions. Moreover, when members of powerful groups in society are left to act on behalf of marginalized groups' substantive interests, this sends a signal to working-class citizens that their participation in politics is not valued and may even erode the legitimacy of the legislature. As a result, the presence of working-class legislators is likely to affect whether the average citizen feels represented.

Even without policy responsiveness, the *presence* of members of the working class in office signals their perspectives were *considered* in the deliberative process and decision-making

was fair and legitimate. Previous empirical work supports this argument, as numerous studies find when citizens see representatives who “look like them,” they are more likely to participate in and positively evaluate the political system (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Barnes and Burchard 2013; Hinojosa and Kittilson 2020; Rocha et al. 2010). Although previous studies have not focused on the working class, other research finds the greater numeric representation of women (Alexander and Jalalzai 2020; Barnes and Taylor-Robinson 2018; Dos Santos and Jalalzai 2021; Jalalzai and Dos Santos 2015; Karp and Banducci 2008; Liu and Banaszak 2017; Ulbig 2007) and racial and ethnic minorities (Badas and Stauffer 2018, 2019; Hayes and Hibbing 2017; Tate 2001) fosters higher levels of trust in and satisfaction with the government.

Importantly, research on representation indicates the inclusion of historically marginalized groups should improve perceptions of representation among all citizens, not only members of the historically excluded group (Barnes and Saxton 2019; Clayton, O’Brien, and Piscopo 2019; Stauffer 2021). Sociotropic models of political representation theorize that “individuals recognize that their personal fortunes depend on the fortunes of the group” (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005, 412). Consequently, institutions that provide more equal representation of all groups—not just one’s own group—will elicit more positive evaluations from citizens. In their study of women’s representation, for instance, Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler (2005, 412) explain: “electoral rules increasing the representation of women in the legislature may be embraced by women egocentrically because of the expected impact of those rules on the descriptive representation of women. However, they also may be valued sociotropically by men and women because those rules are conducive to more equal representation of all groups in the political system, including but not limited to women.” In other words, sociotropic models assume that people generally believe that what is good for one group, tends to be good for society as a whole. Thus, while the inclusion of

one historically marginalized group may signal the value of that specific group, it may also signal that “all points of view will be represented” (Stauffer 2021, 1228) and that the “government values representation and the participation of diverse groups” (Schwindt-Bayer 2010, 165).

Consistent with this view, research on women’s numeric representation frequently finds women’s inclusion is associated with more positive evaluations of institutions among both men and women (Schwindt-Bayer and Mischler 2005; Barnes and Taylor-Robinson 2018; Clayton, O’Brien, and Piscopo 2019; Stauffer 2021). Hunter (2010) also finds some evidence that working class appeals engender support from citizens more broadly in the electoral arena. She explains that in the 1989 presidential bid, the PT projected an image of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s as a “bearded labor leader in rolled-up sleeves,” and focused on a policy-seeking campaign that centered redistribution, land reform, and nationalization (2010, 111). This approach netted Lula more support among higher-income and better educated voters than among respondents making two-times the minimum wage or less and respondents with only a basic education (Hunter 2010, 114-115). Combined, these findings suggest the inclusion of historically marginalized groups may increase support for institutions among all citizens, not only members of the historically excluded group.

Drawing on these insights about the numeric representation of historically marginalized groups, we posit that citizens want the composition of the legislature to be more reflective of the population as a whole. Even absent wholesale policy changes that would benefit the average citizen, workers’ incorporation into the legislature is likely to increase the perceived legitimacy of democratic institutions among working-class citizens. Increases in numeric representation of the working class should erode perceptions that politics only works for socio-economic elites, and it may dampen or even reverse feelings of political apathy and disillusionment. Therefore, *we expect*

to find increases in working-class numeric representation will be positively associated with citizens' evaluations of representative institutions.

Will Any Worker Do?

We expect the descriptive representation of the working class is important for understanding how citizens evaluate political institutions. Yet, evidence of this relationship raises additional questions. Is the mere presence of workers enough to improve citizens' evaluations of institutions, even absent policy responsiveness? Alternatively, given that workers, in most cases, are more likely to respond to the policy interests of working-class citizens, does policy responsiveness explain the observed relationship between descriptive representation and positive evaluations of institutions? If so, descriptive representation may not be necessary to foster improved perceptions of institutions. Finally, who is making the policy may matter. Thus, we ask whether the *combination* of descriptive and policy representation can best increase positive evaluations of institutions? Ultimately, we argue the combination of both descriptive and policy representation has a larger effect on improving how citizens evaluate the quality of the representation they receive compared to either factor alone.

Why might the combination of both descriptive and policy representation better improve how citizens feel represented? Political theorists have argued that descriptive representatives should have strong relationships with the disadvantaged group they represent and be committed to advocating for their policy interests (Dovi 2002). For this reason, neither the presence of workers in office, nor the policy representation of the working class on their own may be enough to dramatically improve perceptions of the representative process. We argue there are two reasons for this: 1) upper-class citizens and politicians are often out of touch with the needs of the working

class, necessitating the need for more workers in office to represent the perspectives of the working class; and 2) many political parties often court workers as voters and as candidates, but have poor track records of representing working-class policy interests. For this reason, party ties to the working class are key for strengthening citizens' evaluations of institutions.

In this section, we first explain why policy matters. Then, we discuss how party ties to working-class citizens help us to better understand when working-class representation can be expected to improve citizens' evaluations of representative institutions.

Policy Matters!

In the first section of this chapter, we explained why descriptive representation may improve evaluations of institutions. In this section we consider the role of policy representation. Then, we explain why the combination of policy and descriptive representation may be most powerful for increasing positive evaluations of institutions.

Citizens May Just Care About Policy Outcomes

It may be the case that the positive relationship between descriptive representation and better evaluations of institutions (observed in Chapter 3) is better explained by policy responsiveness, as opposed to workers' numeric presence in office. Although legislators with working-class backgrounds may be better positioned to act on behalf of working-class citizens, the average voter may feel better represented regardless of the class background of the politicians in office so long as they receive effective policy responsiveness. If so, there may be a spurious relationship between workers in office and improved evaluations of representative institutions that can largely be explained by the types of policies certain parties and legislators push while in office.

If this is the case, an implication is that it should not matter *who* is making policy, so long as policy outcomes reflect working-class citizens needs and interests.

Unlike other historically marginalized groups that have been excluded from office, where their policy positions may be poorly represented or understood by members of outgroups (Mansbridge 1999), political parties have been courting the working-class vote for over a century (e.g., Collier and Collier 2002; Jusko 2017), and the policy interests of workers are generally clear and easily knowable by those who do not have working-class backgrounds (Mansbridge 2015). As part of the process of courting working-class support, parties may occasionally recruit members of the working class to run for office. However, if policy representation is sufficient to improve evaluations of democratic institutions, it is not primarily because there are workers in office that citizens feel better represented, it is because parties that court the working class do a better job of representing working-class policy interests. If it is indeed the case that policy outcomes are largely responsible for influencing citizens' evaluations of institutions, *we expect to observe that policy representation of the working class will be associated with more positive evaluations of representative institutions regardless of the descriptive characteristics of those who develop the policy.*

Who's Making Policy Matters

Members of the working class have policy demands that are unique to their class status. Perceiving and knowing the needs of working-class citizens is a critical first step for establishing a policy agenda that can improve the lives of working-class citizens. Theories of representation explain that descriptive representatives' first-hand experiences with the struggles members of those groups face in their daily lives better position them to legislate on behalf of the group (Dovi

2002). In addition, representatives who have shared life experiences and perspectives with the underrepresented are more likely to understand the nuances of issues (Young 2000). Consequently, white-collar or upper-class citizens are likely to be out of touch with the needs of the average working-class citizen. By contrast, owing to their shared life experiences and knowledge of working-class struggles, deputies with working-class backgrounds can bring first-hand experience to the policy-making process.

For these reasons, people with on-the-ground lived experiences in working-class occupations are likely seen as uniquely positioned to legislate on behalf of workers. Put differently, working-class deputies may “represent their working-class constituents more insightfully than even committed and well-meaning representatives who have not had similar experiences” (Mansbridge 2015, 263). Even if members of marginalized groups hold only a few seats in the legislature, their presence is important for ensuring their representation. Htun (2014), for instance, makes the case that Afro-Latin American women representatives in legislatures, even in extremely limited numbers, remind the entire legislature of the presence of Afro-Latin American women in society, and keeps the group from being invisible. The same likely holds for working-class deputies; their presence allows them to advocate on behalf of workers and bring their perspectives to bear on the policy-making process. Middle and upper-class professionals, by contrast, are unlikely to be perceived as well equipped to legislate on behalf of workers. Therefore, *we expect to find citizens are more likely to believe working-class legislators better understand issues facing the average citizen and to promote laws to improve their everyday lives compared to upper-class representatives.*

Although early research on the link between the class backgrounds of legislators and their policy views suggested a very weak relationship (Putnam 1976; Matthews 1985; Norris and

Lovenduski 1995), a growing body of research demonstrates the presence of working-class deputies is associated with higher levels of policy representation for the working class. Across Latin America, for instance, working-class legislators are shown to have different policy priorities and preferences than their white-collar colleagues. Carnes and Lupu (2015) find that working-class politicians are far more likely to favor state intervention and increased government spending for social and economic welfare programs. Evidence from bill co-sponsorship data in Argentina indicates lawmakers from white-collar professions co-sponsor more rightist economic bills than working-class politicians (Carnes and Lupu 2015). Research from Argentina demonstrates that legislators with labor-based ties are more likely than other legislators from the same political party to introduce legislation addressing workers' rights (Micozzi 2018). Outside of Latin America, numerous studies likewise find a link between descriptive and policy representation of the working class (Alexiadou 2022; Barnes, Beall, and Hollman 2021; Carnes 2013; Kirkland 2021; O'Grady 2019). More generally, these findings are consistent with a large body of research which shows that members of marginalized groups are more likely to represent those groups' interests (Betz, Fortunato, O'Brien 2021; Clayton et al., 2019; Clayton and Zetterberg 2018; Schwindt-Bayer 2010; Taylor-Robinson and Heath 2003; Williams 1998).

For these reasons, we argue that absent working-class inclusion in the policy-making process, working-class policy responsiveness is unlikely to have much effect on how well citizens feel represented. The inclusion of workers in office, *in addition to* policy responsiveness, is more likely to help reverse the widespread decline in support for democratic institutions. Therefore, *we expect the combination of numeric representation and the substantive representation of working-class policy interests will improve evaluations of democratic institutions more than numeric or policy representation in isolation.*

Party Ties to the Working Class

Historically, political parties on the left of the ideological spectrum have courted the working class through ties to labor unions (Collier and Collier 2002; Lipset and Rokken 1967). These party ties to unions have often provided the linkages necessary for political parties to recruit working-class candidates to run for office. However, past work on labor incorporation points to substantial cross-national variation in the extent to which parties are able to incorporate the working class into their parties (Collier and Collier 2002), and the extent to which working-class representatives have opportunities and incentives to represent workers' policy interests (Bensusán 2016; Murillo 2001; Schipani 2022).

In most party systems, one party was historically allied with many of the country's labor unions, such as the Peronist Party (PJ) in Argentina, the PRI in Mexico, the Democratic Action Party in Venezuela, the Labour Party in the UK, or the Social Democratic Party in Germany, among others. However, many different types of political parties presently court voters from the working class, from traditional programmatic parties across the ideological spectrum, to populist parties and movements, and non-programmatic clientelist parties. Indeed, in Latin America where the overwhelming majority of the population is from the working class, no party can afford to ignore workers if they seek to win elections. Given this, many different types of parties may nominate and elect workers. Nevertheless, the institutional mechanisms and party organizational linkages used to recruit working-class candidates are likely to vary across countries.

We argue the relationship between workers' presence in office and evaluations of institutions may be conditional on the nature of these party-labor linkages. Whereas in some cases, parties may nominate working-class candidates to control and demobilize labor, in other cases

parties nominate workers to cultivate the support of the working class and allow labor representatives to advance working-class policy interests (Bensusán 2016). Consequently, working-class representatives have stronger ties to working-class citizens in some party systems rather than others.

Where parties nominate labor representatives in order to cultivate working-class support and represent workers' policy interests—promoting strong ties to working-class citizens—we posit that working-class politicians will promote confidence in agents of political representation. By contrast, where parties nominate working-class candidates to control the working class and prevent labor conflict—fostering weak ties with working-class constituents—we anticipate working-class representatives may be met with backlash, ultimately decreasing trust in the legislature and political parties. In such cases, the descriptive representation of workers may not—in and of itself—signal that the legislature is representative of a greater number of groups in society, or that the democratic process is fair, transparent, and properly functioning.

Working-class deputies selected by political parties may be more beholden to the interests of party elites, rather than working-class voters, which may reduce how well working-class citizens feel represented (Murillo 2001). If working-class legislators nominated by parties are beholden to party leaders, they may not advance the policy interests of voters. Parties may promote working-class legislators as a way to build winning electoral coalitions without any intention of allowing these legislators to promote working-class interests (Schipani 2022). In these circumstances working-class descriptive representatives may actively promote policies counter to working-class interests. For example, labor union-affiliated legislators from the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT), even though they made up a majority of the party's congressional delegation, supported a public pension reform that harmed workers, and opposed labor union reforms designed to democratize

unions (Schipani 2022). On the surface, parties that adopt this strategy may appear to risk electoral defeat by failing to represent their own voters. In practice, across Latin America political parties engage in clientelism or other non-policy approaches as a way to maintain support coalitions of the poor while promoting policies that serve upper-class interests (Calvo and Murillo 2013, 2019; Calvo and Moscovich 2017; Levitsky 2003; Taylor-Robinson 2010; Oliveros 2021).

How working-class representatives gain access to office likely produces better or worse representational outcomes for the working class. Critically, we argue that institutional mechanisms to increase descriptive representation may have positive or negative consequences, either at the individual level through the selection of representatives with weak links to marginalized groups or in the aggregate by producing representational outcomes that harm the very group the institution was designed to protect (Dovi 2002). Political elites in charge of candidate selection often are not members of marginalized groups, such that women are not always in charge of selecting female candidates to comply with gender quotas; Blacks and Latinos are not often in charge of drawing majority-minority districts in the United States; and union rank-and-file members may not always have a say in the placement of union representatives on candidate lists. As a result, governments and/or political parties may use institutions to increase descriptive representation as a way to exert further control over marginalized groups or to bolster their own electoral fortunes rather than as a way to promote their perspectives in the policymaking process.

Several studies provide empirical support for this perspective. For example, India's caste-based quotas, designed to increase the election of some of the most marginalized people in the country, has led to the election of members of "Scheduled Castes" who are consistently known to follow the party line rather than act as group representatives for members of their caste. Unsurprisingly, members of the Scheduled Castes generally do not feel better represented when

represented by legislators from their own caste (Jensenius 2017). Radical right populist parties in Europe elect more women in an effort to appeal to women voters, as increasing descriptive representation is less costly than promising programmatic policy changes (Weeks et al. 2022). In the United States, the use of majority-minority districts to increase Black descriptive representation has in some cases made it less likely for legislation of interest to African-Americans to pass, and has also helped elect more Republicans hostile to Black interests by concentrating Democratic voters in a smaller number of districts (Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996; Lublin 1999). Across Europe, gender quotas are sometimes “employed as a mechanism for party elites to gain power over candidate selection within their own parties” (Weeks 2018, 1935). In some African countries, gender quotas have similarly been promoted by ruling parties to ensure stability and create more compliant legislatures (Clayton, Josefsson, and Wang 2017). More generally, there is widespread empirical evidence that throughout history political parties change electoral rules to be more inclusive when they believe they stand to benefit electorally (Teele 2018a; 2018b).

When parties make appeals to marginalized groups in an effort to strengthen their electoral position or gain control over institutions, and not because they want to promote the groups' interests, this may undermine citizens support for representatives and the institutions where they work. Clayton (2015) finds the use of reserved seats for women reduces women's political engagement, not because voters were opposed to female candidates, but because they opposed the policy of reserving seats in single-member districts. Kerevel and Atkeson (2017) also find competitive female candidates in a gender quota regime decrease women's symbolic representation. Other work suggests institutional mechanisms to increase descriptive representation may stigmatize candidates from underrepresented groups (Bos 2015; Clayton 2015; Cutts et al. 2008)—which may ultimately lead to more negative perceptions of representatives.

In cases where institutional mechanisms used to increase the descriptive representation of particular groups discourages the policy representation of the targeted group, legislators may be stigmatized as unqualified or undeserving of the seat. In practice, this is not uncommon. For example, increases in the descriptive representation of women through gender quotas often leads to women's marginalization in the legislative process, reducing their ability to substantively represent their constituents (Barnes 2016; Franceschet and Piscopo 2008; Kerevel and Atkeson 2013). A case in point: in a moment when Rwanda had the highest share of women legislators in the world, the legislature did very little policy-wise for women, and even approved a bill to reduce maternity leave benefits (Burnet 2011). In addition, parties may comply with nominating candidates from marginalized groups, but either use means to prevent their election, or select individuals that better serve the interests of party elites rather than those of the descriptively represented group. For example, in Mexico, parties have nominally complied with gender quotas but have used various mechanisms to evade their spirit, from forcing recently elected women to resign in favor of male alternates, to nominating more women than men in uncompetitive districts, and recent failed attempts to classify known male politicians as transgender women in order to avoid complying with the parity quota (Agren 2018; Kerevel and Atkeson 2017; Kerevel 2019). In these circumstances, where institutional mechanisms used to increase the descriptive representation of particular groups discourages their policy representation, the weak ties to politically marginalized voters may make voters feel *less* represented by descriptive representatives.

To summarize, although in theory greater descriptive representation of the working class should lead to greater substantive and symbolic representation, in practice these relationships are likely to vary depending on the institutions that govern the political incorporation of the working

class. By institutions we are referring to candidate selection mechanisms, the use of quotas and the nature of party-union linkages.⁹ Political institutions that promote strong ties between representatives and the represented, should foster a positive relationship between descriptive representation and evaluations of the state. But, if institutions undermine the relationship between representatives and the represented, descriptive representation may erode citizens' evaluations. *We expect where institutions promoting working-class inclusion have produced weak (strong) ties between working-class representatives and their constituents, we will find that increases in working-class representation will lead to more negative (positive) evaluations of representative institutions.*

How Do Voters Know Workers are in Office?

For descriptive characteristics of politicians to have any effect on citizen attitudes, these politicians must be visible (Bernhard and Freeder 2020; Barnes and Taylor-Robinson 2018; Hinojosa and Kittilson 2020; Stauffer 2021). Indeed, for the presence of workers in office to signal a more inclusive policy-making process, citizens must be able to identify members of the working class in office. That said, unlike gender, race, and ethnicity there may be fewer tell-tale indicators that allow voters to easily identify working-class politicians—especially when they are dressed for their work in congress and not for their day job. This raises a final question: how do voters know workers are in office? We address this important question in the remainder of this chapter.

⁹ The use of formal or informal quotas to increase working-class representation is not common, but they have been used in the PJ in Argentina (McGuire 1997), the PRI in Mexico (Smith 1979) and in Egypt and Uganda (Carey and Reynolds 2011; Clayton, Joseffson and Wang 2017).

We argue that for a number of reasons working-class legislators are remarkably visible and citizens are generally aware of the extent to which workers are represented in the legislature. In short, we explain that parties and candidates have political incentives to showcase class during campaigns and in office; news media and government websites often report on the occupational backgrounds of politicians; and ordinary citizens can infer legislators' class from facial images and speech.

Of course, we do not expect citizens to know exactly how many seats working-class legislators occupy in the chamber. Provided they are generally aware of the presence (or absence) of workers, the visibility of working-class representatives can shape citizens' evaluations of institutions. As a case in point, people cannot accurately assess the share of seats held by women in national legislatures (Cowley 2014; Dolan 2011; Sanbonmatsu 2003; Stauffer 2021; Verge, Wiesehomeier, and Espírito-Santo 2020), yet copious research shows a positive relationship between women's numeric representation and citizens evaluations of and engagement with political institutions (Barnes and Taylor-Robinson 2018; Karp and Banducci 2008; Schwindt-Bayer 2010; Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Barnes and Burchard 2013; Liu and Banaszak 2017). As Zaller (1992) explains, people often form their political opinions by sampling a variety of considerations from the media, elite discourse, and political communications from the "top of their mind" at the moment they answer a question.

We expect to find copious evidence of workers' visibility in campaigns, the media, and government websites. Moreover, we anticipate that when confronted with minimal information, such as a facial image, voters can infer politicians' class status. Combined, our argument indicates that even if working-class representation is less visible than other forms of descriptive

representation, there are still a number of avenues through which voters obtain information about the class status of their legislators.

Despite widespread information, not all citizens are equally likely to be aware of working-class representation. As a matter of fact, copious research on political interest and attentiveness shows that some citizens are far more knowledgeable and aware of politics than others. Given that citizens can most readily learn about the presence of working-class politicians from paying attention to politics, listening to the news, or accessing government resources, it logically follows that citizens who have a strong interest in politics and those who follow the news are more likely to be aware of working-class representation. Assuming politically attentive citizens and fervent news consumers are most likely to be aware of working-class representation, we expect to observe that the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations of the government will be strongest among these citizens. In this section, we elaborate on the conditional relationship between political interest, news attentiveness, and awareness of working-class representation. But first, we elucidate the three avenues through which citizens learn about working-class representation.

Political Incentives to Showcase Class

Both individual politicians and political parties have incentives to communicate to voters about politicians' personal backgrounds. Appeals focused on a candidate's occupation help to improve a candidate's credibility in the eyes of voters. Occupational information provides a useful information shortcut, particularly in low information elections (Campbell and Cowley 2014; Johannessen 2019; McDermott 2005; Mechtel 2014).

That said, institutions structure legislators' incentives to develop a personal reputation or to promote the party brand. Broadly speaking, in candidate-centered institutional contexts, individual legislators have substantial influence over the fate of their own political career and have an incentive to develop their personal reputation. By contrast, in party-centered institutional contexts, the electoral fates of candidates are almost exclusively dependent on the party's success, leaving candidates little incentive to develop their own reputation with voters (Carey and Shugart 1995; Crisp et al. 2018).

Given these electoral incentives, it may be tempting to think that only in candidate-centered electoral systems do voters have opportunities to learn about a candidate's background and working-class status. As we explain here, however, parties also have incentives to make candidates' working-class status known—even in party-centered electoral systems. In this section, we first explain candidate incentives to showcase their class status in candidate-centered contexts. Then we turn to incentives in party-centered contexts.

Candidate-Centered Electoral Systems

In candidate-centered campaigns, individual legislators must rely primarily on their own reputations to lure voters to the polls. For this reason, in candidate-centered campaigns, such as the campaigns that take place in Brazil, Peru, and in the single-member districts in Mexico, Bolivia, and the U.S., individual candidates have a strong incentive to leverage their occupational status in an effort to relate to voters and even to signal to voters that they care about issues that affect the working class. Not only does copious research on political campaigns demonstrate that candidates advertise their personal attributes during campaigns (West 1994), but importantly, candidates make widespread use of their previous occupations and class status (Johannessen 2019;

McDermott 2005). Importantly, early research on campaign communication pointed to candidate job experience as the most frequently cited personal quality (Shyles 1984).

In Brazil, for instance, Johannessen (2019) provides countless examples of how candidates incorporate information about their occupational status into every aspect of their campaign. He summarizes the point nicely: “Nearly all candidates emphasize their class background in promotional materials, albeit in different ways depending on a candidate’s relative class position. For lower-class candidates, this takes two forms: First, candidates often use campaign pamphlets, flyers, and posters to stress their humble upbringing.... In other cases, candidates stress their current occupation” (Johannessen 2019, 13). To illustrate the first point, Johannessen directs us to an example of a city council candidate who provides the following biography:

Adopted daughter of a stone mason’s helper and a cleaner, Fátima Pereira (Fatinha) was born, grew up, and still lives in the neighborhood of Jardim Primavera in the periphery of Duque de Caxias. Raised in a situation of precariousness due to a lack of resources in the area, she has dreamed of creating a better life for her people since she was young (cited in Johannessen 2019, 13).

As this example makes clear, Fátima Pereira was raised in a working-class family. She makes direct appeals to both her father’s and mother’s occupational experience. In another example, Johannessen illustrates how candidates make appeals to their own careers. Marcelo de Carvalho da Silva, for example, goes by “Marcelo the Bus Driver” [Marcelo Motorista] during his political campaign and listed this nickname on his ballot. As Johannessen (2019, 14) put it: Marcelo de Carvalho da Silva’s “occupation is such a central component of his political identity that he uses it as his ballot name.” In his work, Johannessen provides countless examples of candidates making direct appeals to their occupational status or in some cases their family’s occupational status in an effort to signal their political commitment to voters.

This type of behavior is not unique to Brazil. In the U.S., for instance, a study of congressional campaigns in California found that half of all campaign material made explicit mention of candidates' occupational status (McDermott 1999). Indeed, we argue that in all cases where individuals have an incentive to develop a personal reputation there is motivation to leverage occupational status to relate to voters or set oneself apart from the competition.

At this point, it may seem obvious why individual candidates would make appeals to their occupational status or to use their class status to relate to voters. It may seem less clear whether there is an incentive for parties or candidates to make information about politicians' personal backgrounds known in contexts with party-centered elections. When individuals do not benefit from their own reputation, candidates may have weaker incentives to try to relate to voters by showcasing class status. Nonetheless, we argue that even in such contexts, political parties realize they can benefit from relating to voters and making the working-class status of some of their candidates known to voters.

Party Centered Electoral Systems

Even if individual candidates do not win elections based on their personal reputation, political parties have an incentive to advance the party's reputation through the candidates they nominate. Although one way of doing this is by advancing policy platforms, most parties in Latin America do not advance programmatic policies. Instead, parties curry favor with voters by advancing non-policy politics (Calvo and Murillo 2004; 2019). As such, parties can signal to poor and working-class voters that they have their best interest at heart by recruiting and promoting candidates from working-class backgrounds. This is because parties likely assume candidates who share the majority of the population's life experiences will fare better electorally than members of the political elite since they can personally connect with voters (Castañeda and Navia 2007).

In Mexico for instance, the PRI included workers from labor unions on their list of candidates. In return, union members worked hard on the party's behalf, campaigning for the PRI and turning out voters (Burgess 1999). In doing so, workers use their own connections and reputations as known union affiliates to make appeals to voters on the party's behalf. More recently, many parties nominate well-known public figures on their proportional representation lists to build party support and garner media coverage. The MORENA party has received much coverage in the media for using lotteries to select party list candidates that increase the number of working-class candidates (Poertner 2022). Historically in Argentina, the Peronist Party tried to appeal to working-class voters by establishing informal agreements that allowed union leaders to nominate candidates to the Peronist ticket and a "labor branch" that reserved a third of the positions on the ticket and in party leadership for labor unions (Levitsky 2003). In these circumstances the PRI and Peronist parties were clearly banking on constituents supporting the party because of their shared working-class identities and labor ties.

In addition to incorporating workers onto their candidate lists and making their alliances with unions clear, there is also evidence that candidates in party-centered electoral systems are encouraged to make personal connections with voters. In Argentina, beyond providing clientelistic benefits, one of the primary roles of *punteros* (political brokers) includes organizing rallies and neighborhood meetings so that voters can meet candidates face-to-face and personally connect with them (De Luca, Jones, and Tula 2002; Zarazaga 2014). In Peru, clientelism is used to lure voters to campaign events, meetings, and rallies so that candidates can introduce themselves (Muñoz 2014). And, evidence from Costa Rica indicates that political parties in party-centered electoral systems know that they benefit when their legislators build close rapport with constituents in neighborhoods and communities (Taylor 1992).

Beyond parties' incentives to make the class status of candidates known and to forge personal connections between voters and candidates, strategies for turning out votes—through direct mobilization—requires both candidates and civil society to interact with voters in ways that makes it more likely that voters will acquire personal information about candidates (Boulding and Holzner 2021). That is, even if parties are not motivated to inform voters about individual candidates, voters frequently come in close contact with individual politicians and thus have opportunities to learn about their backgrounds.

As a matter of fact, in party-centered systems across Latin America, parties rely on the broader party machine by charging individual candidates with the tasks of canvassing and turning out voters within their networks (Calvo and Murillo 2019; Langston and Morgenstern 2009). Canvassing on the party's behalf includes "communicating with, making promises to, and mobilizing potential voters" in an effort to turn out votes (Langston and Morgenstern 2009, 166). In doing so, candidates are frequently charged with speaking at mass rallies in their area or doing interviews with the local newspapers. Even if the main focus of these events is the party, these events still create opportunities for voters to learn about candidates on the party ticket. Because parties need to rely on candidates to help turn out voters, they recruit candidates with ties to specific sectors in society, frequently tapping into labor sectors. To the extent that candidates turn out voters within their professional or union networks then we should assume that voters are aware of the presence of working-class candidates.

Candidates also turn out voters through neighborhood-based organizations and civil society (Boulding and Holzner 2021). In Argentina, for example, these are frequently referred to as territorial "agrupaciones" or neighborhood-level political networks across an electoral district aimed at both turning out voters but also helping individual political activists get elected into

Congress or other powerful local political posts (Levitsky 2003). As Szwarberg (2015) explains it, each *agrupación* is allotted a number of positions on the party list that they can distribute to activists from the unit. Although party activists secure votes by solving problems and doling out favors, they interact closely with voters making it all the more likely that voters know something about the candidates they are helping to elect. A number of high-profile workers, including tobacco employees' union leader Roberto Digón, custodians' union leader José María Santamaría, rubber workers' union leader Osvaldo Borda, and ship captains' union leader José Luis Castillo, were elected through these neighborhood networks.

In sum, it is clear that both candidates and parties have incentives to make the working-class status of candidates known. Although these incentives are different in candidate-centered electoral systems than in party-centered contexts, both electoral contexts afford voters a number of opportunities to learn about the class status of candidates and politicians. Given candidate and party incentives to promote politicians' working-class status, *we expect to find widespread evidence of both parties and candidates making working-class status publicly known.*

Information from News Coverage and Governments

There are clearly a number of political motives that compel parties and politicians to showcase the class status of candidates and elected officials. Nonetheless, we also have reason to believe that citizens can readily encounter information about politicians' class status absent politicians' pure political motives to make this information known. To be sure, regardless of the type of electoral system in place or politicians' own incentives to showcase their backgrounds and cultivate a personal reputation with voters, independent news sources and non-partisan government agencies also provide access to this information.

In recent years across Latin America there have been widespread calls for more government transparency. In response to these calls many governments have begun to collect more information about political leaders and government more generally. In Brazil, for example, when candidates register to stand for office, they are required to list their current occupation. As we will demonstrate in Chapter 6 many governments post information about politicians' occupational background on official websites. Indeed, major advancements in information and communication technologies have allowed governments to begin featuring this information in more publicly accessible ways. For instance, Porrúa (2013, 128) explains: "Throughout the first decade of the 21st century, every Latin American country made some effort to advance e-government." Many of these efforts are concentrated on establishing websites, improving access to government officials, and leveraging the internet to allow citizens to pay fines, file their taxes, or register for/update government documents. Importantly, even these types of interactions that are not aimed at obtaining information about representatives, bring citizens to government websites where they may be more likely to encounter this information.

Widespread calls for transparency across Latin America have also been accompanied by a rise in the collection and dissemination of data from government watchdogs, think tanks, universities, and academics. In 2000, for instance, Directorio Legislativo of Argentina began systematically collecting data on National Deputies' professional experience in the private, public, and partisan spheres. In 2006 they expanded these efforts to collect information on deputies from several subnational governments. In a similar vein, The Parliamentary Elites of Latin America Project at the University of Salamanca started conducting surveys with legislators from across the region. These surveys provide detailed information on legislators' backgrounds prior to entering office. Scholars, likewise, leverage information from government websites (Barnes and Holman

2020b; Le Foulon 2020; Kerevel 2015; 2019), NGOs (Barnes and Holman 2020a; Franceschet and Piscopo 2008, 2014; Carnes and Lupu 2016b; Micozzi 2018), and original elite surveys (e.g., Schwindt-Bayer 2011) to systematically collect, code, and analyze these data to uncover trends in representation. Although it is unlikely that private citizens will directly consume any of the information produced by universities and academics, this information is sometime picked up by and widely disseminated in mainstream media.

Indeed, data collection efforts and transparency initiatives by governments, NGOs, and academics are necessary for generating information on legislators' class backgrounds. Importantly, we do not assume that most people are going to read reports produced by non-profits and government agencies or encounter studies produced by academics. Instead, the prevalence of these data make it more likely that reporters and even opposition candidates acquire this information and distill it for public consumption. News coverage of this information may be critical to disseminating it to private citizens. For example, both Rosas (2018) and De La Rosa (2017) draw on publicly available information in Mexico's Sistema de Información Legislativa to write news articles about the class status and legislative actions of several federal deputies.

Beyond distilling and reproducing information from governments, NGOs, and academics, mass media deems information about politicians' occupational backgrounds as relevant and reports on it frequently. It is not uncommon for journalists to report information about individual candidates' class background or professional experience when featuring politicians in news stories. News reports likewise readily report information about political affiliations with unions, the breath of professionals featured on party candidate lists, and even information about politicians' family background. Beyond news coverage, many government websites include short biographies of national deputies. As a result, *we expect to find widespread evidence that governments, the news,*

and even non-governmental organizations make information about legislators' class-status available and digestible.

Citizens Can Infer Class

Beyond relying on information that voters obtain from politicians and the news, there is also evidence that people are surprisingly adept at inferring class status from facial images (Bjornsdottir and Rule 2017; Bjornsdottir, Alaei and Rule 2017) and speech (Kraus, Park, and Tan 2017; Kraus and Keltner 2009). Simply put, just by seeing someone's face or hearing them utter a few words, people are able to infer class status. Voters across Latin America are regularly exposed to politicians' physical characteristics such as facial images and speech. Novel research also shows that a candidate's physical appearance can shape a voter's impressions of a candidate (Bernhard 2022c; n.d.). Consequently, we argue that even the least politically attuned individuals acquire some knowledge about politicians' class status from heuristics, candidates' physical characteristics, and other information they obtain in passing (Bernhard and Freeder 2020).

We know individuals can easily identify someone's age, sex or race when presented with another person's face. Several recent studies in social psychology and political science also find that individuals are adept at identifying more ambiguous characteristics such as religious affiliation, political ideology, sexual orientation, class, and even the probability of electoral success through people's faces (Bjornsdottir and Rule 2017; Lawson et al. 2010; Tshkay and Rule 2013; Rule, McCrae and Ambady 2009). In addition, experimental subjects have also been able to identify an individual's socio-economic status through nonverbal cues after watching short 60-second videos (Kraus and Keltner 2009).

Kraus, Park, and Tan (2017) argue signs of social class are communicated through one's body and physical appearance, linguistic cues, and cultural preferences and choices. It is likely a greater combination of social class signals (e.g., speech or body language) may be more helpful in communicating class, nonetheless Bjornsdottir and Rule (2017) find simple pictures of individual faces are sufficient for people to identify an individual's class status at a rate better than chance. They explain that because people are attuned to social class, they can use stereotype-related impressions to assess an individual's class based on facial images alone. In a series of experiments, subjects were shown facial images and were able to categorize images by class at a rate significantly better than chance (Bjornsdottir and Rule 2017). Moreover, it appears class status is inferred rapidly, and the effect holds even when using very similar pictures with the same facial expressions across all images.

Although it is still somewhat unclear how individuals determine class status through one's face, Bjornsdottir and Rule (2017) suggest people use stereotypes and attractiveness to infer that someone is from a higher social class. These authors also speculate that the experiences of upper- and lower-class individuals become etched in people's faces over time, such that one can use the emotional expressions in people's faces to identify class status. The extent to which the experiences and behaviors of individuals systematically vary across classes may lead these differences to be reflected in differing health and wellbeing outcomes that are visible in a face.

Even the least politically attuned individuals may regularly encounter images of politicians. A large number of countries include candidate pictures on ballots (Tchintian 2018), most legislatures include photographs of deputies on their websites, and images of deputies and candidates frequently appear in newspapers. When campaigning, parties and candidates regularly

include images on flyers, posters, and other propaganda in public spaces. Individuals do not have to seek out this information to find themselves confronted with facial images of politicians.

Yet, it is still unclear from extant research whether citizens can also infer information about legislators' class status from images they may encounter in their day-to-day lives. Individuals with high levels of political information are more likely to be able to draw upon multiple sources of information to infer a representative's class status, such as their dress or their speech. For those who are less attentive to politics, they are more likely to just be exposed to images of their representatives in campaign ads on billboards, street signs, social media, television, ballots, and in newspapers. We argue that, even naïve judgments of politicians (i.e., judgments made by relying on headshots or pictures alone) inform voters' assessments of working-class representation.

Voters in Latin America are also exposed to politicians' speech when they hear them at campaign rallies, in neighborhood meetings, and (albeit less often) on the radio or during floor speeches (e.g., De Luca, Jones, and Tula 2002; Taylor 1992; Zarazaga 2014). A growing body of research indicates that people can accurately perceive other's social class (as measured using occupational status) based on minimal exposure to speech patterns, dialects, and accents (e.g., Giles and Sassoon 1983; Kraus and Keltner 2009). Kraus et al. (2017), for example, argue that speech style is an accurate signal of social class even when the content of speech is held constant. Using isolated speech recordings from seven spoken words, they find that subjects' evaluations of the speaker's social class (using both measures of educational attainment and occupational status) were significantly positively correlated with speaker's known social class, leading them to conclude that "social class is rapidly and accurately perceived in the early stages of social perception" (426).

Although this research is based on English speakers, there is evidence that linguistic markers also vary by class in Latin America (Lipski 2011; Weyers 2018; Arthur and Díaz-Campos 2012; Robles-Puente and Vilches-Aguado 2019; Mazarro 2011). Hence, even minimal exposure to politicians' speech informs citizens' perceptions of working-class representation. As such, we expect that citizens can infer politicians' class status through speech patterns. Though we focus empirically on facial images in this book, there is clear reason to believe that awareness of politicians' social class will be even stronger due to linguistic markers.

Taken together, social science research indicates strong evidence that citizens can detect working-class representation. As with the share of women legislators, people may not be able to accurately guess the exact share of seats held by working-class representatives (Cowley 2014; Sanbonmatsu 2003; Stauffer forthcoming; Verge, Wiesehomeier, and Espírito-Santo 2020). Nonetheless, because parties and candidates have incentives to showcase class during campaigns, news media and government websites often report occupational backgrounds, and ordinary citizens can infer legislators' class from facial images and speech, we argue working-class legislators are visible in Latin America. *We expect to find citizens are able to infer social class from simple heuristics, such as faces or speech.*

Political Interest, News Consumption and Responses to Working-Class Representation

All told, we expect that voters have a number of opportunities to learn about working-class representation, and thus it is likely that the representation of working-class deputies will shape voters' evaluations of representative institutions. Nonetheless, not all citizens are equally likely to

be aware of whether there are working-class politicians in office. As previous studies have found, monitoring representatives is costly (Taylor-Robinson 2010).

Whereas some citizens such as those with high levels of political interest and daily news consumers, have the resources to readily monitor politics, many citizens lack the interest or ability to effectively monitor politics. Absent regular news consumption or high levels of political interest, citizens cannot easily assess if representatives are “standing for” them in office (Pitkin 1967). Put differently, the link we posit between descriptive representation and feelings of being fairly represented by legislatures and political parties cannot be realized. As a result, we propose the relationship between descriptive representation and evaluations of political institutions will be strongest among citizens who express high levels of political interest and those who regularly consume the news.

The link between descriptive representation and positive evaluations of institutions will only be realized if citizens are familiar with the individuals elected to office and are privy to their backgrounds. Furthermore, observing substantive representation may prove even more demanding. Programmatic policies, for example, are challenging to monitor, as they do not result in immediate tangible payoffs. Rather, it can take years for ordinary citizens to realize the benefits of programmatic policies, and policy success is often conditional on whether the bureaucracy effectively implements the policies. Even when legislators are working to represent their constituents, they frequently lack the resources to successfully pass policy proposals. Unsuccessful proposals are even more difficult to monitor than successful bills. Given these challenges, citizens must collect information and use it to evaluate both who is in office and how they behave if descriptive representation of the working class is to foster feelings of fair and effective representation.

Due to the high cost of monitoring politics, we expect the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations of government will be strongest among those citizens who are aware of politics. In particular, as we explain, individuals who have a substantial interest in politics and those who regularly consume the news are more likely to have a sense of who is in office and whether or not government is doing a good job. As a result, the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations of government should be strongest among this subset of citizens.

Interest in Politics

Individuals with high levels of political interest are more likely to be aware of government activities. Prior research on Latin America finds, for instance, that individuals with high levels of political interest have more accurate perceptions of political corruption (Canache and Allison 2005), are more likely to make use of left-right ideological labels (Zechmeister and Corral 2013), and have higher levels of political knowledge (Fraile and Gomez 2017). Political interest is also robustly associated with political engagement. Again in the Latin American context, politically interested individuals exhibit higher levels of political tolerance (Burton, Fenech, and Moskowitz 2019), engage in both conventional and unconventional forms of political participation at higher rates than uninterested individuals (Boulding 2014; Boulding and Holzner 2020, 2021), and are less likely to invalidate their ballot when going to the polls (a way of “abstaining” where voting is compulsory), which Cohen (2018) suggests signals a lack of alienation from the political system. Indeed, some have gone so far as to call political interest “the most powerful predictor of political behaviors that make democracy work” (Prior 2010, 747).

Much of the literature on political participation and engagement conceptualizes interest as a psychological attribute that is distinct from resources (e.g., Schlozman, Brady, and Verba 2018).

In contrast to people with low levels of political interest, citizens expressing high interest are more likely to expose themselves to political information and seek out opportunities to engage in political activities (Bernhard and Freeder 2020; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1997; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). In line with this conceptualization, panel studies have shown individuals' political interest to be remarkably stable over time, both year-to-year and in the long run (Prior 2010), and that political interest is strongly correlated with personality traits such as "openness to experience" and "extraversion" (Gerber, Huber, Doherty, and Dowling 2011; Mondak and Halperin 2008). As Gerber et al. (2011, 37) explain, new political information should be especially appealing to individuals who rank high on these personality traits because of their underlying "attraction to new and challenging stimuli," especially in the inherently social world of politics.

Moreover, research on the relationship between personality and political interest finds that the effect of individuals' underlying psychological predispositions affects political engagement independent of other "monitoring resources" such as education or income (Gerber et al. 2011). In other words, just because individuals have the *means* to acquire and process political information (e.g., time and education), this does not necessarily imply that they also have the *motivation* to do so. Rather, citizens with strong political interest are more likely to be aware of who is in office and how well they are representing their constituents. As a result, *we expect that working-class representation is far more likely to incite positive evaluations of institutions among citizens with high levels of political interest.*

News Consumption

Decades of political communication research suggests that news consumption provides citizens with a greater capacity to engage with and monitor politics. Like political interest, media

consumption has been linked to discussing politics and voting (Salzman 2005), as well as identification with political parties (Pérez-Liñán 2002), and “the media environment is highly important in providing the opportunity for citizens to learn about politics” (Delli Carpini, Keeter, and Kennamer 1994). Although earlier research on this topic suggested that citizens need both the opportunity (e.g., readily available information) and the motivation to become politically informed (Luskin 1990), more recent research suggests that even politically uninterested citizens can passively learn about politics by consuming news. Tewksbury, Weaver, and Maddex (2001) explain that most research on media consumption and political knowledge assumes that learning from the media is an active process: people seek out information because they want to learn about politics. Yet, even people with little or no interest in politics can acquire political information, albeit passively, from the news media. Tewksbury et al. (2001) find some evidence that news consumption is positively associated with knowledge about current events. Importantly, they also find evidence that accidental exposure to political news is positively associated with increased political knowledge. That is, people who reported being exposed to a political news story when they went online looking for something else had higher levels of knowledge about current affairs, even after controlling for socioeconomic status and political interest.

Although Tewksbury et al.’s (2001) finding is based on an analysis of online news consumption, research also suggests that similar types of passive political learning can occur with newspaper consumption. A study of the content of frontpage headlines in Argentina’s two most read newspapers, *Clarín* and *La Nación* revealed that “public affairs” subjects (politics, economics, international news) make up more than half of all stories (Boczkowski and de Santos 2007). Moreover, Boczkowski and de Santos (2007) explained that in recent years, there has been an increasing homogenization in front page content across Argentina’s major print newspapers and

their online versions, suggesting that even if citizens are only reading the newspaper for content about sports or entertainment, they are still exposed to information about politics, and may be passively learning about current affairs. As a result, *we expect working-class representation is far more likely to incite positive evaluations of institutions among citizens who regularly follow the news.*

Conclusion

In this chapter we develop a theory of working-class inclusion to provide answers to the three central questions posed in this book. Our theory of working-class inclusion also develops a number of expectations that we empirically test using a variety of methodologies throughout the remaining chapters. Table 2.1 presents a summary of our theoretical expectations. To evaluate if voters want to be represented by workers, Chapter 3 draws on cross-national survey evidence from Latin America, as well as original surveys of Argentina and Mexico. We present evidence in favor of the first two expectations laid out in part 1 of Table 2.1. We show that yes, voters want to be represented by workers, and more working-class representation leads to improved evaluations of legislatures and parties.

Chapters 4 and 5 then turn to our next set of expectations in part 2 of Table 2.1. In Chapter 4, we draw on original survey experiments from our two cases to demonstrate the combination of descriptive and policy representation, rather than either factor alone, produces better evaluations of representatives. Hence, we do not find support for the idea that citizens only care about policy outcomes. We also show in Chapter 4 citizens think working-class deputies are more likely to represent them compared to upper-class legislators. In Chapter 5, we explain why institutional mechanisms to increase working-class representation have produced weak ties to the working class

in Mexico, whereas these ties are stronger in Argentina. Then, we draw on surveys from these two countries, and original data on working-class legislators, to show that increases in working-class representation in Mexico have increased distrust in legislatures and parties while the reverse is the case in Argentina.

In the last two chapters of the book, we turn to our final question: How do voters know workers are in office? Chapter 6 draws on qualitative evidence from across the region, as well as survey experiments in Argentina and Mexico to demonstrate that evidence of class status is readily available, in order to test the first three expectations in part 3 of Table 2.1. Chapter 7 then draws on cross-national surveys from Latin America to test the remaining two expectations of part 3 to show that the relationship between the descriptive representation of workers and positive evaluations of political institutions is stronger among citizens with more monitoring resources.

Table 2.1. Summary of Expectations

<p>1. Do voters want to be represented by workers?</p> <p><i>Working-class representation signals inclusive policymaking (Chapter 3)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where workers are numerically under-represented in office, citizens will prefer more workers in office compared to the current or perceived status quo.• Increases in working-class descriptive representation will be positively associated with citizens' evaluations of representative institutions.
<p>2. Will any worker do?</p> <p><i>Policy matters! (Chapter 4)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy representation of the working class will be associated with more positive evaluations of representative institutions regardless of the characteristics of those who develop the policy.• Citizens may believe that working-class legislators are more likely than upper-class legislators to understand the problems facing them and promote laws that improve their every-day lives.• The combination of descriptive representation of workers and the representation of working-class policy interests better improves evaluations of democratic institutions than either factor alone. <p><i>Party and institutional ties to the working class (Chapter 5)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where institutions promoting working-class inclusion have produced weak (strong) ties between working-class representatives and their constituents, we will find that increases in working-class representation will lead to more negative (positive) evaluations of representative institutions.
<p>3. How do voters know workers are in office?</p> <p><i>Information about class status is readily available (Chapter 6)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Politicians and political parties make information about occupational backgrounds known.• Governments, NGOs, academics, and journalists collect and disseminate information about legislators' occupational status.• Ordinary citizens can infer legislators' class from facial images and speech. <p><i>Conditional impact of monitoring resources (Chapter 7)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The positive relationship between descriptive representation of the working class and evaluations of representatives will be stronger among citizens who are interested in politics.• The positive relationship between descriptive representation of the working class and evaluations of representatives will be stronger among citizens who regularly follow the news.

Chapter 3

Do Voters Want to Be Represented by Workers?

“These are not the same times, much less the same actors. During the last 15 years union representation in Congress has lost considerable ground...”

—*La Nación*, January 21, 2000

Ahead of a major debate about labor reform in Argentina, *La Nación*, one of the leading Argentine newspapers, ran a story about the decline of union-affiliated deputies in office (Dinatale 2000). The article explained that since 1983—the first democratic election in Argentina’s modern democracy—the ruling Peronist party has lost more than 70 percent of its union-affiliated deputies. Stories like this one have filled pages in newspapers in Argentina in recent decades. Whereas workers once had a robust presence in the national congress, today leading newspapers such as *La Clarín* publish headlines that tell a very different story: “The CGT dreams of having its own deputies and senators.”¹⁰ Unfortunately for labor unions like the CGT, these statements are not overblown. Ahead of the 2017 election, *El Ámbito Financiero* explained union presence in Congress is continuing to shrink: of the eleven union deputies that were in office five will complete

¹⁰ “La CGT sueña con volver a tener diputados y senadores propios.” *La Clarín*, November 16, 2004. https://www.clarin.com/ediciones-anteriores/cgt-suena-volver-tener-diputados-senadores-proprios_0_HJPW3xoJ0Kx.html (Accessed January 13, 2023).

their term and only two will stand for reelection.¹¹ *Infobae* likewise traced the presence of working-class deputies, reporting a decline from 34% in 1973 to less than 5% in 2019 (Klipphan 2019).

Workers have historically been important in the fabric of politics in many countries across Latin America. But today, as in Argentina, workers in Latin America are losing ground. Increasingly, governments are dominated by middle and upper-class legislators from white-collar professions. This trend could be a product of voter preferences. That is, it may simply be the case that working-class deputies are not elected to office because voters do not want them in office. If voters do not want to be represented by members of the working class, then parties may be unlikely to recruit and fund potential working-class candidates. At the same time, it is possible that voters do want to be represented by legislators with a working-class background, but rarely have an opportunity to vote for them because other barriers to entry keep working-class candidates off the ballot. In this chapter, we evaluate whether voters in Latin America want to be represented by the upper-class deputies who occupy office, or whether they prefer to be represented—at least in part—by working-class deputies.

To tackle this question, we take a multi-pronged approach. First, we examine our original survey data from Argentina and Mexico in which we ask respondents what share of the legislature they would prefer to be occupied by working-class deputies. We find that in general, most respondents prefer more working-class deputies than the status quo. Second, to understand how the exclusion of the working class influences citizens' perceptions of representation, we turn to

¹¹ “Tras las legislativas, el sindicalismo perderá presencia en Diputados.” *El Ambito Financiero* June 27, 2017. <https://www.ambito.com/politica/tras-las-legislativas-el-sindicalismo-perdera-presencia-diputados-n3988033> (Accessed January 13, 2023).

cross-national analysis. We demonstrate that, consistent with our observations that citizens want to be represented by working-class deputies, increases in working-class representation are associated with more positive evaluations of representative institutions.

An “Ideal” Working-Class Legislature

In Chapter 2 we explained that citizens are likely to prefer more workers in office than the status quo. Our first step in understanding whether citizens want to be represented by working-class deputies is to get a sense of what citizens think the legislature *does* look like, and what they think the legislature *should* look like in their ideal world. To this end, we deployed surveys in Argentina and Mexico, where we asked respondents to first guess the percentage of national legislators that come from a working-class background. Specifically, we asked: “If you had to guess, what percentage of national deputies do you think comes from the working class?” Then, respondents were presented with a sliding scale ranging between 0 and 100.

In both cases, respondents substantially overestimate the percentage of working-class deputies. In Mexico, the median estimate was 30 percent of deputies are workers, while in Argentina, the median estimate was 25 percent. Of course, there are probably a number of different ways that we can think about what it means to be a working-class deputy, but even with our most generous estimate—using the share of deputies who have *ever* held a working-class job—we calculate that at the time of the survey 8.1 percent of deputies in Argentina were working class and 9.8 percent in Mexico.

Clearly the average respondent in Argentina and Mexico is aware that there are some working-class deputies in the national legislature, and they accurately assess that workers are underrepresented—i.e., they estimate that workers hold a much smaller share of seats in the

legislature than the share of workers in the actual population. At the same time, citizens perceive workers to be better represented than they are. This overestimation is consistent with broader trends where people tend to overestimate the size of small minority groups in a population (Orth 2022) and in line with patterns that emerge when people are asked to estimate the share of women in the legislature (Sanbonmatsu 2003).

As we explain in Chapter 6, this overestimation may be due to the fact that both politicians and political parties have incentives to showcase working-class deputies in an effort to appeal to working-class citizens. Further, as we explain in Chapter 5, it may also be due to the fact that the largest parties in Argentina (Peronist Party) and Mexico (the PRI) have long-standing ties with unions and tout themselves as standing for the working-class. The reality is that workers in both countries have been consistently losing ground over the last several decades. Still, this overestimation is interesting not only because it indicates that people think workers comprise a larger minority in the legislature than they actually do, but it is also useful information for understanding the gap between respondents' perceptions of representation and their ideal legislature (Stauffer 2021).

Do people think that 25 to 30 percent of workers in the legislature is too many? Too few? In fact, what we find is that if Argentines and Mexicans had their way, workers would occupy the lions' share of the legislature in both countries. After assessing their perception of how many workers are currently in office, we asked respondents: "In an ideal world, what percentage of national deputies would you like to be from the working class?" Respondents were again presented with a sliding scale ranging from 0 to 100.

In Argentina, the median response was 64 percent. And, in Mexico it was 70 percent. In other words, both Argentine and Mexican respondents would prefer the vast majority of legislators

have working-class backgrounds. Figure 3.1 illustrates these trends. Specifically, Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of responses for Argentina on the left and Mexico on the right. The solid lines show the respondent's guess as to how many working-class deputies they think are in the national congress. The dashed lines indicate the share of working-class deputies they would like to see in an ideal scenario. Finally, the vertical reference lines indicate the actual share of working-class deputies in office.

The figure demonstrates that, although citizens overestimate the actual amount of working-class representation in the legislature – a finding consistent with prior research on Argentina, the U.S. and the U.K. (Carnes and Lupu 2020) – they also perceive the working class is dramatically underrepresented compared to desired levels of representation. It also appears that citizens desire a legislature that reflects the population as a whole. According to data from the ILO, about 75 percent of Argentine citizens and over 80 percent of Mexican citizens can be classified as working class (Carnes and Lupu 2015). Citizens in both countries would prefer the working class to be proportionally represented in their national legislatures, rather than be dominated by unrepresentative elites.

[Insert Figure 3.1 here]

Figure 3.1 Perceived, Preferred, and Actual Percentage of Workers in Office

This gap between respondents' perceived level of working-class representation and the desired level of working-class representation suggests that citizens may be less satisfied with agents of representation (e.g., legislatures and political parties) than they would be in settings where the working-class is better represented. In what follows, we demonstrate that on average,

citizens evaluate parties and legislatures more positively when there are more working-class deputies in office.

Working-Class Legislators and Evaluations of Representative Institutions

In this section we evaluate the relationship between workers' representation and citizens' perceptions of representative institutions. We use data from five individual-level survey questions from LAPOP in 18 countries from 2008 to 2014 for a total of 48 country-years.¹² Additionally, we leverage elite-level data on legislators' occupational backgrounds as a measure of working-class numeric representation. Occupational data come from the PELA survey of Latin American legislators.¹³

Dependent Variables: Evaluations of Representative Institutions

We analyze five survey questions intended to capture respondents' evaluations of representative institutions.¹⁴ LAPOP asks respondents to indicate their level of trust in the legislature and (in a separate question) parties on a scale from 1 (none) to 7 (a lot). Second, with respect to legislatures, respondents were asked: "Thinking of Congress as a whole, without considering the political parties to which they belong, how well do you think members of Congress are performing their

¹² Appendix 3.1 lists all countries and corresponding survey waves in the analysis. The dependent variables were measured after legislators' election to office.

¹³ PELA asks: "What was your primary activity [that earned you the most money] prior to being elected Deputy?" We use data from waves 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the PELA survey.

¹⁴ Appendix 3.2 presents all LAPOP survey questions used in our analysis.

jobs?” Respondents could report the answers: very poorly (coded 1), poorly (2) fair (3), well (4), or very well (5). Finally, with regards to parties, respondents were asked: “Thinking about political parties in general, to what extent do [nationality] political parties represent their voters?” and “To what extent do political parties listen to people like you?” For each of these questions, respondents were shown a card ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (a lot) and asked to place their response somewhere on the scale.

For ease of interpretation, we create an *institutional trust* dependent variable by averaging responses to the *trust in the legislature* and *trust in parties* questions. We likewise create an *external efficacy, parties* dependent variable by averaging responses to the questions about whether parties listen to and represent their voters. We analyze responses to the question about *congressional job approval* on its own. Importantly, the results we discuss in the remainder of this chapter are robust to analyzing responses to all five questions separately.

Figure 3.2 shows the average distribution of responses—pooled across all country-years for all respondents in our sample. Whereas the questions on trust in institutions were consistently asked in all 48 surveys we analyze, the other questions did not appear in every survey in every wave we analyze. Consequently, we have fewer country-year observations for some measures.

[Insert Figure 3.2.a] [Insert Figure 3.2.b] [Insert Figure 3.2.c]

Figure 3.2 Distribution of Dependent Variables Across Country-Years

Turning first to the left panel in Figure 3.2, trust in institutions is low across the country-years in the pooled sample. The modal level of *institutional trust* in the legislature response is

“none” (coded 0), followed closely by “neither a lot nor a little” (4). The least common response was trust “a lot” with barely 6 percent of respondents selecting a “6” or “7” on the response scale.

Looking at *congressional job approval* in the middle panel, responses in the pooled sample indicate that Latin Americans are generally dissatisfied with their legislature’s performance. Although the most common response option was “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” (coded 3), just shy of 19 percent of respondents indicated members of congress are doing their job well or very well. Meanwhile, about 30 percent of respondents thought they are doing their job poorly or very poorly.

The right panel in Figure 3.2 similarly suggests that Latin Americans are dissatisfied with the representation they receive from political parties. As with *institutional trust*, the most common value of our *external efficacy* dependent variable was a “1” indicating that most people feel no efficacy when it comes to political parties in Latin America. The average value of the *external efficacy* measure in our sample is only 3.13 on a seven-point scale.

Although the distribution of responses for the three dependent variables in Figure 3.2 indicate a general mistrust of and dissatisfaction with representative institutions in Latin America generally, there is also significant variation in citizens’ attitudes across countries. Figure 3.3 plots this distribution of the same dependent variables as in Figure 3.2, but this time across the 18-countries in our sample.¹⁵ In terms of trust in representative institutions (left panel), Mexicans, Uruguayans, and Colombians exhibit the highest levels of trust in the period under investigation. The average level of trust in these countries ranges between 3.8 and 3.9 on a seven-point scale.

¹⁵ Mean responses in Figure 3.3 come from the 2008 LAPOP survey, which was the only wave that consistently asked all five questions in each country.

Respondents in Ecuador and Paraguay, however, have the lowest levels of *institutional trust*. Turning to congressional job approval ratings in the middle panel, we see that respondents in Uruguay are the most satisfied, with an average approval rating of 3.2 on a five-point scale. Again, respondents in Ecuador and Paraguay indicate the lowest levels of *approval*. Finally, when we look at political parties, those in the Dominican Republic and Uruguay indicate the most *external efficacy*, with average responses of 3.7 and 3.6, respectively, on a seven-point scale. Paraguay (2.4) and Brazil (2.6) rank among the countries with the lowest levels of *external efficacy*.

[Insert Figure 3.3.a] [Insert Figure 3.3.b] [Insert Figure 3.3.c]

Figure 3.3 Distribution of Dependent Variables by Country

Working-Class Deputies in Latin America

The key explanatory variable in this analysis is numeric representation of the working class. We use PELA data (Waves 2 to 5) to construct a measure that captures the percentage of legislators that come from a working-class background. As described in Chapter 1, we operationalize “working-class background” as a legislator’s occupation prior to getting elected.¹⁶ The percentage of workers in the legislature varies dramatically across Latin American countries, from 0 percent in Costa Rica in 2008 to 17 percent in Bolivia in 2008. Despite this wide variation, the percentage of workers in the legislature comes nowhere close to the percentage of working-class citizens in any given country. In the overwhelming majority of country-years in our sample, workers hold less than five percent of the seats in the legislature.

Before advancing to our main empirical analysis, we present more descriptive information about working-class legislators to paint a fuller picture of who working-class representatives are.

¹⁶ See Appendix 3.3 for coding rules.

In our sample, working-class deputies report working as manual laborers (blue-collar occupations such as in construction, manufacturing, mining, and metal working) and in transportation (such as railway workers, transport carriers and truck drivers), as well as serving as officials in labor union organizations. For illustration, in the most recent survey wave in our analysis for each country, the largest share of workers, 34 percent, are reported as “employees” or “workers” in the PELA survey. The second largest category in the PELA data (22 percent) are manual laborers: for instance, 10 percent of working-class deputies are construction workers, 6 percent are mechanics, and 6 percent are miners. Twenty percent of working-class deputies work for labor unions (20 percent). Transportation workers account for nine percent of working-class deputies and artisans (e.g., tailors, craftsmen, shoe shiners, and bakers) account for seven percent.

Notably, the vast majority of working-class legislators are white or mestizo men. Given that women and members of marginalized racial/ethnic groups are proportionally underrepresented in legislatures, and working-class deputies hold only a small fraction of all legislative seats, even fewer women legislators and legislators from marginalized racial/ethnic groups hail from working-class backgrounds. Whereas 17.4 percent of all legislators are women, only 11.7 percent of all working-class deputies are women. Given that both women and working-class deputies are underrepresented in national legislatures in Latin America, this means only a very small fraction of all deputies are working-class women. Specifically, only 1.1 percent of all deputies in the sample are working-class women.¹⁷

¹⁷ These figures are from waves 2-5 of the PELA survey. The plurality of working-class women, 22.6 percent (12 women), are from Honduras. 13.3 percent (7) are from Peru, 11.3 percent (6) from Mexico, and 9.4 percent (5) from each Bolivia and Nicaragua. The remaining 34 percent

[Insert Figure 3.4.a] [Insert Figure 3.4.b] [Insert Figure 3.4.c]

[Insert Figure 3.4.d_legend]

Figure 3.4 Gender Composition of Legislators and Citizens

Source: Waves 4 and 5 of PELA data, World Bank data from 2010 (the same period).

Women's representation in legislatures and the share of working-class women varies considerably across Latin America. Figure 3.4 plots the gender breakdown of all deputies in each country (PELA waves 4 and 5) in the panel on the left, the gender composition for working-class deputies in the center panel, and the gender composition of the general population in the panel on the right. As seen in the left panel, in all cases, the majority of legislators are men. Argentina, Costa Rica, and Ecuador stand out as having more than 30 percent women in office. On the other extreme, Guatemala, Colombia, and Panama have fewer than 10 percent women in office.

Looking at the center panel, we plot the share of women among working-class deputies. It is clear that deputies coded as working class are overwhelmingly men. Eight of the fourteen countries do not have any working-class women. Among countries where at least some women are coded as working class, Peru stands out. Here, four of the eight working-class deputies are women—i.e., 50 percent. The next closest cases are Honduras, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic where between 20 and 33 percent of working-class deputies are women. In Guatemala and El Salvador only 13 percent and 11 percent of working-class deputies respectively are women. To get a better sense of the occupations of women deputies from the working-class we looked

come from Argentina (3), Brazil (1), Chile (1), Dominican Republic (4), Ecuador (1), El Salvador (3), Guatemala (1), Panama (1), Paraguay (1), and Uruguay (2).

more closely at waves 4 and 5 of the PELA data. Most of the working-class women (58 percent) in waves 4 and 5 are recorded as “employees” or “workers.” Twenty-six percent of the working-class women are union leaders and ten percent are artisans. Notably only one working-class woman from waves 4 and 5 reported a manual labor job.

Finally, despite the small share of women deputies in office, and even smaller share of women represented among working-class deputies, the final panel shows that women are a majority of the population in the region. In all countries women make up at least 50 percent of the population. In some countries, however, such as Uruguay and El Salvador, women make up closer to 52 percent or 53 percent of the population, respectively.

With respect to race and ethnicity, 57.5 percent of deputies surveyed were classified as white, 31.9 percent mestizo, and only 4.7 percent, 3.7 percent and 1.8 percent were coded indigenous, black, or mulatto respectively. Less than one percent were coded other.¹⁸ Looking exclusively at deputies from working-class backgrounds, the racial/ethnic composition of deputies shifts slightly. Among workers, 43.7 percent are coded white, 41.8 percent mestizo, 9.7 percent indigenous, and a mere 3.9 percent and 1.0 percent as black and mulatto respectively. No workers were coded “other.” Thus, mestizo, indigenous, and black deputies hold a slightly larger share of

¹⁸ Interviewers were asked to classify a deputy’s race/ethnicity after the end of the interview.

However, the question about a deputy’s race/ethnicity is only available in Waves 4 and 5 of the PELA survey. In wave 4 Brazil, Panama, and Peru, included the question about race. In wave 5, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Uruguay included the question about race. Notably, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Venezuela did not include a question about race in wave 4.

seats among workers than they do among the full sample of legislators. Still, given that the overwhelming majority of deputies are white or mestizo and most do not hail from working-class backgrounds, the actual number of legislators who are coded as both working class and from a marginalized racial/ethnic group is very small.

[Insert Figure 3.5.a] [Insert Figure 3.5.b] [Insert Figure 3.5.c]

[Insert Figure 3.5.d _legend]

Figure 3.5 Racial and Ethnic Composition of Legislators and Citizens

Source: Waves 4 and 5 of PELA data, LAPOP data from 2010 (the same period).

The distribution of legislators and working-class legislators across different races and ethnicities varies substantially across countries in Latin America. To put these trends into perspective Figure 3.5 plots the racial/ethnic composition of all deputies in each country in the panel on the left, the racial/ethnic composition for working class deputies in the center panel, and the racial/ethnic composition of the general population in the panel on the right. As seen in the left panel, the majority of legislators are white in the majority of cases (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Costa Rica, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico), while only seven percent of legislators are white in Dominican Republic and 33% in Honduras and Guatemala. Mestizo deputies are the second largest group on average, and in countries such as Peru, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador they are a majority. In all cases, indigenous, black, and mulatto deputies are a minority. In a few countries, such as Mexico, Guatemala, and Ecuador, indigenous deputies make up more than 10 percent of the chamber. Black deputies hold 34 percent of seats in the Dominican Republic, and 10 percent in Panama. Mulatto deputies hold more seats in Brazil, Dominican Republic, and Panama—about 7 in each country—than elsewhere in Latin America.

Turning to the center panel, these trends look slightly different for working-class deputies. Among working-class deputies, Fifty percent or more of working-class deputies are white in six of fifteen countries (i.e., Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico). Mestizos are better represented among working-class deputies, occupying fifty percent of seats or more in five countries (Guatemala, Honduras, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Mexico). Indigenous deputies are likewise proportionally better represented among working-class deputies. In Guatemala, 43 percent of working-class deputies are indigenous. Also of note, 38 percent of deputies in Peru, 29 percent in Colombia, and 20 percent in Ecuador are indigenous. Black deputies are also more visible among working-class deputies in some countries, accounting for 25 percent of working-class deputies in The Dominican Republic, 14 percent in Brazil, 13 percent in Panama and six percent in Honduras.¹⁹

¹⁹ Among all deputies in the sample, women are slightly more likely than men to be coded as white, indigenous, or mulatto. Women are less likely to be mestizo or black. Among the sub-sample of workers, by contrast, women are more likely than men to be coded as mestizo or indigenous. There are no black or mulatto women working-class deputies. In total, women working-class deputies comprise 1.3 percent of the total sample distributed across three races/ethnicities: white (27 percent) mestiza (46 percent), and indigenous (27 percent). El Salvador and the Dominican Republic each have one mestiza woman worker. Guatemala has one indigenous woman worker. Honduras has six women workers, 5 of whom are mestiza, and one is white. Mexico has two white, women workers. Peru has 3 indigenous women workers and 1 white woman worker.

To assess the occupations of working-class deputies by race and ethnicity, we again turn to waves 4 and 5 of PELA. About 26 percent of white working-class deputies are workers (also denoted in PELA as employees). Another 23 percent are union leaders and 12 percent work in transportation. Among mestizos, 67 percent are workers or employees, 17% work for unions, and 8% are artisans. Nearly all indigenous working-class legislators during this period are union leaders (four out of five), while the other is an artisan. Finally, among the three black working-class deputies, one is a construction worker and two are union leaders.

The racial and ethnic composition of countries varies dramatically across Latin America. The right panel in Figure 3.5 uses self-reported race and ethnicity from LAPOP to approximate the racial and ethnic composition of the population in Latin America. Importantly, for our comparisons, a majority of people identify as white in only four countries (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Costa Rica). However, whites make up a majority of deputies in eight countries and a majority of working-class deputies in six countries. Thus, legislators in general do not often represent the racial and ethnic composition of their countries, although working-class deputies better approximate the racial and ethnic composition of the population compared to deputies from middle- and upper-class backgrounds.

Working-Class Legislators and Perceptions of Representation

We posit there will be a positive relationship between increases in the presence of working-class legislators and perceptions of representation by legislatures and political parties. Although we cannot entirely rule out reverse causality with our analysis, it is important to note we measure working-class representation in the period prior to the nationally representative surveys. This research design ensures that citizens are not simply electing more workers to office in countries

where they have more positive evaluations of political parties and the legislature. Instead, the share of working-class deputies is determined before citizens' attitudes are measured.

We first consider the correlation between the *percent workers* in each country-year and the average response (i.e., the country-year mean) to each of the three evaluative measures of legislatures and parties. Figure 3.6 plots this relationship. The x-axis displays the *percent workers* in each country-year and the y-axis shows the average response to each question. To facilitate the interpretation of these data, we plot the bivariate regression line and the correlation coefficient for the relationship.²⁰ Positive relationships indicate that an increase in the share of workers is associated with more positive evaluations of representation.

[Insert Figure 3.6.a] [Insert Figure 3.6.b] [Insert Figure 3.6.c]

Figure 3.6 Correlation between Working-Class Representation and Perceptions of Representation

It is clear from Figure 3.6 that for each measure, working-class representation is positively correlated with citizens' evaluations. Moreover, the bivariate regression line is positive and significant for the *institutional trust* and *congressional job approval* variables. The relationship between the *external efficacy, political parties* measure is the only one in which the bivariate regression does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Put differently, when there are more workers in the legislatures, citizens have more positive evaluations of political institutions. Combined, these figures provide preliminary evidence in support of our expectation that increases in working-class numeric representation will be positively associated with citizens' evaluations of representative institutions.

²⁰ See Appendix 3.6 for OLS regression results used to produce Figure 3.6.

This general analysis leaves us with a consistent picture of how working-class deputies are associated with citizens' evaluations of legislatures and political parties across Latin America. Indeed, we find a positive relationship between working-class representation and perceptions of representation for three different indicators across the 18 countries in our sample. These results indicate that on average, responses to working-class deputies are similar across Latin America.

Nonetheless, it is possible there are a number of omitted factors that may affect the observed relationship. It is not clear, for example, whether there are factors that can explain *both* working-class deputies' access to office and citizens' evaluations of institutions. If another factor is responsible for increases in both workers' representation and citizens' evaluations of institutions, it is possible the relationship observed in Figure 3.6 is completely spurious. At the same time, if another factor leads to increases in workers' access but decreases in citizens' evaluations (or vice versa) the omission of this variable may bias our results towards the null. For this reason, it is important to account for factors that may explain both of these political phenomena. In the following section, we discuss potential confounders and provide multivariate analyses of working-class representation and citizens' evaluations of representative institutions in an effort to develop a clearer understanding of this relationship.

Working-Class Legislators and Evaluations of Representative Institutions: Multivariate Analysis

Prior research has not established a clear understanding of the factors that lead to a higher number of workers in office (e.g., Hemingway 2020). Nonetheless, to the extent that scholars can explain workers' numeric representation, it is clear that access is driven by demand-side—rather

than supply-side factors. Importantly, in his work on U.S. state legislatures, Carnes empirically disputes the notion that working-class representation can be explained by supply-side factors such as fewer resources among the working class to run for office, lower levels of interests in government and politics among the working class, or even the lack of skills, desire, or ambition to hold office. Instead, he shows empirically that “a deficit of these traits” cannot explain the shortfall of working-class legislators in the U.S. states (Carnes 2016, 94). There are more than enough qualified, interested, and politically ambitious people with working-class backgrounds to populate the chambers of U.S. state legislatures.

As in U.S. state legislatures, there is no shortage of workers or union leaders in Latin America who can readily hold political office. For decades, union members and leaders served as the supply-chain for local, state, and federal political posts across Latin America. When given the chance, we still see today working-class citizens eagerly standing for and holding office across the region.

Thus, when thinking about omitted variables that may explain the scarcity of working-class deputies in office (and citizens’ evaluations of institutions) it seems more promising to consider demand-side factors. We can think of a number of factors that—at least in theory—could be associated with higher levels of working-class representation and may also improve citizens’ average evaluations of representative institutions in a country. If the relationships we observed above in Figure 3.6 are due to omitted variable bias, when we account for potential confounders the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations of representative institutions should go away.

In this section, we first introduce potential omitted variables in our analysis. We explain the intuition behind why these factors may lead to higher levels of working-class representation

while also improving evaluations of institutions, and we show how they correlate empirically. Then, given that our dependent variable is measured at the individual level, we introduce a number of individual-level factors that are known to shape attitudes, which we control for in our multivariate analysis. Finally, we discuss our modeling strategy and present our results. We report the results for multivariate analyses accounting for potential confounders in Appendix 3.7. Owing to high collinearity between the potential country-level confounders we do not include all the potential confounders in the same model.²¹

Economic Development and Inequality

Economic development may be important for workers' access to office because economic development leads to industrialization, which is accompanied by wage earners working in blue-collar jobs. Where wage earners are central to the economy, they are better positioned to make demands on political parties to gain access to office. With respect to citizens' attitudes, there may be an indirect effect in that a country's socioeconomic development is associated with better representation of citizens' policy preferences (Luna and Zechmeister 2005; Lupu and Warner 2022), which should also lead to better evaluations of institutions. We thus control for Gross National Income (GNI) per capita. Surprisingly, we find that working-class representation is

²¹ In the full sample, union density and party system institutionalization are highly correlated (.72) with each other and with other potential confounders, thus introducing high levels of multicollinearity. Union density is correlated with our measure of economic development (GNI) at .48, our measure of left leaning political parties at .45, and our measure of democracy at .49. Party system institutionalization is correlated with GNI at .52 and democracy at .61.

negatively correlated with GNI per capita in our sample ($r=-0.26$), but as expected, positively correlated with citizens' attitudes. This suggests that omitting GNI per capita from our analysis could bias our results towards the null. Indeed, when we control for GNI per capita we observe that the strength and magnitude of the relationship between working-class representation and evaluations of institutions is stronger for each of the dependent variables analyzed in this chapter (Appendix 3.6).

Just as economic development may improve perceptions of institutions, economic inequality may diminish perceptions of representation. At the same time, there is some evidence from research on OECD countries that more equal levels of income distribution are associated with more working-class legislators in office (Carnes and Lupu 2022). For this reason, omitting inequality from our analysis may bias our results towards the null. To account for this, we control for a measure of net (after-tax) income inequality (Gini) from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID) (Solt 2020). In our sample, the mean Gini coefficient for income inequality is 46.27 and ranges from a low of 36.9 in Uruguay (2014) to a high of 52.3 in Colombia (2008). Unlike research from OECD countries, we observe that inequality is not correlated with the share of workers in office ($r= -0.06$). Consequently, it is not surprising that our results are largely unchanged when we account for inequality in our analysis (Appendix 3.7).

Left-Leaning Political Parties

In Latin America, as is the case across most of the world, left-leaning political parties are more likely than right-leaning parties to have ties to labor unions and the working-class (Collier and Collier 2002; Posner, Patroni and Mayer 2018). Left-leaning parties are likewise more likely to champion redistributive policies that may be preferable to the majority of people, particularly

in societies with high levels of inequality, as is the case across Latin America (Levitsky and Roberts 2011). It may thus seem reasonable to assume that working-class legislators are more likely to be elected by left-leaning political parties, and consequently that increases in the seat share of left-leaning political parties may lead to increases in working-class deputies in a chamber. In other words, there may be a higher demand for working-class deputies when left-leaning parties have more political power. Similarly, given the high levels of inequality across Latin America, and the redistributive policies pursued by left-leaning parties, citizens may evaluate political institutions more favorably when left-leaning parties have more influence over policy outcomes.

We thus account for the share of left-leaning legislators in office. We use a PELA question that asks legislators to place their own party on a (1-10) left-right scale, and we calculate the average ideological position for each party. Parties are coded as left if their mean score is less than four, as center for a mean score between four and seven, and as right if the mean score is greater than seven. We control for the percentage of parties in each chamber with a mean score less than 4.

The *percent leftist parties* and *percent workers* in the legislature are only weakly correlated ($r=.29$), and 77 percent of the workers in the sample belong to either center or right parties (see Appendix 3.5). About seven percent of legislators in leftist parties are workers, compared to seven percent of the members of center parties and around ten percent right parties. At first glance this distribution may appear surprising as we find that workers hold a larger share of seats in right parties than in left parties. But the trend is fully consistent with recent research documenting that socioeconomic status is not related to political ideology in Latin America like it is in Western Europe or the U.S. – i.e., poor and working-class citizens are core constituencies of center-right parties in a number of countries (Boulding and Holzner 2021). It is also consistent with evidence

from OECD countries indicating that left-party strength is not associated with working-class numeric representation (Carnes and Lupu 2022). Still, there are a larger number of overall workers belonging to left parties. For this reason, we account for this in a multivariate analysis in an effort to rule out the possibility that the relationship we observe is spurious. We find our results are robust to the inclusion of this control variable (Appendix 3.6).²²

Labor Union Density

Across Latin America workers are an important political group, but their ability to organize and coordinate to advance their political goals may be contingent on the presence of unions. In some cases, unions recruit candidates to run for office and back them in elections, increasing the likelihood that candidates with working-class backgrounds win a seat at the table. Unions may negotiate directly with political parties to reserve space for union candidates on party lists (Micozzi 2018). Historically, unions often served as the electoral machinery for some political parties, turning out votes in exchange for seats in the legislature (Gibson and Calvo 1996; Langston 2017; Middlebrook 1995; Murillo 2001). Still today, even after globalization and economic reform have weakened many unions across Latin America, evidence suggest that unions continue to motivate their members to participate at the polls (Chambers-Ju 2021; Chambers-Ju and Hecock 2021). Some studies also suggest workers are more likely to be elected where labor unions are stronger (Carnes 2018; Carnes and Lupu 2022; Hemingway 2020). For these reasons, the presence and strength of unions may be important for explaining worker's access to office.

²² These results are very similar if measure left parties based on legislator self-placement of parties along a left-right scale, or if we account for the presence of a left-leaning president.

Unions may also, albeit indirectly, improve citizens' evaluations of government. Where unions are effectively lobbying on their constituents' behalf, they may improve policy representation of the working class. Improved policy may lead to better evaluations of government. Further, research shows that strong civil society is associated with higher levels of trust and better functioning democratic institutions (Putnam 1993). Thus, by fostering civic association amongst members, unions may increase trust in government, namely legislatures and political parties.

Using data from the International Labor Organization and Inter-American Development Bank, we account for union density in each country-year. Union density figures represent the percentage of employees in a given country's labor force that are members of a labor union. The percentage of workers in the legislature is weakly correlated with union density in our sample ($r=.36$). Union density ranges from a low of 0.2 percent in Venezuela to a high of 30.7 percent in Argentina. The average union density value in our sample is 12.8 percent with a standard deviation of 8.0. We find the relationship between working-class representation and each of our dependent variables is consistent, even when we account for union density in a given country-year (Appendix 3.7).

Political Institutions: Electoral Systems, Party Systems, and Democracy

Next, it is important to consider political party systems, electoral systems, and the level of democracy. Parties and electoral systems structure legislators' access to office and even their incentives once in office, which may explain the observed relationship between working-class representation and citizen evaluations. The level of democracy in a country can also simultaneously impact working-class access to office, and how citizens evaluate political

institutions. In this section, we consider the effects of personal vote-seeking incentives, party system fragmentation, programmatic parties, and the level of democracy.

Electoral Systems and Personal Vote-Seeking Incentives

Electoral systems are the major factor influencing legislators' incentives to either advance their own personal reputation or to develop their party brand name (Crisp et al. 2004; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997). Individual candidates may have a clear incentive to make their personal class status known if they are running for election in a country that encourages strong personal vote-seeking incentives. By touting their class background, they can craft a relatable persona and lure more voters to their ticket. Thus, at first glance, it may be appealing to believe that voters in countries with strong personal vote-seeking incentives are more likely to be aware of the class status of politicians than voters in countries with strong party-centered incentives.

This consideration is important because if only citizens in countries with strong personal vote-seeking incentives were aware of working-class representation (or if working-class representation were only important in countries with strong personal vote-seeking incentives) we would expect the relationship between percent workers and each of our dependent variables to be conditional on personal vote-seeking incentives. As we discussed in Chapter 2, and illustrate in Chapter 6, voters in both types of electoral systems are likely to be aware of legislators' class status, as parties have political incentives to tout candidates'/deputies' class status in systems with strong party-centered incentives. Nonetheless, we argued in Chapter 2 that both candidates and parties have an incentive to showcase legislators' class status. Ultimately, the extent to which voters in one system are more or less aware of working-class representation is an empirical question.

To account for this, we include a measure of personal vote-seeking incentives (PVI) for each of the countries in our sample. Specifically, we use the Johnson and Wallack (2012) measure. Theoretically, this measure ranges from 1 (lowest PVI) to 13 (highest PVI). The vast majority of country-years in our sample are in the lower PVI categories. Only a handful of country-years in our analysis have high PVI. Thus, on its face, we can conclude that if we are not accounting for PVI, and the logic presented above is correct, it would bias our results towards the null since the proposed relationship between working-class representation and evaluations of representative institutions should only be present in countries with strong PVI. Still, to fully account for this possibility we evaluate the relationship between working-class representation and each of the dependent variables conditional on PVI using an interaction term.

Appendix 3.7 demonstrates the relationship between the percentage of working-class legislators and citizens' perceptions of representation is not conditioned by the level of personal vote-seeking incentives. The interaction term is insignificant in each of the three interactive models (trust, approval, and efficacy), but the direct effect of percent workers on each of the dependent variables is positive and statistically significant in the three baseline models, indicating that the relationship between working-class representation and citizens evaluations of institutions is not conditional on PVI.

Programmatic Parties

Programmatic political parties provide voters with meaningful choice over policies by developing coherent political platforms and focusing on policy outcomes rather than clientelism (Morgan 2011; Kitschelt et al. 2010). In their attempt to offer voters meaningful choices and representation, it is possible that programmatic political parties are more likely to recruit members

of the working class to run for office and to incorporate workers into politics. It is also possible that citizens are more likely to trust/approve of legislatures and parties in countries with programmatic political parties. We account for programmatic party systems using the *party linkages* measure from the Varieties of Democracy (VDEM) project.²³ The modal category in our sample is mixed-clientelistic with countries like Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Venezuela, Peru, and the Dominican Republic (2014) falling in this category. Mixed-programmatic is the next common category in our sample, which includes Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Chile (2008, 2010, 2012), and Brazil. Meanwhile, Dominican Republic (2008, 2010, 2012) is coded as clientelistic, Argentina and Panama are identified as local collective, and Chile (2014) and Uruguay are classified as policy/programmatic. After accounting for this expert coding of party linkages across Latin America, we find the key relationship between workers and citizens' evaluations of institutions cannot be explained by the presence of programmatic parties (Appendix 3.7).

Party System Fragmentation

²³ VDEM asked experts "Among the major parties, what is the main or most common form of linkage to their constituents?" The options were: 0) Clientelistic (constituents are rewarded with goods, cash and/or jobs), 1) Mixed Clientelistic and Local Collective, 2) Local Collective (constituents rewarded with local collective goods like wells, toilets, markets, roads, bridges, and local development), 3) Mixed Local Collective and Policy/Programmatic, 4) Policy/Programmatic (constituents respond to party's positions on national policies, general party programs and vision for society).

Another feature of party systems that may influence both workers' access to office and citizens' evaluations is party system fragmentation (i.e., the effective number of political parties). Party system fragmentation theoretically could influence the election of more workers to office by increasing the likelihood that far-left socialist or worker's parties win seats in office. When a larger number of parties win a seat at the table, there is a higher probability that one of those parties seeks to appeal directly to workers.

Conversely, one may reason that higher party fragmentation is associated with fewer deputies from each party, and this could result in fewer workers having access to office. We can think about it this way: parties often look to balance their ticket across different interest groups in society. As Richard Matland (2005, 101) explained: "Rather than having to look for a single candidate who can appeal to a broad range of voters, party gatekeepers think in terms of different candidates appealing to specific sub-sectors of voters." For this reason, all types of parties may be inclined to include workers somewhere on their list, they just may not be at the top of the ballot. Ultimately, as party fragmentation increases, fewer candidates from each party win a seat in congress. The smaller the party delegation, the less diverse the delegation will be (and the less likely it is to include workers).

Higher fragmentation may also be associated with trust/approval. On one hand, voters may feel like a wider range of voices are represented in politics when more parties hold a seat in congress, resulting in better evaluations of institutions. On the other hand, since high fragmentation often makes it harder to form majority coalitions in order to pass bills, especially in Latin America's presidential systems, it could impede policy representation and ultimately depress citizens' evaluations of government.

To assess whether party fragmentation is influencing both our dependent and independent variables, leading to omitted variable bias, we control for fragmentation in the party system (Bormann and Golder 2013). In our sample, fragmentation ranges from a low of 1.07 in Venezuela in 2008 to a high of 10.44 in Brazil in 2010 with a mean of 3.99 and a standard deviation of 1.84. Our results are robust to the inclusion of this measure in the model (Appendix 3.7).

Democracy

A final factor that may simultaneously affect workers' access to office and citizens' evaluations of institutions is a country's overall level of democracy or regime type. In terms of access to office, the formal incorporation of workers into labor-based political parties, such as the Peronist Party (Partido Justicialista or PJ) in Argentina or the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico happened during periods of authoritarian rule. As Boulding (2014) explains, the incorporation – or cooptation – of civil society organizations and labor unions in non-democracies is often designed to prevent contentious mobilization. Rather than increasing workers' access to elected office, many Third Wave transitions to democracy in Latin America coincided with a decline in the presence of working-class legislators as newly elected leaders pursued market-based economic reforms, while labor-based parties weakened their relationship with unions (Boulding and Holzner 2021; Holzner 2010; Posner, Patroni and Mayer 2018). In terms of attitudes, people may be less satisfied with institutions that offer fewer opportunities to hold government accountable or express displeasure with unpopular policies.

To account for the possibility that the degree of democracy influences both workers' access to office and citizens' evaluations, we control for the average of a country's political rights and civil liberties scores from Freedom House. Freedom House scores range from 1 (completely free)

to 7 (not free). We reverse these scores so that higher values correspond to more democracy. Although none of the surveys in our analysis were conducted during a “not free” period, half of all respondents were surveyed in contexts that Freedom House considers less-than-fully democratic. Countries like Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela were consistently rated as “partly free” during the period analyzed here, whereas Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay had the highest Freedom House scores. Although there was considerable variation in the degree of democracy across Latin America during this period, including Freedom House scores does not alter our main finding. The relationship between *percent workers* in office and citizens’ evaluations of representative institutions remains positive and significant (Appendix 3.7).

Individual-Level Indicators

At the individual level, we control for a number of variables that previous research has shown to be associated with political evaluations, namely: *political interest* and *ideology*. Political interest comes from the question, “How much interest do you have in politics: none (coded 1), little (2), some (3), or a lot (4)?” *Ideology* is measured using a question that asks respondents to place themselves on a 1 (left) to 10 (right) scale. In many Latin American countries, a significant portion of respondents do not make use of left-right ideological labels (Zechmeister and Corral 2013), and thus are coded as missing values for this question. Rather than completely dropping these respondents from our analysis, we collapse responses into four nominal categories: left, center-left, center-right, and right. We then recode non-response values as a category and include them in our analysis as well. Finally, we control for a number of socio-demographic factors,

specifically: age, household asset-based wealth, sex, education, and whether the respondent lives in a rural (coded 1) or urban (0) area.²⁴

Analysis and Results

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test shows that each of our three dependent variables vary significantly across the country-years included in our analysis. Thus, a multilevel model with random intercepts, which allows us to investigate individual-level and country-level sources of variation in citizens' perceptions of representation, is appropriate. After estimating a series of multilevel linear models predicting each of our three dependent variables (Appendix 3.6-3.7), we then calculate the expected values of each dependent variable for each of the *percent workers* values in our sample (based on results in Appendix 3.6). The x-axis of each panel in Figure 3.7 represents the range of *percent workers* values in our sample. The y-axis in each panel corresponds to the expected value of each respective dependent variable. Figure 3.7 clearly illustrates an important finding: the relationship between the percentage of working-class legislators and each dependent variable measuring citizens' perceptions of legislatures and political parties is positive and statistically significant ($p < .05$).

²⁴ Although we control for wealth, we do not distinguish between citizens from different classes. In our earlier work, we do not find the relationship between working-class representation and citizens' perceptions are different for citizens who hold working-class occupations and those with middle-/upper-class occupations (Barnes and Saxton 2019). See Appendix 3.9 for a discussion.

[Insert Figure 3.7.a] [Insert Figure 3.7.b] [Insert Figure 3.7.c]

Figure 3.7. Working-Class Legislators and Improved Perceptions of Representation

In terms of *institutional trust* (left panel in Figure 3.7), a change from the lowest (0 percent) to highest (16.67 percent) values of *percent workers* in our sample is associated with a .68 increase in the expected value of trust in institutions (a 22 percent increase). Similarly, a move from the lowest to highest values of *percent workers* is associated with a .47 increase in the *congressional approval* outcome. Turning to the measure of efficacy in regard to political parties (right panel in Figure 3.7), a move from the lowest to highest percentage of working-class legislators in our sample is associated with a .42 increase in the expected value of the outcome variable.

All of these improvements in perceptions of representation, which signify the difference between the expected value of the dependent variable at high and low values of *percent workers*, are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level. In other words, the results displayed in Figure 3.7 are fully consistent with our main expectation: as the percentage of working-class legislators increases, citizens express improved perceptions of representation from the legislature and from political parties. Importantly, we can be confident the patterns we observe in Figure 3.7 are not explained by other factors, such as the presence of leftist political parties, the level of economic development in a country, or the nature of the party system itself.

Opinions of Marginalized Citizens

Overall, we observe robust evidence that increases in working-class representation are associated with better evaluations of democratic institutions. Nevertheless, it is possible that not all citizens respond positively to working-class representation. In this final section we explore whether the relationships observed in this chapter are stronger or weaker for women compared to men, and

marginalized racial and ethnic groups compared to whites. We compare women to men and different marginalized groups to whites given the large disparities in representation. Recall, Figure 3.5 demonstrates that most deputies—and most working-class deputies—are men, even though women make up a slight majority of the population. Figure 3.5 shows that white deputies make up 58 percent of all deputies across Latin America and 43.7 percent of working-class deputies, despite whites making up only 32 percent of the region's population.

On one hand, working-class deputies do not descriptively represent the most marginalized workers in society. Indeed, the lion's share of working-class deputies are white or mestizo men. Since women and other racial and ethnic groups are underrepresented among working-class representatives it is possible the relationship between working-class representation and evaluations of institutions is stronger for white respondents compared to mestizo, indigenous, black and mulatto respondents, and stronger for men than for women.

On the other hand, Figure 3.5 shows that marginalized racial and ethnic groups hold a larger proportion of seats among the sub-set of working-class deputies compared to whites than among all deputies. That they are better descriptively represented among working-class deputies than non-working-class deputies may cause mestizo, indigenous, black and mulatto citizens to respond even more positively to working-class representation than white citizens. And, since women and marginalized racial and ethnic groups are more likely than white men to hail from the working class, members of these groups may be more likely to feel represented by working-class deputies, regardless of the deputies' gender or race. If this is the case, it is possible the relationship between working-class representation and evaluations of institutions are even stronger for women compared to men, and for marginalized racial and ethnic groups compared to whites.

To probe this relationship, we examine a series of models using interaction terms that allow us to evaluate whether the relationship between working-class representation and evaluations of institutions is stronger/weaker for 1) men compared to women; 2) whites compared to all other racial and ethnic groups; and 3) white men compared to all other respondents.

Turning to our first set of analyses we interact the sex of the respondent with the share of working-class deputies in office (Appendix 3.8). We do not observe any difference in the magnitude or direction of the relationship between working-class representation and our three dependent variables for men and women. In all three models the constituent term for percent workers is positive and significant, and the interaction term between woman respondents and working-class representation is insignificant. The results indicate that increases in working-class representation are associated with positive and significant increases in evaluations of institutions among both men and women. Even though very few working-class legislators are women, women citizens still evaluate institutions more positively when there are more workers in office.

Next, we examine the difference between white respondents and mestizo, indigenous, black and mulatto respondents (Appendix 3.8). We classify respondents as white or not, and interact this variable with the share of working-class deputies in office. We find the interaction term between white and working-class deputies is positive and significant ($p < .05$) for all three outcome variables. The positive and significant interaction term across each indicates that the relationship is stronger for white respondents than for respondents from all other racial and ethnic groups. Increases in working-class representation engenders more positive evaluations of government among both groups, but the effect is slightly larger for white respondents.

Finally, we repeat this exercise focusing specifically on white men compared to all other respondents (Appendix 3.8). Here, we observe similar trends to the ones reported for all white

respondents: the interaction terms are positive and significant in the model that examines trust in institutions ($p < .01$). The relationship is also positive for the congressional job approval and external efficacy model, but the relationship for these dependent variables is weaker ($p < .10$). These results indicate that it is not solely white men who drive the relationship reported above, but white women also respond more favorably than respondents from marginalized racial and ethnic groups.

Combined, these results indicate that white men and women respond more positively to working-class representation than do mestizo, indigenous, black and mulatto respondents. Even though deputies from marginalized racial and ethnic groups are better represented among working-class legislators than among the entire chamber, they are still disproportionately underrepresented. This underrepresentation may help explain why respondents from these marginalized racial and ethnic groups are less responsive to working-class representatives as white respondents. Importantly, however, even though the relationship is stronger for some groups than others, there is a strong positive and significant relationship between increases in working-class representation and positive evaluations of institutions for all groups.

This auxiliary analysis illustrates that gender, race, and ethnicity interact with class in important ways (Barnes, Beall, and Holman 2021; Cassese and Barnes 2019; Cassese, Barnes, and Branton 2015). Although a full investigation of this topic that can disentangle these relationships is beyond the scope of this book, our findings here indicate that future work should take seriously gender, race, and ethnicity when considering the causes and consequences of working-class representation.

Conclusion

This chapter presents several findings that are key to understanding *if voters want to be represented by working-class deputies*. First, on average, survey respondents are likely to say they want to be represented by more working-class legislators than are currently in office and by more working-class legislators than they perceive there are in office. Thus, even to the extent that citizens overestimate how many workers hold office in the national congress, they still want there to be more workers than they think there are. In fact, citizens would like the working class to be represented in proportion to their presence in the population. This supports our argument that citizens do want to be represented by members of the working class.

Second, these results show that the class composition of the legislature does influence citizens' evaluations of representative institutions. Increases in the proportion of working-class deputies are associated with higher levels of trust in legislatures and political parties, legislative approval, and a stronger belief parties listen to and represent voters. Combined, the two analyses in this chapter provide strong support for the idea that citizens do want to be represented by working-class deputies.

However, the analyses in this chapter assume the relationship between working-class representation and voters' evaluations of legislators and political parties is constant across all contexts. Although the evidence presented in this chapter clearly indicates that on average, increases in working-class deputies are associated with improved assessments of representative institutions, the analysis cannot determine if these results are directly due to the presence of more workers in office, or if the result is better explained by the tendency of working-class legislators to focus more resources on promoting working-class policies. As we explained in Chapter 2, citizens may evaluate legislatures and parties more positively, not necessarily because there are

more workers in office, but because more workers in office serves as a proxy for legislatures and parties that better respond to the policy interests of the average citizen. In order to address this gap in the analysis, in the next chapter we turn to a survey experiment that allows us to distinguish between the direct effect of having more workers in office without policy representation, the direct effect of policy representation of the working class without workers in office, and the combined effect of working-class numeric and policy representation on how citizens feel represented.

This chapter also raises questions about the role of political parties. Though the analysis in this chapter accounts for the nature of the party system and the presence of left-leaning parties, we are not able to examine how workers from different party systems influence evaluations of representative institutions. As we explained in Chapter 2, some party systems have stronger track records of representing the working class over others, and it is likely the presence of working-class legislators may have stronger or weaker effects on how citizens feel represented based on the nature of ties between parties and workers. In Chapter 5, we turn to these issues and address the relationship between political parties and the working class.

Finally, an implicit assumption underlying the relationship between working-class representation and evaluations of institutions shown in this chapter, is that voters know whether there are greater or fewer workers in congress. That is, for the presence of workers in office to signal a more inclusive policy-making process, and to lead to better evaluations of institutions, the public must be able to identify members of the working class in office. In this chapter we show that citizens are aware that some national deputies hail from the working class, and citizens accurately assess that working-class deputies hold a much smaller share of seats in the legislature than the share of workers in the actual population. In Chapter 6 we address the visibility of workers in politics more directly. And, Chapter 7 shows that the relationship between working-class

numeric representation and better evaluations of institutions is strongest among citizens who are most likely to be aware of worker's presence in (or absence from) office.

Chapter 3 Appendix

Appendix 3.1 List of Countries and Survey Waves Included

Country	LAPOP year	Legislative Session	PELA wave(year) ^a
Argentina	2008, 2010	2007-09, 2009-11	4 (2008), 5 (2010)
Bolivia	2008	2006-10	4 (2006)
Brazil	2008, 2010	2003-07, 2007-11	3 (2006), 4 (2010)
Chile	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014	2006-10, 2010-14	4 (2006), 5 (2010)
Colombia	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014	2006-10, 2010-14	4 (2006), 5 (2010)
Costa Rica	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014	2006-10, 2010-14	4 (2006), 5 (2010)
Dom. Rep	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014	2006-10, 2010-14	4 (2006), 5 (2010)
Ecuador	2008, 2010, 2012	2007-08, 2009-12	4 (2008), 5 (2009)
El Salvador	2008	2006-09	4 (2006)
Guatemala	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014	2004-08, 2008-12, 2012- 15	3 (2006), 4 (2009), 5 (2012)
Honduras	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014	2006-10, 2010-14	4 (2006), 5 (2010)
Mexico	2008	2006-09	5 (2006)
Nicaragua	2008, 2010	2007-11	4 (2007)
Panama	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014	2004-09, 2009-13	3 (2004), 4 (2009)
Paraguay	2008	2003-08	3 (2003)
Peru	2008, 2010	2006-11	3 (2010)
Uruguay	2008, 2010, 2012, 2014	2005-10; 2010-15	3 (2005), 4 (2010)
Venezuela	2008		2 (2000)

^a The PELA wave corresponds to the most recent available data prior to the date LAPOP fielded the AmericasBarometer in each country. In countries where the legislative period started in the same year as the LAPOP survey, we made sure that the legislative elections happened before the LAPOP survey was conducted.

Appendix 3.2 Individual-Level Survey Questions from LAPOP

Variable	English	Spanish	Response Options
Legislative Trust	To what extent do you trust the National Congress?	¿Hasta qué punto tiene confianza usted en el Congreso Nacional?	1=Not at all to 7=A lot
Legislative Approval	Now speaking of Congress/Parliament. Thinking of members of congress as a whole, without considering the political parties to which they belong, do you believe that the members of Congress/Parliament are performing their jobs very well, well, neither well nor poorly, poorly, or very poorly?	Hablando del Congreso y pensando en todos los diputados en su conjunto, sin importar los partidos políticos a los que pertenecen, usted cree que los diputados del Congreso (país) están haciendo su trabajo muy bien, bien, ni bien ni mal, mal, o muy mal?	1=Very well to 5=Very Poorly Recorded in the analysis such that 5=Very well
Party Trust	To what extent do you trust political parties?	¿Hasta qué punto tiene confianza usted en los partidos políticos?	1=Not at all to 7=A lot
Parties Listen	How often do political parties listen to the average person?	¿Qué tanto los partidos políticos escuchan a la gente como uno?	1=Not at all to 7=A lot
Parties Represent	Thinking of political parties in general, to what extent do [country's] political parties represent their voters well?	Pensando en los partidos políticos en general. ¿Hasta qué punto los partidos políticos (nacionales) representan bien a sus votantes?	1=Not at all to 7=A lot
Political Interest	How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?	¿Qué tanto interés tiene usted en la política; mucho, algo, poco o nada?	1=A lot to 4=None Recorded such that 4=A lot
Sex	Sex (note down, do not ask)	Género (anotar, no pregunte)	1=Man 2=Woman Recorded such that 0=Man 1=Woman
Political Ideology	On this card there is a 1-10 scale that goes from left to right. Nowadays, when we speak of political leanings, we talk of those on the left and those on the right. In other words, some people sympathize more with the	En esta hoja hay una escala de 1 a 10 que va de izquierda a derecha, donde 1 significa izquierda y el 10 significa derecha. Hoy en día mucha gente,	1=Left to 10=Right Recorded such that 0=None, 1=Left (1-3),

	left and others with the right. According to the meaning that the terms "left" and "right" have for you, and thinking of your own political leanings, where would you place yourself on this scale? Indicate the box that comes closest to your own position.	cuando conversa de tendencias políticas, habla de gente que simpatiza más con la izquierda y de gente que simpatiza más con la derecha. Según el sentido que tengan para usted los términos "izquierda" y "derecha" cuando piensa sobre su punto de vista político, ¿dónde se colocaría usted en esta escala? Indique la casilla que se aproxima más a su propia posición.	2=Center-Left (4-5), 3=Center-Right (6-7), 4=Right (8-10)
Age	How old are you?	¿Cuál es su edad en años cumplidos?	Age in years
Rural	Urban town or rural area (filled out by LAPOP)	Urbano o Rural [Usar definición censal del país]	1=Urban 2=Rural Recoded such that 0=Urban 1=Rural
Education	What was the last year of education you completed?	¿Cuál fue el último año de enseñanza que usted completó o aprobó?	0=None to 18+ years
Wealth	Following Córdova (2008), we construct a household asset-based measure of wealth.	¿Para finalizar, podría decirme si en su casa tienen...?	0=poorest to 5=wealthiest

Appendix 3.3 Coding Rules for Legislators' Social Class – PELA Occupational Categories

Occupational Class	Occupation	Examples of PELA Responses
Working Class	Laborer Service Industry Worker Union officer	Bricklayer, Truck driver, Electrician, Construction worker, Miner Security guard, Tailor Union leader, Union secretary
Non-Working Class	All other occupational categories: Businessperson Private-Sector Professional Military/Law Enforcement Legal Political Service-Sector Professional	CEO, Banker, Manager, Business owner Doctor, Journalist, Professor, Engineer Police Officer Lawyer Mayor, Provincial deputy, Party secretary Teacher, Nurse, NGO, Social worker
No Information	Retiree Student Housewife Unemployed	

Source: Carnes and Lupu (2015)

Appendix 3.4 Working-Class Representation and Evaluations of Political Institutions, Bivariate

	(1) Institutional Trust	(2) Congressional Job Approval	(3) External Efficacy, Parties
% Workers in Legislature	.035** (.014)	.026** (.010)	.022 (.014)
Constant	3.167*** (.087)	2.689*** (.061)	3.033*** (.092)
Observations	48	41	48
R^2	0.12	0.15	.08

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$ (standard errors). The OLS coefficients in Appendix 3.4 correspond to the fitted regression lines presented in Figure 3.6.

Appendix 3.5 Descriptive Statistics Leftist Parties and Percent Workers in the Legislature

	Legislator's Party Placement	Legislator's Self-Placement
Correlation between % Workers and % Left Party		
Country-Year Level Dataset	r=.29	r=.20
Individual Level Dataset	r=.24	r=.18
Workers as a Percentage of each party category		
Workers as % of Left Party	8.60%	7.69%
Workers as % of Center Party	6.54%	7.12%
Workers as % of Right Party	9.90%	4.19%
Percentage of Workers in each party category		
% of Workers in Left Party	23.01%	31.22%
% of Workers in Center Party	57.52%	65.08%
% of Workers in Right Party	19.47%	3.70%

Note: Appendix 3.5 shows the relationship between *percent workers* and *percent left parties* in the legislature. Using a PELA question that asks legislators to place their party (left column) and themselves (right column) on a 1-10 left-right scale, we calculated ideological positions for each party in our sample.

Appendix 3.6: Working-Class Representation and Evaluations of Political Institutions, Multivariate

	(1) Institutional Trust	(2) Congressional Job Approval	(3) External Efficacy, Parties
% Workers in Legislature	.040*** (.012)	.027*** (.009)	.025** (.012)
<i>Individual-Level</i>			
Political Interest	.267*** (.006)	.081*** (.004)	.235*** (.008)
Woman	.088*** (.011)	.082*** (.007)	.057*** (.015)
Ideology=Left (1-3)	.017 (.019)	.036*** (.012)	.110*** (.026)
Ideology=4-5	.096*** (.017)	.042*** (.011)	.156*** (.023)
Ideology=6-7	.288*** (.018)	.103*** (.011)	.373*** (.025)
Ideology=Right (8-10)	.446*** (.018)	.151*** (.011)	.489*** (.024)
Age	-.000 (.000)	-.003*** (.000)	-.004*** (.000)
Rural	.211*** (.013)	.071*** (.008)	.081*** (.017)
Education	-.017*** (.002)	-.012*** (.001)	-.022*** (.002)
Wealth Quintile	-.019*** (.004)	-.008*** (.003)	.005 (.006)
<i>Country-Level</i>			
GNI per capita	2.600*** (.652)	1.191** (.504)	2.448*** (.709)
%Left Party in Legislature	-.001 (.002)	.001 (.002)	.003 (.002)
Constant	.733 (.470)	1.787*** (.362)	.867* (.506)
Observations	72099	61688	37667
Country-Years	48	41	30
<i>Wald Chi</i> ²	3825.37	1208.67	1707.87

* p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01 (standard errors). Multilevel linear regression coefficients estimated in Stata 17.1. Ideology=none is excluded as a reference category. Owing to high levels of multicollinearity we do not include all level two variables in the same analysis. Results from this model are used to generate the predicted probabilities presented in Figure 3.7.

**Appendix 3.7 Working-Class Representation and Evaluations of Political Institutions,
Additional Robustness Checks**

	Institutional Trust	Congressional Job Approval	External Efficacy, Parties
<i>Economic Inequality Models</i>			
% Workers in Leg.	0.040*** (0.012)	0.027*** (0.009)	0.026** (0.012)
Gini	0.001 (0.018)	-0.004 (0.014)	-0.015 (0.019)
Observations	72099	61688	37667
Country-Years	48	41	30
<i>Union Density Models</i>			
% Workers in Leg.	.035** (.014)	.027*** (.010)	.027* (.015)
Union Density	-.003 (.010)	-.001 (.007)	-.007 (.010)
Observations	64976	54631	34214
Country-Years	45	38	28
<i>Personal Vote-Seeking Models</i>			
% Workers in Leg.	.032 (.024)	.044*** (.017)	.007 (.024)
Personal Vote	.012 (.022)	.035** (.016)	-.013 (.022)
% Workers X PVI	.001 (.004)	-.004 (.003)	.004 (.004)
Observations	72099	61688	37667
Country-Years	48	41	30
<i>Programmatic Parties Models</i>			
% Workers in Leg.	.033*** (.012)	.027*** (.010)	.025* (.013)
Programmatic Party	.103* (.054)	.007 (.043)	.004 (.059)
Observations	72099	61688	37667
Country-Years	48	41	30
<i>Party System Fragmentation Models</i>			
% Workers in Leg.	.038*** (.013)	.027*** (.009)	.022* (.012)
Fragmentation	-.017 (.030)	-.003 (.022)	-.036 (.031)
Observations	72099	61688	37667
Country-Years	48	41	30
<i>Democracy Models</i>			
% Workers in Leg.	.037*** (.013)	.031*** (.009)	.024* (.013)
Democracy (FH)	.076 (.094)	-.085 (.077)	.032 (.095)

Observations	72099	61688	37667
Country-Years	48	41	30

* p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01 (standard errors). Multilevel linear regression coefficients estimated in Stata 17.1. All models reported here are identical to those reported in Appendix 3.6, with the exception of the additional control variables reported here. We do not report here the additional individual- and country-level variables listed in Appendix 3.6. Union Density models: The number of country-year observations is slightly lower because we do not have reliable data on union density in Ecuador.

Appendix 3.8: Working-Class Representation and Evaluations of Political Institutions by Sex, Race and Ethnicity

	Institutional Trust	Congressional Job Approval	External Efficacy, Parties
<i>Men vs. Women Respondents</i>			
% Workers in Leg.	0.043*** (0.012)	0.029*** (0.009)	0.026** (0.012)
Woman	0.099*** (0.017)	0.087*** (0.011)	0.052** (0.022)
Woman * % Workers in Leg.	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.003)
Observations	64487	55282	33681
Country-Years	48	41	30
<i>White vs. All Other Racial/Ethnic Groups</i>			
% Workers in Leg.	0.037*** (0.012)	0.026*** (0.009)	0.023* (0.012)
White	0.003 (0.021)	-0.022 (0.013)	-0.043 (0.028)
White * % Workers in Leg.	0.009*** (0.003)	0.005** (0.002)	0.009** (0.004)
Observations	64456	55255	33681
Country-Years	48	41	30
<i>White Men vs. All Other Respondents</i>			
% Workers in Leg.	0.039*** (0.012)	0.027*** (0.009)	0.025** (0.012)
White Man	-0.079*** (0.027)	-0.051*** (0.017)	-0.059 (0.036)
White Man & % Workers in Leg.	0.013*** (0.004)	0.005* (0.002)	0.009* (0.005)
Observations	64487	55282	33681
Country-Years	48	41	30

* p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01 (standard errors). Multilevel linear regression coefficients estimated in Stata 17.1. The models reported here are identical to those reported in Appendix 3.6, with the exception of including additional variables and interaction terms reported here. We do not report here the additional individual- and country-level variables that are listed in Appendix 3.6.

Appendix 3.9 Challenges with Identifying Working-Class Citizens

In our study, we do not distinguish the effects of working-class representation on citizens from different classes. In earlier work, we attempt to distinguish between working-class citizens and middle/upper-class citizens using occupation information from LAPOP to code citizens class status, but we do not find the relationship between working-class representation and citizens' perceptions are different for these two groups (Barnes and Saxton 2019). This result may suggest increases in working-class representation improve perceptions of representation among all citizens. In particular, sociotropic models of political representation reason that more inclusive institutions will foster more positive evaluations among all citizens because “individuals recognize that their personal fortunes depend on the fortunes of the group” (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005, 412). Consistent with our results, a number of studies on women's representation that find increases in numeric representation of politically marginalized groups improve perceptions of representation among all citizens (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005; Barnes and Taylor-Robinson 2018; Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo 2019; Stauffer 2021). Nevertheless, the results may also be due to measurement issues in available survey data.

One possible measurement issue concerns how LAPOP asks about respondents' occupations. Even in the one wave (2008) that included a more fine-grained occupation question, certain response categories are constructed by combining working-class occupations (e.g., “street vendors” or *vendedores ambulantes*) with white-collar occupations like “small business owners” (*propietario de establecimientos comerciales pequeños*). Additionally, it is possible, although we cannot say for certain, that this question is excluding a significant number of workers in the informal sector of the economy who would otherwise be coded as working-class. To illustrate one possible reason, people who indicated they were not currently working – even if they were

currently looking for work – did not get the follow-up occupation question. Even if it were not a measurement problem, the lop-sided class structure in Latin America makes it difficult to identify variation in the effects of working-class representation on the potentially small number of socio-economic elites in our data.

Nevertheless, if the relationship between working-class legislators and citizens' perceptions is stronger among working-class respondents than among upper-class respondents, not accounting for this difference is likely to bias our results towards the null. In other words, including upper-class respondents in our analysis will make it harder for us to find empirical support for our theory. Our theory of working-class inclusion is about the average citizen, and the average citizen in Latin America is working-class. Throughout this book, where we find working-class inclusion fosters improved perceptions of representation, these findings apply to the majority of Latin American citizens.

Chapter 4

Will Any Worker Do? The Role of Policy in Linking Workers' Presence to Evaluations of Representatives

*"I believe that every person who has worked hard to make a living understands the sacrifice that others make to get ahead on a daily basis. If a deputy was previously a worker, he will clearly understand that many times, it is difficult to get decent and stable work. In my opinion, people who are in government should have as their main objective to improve working conditions for the people. Although many lose the goal blinded by money and power, others really focus on helping people who are struggling day by day to sustain themselves."*²⁵

-Respondent from Argentina

*"[Working-class] lawmakers respond to their parties and unions. They do not represent citizens or their interests. They forget about popular representation. They are 100 percent partisan."*²⁶

-Respondent from Mexico

²⁵ Yo creo que toda persona que haya trabajado duro para ganarse la vida comprende el sacrificio que los demás hacen para salir adelante a diario. Si un diputado fue anteriormente un trabajador claramente comprenderá lo difícil que es muchas veces hasta conseguir trabajo digno y estable. A mi pensar las personas que están en el gobierno deberían tener como objetivo principal mejorar las condiciones de trabajo para el pueblo. Aunque muchos pierden el objetivo cegados por el dinero y el poder, otros realmente se enfocan en ayudar a las personas que están luchando día a día para poder sustentarse.

²⁶ Los legisladores responden a sus partidos y gremios. No representan a los ciudadanos ni a sus intereses. Se olvidan de la representación popular. Son partidistas al 100 por ciento.

The quotes that open this chapter highlight a tension regarding descriptive representation of the working class. In the original survey data we collected in Argentina, individuals who favor more working-class inclusion note they like workers for a few reasons. Not only do working-class deputies understand their struggles and bring new perspectives to the legislature, but some note they actively work to promote ordinary citizens' policy needs. As our survey data from Mexico suggests, however, the mere presence of working-class legislators does not always garner positive evaluations of representation. Even if working-class deputies come from similar backgrounds as the average citizen, they sometimes forget about popular representation once they make it into office.

Up to this point, we have found strong evidence that the average citizen wants to see more working-class representatives in office, and when more workers are in office, citizens feel better represented in the political process. These general trends, found using cross-national survey data, leave several questions unanswered. We find consistent evidence in Chapter 3 that more workers in office are associated with better evaluations of legislatures and parties. However, we cannot say whether this relationship is due to the mere presence of more workers in office, or if this relationship is explained by the policy outcomes proposed by working-class legislators which subsequently lead to improved evaluations of representative institutions.

We want to understand what is driving the relationship observed in Chapter 3. Does descriptive representation of the working class, absent policy responsiveness, improve evaluations of political institutions? Does policy responsiveness to working-class interests, without descriptive representation, influence the extent to which citizens feel represented? Or, as argued in Chapter 2, is the combination of workers in office and responsiveness to working-class interests more likely to change how voters evaluate representative institutions? Until now, we have not been able to

distinguish between these three different effects: 1) the direct effect of working-class descriptive representation; 2) the direct effect of working-class policy representation; and 3) the combined effect of descriptive and policy representation.

In this chapter, we address these questions using two different analyses, drawn from original surveys carried out in Argentina and Mexico. First, we ask Argentine and Mexican citizens whether or not they think working-class deputies are better positioned to represent their policy positions than are upper-class deputies.²⁷ We find that on average, respondents think working-class deputies better understand the problems facing the general public and think they are more likely to advance policies that best represent their interests compared to upper-class deputies.

Second, we turn to original survey experiments we conducted in Argentina and Mexico. The design of these survey experiments allows us to distinguish between the relative effects of just having workers in office without policy responsiveness, policy responsiveness without workers in office, and workers in office with policy responsiveness. In contrast to the observational data used in Chapter 3, where it is harder to establish the causal mechanism linking the presence of workers in office to evaluations of political institutions, our experimental design enables us to determine the effect of the different causal mechanisms and identify which has more empirical support.

The results from our survey experiments indicate that descriptive representation or policy representation on their own only foster minor improvements in citizens' perceptions of representation from legislatures. However, the most significant and consistent finding across both

²⁷ In the survey flow, all the questions about perceptions of working-class representation came after our experiments and other questions in the survey, including attention checks. See Appendix 4.3 for details.

Argentina and Mexico is that *both* descriptive representation of the working class, *and* the advancement of working-class citizens' substantive policy interests, better explain our cross-national finding in Chapter 3—that increases in workers' presence in the legislature is associated with improved perceptions of representation among all citizens.

Working-Class Deputies Represent

In Chapter 2 we explained that working-class representation may result in improved policy solutions that better meet the needs of working-class citizens. For this reason, we want to know whether citizens think that working-class deputies are more likely than upper-class politicians to care about their interests and to design policy to meet their needs. If so, this suggests one of the reasons citizens want more workers in office is because they value workers influence in the policy-making process.

To this end we asked a series of questions designed to explore if citizens think workers are more likely to meet their policy needs compared to upper-class professionals. First, respondents were asked: “Some deputies in Congress come from the working class. To what extent do you think these deputies:...”

- Understand the problems that people like you face?
- Are dedicated to promoting projects to improve the quality of life of all citizens?

Then we asked the same about white-collar representatives: “Some deputies in Congress are professionals, such as lawyers, doctors, and business owners. To what extent do you think these deputies ...”

- Understand the problems that people like you face?
- Are dedicated to promoting projects to improve the quality of life of all citizens?

At the end of our surveys, we followed up with open-ended questions designed to probe why respondents feel the way they do about working-class deputies' ability to understand their problems. We randomly assigned a follow-up question to each of the respondents, such that everyone was asked to explain why they responded as they did to one of the two questions about working-class deputies. For example, about one-third of the respondents were asked: "In a previous question, you said that working class deputies [*pipe in response: do not understand/understand/do not understand better or worse*] the problems facing people like you. Can you explain to me in 200 words or less why you think this?" The other respondents were asked why they think working-class deputies are or are not dedicated to promoting projects that improve the quality of life of all citizens.²⁸

We use the responses to the open-ended survey questions to better understand respondents' perspective on working-class deputies. In considering the open-ended responses, we first read each response and identified common themes that emerged in response to the open-ended questions. Then we coded all open-ended responses into one or more categories based on these common

²⁸ In the survey, respondents were also asked a third question about the qualifications of working-class vs upper-class deputies. We do not analyze that question here, but the trends presented in this chapter are similar to trends observed for that question. For the open-ended responses, 1/3 of respondents were asked to explain their answer to the question about understanding the problems people face, 1/3 of respondents were asked to explain their answer to the question about promoting laws that benefit all citizens, and 1/3 of respondents were asked to explain their answer to the question about qualifications. Many respondents expressed very similar sentiments in these open-ended responses.

themes. We report this information in Appendix 4.1 (understand) and Appendix 4.2 (promote projects). Except for responses coded as vague or unclear, the categories are not mutually exclusive, and consequently the percentages reported do not sum to 100. A systematic analysis of the open-ended responses is beyond the scope of this study, and thus we do not rely on the open-ended responses to make inferences. Instead, we report the overall trends below and draw on open-ended responses throughout the remainder of the manuscript to illustrate our findings from the quantitative analyses.

Understand the Problems People Face

It is clear from the data in Argentina that people think working-class deputies understand their problems better than do upper-class deputies. Consider whether respondents reported that deputies “understand the problems that people like you face.” As depicted in Figure 4.1, in Argentina, nearly 42 percent of all respondents said that working-class deputies understand the problems they face either “well” or “very well,” compared to only 27 percent of respondents who felt the same way towards deputies from upper-class, professional occupations. This fifteen-point gap clearly indicates that in Argentina respondents perceive working-class deputies to be more attuned to the problems they face.

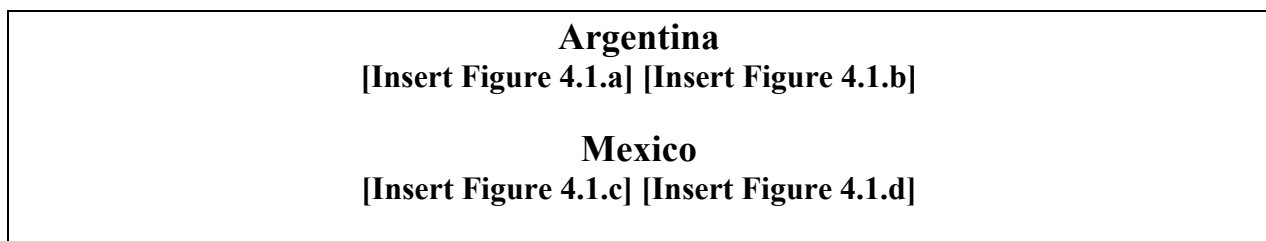


Figure 4.1 How Well Deputies Understand Problems That People Like You Face

Consider the open-ended responses for Argentines who expressed that deputies understand the problems that people like them face. About 95% of Argentines who responded “well” or “very well” reflected that working-class deputies empathize with working-class citizens or have similar lived experiences to the majority of people (Appendix 4.1). As one Argentine respondent noted, “A [deputy] of the working class understands and has suffered the same problems of that sector: they have experienced first-hand the disrespect and mistreatment from employers. I think they are closer to working people than someone who never was.”²⁹ Another respondent articulated the same sentiment: “Before they were deputies they supposedly had to manage to survive with a salary of a salaried employee. They shop in a supermarket, travel by public transportation, and attend public hospitals. They don’t live in a bubble.”³⁰ Additionally, five percent of respondents said working-class deputies are better positioned to improve the lives of average citizens or they have even observed them proposing policies to help the working class. As this respondent put it: “because they are always next to the workers, asking that labor rights be respected. They draft laws in support.”³¹

²⁹ Una persona trabajadora de esa clase comprende y ha padecido los problemas de ese sector, a vivido en carne propia los maltratos y destratos de la parte empleadora. Creo que están mas cerca de la gente trabajadora que alguien que nunca lo estuvo.

³⁰ Porque supuestamente antes de haber sido diputados se las tuvieron que ingeniar para sobrevivir con un sueldo de un asalariado. Hacen las compras en un supermercado, viajan en transporte público y asisten a hospitales público. No viven en una burbuja

³¹ Porque siempre están al lado de los trabajadores, pidiendo que se respeten los derechos laborales. Redactan leyes en apoyo.

Still, about 13 percent of respondents who selected “well” or “very well” said that once workers come to office, they forget what it is like to be a worker. Or that they do not actually do anything to help the working class. Respondents who expressed this position often did so after explaining why working-class deputies are better positioned to understand people like them, but then the respondent went on to express that in the end they do not or cannot make any changes in office. In these cases, the response would be coded as belonging to multiple categories. For instance, one respondent summarized it like this: “There are few deputies who understand the problems, because they themselves went through the same thing, but unfortunately as time goes by, they forget where they came from and they are not interested in people, but rather in having more money for politics.”³²

Whereas 42 percent of Argentine respondents believed working-class deputies understand their problems, Figure 4.1 shows that 27 percent of respondents said they do a poor job of understanding the problems that people like them face. This is also less than the share of respondents—33 percent—who said professional deputies do not understand their problems. Clearly not everyone believes that working-class deputies understand the problems of everyday people, but on average people tend to evaluate them more favorably than middle/upper-class deputies.

The most common reason Argentine respondents gave for indicating workers do not understand their problems (55 percent), was that they view deputies as corrupt and only interested

³² Hay pocos diputados que comprenden los problemas, debido a que ellos mismos pasaron por lo mismo, pero lamentablemente al pasar el tiempo se van olvidando de donde vinieron y no les interesa la gente, sino tener mas dinero por la política.

in filling their own pockets—“Once he has won the seat, like any other politician, he stops thinking about the voter and only thinks about his own pocket!”³³ Another 45 percent of people reflected that once in office workers forget where they come from or they are disconnected from people. Put differently: “because once they arrive, they think they belong to another class and they forget who they represent.”³⁴ Finally, 26 percent of people said workers are only responsive to their party, union, or industry once they become deputies. As one respondent explained: “because working-class deputies generally are or were trade unionists and represent the interests of the union leaders who placed them on the lists and not of the affiliates.”³⁵ Despite these negative views of working-class deputies, Argentine respondents were overall more likely to believe that working-class deputies understand the problems people like them face, and they certainly believe they understand their problems more than middle-/upper-class deputies.

In Mexico, respondents likewise believe working-class deputies are more likely than upper-class deputies to understand their problems. That said the differences between response categories are much smaller than in Argentina. Although 33 percent of respondents stated working-class deputies understand the problems they face well or very well, only 29 percent of respondents felt the same about deputies from white-collar professions—a 4 percent gap. Sentiments reflected

³³ Una vez conseguido el escaño, al igual que cualquier otro político, deja de pensar en el votante y solo piensan en su propio bolsillo!

³⁴ Porque una vez que llegan se creen de otra clase y se olvidan a quienes representan.

³⁵ Porque los diputados de clase trabajadora, generalmente son o fueron sindicalistas y representan los intereses de los dirigentes gremiales que los colocaron en las listas y no de los afiliados.

in the open-ended responses shed light onto why some respondents believe working-class deputies do a better job understanding people's problems. As one Mexican respondent indicated:

“They are people who have been exposed to the daily difficulties that the general population faces. They have traveled by public transport, they have no bodyguards and therefore they have been assaulted, they have been afraid to walk down a street without lighting, their cars have broken down due to potholes, they see how difficult it is to get a job, they see what it is to study in public school.”³⁶

Among those Mexican respondents who indicated working-class deputies do understand the problems they face, 94 percent explained their position in terms similar to those expressed in the quote above (see Appendix 4.1). Nearly every one of these respondents suggested that working-class deputies better understand the daily lives facing the large majority of the population.

Nonetheless, the view that working-class deputies are better positioned to sympathize with people's problems are less pervasive than in Argentina. A similar number of respondents in Mexico, 34 percent, also indicated working-class deputies do not understand the problems they face. Among these respondents, 42 percent indicated that working-class deputies in Mexico are corrupt, greedy and only took the position for the high salary (see Appendix 4.1). For example, one respondent suggested “they only think of their own pockets and steal whatever they can, they

³⁶ Por que son personas que han estado expuestas a las dificultades diarias que padece la población en general. Han viajado en transporte público, no tienen guardaespaldas y por consiguiente los han asaltado, han tenido miedo al caminar por una calle sin iluminación, sus carros se han descompuesto a causa de baches, ven lo difícil que es conseguir trabajo, ven lo que es estudiar en escuela pública.

are not interested in the working class, only ruining the lives of those who have the least.”³⁷ Thirty-two percent of these respondents suggested working-class deputies often forget where they came from, are often disconnected from working-class people, and only look out for themselves instead of their constituents. According to one respondent, “when they achieve power, they forget they came from the working class and start to look out for their own interests.”³⁸ Many respondents who indicated that working-class deputies do not understand the problems people face also suggested that these legislators typically serve party or elite interests, rather than those of the working class (15 percent). One respondent stated “at least in Mexico, they are in their position due to shady deals between economic and party elites, not because of their representativeness.”³⁹ Finally, other respondents indicated working-class deputies fail to deliver on their campaign promises (19 percent). As one respondent indicated, “they only use our votes to get elected and forget what they owe citizens. When one asks them to deliver on a campaign promise, they forget what they promised.”⁴⁰

³⁷ Por que solo piensan en su bolsillo y todo lo que puedan robar nunca les interesa la clase trabajadora solo fastidias la vida de los que menos tienen.

³⁸ Porque cuando llegan al poder olvidan que pertenecieron a la clase trabajadora y empiezan a ver pot sis [sic] intereses propios.

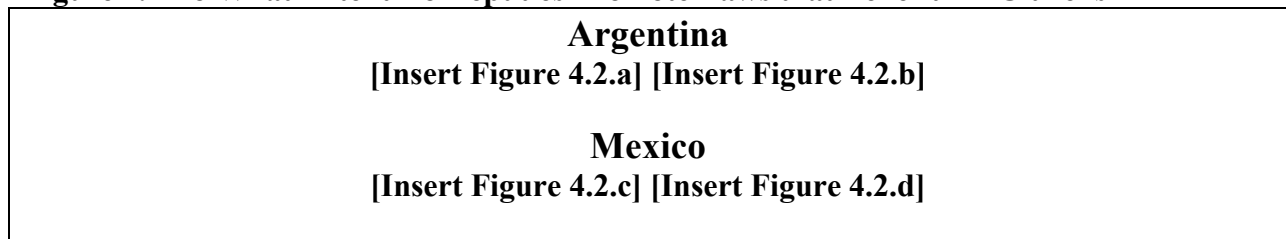
³⁹ Por lo menos en México, están en el puesto por componendas de intereses de élites partidistas y económicas, no por su representatividad.

⁴⁰ Solo utilizan nuestros votos para llegar a conseguir los puestos políticos y se olvidan que se deben a los ciudadanos y cuando uno se acerca a solicitarles cumplan con las promesas de campaña no se acuerdan de las promesas

Promote Policies to Improve Citizens' Daily Lives

Respondents in Argentina (but not Mexico) also believe that working-class deputies are more likely to promote laws that improve the quality of life of all citizens. As Figure 4.2 illustrates, in Argentina, 33 percent of respondents thought working-class deputies did a good job of promoting laws that benefit all citizens. By contrast only 23 percent of respondents thought upper-class deputies did the same.

Figure 4.2 To What Extent Do Deputies Promote Laws that Benefit All Citizens



Here too, respondents clearly indicate that working-class deputies better represent them. As one respondent explained, working-class deputies are better positioned to advocate for their interests because: “Policies must be created by those who closely know reality, who have suffered or are in touch with the current problems.”⁴¹ Another respondent expressed a similar position: “I think that working-class deputies are dedicated to promoting projects to improve the quality of life because being part of the working class, they see in their [own] experiences, the deficiencies in the

⁴¹ Las políticas deben ser creadas por quien conoce la realidad de cerca, lo ha sufrido o está en contacto con la problemática actual.

quality of life.”⁴² All told, 74 percent of respondents who agreed with the statement that working-class deputies promote laws that represent all citizens suggested this was the case because working-class deputies better understand the struggles of working-class citizens and empathize with the working class (see Appendix Table 4.2). As one respondent put it: “because being workers and knowing what it feels like to break your back working, they are in a position to have empathy with the rest.”⁴³ Another simply stated: “because they are in more direct contact with the adversities of the general population.”⁴⁴

Additionally, 30 percent of respondents indicated that workers better know how to improve people’s lives; how to provide benefits, laws, or policies to help workers, or that working-class deputies have a track-record of helping people. One respondent explained why they said working-class deputies are dedicated to promoting projects that improve the quality of life of all citizens because: “I base my response on the reality of Santa Fe, and on the plans that are being carried out

⁴² Pienso que los diputados de clase trabajadora se dedican a promover proyectos para mejorar la calidad de vida porque al ser parte de la clase trabajadora ve, en sus experiencias esas deficiencias en la calidad de vida.

⁴³ Porque al ser trabajadores y saber lo que se siente romperse el lomo laburando están en posición de tener empatía con el resto.

⁴⁴ Porque están en contacto mas directo con las adversidades de la población general.

by the deputies in the poor neighborhoods, aimed at infrastructure and the improvement of public services.”⁴⁵

Not all Argentine respondents thought workers were without fault. In fact, 35 percent of respondents said that workers do not promote laws that benefit all citizens—the same percentage who indicated that upper-class deputies do not do so. Consistent with this trend, when probed, respondents did not reflect the notion that workers were uniquely out of touch with citizens lives or poorly positioned to advocate for their interests. Instead, many indicated that upon entering office working-class deputies become corrupt (59 percent), they forget where they come from and do not advance laws that represent the working class (57 percent), and/or they only represent parties, unions, and/or interest groups (27 percent) (see Appendix 4.2). One respondent summarized it like this:

“All legislators arrive promising solutions to all the common problems of citizens... education, security, employment, among other things. And when they take their seat, they forget all about it. They only think about their own deep pocket, becoming millionaires at the expense of corruption in which, it doesn't matter what political party it is. They all agree to rob the state.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Yo me baso en la realidad de Santa Fe, y de los planes que se están llevando a cabo por los diputados en los barrios pobres, dirigidos a las infraestructuras y a la mejora de los servicios públicos

⁴⁶ Todos los legisladores llegan prometiendo soluciones a todos los problemas comunes de los ciudadanos... educación, seguridad, empleo, entre otras cosas. y cuando llegan a ocupar su banca, se olvidan de todo ello. Solo piensan en su propio bolsillo profundo, haciéndose millonarios a costa de la corrupción en la cual, no importa de que partido político sea. Se ponen de acuerdo todos para robar “al estado.”

Another agreed: “once they get to that position, they don't care about anything but themselves and their party. They do little for those who voted for them.”⁴⁷ In all, although Argentine respondents were equally likely to say working-class and upper-class deputies do a poor job promoting laws that benefit all citizens, they were more likely (10 percent gap) to agree that working-class deputies promote laws that benefit all citizens.

In Mexico, by contrast, we generally find respondents do not perceive large differences in the ability of working-class and upper-class deputies to promote laws that benefit all citizens. In fact, only 24 percent of respondents felt like working-class deputies were dedicated to representing policies that benefit citizens. The respondents who did perceive working-class representatives as responsive reflected attitudes similar to respondents in Argentina. For instance, one respondent who reported workers were more likely to advance policies that improve the daily lives of citizens summed up their feelings as to why in one word: “Empathy.”⁴⁸ As another respondent explained, “Since [workers] have more real contact with the members of society’s needs, it is easier for them to understand, and try to help people.”⁴⁹ Among these respondents who thought working-class deputies do promote beneficial laws, 75 percent of respondents thought that working-class deputies were more likely to empathize with the average person and understand what workers face in their

⁴⁷ Una vez que llegan a ese cargo no les importa nada mas que ellos y su partido. hacen poco para los que los votaron.

⁴⁸ Empatía

⁴⁹ Dado a que están más en contacto real con las necesidades que los integrantes de la sociedad tienen, les es más fácil comprender, y tratar de ayudar a las personas

daily lives (see Appendix 4.2). Another 26 percent indicated that the deputy's working-class background made them more likely to propose policies that would actually help people.

Nonetheless, we find that respondents in Mexico are somewhat more likely to say working-class deputies do a poor job of promoting laws that are beneficial to all citizens compared to upper-class deputies. For instance, one respondent put it this way:

“These deputies have neither social nor political preparation, as well as less culture. They generally miss Chamber sessions, but they require special payments and perks. They rarely are dedicated to promoting projects for the better. They have no idea of anything except supporting their party or leader. And they worry about lining their pockets with money.”⁵⁰

Another also reflected:

“It is because, as soon as they get their position, they care more about what they earn than the people who voted for them. I have seen it, and verified it on different occasions, when they campaign for votes, they promise to help; when they win, they ignore those who elected them. In the last elections it happened once again in my community.”⁵¹

Among the respondents who indicated working-class deputies do a poor job, 41 percent thought working-class deputies were corrupt. 37 percent of these respondents expressed frustration that working-class deputies often turn their backs on working-class people once they reach office and

⁵⁰ Esos diputados no tienen preparación ni social, ni política y menos de cultura. Generalmente faltan a las sesiones de la Cámara, pero exigen pagos y prebendas especiales. Salvo en contados casos, se dedican a promover proyectos para mejorar. Ellos ni idea tienen de nada que no sea para apoyar a su partido o líder. Y se preocupan de llenarse las bolsas de dinero.

⁵¹ Es por que, en cuanto tienen el puesto, les importa mas lo que ganan que la gente que las gente que voto a su favor. Lo he visto, y comprobado en diferentes ocasiones, cuando buscan el voto, prometen ayudar, cuando ganan ignoran a quienes lo eligieron. En las últimas elecciones sucedió una vez mas en mi comunidad.

do not keep their campaign promises. Another 21 percent of respondents indicated that instead of representing workers, working-class deputies were more likely to represent the interests of other groups, such as their party, their union or business (see Appendix 4.2).

Although the evidence presented in Chapter 3 suggested respondents in both Argentina and Mexico perceive the working class to be dramatically underrepresented, and desire more working-class representation, the differences we see between Mexico and Argentina and find in Figure 4.2 point to a broader tension surrounding working-class representation in Mexico. Indeed, these findings indicate that although there is a desire to see more working-class deputies elected in Mexico, many respondents do not perceive them as representing their interests. In the next chapter, we address this issue head on when we turn to the role of political parties, and how the linkages between parties and the working class help explain these differences between Argentina and Mexico. In short, we demonstrate in the next chapter that Argentine deputies from the working class have done a better job at representing workers compared to their Mexican counterparts, and citizens are aware of these differences.

Combined, the results in Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 indicate some support for our expectation that citizens want to be represented by working-class deputies because they represent their policy interests. In Argentina, it appears that respondents favor working-class deputies over white-collar deputies. Their reflections on working-class deputies revealed that they believe workers understand ordinary people's problems, have experienced their struggles, and because of their life experiences, make better policies that benefit all citizens. In Mexico, respondents seem to favor the idea of working-class deputies (as we saw in Chapter 3), but when asked to evaluate their performance in office they indicate that in practice they are no better than deputies with white-

collar backgrounds. Instead, working class deputies have developed a bad reputation and are perceived as corrupt, unqualified, and as beholden to their party.

People's perceptions about working-class deputies in both Argentina and Mexico provide some important insights into the conditions under which citizens prefer to be represented by members of the working class. Comments from respondents in both countries, although more commonly expressed in Mexico, seem to suggest that people do not want to be represented by working-class deputies who have a poor track-record for advancing policies that benefit a majority of citizens. In other words: *Not just any worker will do*. People appear to want workers in office who will represent their policy interests. In the next section, we probe this question further.

Evaluating the Effects of Workers' Descriptive & Policy

Representation

In this section we present an original experiment designed to isolate the effects of workers' descriptive and policy representation on citizens' evaluations of government and representation. The experiment sheds new light on the important question: *Will any worker do?* In other words, we investigate whether descriptive representation in the absence of policy responsiveness will improve perceptions of representation. Or, whether policy representation explains away the positive association between descriptive representation and citizens' evaluations observed in previous chapters. If policy representation is required, we consider whether policy representation is enough to improve evaluations of institutions; or, whether policy that reflects working-class interests is only credible when it comes from working-class representatives. As we argue in Chapter 2, it is likely both descriptive and policy representation work together to enhance citizens' perceptions of representation.

As we show below, only the combined effect of descriptive and policy representation has substantial effects on improving citizens' feelings of representation. Only in Argentina do we have any evidence that working-class representation without policy representation has any effects on improving citizens' evaluations. The fact that we find no direct effect of descriptive representation in Mexico but do find strong evidence in favor of a combined effect, further suggests the poor track-record of workers in office in Mexico has led to more skepticism about working-class descriptive representation compared to Argentina. We revisit this *Mexican Puzzle* in Chapter 5.

Experimental Design

In early 2019, we fielded online surveys in Argentina (February) and Mexico (July) wherein we included a series of experimental manipulations. A detailed discussion of the overall survey flow can be found in Appendix 4.3. We based the experiment on several real-world newspaper examples from Latin America. In particular, we drew upon an article from Bolivia wherein following the 2014 election, *La Razón* highlighted the occupational backgrounds (e.g., laborers, miners, micro-entrepreneurs, peasants, truckdrivers, and merchants) of several different candidates (Toro 2014). A similar type of article appeared in a Mexican newspaper in 2017 detailing the occupational backgrounds of five deputies that Morena had selected via a lottery to fill seats in the Congress (De la Rosa 2017). Similar examples, such as an article featured in *Infobae* in 2019 are likewise observed in Argentine newspapers (Klipphan 2019).

Using an experimental manipulation has a number of advantages. In particular, basing the experiment on a real-world example allows for greater certainty that the results are generalizable to attitudes outside the experiment (e.g., Bauer 2020; Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton 2018; Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo 2019). The hypothetical newspaper stories that we featured in this

experiment were designed to manipulate information about the provincial legislatures in Buenos Aires Province or Mexico State, including the legislature's class makeup, partisanship, and policy priorities.⁵²

We administered each of our online surveys with embedded experiments to a sample of approximately 3,000 participants over the age of 18.⁵³ First, participants were randomly assigned to read about an all-white-collar or a mixed white-collar and blue-collar sample of deputies:

⁵² We focus on subnational, rather than national, legislatures to avoid presenting information many respondents may recognize as false given greater news coverage of the national legislature in both countries. Although we included several partisan treatments in our experiment, the size and direction of the effects that we observe when testing our main expectations are largely similar within each group of partisan treatments. The primary effect of the partisan cue was to shift the baseline evaluations. Thus, we collapse responses for each combination of descriptive and policy representation across the three partisan treatments. Interested readers can find the party results in Appendix 4.7-4.10.

⁵³ We used the survey firm Netquest to field our online survey. The sample was nationally representative to census data on age, sex, and household income. Although online surveys may be skewed towards those with internet access and the more affluent, the results of our survey experiment are not dependent on the representativeness of the sample. Since the treatment is assigned randomly, it is not endogenous to the individual characteristics of survey respondents. Scholars have shown that findings first uncovered using nationally representative population samples replicate when researchers use online convenience samples from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) platform, as well as samples from college classrooms (notoriously unrepresentative

White-collar legislature: Manufacturing executives, university professors, landowning farmers (*agricultores*), and lawyers were among some of the deputies elected in the last elections for the Province of Buenos Aires/State of Mexico.

Mixed Legislature: Factory workers, university professors, non-land-owning farmers (*trabajadores rurales* or *campesinos*), and lawyers were among some of the deputies elected in the last elections for the Province of Buenos Aires/State of Mexico.

Next, participants randomly received information about the new legislature's main policy priority: that the deputies' first order of business was either a park beautification project (neutral policy) or a job creation project (pro-worker policy).⁵⁴ As with the occupational backgrounds of the deputies in our hypothetical news stories, we also fashioned our pro-worker policy proposal after real world newspaper examples from Latin America. For instance, a 2018 article described a similar job creation proposal in Mexico to address a large population of unemployed young adults who do not attend school (Beltrán 2018). Similar policy debates can be found in media accounts outside of Mexico as well. Following the 2018 presidential elections in Paraguay, President-elect Mario Abado Benítez called for incorporating technological and worker training into high school curriculums to prepare graduates for the workforce and to combat a youth unemployment rate that is double that found in the overall Paraguayan population (Gonzalez 2018).

samples) (Berinsky et al. 2012; Coppock 2018; Mullinix et al. 2015). In addition, if our samples are biased towards the more affluent, i.e., more individuals from the middle and upper classes, this is likely to bias our results towards the null hypothesis, since we might expect our results to be stronger among the less affluent, or individuals from the working class.

⁵⁴ These policies were chosen as plausible policies that could come out of a subnational legislature in Argentina and Mexico. Other, more impactful policies, like increasing the minimum wage, are the purview of national legislatures.

To illustrate, participants in the Argentina experiment that received the blue-collar legislator and pro-worker policy treatments would have read the following hypothetical news story:

Factory workers, university professors, farm workers, and lawyers are some of the deputies elected in the most recent elections in the Province of Buenos Aires.

For example:

Carlos Cadena Corona is a worker in a home appliance factory. This industry represents an important part of the Province's economy.

José Arredondo Dávila is an engineering professor at a local university.

Francisco Pacheco Rodríguez is a farm worker who makes a living selling fruits and vegetables. A large part of the population in the Province earns a living from agriculture.

Mario Gutiérrez Fernández is a lawyer by profession and a politician.

After the election, these deputies got to work addressing huge challenges associated with labor informality and the lack of economic opportunities for large parts of the population. The deputies mentioned above introduced a bill to create a job training center where people can receive a scholarship and companies participating in the program will have the opportunity to train new employees.

Participants who did not receive the pro-worker policy, as described above, received the following neutral policy:

After the election, these deputies got to work promoting a public park beautification project to improve the quality of life for all, and to promote safe community spaces for families. In the bill, they propose to establish a fund for park reforestation and the installation and maintenance of children's playgrounds.

This combination of information about descriptive representation and policy responsiveness entailed a 2x2 factorial design, for a total of 4 possible treatment combinations. About 650 participants in each country received each treatment. Appendix 4.4 presents the original language of each of the treatments for these experiments.

After reading about these hypothetical election results and the legislators' first policy priorities, participants answered four post-treatment questions designed to assess their perceptions of the new legislature's representative function.

- How well do you think the results from this legislative election represent the people of this province?
- How well do you think these deputies are going to represent the demands of the people?
- How well do you think these deputies are going to listen to the people?
- How much do you think these deputies will care about what the people think?

Responses are coded on a 1 to 5 scale where 5 indicated the most positive evaluations of the legislature's representative function. After answering the post-treatment questions about representation, participants also answered a manipulation check question designed to make sure they received the information in the story they read: *In the article you just read, what was the elected deputies' first initiative?* In total, about 21 percent (N=629 in Argentina and N=764 in Mexico) of the participants failed to answer the manipulation check question correctly and were thus excluded from the analysis in the next section.⁵⁵

Results of the Survey Experiment

To aid in the interpretation of our experimental results – comparing four different treatment combinations across two different countries – we began by averaging responses to the four post-treatment questions to create an indexed measure of *evaluations of representation* from the provincial or state legislature mentioned in the news story. Factor analysis revealed that responses to each of the four post-treatment questions load strongly onto a common underlying factor, and

⁵⁵ Including respondents who failed the manipulations checks does not change our results.

responses to each of the four questions have a strong scale reliability coefficient (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$ in Argentina and $.89$ in Mexico).

We then estimated an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model for each experiment wherein we predict our indexed measure of *evaluations of representation* using a series of dummy variables for each possible combination of descriptive and policy representation treatments (Appendix 4.5). We use the OLS regression results to generate and plot the expected value of the dependent variable, our indexed measure of evaluations of representation, for each treatment group in each country. To test our expectations, Figures 4.3 through 4.5 plot the expected values for the Argentina experiment (top) and the Mexico experiment (bottom). In Appendix 4.6, we provide figures that combine all treatment groups into a single figure for interested readers.

Does Descriptive Representation Have a Direct Effect Absent Policy Representation?

We begin by using the results from our survey experiment to evaluate support for the argument that descriptive representation of the working class exerts a direct effect on citizens' perceptions of representation. Recall from Chapter 2 that prior research on democratic representation posits that the descriptive representation of historically marginalized groups can promote more positive evaluations of representation even in the absence of policy responsiveness. When citizens see representatives who "look like them," they are more likely to positively evaluate the political system.

[Insert Figure 4.3]

Figure 4.3 Direct Effect of Descriptive Representation

Note: Figure 4.3 plots the expected value of respondents' evaluations. Higher values indicate more positive evaluations. Point estimates represent the expected values; bars represent 85 percent confidence intervals. Where bars overlap the predicted values are not significantly different from one another at the 95 percent confidence level (Julious 2004).

If working-class inclusion in the legislature produces stronger attachments to representative institutions—even in the absence of policy responsiveness—then there should be observable implications of this direct relationship in our experimental results. Specifically, we should expect to see that in the absence of pro-worker policy representation, i.e., the “neutral” policy treatment in our experiment, citizens will be more satisfied with legislative representation when participants read that blue-collar deputies were among those recently elected. In other words, the expected value of our *evaluations of representation* measure should be higher for individuals who received the “blue-collar, parks” treatment compared to the “white-collar, parks” treatment in Figure 4.3.

We find evidence of this direct relationship at work in Argentina, but the same does not hold for Mexico. Turning first to the Argentina results in the top panel of Figure 4.3: among respondents receiving the “blue-collar” treatment, the expected value of our *evaluations of representation* measure is .12 higher ($p < .05$) compared to the “white-collar treatment,” even in the absence of policy representation. In our Mexico experiment, by contrast, we find no evidence that on its own, descriptive representation of the working-class leads to more positive evaluations of political institutions. In many ways, this finding is consistent with historical observations we discuss in the next chapter. That is, in Mexico, organized labor has been coopted by parties. As a

result, working-class representatives are sometimes known to promote policies that work against working-class citizens' interests.

Does Policy Representation Have a Direct Effect Absent Descriptive Representation?

We next evaluate our expectation that the cross-national positive relationship between working-class inclusion and perceptions of representation is the result of increased attention to working-class citizens' policy interests. Recall from Chapter 2 that working-class legislators bring distinct policy preferences to office that tend to be more economically progressive, more statist, and more in line with the preferences of the average voter. Thus, if the average citizen is responding positively to working-class inclusion *because* of increased policy responsiveness (as opposed to responding to a message that the legislature is inclusive and mirrors the class diversity in society), then we should observe a direct link between policy responsiveness and positive evaluations of representative institutions in the absence of descriptive representation.

Specifically, if policy responsiveness explains the positive relationship between workers' presence in the legislature and improved perceptions of representation, then we should expect to see the pro-worker policy treatment associated with higher values of the *evaluations of representation* measure, even in the absence of working-class descriptive representation. In other words, when we compare the two "white-collar" treatments in Figure 4.4, we should observe higher expected values of the dependent variable among the "jobs" treatments compared to the "parks" treatments.

[Insert Figure 4.4]

Figure 4.4 Direct Effect of Policy Representation

Note: Figure 4.4 plots the expected value of respondents' evaluations. Higher values indicate more positive evaluations. Point estimates represent the expected values; bars represent 85 percent confidence intervals. Where bars overlap the predicted values are not significantly different from one another at the 95 percent confidence level (Julious 2004).

We find support for our expectation that the representation of working-class citizens' policy interests improves evaluations of democratic institutions. Turning first to the Argentina experiment in the top of Figure 4.4, we find the jobs policy is associated with a better evaluation of institutions than the parks policy, all else equal. Specifically, when white-collar deputies promote policies that address the average citizen's employment needs, evaluations of representation are .12 points higher than when the same deputies do not further the interests of the working-class.

In Mexico, we observe a similar pattern as in the Argentina experiment, but the results are weaker. When white-collar deputies fail to provide policy responsiveness, the average evaluation of representation is .06 points lower, although the difference is not statistically significant ($p=.25$). In Chapter 2 we explained it is possible that increases in working-class representation produces better evaluations of institutions *because* of policy responsiveness. If this is the case, it does not matter who is crafting the policy; what matters is that agents of representation are responsive to citizens' policy needs. We see support for this expectation in Argentina. Yet, in Mexico, policy alone only weakly improves evaluations of institutions. These results suggest that in the Mexican

case, citizens do not view pro-worker policies as credible when white-collar legislators are left to act on behalf of working-class citizens' substantive policy interests.

Do Descriptive and Policy Representation Jointly Enhance Perceptions of Representation?

In this last section, we consider the possibility that the combination of *both* descriptive representation and policy responsiveness to working-class citizens' interests better improve perceptions of representation from the legislature. When members of traditionally marginalized groups gain access to representative institutions, they face a number of formal and informal institutional barriers which may constrain their efforts to change policy. In this sense, if citizens care about pro-working-class policy, as our experimental results from Argentina in Figure 4.4 suggests they do, then the mere presence of workers in the legislature may not fully explain our cross-national findings from Chapter 3, which show that an increase in workers' numeric representation is associated with improved perceptions of representation.

Relatedly, policy responsiveness in the absence of descriptive representation may likewise not fully explain the cross-national findings in Chapter 3. Our experimental results from Mexico in Figure 4.4 suggest that white-collar legislators cannot credibly represent the substantive policy interests of working-class citizens. Were this policy signal credible, we would have expected to see improved perceptions of representation when white-collar deputies promoted pro-worker policy, as opposed to a neutral policy, but this is not what we observed. If legislatures are going to propose policy outcomes that are effective and that actually improve the lives of average citizens, then the class backgrounds of legislators involved in the policymaking process are vitally important. Moreover, having a diversity of voices represented in the deliberative process ensures

that multiple perspectives are incorporated into policy and increases the perceived legitimacy of policy outcomes.

To evaluate our expectation that both descriptive representation of the working-class, as well as the promotion of workers' substantive policy interests, better explain why working-class inclusion fosters improved evaluations of representation cross-nationally, we turn to Figure 4.5. If this combined effect is at work, we should expect to see the largest increases in perceptions of representation when we compare the "white-collar, parks" treatments to the "blue-collar, jobs" treatments. Turning first to Argentina in the top of Figure 4.5, evaluations of representation improve by .18 points ($p < .01$) when participants read about a legislature that provides both descriptive representation and policy responsiveness. This .18-point increase in perceptions of representation is larger than either improvement that comes from descriptive or policy representation on their own.

[Insert Figure 4.5 here]

Figure 4.5 Joint Effect of Descriptive & Policy Representation

Note: Figure 4.5 plots the expected value of respondents' evaluations. Higher values indicate more positive evaluations. Point estimates represent the expected values; bars represent 85 percent confidence intervals. Where bars overlap the predicted values are not significantly different from one another at the 95 percent confidence level (Julious 2004).

Turning next to the Mexico experiment in the bottom of Figure 4.5, similar differences to those we observe in Argentina emerge. When participants read that a newly elected legislature provided working-class citizens both descriptive and policy representation, the average evaluation

of representation improved by .19 points ($p < .01$) compared to the baseline condition in which neither aspect is present. Although on their own, neither descriptive representation, nor policy responsiveness, improve Mexican's perceptions of representation, when combined, they produce a sizeable and significant improvement.

These results suggest several things. First, the default assumption in Mexico is that working-class deputies will not promote working-class citizens' policy interests, and in fact, they may actively work against them. We return to this discussion in Chapter 5. Second, white-collar Mexican deputies cannot credibly signal that they are devoted to pro-worker policy. Finally, when people learn that Mexican legislators with blue-collar occupational backgrounds are actually pursuing pro-worker policies, perceptions of representation improve dramatically.

Conclusion

This chapter addresses the question “*will any worker do?*” by examining the role of policy responsiveness in linking the presence of working-class legislators to citizens' evaluations of political institutions. In Chapter 3, we used cross-national data to show that citizens evaluate representation more positively when working-class deputies hold a higher percentage of seats in the legislature. Yet, our analysis left an important question unanswered. In particular, using the cross-national analysis in Chapter 3 we were unable to adjudicate between three possible explanations for these findings: whether the mere presence of working-class legislators improved citizens' perceptions; whether citizens are more satisfied because of policy responsiveness to working-class interests; or whether a combination of these two factors have a greater effect on improving evaluations of representation.

In this chapter, we began by using original survey data to illustrate that citizens in Argentina are far more likely than those in Mexico to say that working-class deputies understand

ordinary people's problems and promote policies that benefit all citizens. Then, using a survey experiment, we examined how different combinations of representative linkages affect how citizens evaluate political institutions. In Argentina, where individuals were more likely to find working-class politicians relatable and attuned to their needs, the mere presence of workers in the legislature produced a modest improvement in evaluations, even absent policy responsiveness. The same result did not hold in Mexico, where individuals were less likely to believe working-class deputies understand the problems that ordinary citizens encounter in their daily lives. Indeed, in the absence of policy responsiveness, respondents in our Mexico experiment evaluated workers *similar to* white-collar representatives.

Further, as posited in Chapter 2, if policy responsiveness helps to explain why citizens evaluate political institutions positively when workers are in office, then, policy representation should improve citizens evaluations regardless of who makes the policy. That is, so long as an all-upper-class legislature puts working-class, and by extension average Latin American voters' concerns on the policy agenda, citizens should evaluate political institutions more positively. As with our first expectation, we find some evidence of this policy linkage in Argentina. When individuals in our Argentina experiment learned that white-collar legislators were promoting working-class policy interests, their evaluations improved. A similar pattern emerged in our Mexico experiment, but, the difference was not statistically significant.

A final possibility, discussed in Chapter 2, is that *both* working-class inclusion *and* policy responsiveness to working-class citizens may work together to improve how citizens evaluate political institutions. On this front, both of our survey experiments offered support for our argument. Compared to the condition where white-collar legislators were unresponsive to working-class policy interests, political evaluations in both Argentina and Mexico improved

dramatically when blue-collar legislators acted on behalf of their working-class constituents. The combination of working-class descriptive representation and policy representation netted the largest improvement in respondents' evaluations, particularly in the case of Mexico.

In this chapter we find evidence that the combination of working-class descriptive and policy representation leads citizens to feel better represented in both cases. Still, we are left with the puzzle of why descriptive and policy representation on their own only improve evaluations of representation in Argentina. In Mexico, we find more consistent evidence that descriptive representation, absent policies that benefit the working class, is met with backlash. To explain these contrasting findings, and this *Mexican Puzzle*, we turn to an analysis of the historical and institutional linkages between the working class and political parties in the next chapter. As we elaborate in Chapter 5, working-class politicians in Argentina have more autonomy to pursue pro-worker policy and have stronger ties to working-class citizens, whereas in Mexico, working-class deputies have weaker ties to the working class, and at times actively promote policies that go *against* workers' interests. These differing institutional linkages between workers and parties, a result of historical legacies, help us explain many of the differences we observe between Argentina and Mexico.

Appendix 4.1. To what extent do you think working class deputies understand problems that face people like you?

	Argentina	Mexico
Very well/well	42%	33%
<i>Can you explain why you answered well or very well?</i>		
They have empathy with peoples daily lives; have more contact with the people; They understand what workers face	95%	94%
They better know how to improve people’s lives; they know how to provide benefits, laws, policies to help people; they have done certain things, passed laws or policies to help people	5%	6%
Actually, once they reach office they forget about the people; other negative or opposite responses; they may understand problems but don’t do anything about it once in office	13%	5%
Vague or unclear responses	1%	2%
Open-ended response N	397	369
Very poorly/poorly	27%	34%
<i>Can you explain why you answered poorly or very poorly?</i>		
They are corrupt; only care about filling their pockets/getting high salary; use position for own benefit; power corrupts; they are greedy or steal; they only represent their own personal interests; unions are corrupt	55%	42%
The forget where they came from; are disconnected from people or don’t care about the people; no deputy understands; job changes them for the worse	46%	32%
They don’t fulfill promises; policy failures; do nothing in office	10%	19%
Unqualified, unprepared, uneducated; don’t have capacity to understand working class issues or how to resolve them	6%	10%
They only serve party interests/economic elite interests; they serve other political interests, not those of workers; They only support union interests	26%	15%
Think working-class deputies do understand	>1%	2%
Respondent is not working-class; working-class deputies only serve interests of working class; working-class deputies don’t serve other interests outside of their class interests	>1%	3%
Vague or unclear responses	6%	5%
Open-ended response N	244	396

Note: One-third of respondents were told: “In a previous question, you said that working class deputies [*pipe in response: do not understand/understand/do not understand better or worse*] the problems facing people like you. Can you explain to me in 200 words or less why you think this?” Appendix 4.1 codes open-ended responses for those who indicated deputies did or did not understand into multiple categories. N is based on substantive responses (excluding non-sensical responses). Don’t Know/Refused to Answer/Nonsense responses are also not included in overall N. Responses can be classified in more than one category, thus overall percentages do not sum to 100.

Appendix 4.2. To what extent do you think working-class deputies are dedicated to promoting projects that improve the quality of life of all citizens?

	Argentina	Mexico
Very well/well	33%	24%
<i>Can you explain why you answered well or very well?</i>		
They have empathy with people’s daily lives; they have more contact with the people; they understand what workers face, what work is, or what it is like to struggle; They can express a working-class perspective	74%	75%
They better know how to improve people’s lives; how to provide benefits, laws, or policies to help people; they have done certain things, passed laws or policies to help people	30%	26%
Actually, once they reach office they forget about the people; other negative or opposite responses	11%	1%
Vague or unclear responses	6%	10%
Open-ended response N	286	268
Very poorly/poorly	35%	40%
<i>Can you explain why you answered poorly or very poorly?</i>		
They are corrupt; they only care about filling their pockets; they use position for their own benefit; power corrupts	59%	41%
They don’t represent the people; don’t pass laws that help workers; they forget where they came from when they get to congress; don’t keep promises; promote bad policies; don’t work or are lazy	57%	37%
Actually they do care more about the people; they understand what workers face	>1%	1%
They lack education or preparation for the job	6%	10%
They have good intentions but lack power to produce change; parties won’t let workers do anything once in power	1%	3%
They just support the interests of party or business interests; they only support union interests; they support other political interests, not those of workers	27%	21%
They only represent working class, not other groups or other classes	2%	2%
Respondent thinks the whole system is bad, hates the government, thinks all deputies are bad, other anti-system responses	4%	2%
Vague or unclear responses	2%	3%
Open-ended response N	322	442

Note: One-third of respondents were told: “In a previous question, you said that working class deputies [*pipe in response: do not promote/ promote/are not more or less likely to promote*] projects that improve the quality of life of all citizens. Can you explain to me in 200 words or less why you think this?” Appendix 4.2 codes open-ended responses for those who indicated deputies did or did not understand into multiple categories. N is based on substantive responses (excluding non-sinical responses). Don't Know/Refused to Answer/Nonsense responses are also not included in overall N. Responses can be classified in more than one category, thus overall percentages do not sum to 100.

Appendix 4.3 Description of Survey Flow

In early 2019, we partnered with the online survey firm Netquest to recruit approximately 3,000 participants each in Argentina and Mexico from a pre-existing online panel. Netquest used quotas to ensure the resulting samples were nationally representative to sex, education, and age.

In total the survey was approximately 20 minutes in length and included seven separate experiments. Not all respondents participated in every experiment, although everyone took part in the two experiments presented in this book. First, respondents were randomized to participate in one of two experiments about economic inequality. Second, everyone participated in the newspaper experiment that is the focus of this chapter. Third, everyone participated in a hypothetical candidate choice experiment. Forth, everyone participated in the facial image experiment discussed in Chapter 6. Finally, respondents were randomized to participate in one of two experiments related to politician gender.

Each experiment was separated by a battery of unrelated questions. We also included two attention check questions throughout the survey and excluded respondents who failed both of them from the analyses presented in the book. All respondents who completed the survey, including those who failed our attention check questions, were compensated by Netquest with points that can be redeemed for consumer goods and/or gift cards.

At the end of the survey, we asked a battery of questions about respondents' perceptions and evaluations of working-class politicians, as well as their own class status. Importantly, all of these questions related to class perceptions were asked *after* the experiments discussed in this book so as to not prime responses or contaminate the treatments.

Appendix 4.4. Experimental Vignette: Example from Argentina

Respondents received 1 of 12 newspaper vignettes. Respondents were presented with: 1) either the white-collar legislators treatment or the blue-collar legislators treatment, 2) the parks policy treatment or the jobs policy treatment, and 3) no mention of party ID in the legislators treatment, the mention of PJ or Cambiemos in the Argentina experiment, the mention of PRI or Morena in the Mexico experiment. The only differences between the Argentina and Mexico experiments are: a) the replacement of “Provincia de Buenos Aires” with “Estado de México,” and b) the replacement of “trabajador rural” with “campesino” in the blue-collar legislators treatment.

[White-Collar Legislators Treatment]:

Empresarios de la industria manufacturera, profesores universitarios, agricultores, y abogados son algunos de los diputados electos [sin Partido/del PJ/de Cambiemos] en las elecciones pasadas en la Provincia de Buenos Aires.

Por ejemplo:

Carlos Cadena Corona es un empresario y dueño de una fábrica de electrodomésticos. La industria representa una gran parte de la economía de la Provincia.

José Arredondo Dávila es un profesor de ingeniería de la universidad provincial.

Francisco Pacheco Rodríguez es agricultor y dueño de una gran finca que se dedica a sembrar frutas y verduras. Una gran parte de la población de la Provincia se dedica a la agricultura.

Mario Gutiérrez Fernández es abogado de profesión y político.

[Blue-Collar Legislators Treatment]:

Obreros de la industria manufacturera, profesores universitarios, trabajadores rurales, y abogados son algunos de los diputados electos [sin Partido/del PJ/de Cambiemos] en las elecciones pasadas en la Provincia de Buenos Aires.

Por ejemplo:

Carlos Cadena Corona es un obrero y trabajaba en una fábrica de electrodomésticos. La industria representa una gran parte de la economía de la Provincia.

José Arredondo Dávila es un profesor de ingeniería de la universidad provincial.

Francisco Pacheco Rodríguez es un trabajador rural que se dedicaba a sembrar frutas y verduras. Una gran parte de la población de la Provincia se dedica a la agricultura.

Mario Gutiérrez Fernández es abogado de profesión y político.

[Parks Policy Treatment]:

Después de la elección, **los diputados mencionados se dedicaron a promover un proyecto de mejoramiento de los parques públicos** para mejorar la calidad de vida de todos y promover espacios seguros y comunitarios para las familias. En el proyecto de ley, se contempla el establecimiento de un fondo para la reforestación de los parques y la instalación y mantenimiento de juegos infantiles.

[Jobs Policy Treatment]:

Después de la elección, **estos diputados se dedicaron a enfrentar el reto de la gran informalidad laboral y la falta de oportunidades económicas** para una gran parte de la población. Los diputados mencionados presentaron una ley para la creación de un centro de trabajo donde las personas recibirán una beca y las empresas que participan en el centro tendrá la oportunidad de capacitar a los becarios para un puesto de trabajo.

Appendix 4.5 Newspaper Experiment, Predict Perceptions of Representation

	(1) Argentina	(2) Mexico
White-collar jobs	0.12** (0.05)	0.07 (0.06)
Blue-collar parks	0.12** (0.05)	-0.04 (0.06)
Blue-collar jobs	0.18** (0.05)	0.19** (0.06)
Constant	2.78** (0.04)	2.90** (0.04)
Observations	2391	2055
R^2	0.01	0.01

Note: * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$ (standard errors). OLS regression coefficients. The “white-collar legislature, parks policy” treatment dummy variable is excluded as the reference category, so all coefficients can be interpreted in relation to this baseline.

[Insert Figure 4.6_appendix]

Appendix 4.6 Evaluations of Representation, All Treatments

Note: Appendix 4.6 plots the expected value of respondents' evaluations. Higher values indicate more positive evaluations. Point estimates represent the expected values; bars represent 85 percent confidence intervals. Where bars overlap the predicted values are not significantly different from one another at the 95 percent confidence level (Julious 2004). Estimates in each figure are grouped by country. Black plots represent the blue-collar descriptive representation treatments (compared to the white-collar treatments in gray), and diamonds represent the pro-worker policy treatments (compared to the square non-worker policy treatments).

Appendix 4.7 Newspaper Experiment, Including Partisan Treatment

	(1) Argentina	(2) Mexico
White-collar, jobs, no PID	.061 (.083)	.099 (.080)
Blue-collar, parks, no PID	.042 (.088)	-.014 (.079)
Blue-collar, jobs, no PID	.066 (.085)	.160* (.083)
White-collar, parks, PJ/PRI	-.112 (.087)	-.183** (.083)
White-collar, jobs, PJ/PRI	-.002 (.086)	-.073 (.081)
Blue-collar, parks, PJ/ PRI	.019 (.087)	-.243** (.081)
Blue-collar, jobs, PJ/PRI	.136 (.085)	-.017 (.079)
White-collar, parks, Cambiemos/MORENA	-.280** (.088)	.045 (.081)
White-collar, jobs, Cambiemos/MORENA	-.107 (.086)	.038 (.081)
Blue-collar, parks, Cambiemos/MORENA	-.095 (.089)	-.002 (.079)
Blue-collar, jobs, Cambiemos/MORENA	-.052 (.088)	.198** (.081)
Constant	2.903** (.061)	3.005** (.058)
Observations	2391	2803
R^2	.01	.02

Note: The “white-collar, parks, No PID” treatment dummy variable is excluded as the reference category, so all coefficients can be interpreted in relation to this baseline. For ease of interpretation the substantive effects from this analysis are plotted in Appendix 4.8-4.10.

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$ (standard errors). OLS regression coefficients.

Argentina
[Insert Figure 4.8.a_appendix]

Mexico
[Insert Figure 4.8.b_appendix]

Appendix 4.8. Direct Effect of Descriptive Representation with Partisan Treatments

Note: Appendix 4.8 plots the expected value of respondents' evaluations. Higher values indicate more positive evaluations. Point estimates represent the expected values; bars represent 85 percent confidence intervals. Where bars overlap the predicted values are not significantly different from one another at the 95 percent confidence level (Julious 2004). Estimates in each figure are grouped by political party. Black plots represent the blue-collar descriptive representation treatments (compared to the white-collar treatments in gray).

Argentina
[Insert Figure 4.9.a_appendix]

Mexico
[Insert Figure 4.9.b_appendix]

Appendix 4.9 Direct Effect of Policy Representation with Partisan Treatments

Note: Appendix 4.9 plots the expected value of respondents' evaluations. Higher values indicate more positive evaluations. Point estimates represent the expected values; bars represent 85 percent confidence intervals. Where bars overlap the predicted values are not significantly different from one another at the 95 percent confidence level (Julious 2004). Estimates in each figure are grouped by political party. Diamonds represent the pro-worker policy treatments (compared to the square non-worker policy treatments).

Argentina
[Insert Figure 4.10.a_appendix]

Mexico
[Insert Figure 4.10.b_appendix]

**Appendix 4.10 Joint Effect of Descriptive and Policy Representation with Partisan
Treatments**

Note: Appendix 4.10 plots the expected value of respondents' evaluations. Higher values indicate more positive evaluations. Point estimates represent the expected values; bars represent 85 percent confidence intervals. Where bars overlap the predicted values are not significantly different from one another at the 95 percent confidence level (Julious 2004). Estimates in each figure are grouped by the partisanship cued in the treatment. Black plots represent the blue-collar descriptive representation treatments (compared to the white-collar treatments in gray), and diamonds represent the pro-worker policy treatments (compared to the square non-worker policy treatments).

Chapter 5

Will Any Worker Do? Linking Parties to Workers in Argentina and Mexico

“Union leaders warm seats; register little productivity”

—Excelsior, February 21, 2018

With only 6 months left in the three-year long legislative term the second oldest newspaper in Mexico City published a story calling deputies from labor unions nothing more than seat warmers (Rosas 2018). In their role as national deputies, union leaders are unproductive lawmakers, do not speak up on behalf of workers, and consequently, have minimal influence in the Mexican Congress. Notably, Pedro Alberto Salazar, the Secretary General of SINTREM, had yet to introduce a single piece of legislation. Likewise, Manuel Vallejo Barragán, Secretary from the National Union of Social Security Workers has not raised a single point of agreement in favor of the workers he represents. *Excelsior* conceded that some union leaders had at least introduced legislation, but it suggested that their efforts were in vain. Marco Antonio García Ayala’s (President of the National Union for Workers in the Health Ministry) legislative proposals, for instance, were stalled as the PRI had failed to even agitate for his legislation to be taken up in committee.

In Mexico, it is not uncommon for media coverage to report on working-class deputies, often characterizing them as lazy, corrupt, and, on occasion, as actively campaigning against workers’ best interests. Flores (2019) highlights how fifteen of the most powerful union leaders in

the country have been in charge of their unions for decades, rotated in and out of legislative office, and how many have been charged with embezzling resources from their unions. Many of our own survey respondents in Mexico reflect profound skepticism towards working-class deputies. For example, one Mexican respondent from our survey stated:

“In previous legislatures, the deputies who should be protecting working-class interests end up changing their interests according to what their party asks of them or for the economic elites that really control the chamber.”⁵⁶

Thus, it is not immediately obvious, at least in the Mexican case, that more workers in office would improve voter evaluations of their representative institutions.

The above quote and examples from Mexico stand in stark contrast to the modal response we received in Argentina, and from our cross-national evidence. One Argentine survey respondent summed up their perspective on working-class representation nicely:

“They [working-class deputies] know what it is to work to support a family, with dignity. They know what the worker's needs are and the effort required to make ends meet. And I think they take those ideas into the position they occupy.”⁵⁷

This quote coincides with findings in Chapter 3, where we show that voters want to be represented by workers, and Latin American countries with greater levels of working-class representation had

⁵⁶ En anteriores legislaturas los diputados que deberían de proteger los intereses de la clase trabajadora, ya estando en la cámara cambian sus intereses ya sea por su partido que los postulo para el cargo o por intereses de los sectores económicos que son los que realmente lideran en las cámaras

⁵⁷ Porque ellos saben lo que es trabajar para mantener a una familia, dignamente. Saben cuáles son las necesidades del trabajador y el esfuerzo que se hace para llegar a fin de mes. Y creo que llevan esas ideas al puesto que ocupan.

higher levels of institutional trust in legislatures and parties. In Chapter 4, we also demonstrate that in general, voters want to be represented by workers because they are more likely to promote policies favored by many citizens, and individual evaluations of representative institutions are more positive when people are represented by workers who advocate working-class policy interests. Yet, the introductory examples from Mexico demonstrate that workers in office may not always represent workers better. Indeed, we also find in Chapter 4 that Mexicans are more likely to think working-class deputies poorly represent their policy interests compared to Argentines.

To explore this *Mexican puzzle* further, we turn to the role of institutions which structure the relationship between parties and workers. Recall that in Chapter 2 we explained that even though all workers come to office having unique lived experiences that better position them to represent the needs of working-class citizens, once in office workers are faced with a range of competing incentives and opportunities that sometimes preclude their desire and ability to represent working-class interests. We argue for working-class legislators to effectively improve evaluations of representative institutions, they should have strong relationships with the disadvantaged group they represent and be committed to advocating for their policy interests (Dovi 2002).

In this Chapter, we first draw on secondary sources to explain variation in the organizational and institutional linkages between political parties and the working class. To demonstrate the strength of ties between political parties, working-class representatives, and working-class citizens, we engage in process tracing to specify how these ties developed over time. Process tracing is a qualitative approach where we trace the development of several institutional features of party-labor relations in order to better understand how these institutions cause variation in ties between parties and the working class across our two cases (Beach 2016; Pierson 2004).

Since there is no obvious way to quantitatively measure the variation in ties between parties and workers across cases, a qualitative approach is the best way to measure this concept.

As we argued in Chapter 2, and further argue in this Chapter, this variation in ties between parties and the working class is likely to have effects on working-class descriptive representation and on how citizens feel represented. In some cases, political parties establish linkages with organized labor that may actively discourage policy representation of workers, leading to weak ties between workers in office and the average working-class citizen (e.g. Schipani 2022). Drawing on prior research on our two cases, we explain how variation in the organizational ties between political parties and workers produces stronger ties between working-class representatives and citizens in Argentina, and weaker ties in Mexico.

Then, we evaluate a key implication of this argument, namely that where there are more workers in office with weak ties to the average worker, we will observe a negative relationship between descriptive representation and how citizens feel represented. While there is no obvious way to measure variation in party-labor ties in a quantitative analysis, our previous discussion of how these ties vary between Mexico and Argentina leads us to expect a different relationship between the presence of workers in office, and evaluations of democratic institutions. We test this expectation using original time-series data on the presence of workers in office across provinces in Argentina and states in Mexico, paired with nationally representative surveys. We find an increase in the number of workers in office in Mexico decreases trust in legislatures and parties. In Argentina, by contrast, increases in working-class representation are associated with more trust in these institutions. We argue these different relationships found in Argentina and Mexico can be explained by variation in party-labor ties.

This chapter is focused on comparing Argentina and Mexico, two countries that are relatively similar across a number of factors that may explain both working-class access to office and citizens' evaluations of representative institutions. In particular, both cases are relatively large, federal, middle-income countries in Latin America, with major, labor-based political parties that incorporate working-class representatives into their candidate lists. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico, and the Peronist Party (Partido Justicialista, or PJ) in Argentina, incorporated workers' rights into their party platforms and even went so far as to institute quotas for union representatives in their candidate lists. Even today, the way workers gain access to the ballot is similar in the two cases, with party leaders deciding which candidates will represent the party and the order in which their names will appear on the ballot. Both countries also went through periods of neoliberal economic reform in the 1980s and 1990s that altered the relationship between these parties and labor unions. As the power of unions declined in these two cases, as well as across Latin America, both the PRI and the PJ increasingly promoted economic policies at odds with the interests of their working-class supporters (Chambers-Ju 2021; Levitsky 2003; Posner, Patroni, and Mayer 2018; Stokes 2001; Murillo 2001).

Despite these similarities, in the past thirty years, the relationship between labor unions and political parties has taken different trajectories in Mexico and Argentina; this variation has important implications for citizen's evaluations of working-class representation. As we explain in this chapter, Argentina and Mexico differ on a number of important dimensions that condition the relationship between working-class descriptive representation and citizens' evaluations of representative institutions. Put briefly, in Argentina representatives from the working-class have stronger ties to working-class citizens and a better track record of policy representation than do working-class representatives in Mexico.

In this chapter we first introduce these cases and then draw on existing research to demonstrate: 1) how institutional linkages between parties and organized labor can either strengthen or weaken the political power of the working class, and 2) how parties vary in nominating working-class representatives that are accountable to their working-class base. After we identify differences in the strength of ties between parties and workers in Argentina and Mexico, we show that increases in working-class representation in these two different settings are associated with starkly different levels of trust in legislatures and parties. The qualitative analysis used to explain variation in party-labor ties across our two cases helps us explain why we observe different relationships between the number of workers in office and trust in institutions in Argentina and Mexico.

The Roots of Worker’s Representation in Argentina and Mexico

Historically, labor unions have been key players in Argentine and Mexican politics. In both countries labor unions have authoritarian legacies, corporatist traditions, and enduring partisan loyalties with the PJ in Argentina and the PRI in Mexico (Bensusán 2016; Collier and Collier 2002; Chambers-Ju and Finger 2017; McGuire 1997; Murillo 2001). Moreover, both the PJ and PRI have a long track record of nominating workers to run for congress. Here we describe some of the key similarities between labor unions, parties, and workers’ access to political office that elucidate why a comparison of Argentina and Mexico is particularly appropriate. Then, in the following two sections, we describe how these two cases diverge in important ways.

Roots of Working-Class Representation in Argentina

Working-class representation has historically been high in Argentina. In the 1950s the Peronist Party instituted an informal quota, reserving thirty-three percent of positions on the Peronist ballot for labor union representatives (Micozzi 2018). As we show in Chapter 1, however, since the 1980s, the number of working-class deputies has declined. Not only did the Peronist Party manufacture descriptive representation of the working class, but labor unions also wielded substantial bargaining power within the party, meaning that working-class representatives from labor unions were able to effectively advocate for workers' policy interests (Murillo 2001; Posner, Patroni and Mayer 2018). As Calvo and Moscovich (2017, 8) explain: unions used their strength and numbers to "drive party politics and challenge policies they disliked." Research on Argentina systematically demonstrates that working-class descriptive representation is associated with the advancement of policies that benefit working-class citizens (Micozzi 2018; Carnes and Lupu 2015). For this reason, it is difficult to disentangle whether increases in descriptive representation alone, or improved substantive representation, is associated with better evaluations of representative institutions using observational data in Argentina.

However, working-class representation is intrinsically connected to the Peronist Party. "Unions were the backbone of the "Resistance" between 1955 and 1974, carrying the banner of the party when Perón was exiled and the Peronism brand was under proscription" (Calvo and Moscovich 2017, 8). Even though empirical evidence shows that representatives with direct ties to labor unions are more likely to advance workers' interests than their co-partisans in the Peronist Party (Micozzi 2018), it is unclear if citizens draw distinctions between working-class descriptive representation and the Peronist Party. Moreover, given the strong party discipline and unified party fronts advanced in the Argentine political system (Jones 1996; Calvo 2007, 2014) it is unclear if citizens view working-class representation as key to advancing their policy positions, or if they

credit the Peronist Party for championing their policy interests. In any case, the Peronist Party has long-standing credible ties to the working class, at least more so than any other party in the Argentine party system, and it is more likely they will advocate for policies favored by many workers.

Nevertheless, working-class deputies and union leaders in Argentina have been known to publicly oppose Peronists and other parties when they advance policies that are bad for workers. During the Peronist administrations of the Kirchners, there were numerous examples of the major Argentine labor confederations publicly conflicting with the government. In 2003 alone, there were nearly 200 labor disputes against Nestor Kirchner's economic policies, and in 2006, the newly elected head of the CTA federation vowed not to give "*ni un milímetro de sumisión al Gobierno*" or "a millimeter of submission to the government" of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (La Nación 2006). Later during the 2007 Argentine presidential campaign, transport union leader Hugo Moyano openly challenged Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and demanded to be taken into account in her eventual administration (La Nación 2007). Following the Peronist victory in the 2019 presidential election, President-elect Alberto Fernández organized talks to reconcile a decades-long rift between the CTA and CGT confederations. During these talks, the CTA leader mentioned that whoever takes over the newly unified confederation must be "a representative of the workers who is ready to resist if the next [Peronist] government wants to move forward with labor and pension reforms" (Infobae 2019).

Roots of Working-Class Representation in Mexico

As in Argentina, Mexican workers historically enjoyed high levels of descriptive representation in the legislature, but those numbers have declined over time as shown in Chapter

1. Unlike in Argentina, however, working-class legislators, at least since the 1980s, have often had weaker representative ties to working-class citizens. After the Mexican Revolution, the PRI developed a corporatist arrangement in which labor and peasant organizations were coopted and closely tied to the party and the state. Over time, this arrangement resulted in intense competition between different labor unions, thus eroding organized labor's autonomy from the party and its ability to extract pro-worker policy concessions from the government. Ultimately today, many PRI-affiliated Mexican labor unions are known to actively campaign against workers' substantive policy interests (Posner, Patroni and Mayer 2018).

Recall the example from Chapter 2, where working-class legislators from the PRI failed to advocate for workers' best interests in legislative debates over major energy reforms (Montalvo 2014). Lance Compa (2003, 4) summarizes the co-option of Mexican working-class deputies nicely: "Instead of acting independently to carry out programs developed by their members and bargain freely with employers, many unions subordinated their functions to government dictates. In return for seats in Congress set aside for union officials and favored treatment by successive PRI presidents and labor secretaries, union leaders delivered their members' votes to PRI candidates."

Unlike research in Argentina systematically demonstrating working-class deputies advocate on behalf of workers, recent empirical work on the legislative effectiveness of Mexican federal deputies over the 1997-2018 period finds union-affiliated legislators to be some of the least effective lawmakers. Among union-affiliated deputies, 49 percent did not sponsor a single bill, compared to only 24 percent of all other deputies (Bárcena Juárez and Kerevel 2022). These findings coincide with basic descriptive statistics reported in the news, like the ones in the opening

pages of this chapter, and examples provided in Chapter 2, which indicate that working-class deputies lag behind their colleagues in their legislative activity (Rosas 2018).

In addition to their lack of legislative activity, many high-profile union leaders and legislators have been accused or convicted of corruption, often through embezzlement of union resources. Most recently, Carlos Romero Deschamps, who has served three terms as federal deputy and two terms as senator under the PRI, was forced out of his leadership position of the national oil workers union after being charged with several counts of corruption (Los Angeles Times 2019). The above-mentioned Deputy Victor Flores has also been accused of illicit enrichment through his position as railroad worker union leader, along with numerous other long-time union leaders who move in and out of legislative office (Flores 2019). Overall, the lack of legislative activity among union-affiliated deputies, the apparently high levels of corruption among many union leaders, and the rotation in and out of legislative office of many of these same leaders, suggest many working-class deputies do not use their office to further the interests of ordinary workers.

Until recently, most workers elected to office were affiliated with the PRI. However, the formation of the new left-leaning National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) in 2014 has changed the dynamics of working-class representation in Mexico. MORENA was founded by Mexico's current president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a two-time presidential candidate for the PRD and former Mexico City mayor. AMLO and MORENA have consistently had a pro-poor platform that advocates for numerous social welfare policies. The party has also, since 2015, adopted candidate selection processes that have dramatically increased the number of working-class candidates nominated and elected under the party's banner.

Following AMLO's 2018 election to the presidency, the party has promoted several new policies that strongly favor the working class. For example, by 2019 a major reform of Mexican

labor law was passed that eliminated the practice of signing collective-bargaining agreements between employers and unions that were done without the knowledge or consent of workers themselves (Montes 2018). The labor reform also democratized labor unions, ending the long-standing authoritarianism within Mexican labor unions that previously allowed the PRI to exert substantial control over workers, as we explain below (Noticias al Día 2019). Unsurprisingly, the recent labor reform has been met with resistance from the PRI-aligned CTM labor confederation. The CTM, led by current PRI Senator Carlos Aceves del Olmo, is trying to use the courts to block the implementation of several aspects of the labor reform to slow down or prevent the introduction of greater internal democracy within unions and the revision of collective contracts (Becerril 2019; Mejía 2019). Thus, unlike the PRI, MORENA is a party that appears to not only nominate a substantial number of working-class representatives, but also is more credible in its ability to advance reforms that benefit the working class.

This comparison illustrates that Argentine working-class deputies better represent workers than do Mexican working-class deputies. But, it is not the case that working-class deputies have never faltered in Argentina. They too face competing incentives and sometimes make political calculations that compel them to turn their backs on workers and align with the government or business interests. Rather, it is our contention that all things considered, union leaders and working-class deputies have done more to gain citizens trust than the average elite deputy in Argentina. As a result, we anticipate that their presence in office will engender better evaluations of representative institutions.

Institutional Linkages: Parties and Labor Unions in Argentina and Mexico

As we argued in Chapter 2, some parties develop organizational linkages with labor unions, which often are responsible for increasing the number of workers elected to legislatures. However, the nature of these party ties to workers often varies across countries. As we explain below, the way in which labor was incorporated into the party system, through the PJ in Argentina and the PRI in Mexico, has led to stronger ties between working-class representatives and the average worker in Argentina compared to Mexico.

First, political parties may establish organizational ties to the working class that serve to weaken labor, allowing the party to exert substantial control over working-class organizations, or they may establish ties to the working class that strengthen labor. In Mexico, the PRI has limited the autonomy of organized labor from the party, and fostered competition between different PRI-affiliated labor confederations, to weaken the ability of unions to extract policy concessions from the party. In effect, the PRI incorporated organized labor movements into the party to control workers and to serve other party and state interests, often to the detriment of the working class. In contrast, labor unions in Argentina were more autonomous from the PJ, and the PJ did not attempt to foster competition between labor confederations to the same extent as in Mexico, which allowed labor unions to extract greater policy concessions from the party. Thus, the greater autonomy between organized labor and the PJ compared to Mexico, worked to the benefit of workers in Argentina.

Second, political parties may nominate working-class representatives with weaker or stronger ties to unions and working-class constituencies. The PRI has often nominated union leaders with weak ties to rank-n-file labor, primarily because the party and labor union leadership

have opposed internal democracy within unions, and limited shop-floor representation. In contrast, in Argentina there is greater democracy within unions, and more shop-floor representation, thus allowing workers to hold their leadership accountable and making it more difficult for party leaders to pressure working-class representatives to defect from the demands of their constituencies.

A Brief Background on Labor Union Ties to Parties in Mexico and Argentina

Historically, Mexico's PRI has been organized into three corporatist sectors: the labor sector, dominated by the Mexican Worker's Confederation (CTM) although several other national confederations tied to the PRI also existed (e.g., CROM, CROC); the peasant sector dominated by the National Campesino Confederation (CNC); and the heterogeneous popular sector, which included unionized bureaucrats, teachers and healthcare workers (Chambers-Ju 2021; Middlebrook 1995; Murillo 2001). These national confederations were supported by the state, were incorporated into the PRI's party structure, and individual union members were automatically affiliated with the PRI through their union's association with one of the confederations. Attempts to form independent unions were often violently repressed, which limited labor organization outside the PRI. During the PRI's dominance from the 1930s to the 1980s, the corporatist sectors served as the electoral machinery of the party and as a reward for their loyalty, numerous worker and peasant representatives from each sector were granted seats in the legislature (Middlebrook 1995; Murillo 2001; Langston 2017).

In Argentina the origins of the Peronist movement trace back to 1940. Although the labor unions were a foundation of the Peronist movement, by the time Perón created the Peronist Party in 1946, labor unions had already developed substantial power and autonomy (McGuire 1997, 18). Indeed, Collier and Collier (2002) suggest that by the 1940s Argentina had the strongest labor

unions in Latin America. Despite their strength, union leaders were largely unaffiliated with political parties prior to the emergence of the Peronist Party. Perón leveraged the strength of labor unions in 1946 to launch himself into the presidency (Murillo 2001, 27), thus, marking the political incorporation of unions. As with the PRI in Mexico, the Peronists in Argentina developed a corporatist arrangement wherein labor unions were closely tied to the Peronist party and to the state. Although individual unions maintained considerably more power and autonomy than unions in Mexico, the CGT staff were “handpicked” by Juan and Eva Perón (McGuire 1997, 18).

Although unions’ relationship with the Peronist Party were critical for the political incorporation of workers, over the last few decades many of the major unions have split with the Peronists which, as we discuss below, has implications for their political power. Still, citizens in Argentina draw connections between organized labor and Peronism today. As a respondent in our Argentine online survey put it: “[Working-class deputies] are friends of the Peronist movement that bears my flag, they clearly represent my interests and those of all Argentine citizens who work.”⁵⁸

Labor unions in Mexico and Argentina are very similar in many respects. That said, there are important differences in the institutional structure of unions in both countries, and how they are tied to political parties, which we argue are critical for understanding whether increases in working-class representation will foster trust in political institutions or trigger backlash. In the section that follows, we discuss four key features of labor unions that vary across Argentina and

⁵⁸ Son compañeros y compañeras del movimiento justicialista que lleva mi bandera, claramente representa mis intereses y el del resto de los ciudadanos argentinos que trabajamos.

Mexico: 1) union competition, 2) union autonomy from parties, 3) internal democracy, and 4) shop floor representation (Bensusán 2016).

To preview, we explain how union competition and union autonomy shape organizational linkages between parties and labor unions, and how internal democracy within unions and shop-floor representation structure ties between working-class representatives and working-class constituents. Variation in these four features structure institutional linkages between parties and workers. They serve to weaken ties to workers in Mexico, but strengthen ties in Argentina. As a result, we argue that increases in the representation of working-class representatives in Mexico will incite backlash, undermining trust in the legislature and political parties. In Argentina, by contrast, we expect to observe the opposite relationship—descriptive representation of the working class will help restore trust in agents of representation. To understand why this is the case it is necessary to consider how unions vary across these four dimensions.

Before proceeding, however, it is important to note that labor politics in Mexico are currently in flux. The 2018 election of president Andrés Manuel López Obrador shows some renewed promise for worker's rights. President López Obrador vowed to eliminate protection contracts that isolate factories from labor unrest. In keeping with his promises, on International Workers Day, May 1, 2019, the President signed into law a reform that afforded workers collective bargaining and the rights to select labor union leaders. López Obrador and his new MORENA party seek to overhaul nearly a century of authoritarian labor politics supported by the PRI. It remains to be seen whether these new rules will be enough to restore working-class deputies' ties with workers and incentivize them to represent workers in office. However, our empirical analysis below all relies on data collected before the election of López Obrador. Therefore, we only briefly touch on some recent changes to Mexican labor politics in this chapter.

Union Competition Weakens the Political Power of Workers in Office

The first key difference between unions in Mexico and Argentina is that union competition is more pervasive in Mexico at the national level than in Argentina (Murillo 2001, 51). Union competition—or competition between unions over members from the same labor sector—impedes unions' ability to extract policy concessions from the government. As Murillo explains, when labor unions have to compete among one another for the same members it is more difficult for unions to coordinate and diminishes their power. In particular, competition between unions introduces a collective action problem wherein unions have to coordinate amongst themselves to extract policy concessions from the government. Unions have little incentive to coordinate because it obfuscates the differences between unions and detracts from their ability to compete for membership. As a result, when competition is high, parties can exploit competition to weaken the ability of working-class representatives to successfully bargain for policy outcomes favorable to the average worker.

In Mexico, competition occurred between PRI-affiliated confederations. Although the PRI was dominated by the Mexican Worker's Confederation (CTM), several other national confederations tied to the PRI competed for workers from the same sectors (e.g., CROM, CROC). Competition over the same workers reduced each union's ability to extract policy concessions. For example, when President Carlos Salinas began advocating a series of market-oriented reforms after his election in 1988, he was able to secure the support of most union leaders for these reforms without granting many concessions. Rather than negotiating with union leaders, he shifted resources away from the CTM—i.e., the confederation making the most policy demands—inducing CTM-affiliated unions to leave the confederation and align with the CROC or CROM where they could obtain more resources (Murillo 2001, 108). Union competition over the same

members disincentivized coordination, leaving the CTM little incentive to coordinate with the CROC and CROM to extract policy concessions from the government. The CTMs decision to act alone enabled the government to not only ignore its demands, but also to punish the CTM for making more demands than the other confederations.

Competition over workers in the same industry persists today. As of 2018, forty-three percent of all labor unions are represented by either the CTM, CROC, or CROM (Luna 2018). Each of these confederations is politically aligned with the PRI. Union competition bolsters the PRI's political stranglehold over unions, leaving unions with limited ability to extract policy concessions from the government. While the election of López Obrador in 2018 and the passing of major labor reforms has weakened the PRI and its affiliated unions, competition over workers may persist with the addition of new MORENA-affiliated unions. Two relatively newer labor confederations, the Autonomous Confederation of Workers and Employees of Mexico (CATEM) and the International Confederation of Workers (CIT) are both led by MORENA senators (Rivera and Sánchez 2019; Badillo 2019) and appear to be growing.

In Argentina, by contrast, union competition over workers in the same sector is considerably lower than in Mexico and this aided unions in extracting policy concessions during the neo-liberal reforms in the mid-1990s. With a brief exception during the early 1990s, most labor unions in Argentina were unified under the CGT, which represents one out of every five workers, and nearly two-thirds of unionized workers in Argentina. Specifically, two factions formed within the CGT, the populist CGT-Azopardo which rejected market reforms and the CGT-San Martín which supported market reforms (McGuire 1997). As was the case in Mexico, the Peronist government took advantage of these divisions to manipulate union competition by reducing state resources to the populist faction, triggering union members of the populist faction to defect to the

better resourced, pro-government faction. Union leaders were aware divisions within the CGT allowed the government to manipulate union competition and weakened their ability to bargain. As Murillo (2001, 151) explains, divisions within the CGT cost unions “control over welfare funds, decrees restraining wage bargaining and strike activity in the public services, and the employment law.” This weakened ability to bargain over policy outcomes motivated the factions to reunify in 1992. The reunification resulted in the CGT having a near monopoly over union power.

The other notable split in the CGT also occurred in 1991 when a separatist group comprised mainly of public-sector workers and teachers formed the CTA (*Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina*). In late 2019, nearly three decades after the split, the leader of the CTA began talks to reunify with the CGT. Although there is some resistance against reunification in both confederations, and the ultimate reunification is uncertain, labor leaders recognized the need to reunify after four years of economic austerity under Macri’s Cambiemos administration “in order to continue defending the workers” (Galván 2019).

Thus, whereas Salinas and the PRI exploited union competition in Mexico to disincentivize unions from making demands, Murillo explains that because of the reunification of the CGT in Argentina during the neo-liberal reform period under Peronist President Menem, government officials had an incentive to cooperate with loyal union leaders by granting policy concessions in an effort to keep union members happy and offset the likelihood that loyal leaders would be displaced by populist leaders.⁵⁹ Since the neo-liberal reforms, the CGT has faced some opposition, challenging the unity of labor unions in Argentina. Nonetheless, the unification in 1992

⁵⁹ The teachers unions, by contrast, compete over the same workers and were unable to extract concessions from Menem (Murillo 2001, 167).

demonstrated the unions' ability and willingness to unify when their bargaining powers were compromised and increased their ability to effectively bargain on behalf of workers' rights.

The ability of unions to negotiate policy concessions during the critical neo-liberal reforms in Argentina and their inability to do so in Mexico in many ways established powerful legacies regarding unions' abilities and willingness to advocate for workers. Moreover, in the case of Mexico, neo-liberal reforms in the 1990s cemented labor relations. That is, until recently, union links to political parties have changed very little in Mexico since the 1990's with union leaders having done very little to distance themselves from the PRI despite the negative effects these reforms had on their working-class base (Compa 2003).⁶⁰ While some corporatist unions allied with the National Action Party (PAN) following the democratic transition in 2000, the PAN elected to reproduce a similar relationship with union leaders as the one that existed under PRI governments (Posner, Patroni and Mayer 2018). Neoliberal reforms in Argentina eroded union linkages with the PJ to a greater extent than in Mexico (Levitsky 2003; Stokes 2001).

In Argentina, despite the reunification of the CGT in 1992, a number of factions have emerged within CGT throughout time, with some notable disunity in 2012 which was not resolved until 2016. Nonetheless, Murillo (2001) explains that the confederation in Argentina is more accountable to the union members than in Mexico. In Mexico, every union has the same amount of power or influence in the confederation regardless of union membership—this disempowers

⁶⁰ The one major exception is the large exit of teachers union (SNTE) legislative representatives from the PRI in 2005/2006, which led to the formation of the New Alliance Party (PANAL). Nevertheless, with few exceptions, PANAL has been a close ally of the PRI in the legislature since the split.

individual unions and concentrates power in the hands of CTM leadership. In Argentina, by contrast, larger unions yield more power. As a result, even when there is disunity among unions in Argentina, the largest unions continue to exert more control over the CGT, which facilitates the policy negotiation process. In sum, while both the PRI and PJ attempted to play different unions off one another during the neoliberal reform period in order to limit policy concessions to workers, the PRI has more thoroughly promoted competition between labor confederations compared to the PJ, which weakened the power of PRI-affiliated unions to represent their working-class base much more so than in Argentina.

Union Autonomy Strengthens the Political Power of Workers in Office

Second, union autonomy—which refers to the a union’s ability to engage in collective organization, bargaining, and conflict resolution *without* state intervention (O’Connell 1999)—structures a union’s opportunities and incentives to represent workers. When labor unions have autonomy from parties and from the state, union representatives in political office have stronger incentives to represent workers (rather than party or state interests). Although legally the two countries have similar levels of union autonomy, in practice Mexico has higher levels of extra-legal state intervention (O’Connell 1999), rendering the overall level of union autonomy lower in Mexico than in Argentina (Bensusán 2016). The comparably high levels of union autonomy in Argentina, incentivize union representatives to advocate for workers’ policy interests.

In Mexico unions have limited autonomy from political parties. Despite significant resources allocated towards unions, the state retains substantial control over the distribution of resources and there are very high barriers to entry for the emergence of new labor unions. Instead, parties use unions to maintain control over workers in the interests of the government and

employers. Rather than establishing collective agreements intended to protect workers' rights, "Experts have estimated that some 90 percent of all collective agreements filed with the Mexican labor department are fraudulent "protection contracts" or "pretend contracts" meant only to block real unions from forming" (Bouzas 2003; Compa 2003, 15). Where workers attempted to form independent unions free of CTM control, employers engaged in mass firings and closed plants, or in more extreme cases, violence and repression (Bensusán 2004; O'Connell 1999). When elections are held to decide whether independent unions can come to power to displace established unions, there are no secret ballots. Workers are typically forced to report their votes to the reigning union leader, the factory owner, and government officials who adopt intimidation tactics and threaten workers jobs and physical safety (Compa 2003).

To understand the magnitude of this problem, consider the story of factory worker Rubin Ruiz (Bacon 2019). In 1994, after experiencing adverse working conditions and sustaining an injury in the auto factory where he worked, Ruiz galvanized a group of colleagues in STIMAHCS, an independent metalworkers union, to organize and advocate for improved working conditions. The workers were subsequently informed that they were already "represented" by a union within the CTM. The union had entered into a protection contract that essentially protected the company from labor complaints and unrest. The human rights manager informed Ruiz that joining another union was a violation of the company's policy and he was fired from his job. Despite the company's efforts to deter workers from unionizing under a new organization, in 1997 the workers staged an election to decide which union they wanted to represent them. These efforts were met with severe violence and repression. The government was complicit in the efforts to suppress independent union formation. Journalist David Bacon (2019, 2) described the election events this way:

“before the election, a state police agent drove a car filled with rifles into the plant. Two busloads of strangers arrived, armed with clubs and copper rods. During the voting, workers were escorted by CTM functionaries past the club and rifle-wielding strangers. Some workers were forcibly kept in a part of the factory to keep them from voting. At the polling station, employees were asked aloud which union they favored, in front of management and CTM representatives. [In response] STIMAHCS tried to get the election canceled. But the government body administering it, the Conciliation and Arbitration Board (JCA), went ahead, even after thugs roughed up one of the independent union’s organizers. Predictably, STIMAHCS lost... [This] election has been a symbol of all that’s gone wrong with Mexico’s labour law, which provides protection on paper for workers seeking to organize but which has been routinely undermined by a succession of governments bent on using a low-wage workforce to attract foreign investment.”

The PRI lost the presidential election in 2000, creating for the first time an opportunity for workers to break with the PRI and align with another political party. A new alliance between workers and the PAN could have better positioned workers to advocate for and expand their rights. Indeed, initially political observers predicted: “The ouster from power of Mexico’s Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) after 71 years promised to rupture the longtime alliance among organized labor, the state, and the PRI. A transition to a democratic political regime would make possible for the first time a shift away from an authoritarian-corporatist system of industrial relations toward a democratic model of labor governance” (quoted in Compa 2003, 7-8). Nonetheless, this transition never happened under PAN governments, nor did the PAN take an interest in workers. The PAN did not make good on its promise to democratize labor unions (Posner, Patroni and Mayer 2018). Although the PRI’s loss of the presidency in 2000 did provide a minor increase in autonomy for labor organization, democratization brought little change in this corporatist arrangement to benefit workers. As Graciela Bensusán (2016, 144) explains, without internal democracy and transparency (which we discuss below), “...this autonomy merely translated into greater opportunities for corruption and collusion with employers, further eroding the public image of unions while lining the pockets of union leaders.”

As a matter of fact, similar stories surfaced from factory workers across other industries under successive PAN presidencies. For instance, textile workers from a large apparel factory in Puebla, Mexico described exploitive working conditions. As Gabriela Tejeda, a garment worker, put it: “The company was not paying our wages on time. That was on top of all the other problems—dirty bathrooms and a dirty cafeteria, forced overtime without overtime pay, locking us in the factory until we met production quotas, verbal abuse, lack of transportation, and more” (cited in Compa 2003, 39). When she and her colleagues organized to form the Union of Matamoros Garment Workers to advocate for better working conditions, leaders of the organization Gabriela and Liliana Tejeda were threatened that: “contractors would pull out if we formed an independent union. He warned us that the leaders would become known as troublemakers and never find work in this area” (Liliana Tejeda cited in Compa 2003, 39). Gabriela and Liliana reported being followed and photographed by men. In the wake of these threats, other union members quit attending meetings. Time and time again, worker’s efforts to advocate for their wellbeing by forming independent unions are obstructed and the government continues to turn a blind eye to workers’ rights to organize.

In Argentina, by contrast, unions have more autonomy from political parties. Bensusán (2016) explains that in Argentina, because wage workers comprised a majority of the population, unions were able to maintain more autonomy than in Mexico where wage workers were a minority, despite the similarities of the state-corporatist institutional design in both countries. In Argentina unions, at least through the late 1990s, were a central part of the Peronist Party structure and they wielded substantial power within the party. Unlike in Mexico, the relationship between unions and the Peronist Party was more give and take. Because unions had access to state resources and maintained important political networks, they were able to leverage resources to turn out voters

for the Party (Gibson and Calvo 1996). Their critical role whipping the votes meant they were able to maintain substantial influence over candidate selection (Levitsky 2003).

For instance, Levitsky (2003, 51) points out their ability to provide the party with a number of political benefits was “double-edged” for the Peronists because unions and other semi-autonomous organizations “limited Menem’s capacity to impose leaders, candidates, and strategies on lower-level branches. As a result, local and provincial Peronist organizations remained surprisingly ‘un-Menemised’ at the end of the 1990s.” Thus, as a result of their autonomy, unions continued to wield some influence over candidate selection, and working-class politicians elected through the Peronist Party owed their loyalties to the unions and to workers, not exclusively to the Party. This relationship is important because, throughout history, it has enabled labor union leaders to constrain politicians. Ultimately, the degree of union autonomy in Argentina gives unions more control over the substantial resources acquired through dues paying members, high union memberships, and other funding sources.

To recap, competition and union autonomy are important for understanding how institutions structure the relationship between labor unions and political parties. The relationship between unions and parties defines union deputies’ abilities and incentives to represent workers. Internal democracy and shop-floor representation, by comparison, inform our understanding of working-class representatives (often leaders of labor unions) ties directly to working-class constituents. As we explain below, this link is equally important for understanding whether working-class deputies represent workers in office. We turn first to internal democracy.

Internal Democracy Strengthens Ties to the Working Class

Internal democracy refers to worker's ability to choose their own union leaders through democratic procedures. When workers select their own leaders—i.e., when internal democracy within unions is strong—union-affiliated legislators are accountable to working-class constituents. As a result, they are more likely to represent the workers in office. Absent internal democracy, parties nominate union leaders, and union-affiliated legislators are thus accountable to parties, not constituents. As we explain, unions in Argentina have higher levels of internal democracy than those in Mexico.

Unions in Mexico have little internal democracy, although the recent 2019 labor reform seeks to change the long-standing authoritarian nature of union politics. In addition to not having the ability to choose which unions represent them, workers also do not get to choose their union leaders (Bensusán 2016; Compa 2003). The government oversees union's internal procedures and the election of union leaders. As a result, union leaders have little incentive to represent workers and workers do not have mechanisms to hold union leaders accountable. This authoritarian approach to selecting union leaders thus reinforces the lack of power among rank-and-file workers. Combined, the low levels of internal democracy and union autonomy, the institutions governing state-labor relations, and the nature of relations between labor leaders and workers in Mexico, do not facilitate or encourage unions to represent workers, leaving Bensusán (2016, 144) to conclude that in Mexico the role of unions as the “defenders of workers’ interests” has deteriorated precipitously over the last three decades, thus undermining unions’ credibility and legitimacy among workers.

Unions in Argentina have substantially more internal democracy than in Mexico. Labor relations in Argentina are currently governed by the 1988 Law on Union Association (*Ley 23.551 – Asociaciones Sindicales*), which stipulates that union statutes contain “electoral regimes that

ensure internal democracy in accordance with the principles of law” (Articles 8 and 16) and “30 percent female representation in representative and elective positions” (Article 18).⁶¹ And, despite some notable failed efforts to improve internal democracy in Argentina’s major unions, attempts to strengthen the internal democracy of unions are ongoing. In 2014, Deputy Facundo Moyano, who along with his father has strong ties to organized labor, introduced legislation that would have guaranteed direct elections of unions’ boards of directors by union members and remove requirements to stand for election (LaPolíticaOnline 2014). The proposed legislation was part of a broader effort led by deputies like Moyano to improve democratization in Argentina’s trade unions. Although Moyano’s proposal ultimately failed to garner support in the Congress, the Argentine government once again attempted to democratize the internal structure of the country’s trade unions in 2017. The Ministry of Labor issued an official bulletin that included a series of recommendations for unions – one of which was elections for union boards of directors (Boletín Oficial 2017). Although moves like Deputy Moyano’s 2014 ultimately failed, they nonetheless had the backing of labor confederations like the CGT-Azopardo (the populist wing of the Confederation). Even though workers in Argentina still do not have the right to elect union boards of directors, they nonetheless have influence over the selection of union leaders which results in accountability between workers and leaders. Indeed, democracy within unions is critical for ensuring that union leaders represent workers’ interests when negotiating agreements with the government and employers.

⁶¹Retrieved from: <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/20000-24999/20993/texact.htm>

Shop Floor Representation strengthens ties between workers and their representatives

A final point of comparison for Argentina and Mexico is shop floor representation. Shop floor representation refers to workers' direct representation (Basualdo 2011). In some countries shop floor representatives—or shop stewards—are union members who are elected from among wage workers within each factory. The election is typically regulated by law and the number of representatives from each factory is proportional to the number of wage workers in the firm. Shop floor representation is critical for linking workers to union leaders and union representatives in government. When unions have representatives within the workplace, union-affiliated legislators have a direct connection to the needs and wants of ordinary workers. The day-to-day interactions between shop stewards and rank-and-file wage workers ensure that workers needs are heard and transmitted to unions. As a result, they are more likely to know and represent workers' interests. Thus, shop floor representation fosters stronger relationships between workers and their representatives.

In Mexico, union representatives have very little presence on the shop floor, meaning that union representatives are disconnected from workers. In fact, as illustrated in the previous examples of Rubin Ruiz and Gabriela Tejeda and Liliana Tejeda, it is not uncommon for workers to be all together unaware that they are represented by a union because union presence is largely absent from the workplace (e.g., Bacon 2019; Compa 2003). As a result, leaders are unlikely to be privy to workers' needs and they have fewer incentives to represent their interests.

In Argentina, by contrast, shop floor representation is guaranteed by law, and union representatives have historically had a strong presence in the workplace. Shop stewards form a

committee charged with “representing all workers in a certain factory and of collecting and conveying their demands regarding work conditions, health issues, wages, and any other specific complaints workers may have” (Basualdo 2011, 306). Although shop-floor representation weakened after the transition to democracy in 1983, recently there has been a resurgence. According to one study, just over 50 percent of large firms (200 + workers), 28 percent of medium firms (40 to 200 workers) and 7 percent of small firms (less than 40 workers) have shop-floor representatives (Atzeni and Ghigliani 2008). Although these statistics do not reflect the optimal level of shop floor representation, the enduring presence of shop stewards in over half of Argentina’s large firms indicates that a substantial share of workers have direct ties to unions. Equally important, for our purposes, these statistics provide evidence that unions’ ties to workers are stronger in Argentina than in Mexico.

To summarize, four key features of labor unions vary between Argentina and Mexico: union competition, union autonomy, internal democracy, and shop floor representation. These characteristics of labor unions serve to either strengthen or weaken working-class representatives’ ties to workers. Taken together, the proceeding discussion demonstrates that both Mexico and Argentina have faced some struggles in establishing, maintaining, and strengthening working-class representatives’ ties to working-class citizens. Working-class legislators in neither country are beyond reproach. As a matter of fact, we can point to several examples of Argentine representatives failing to articulate or advocate for workers’ substantive policy interests. They too face competing incentives and sometimes make political calculations that compel them to turn their backs on workers and align with the government or corporations.

At the same time, far more features of the Argentine system work to foster connections between workers and working-class representatives. Thus, all told, Argentina has done a

substantially better job than Mexico in sustaining representative linkages to the working class. As a result, we anticipate the presence of workers in office will engender better evaluations of representative institutions in Argentina. We anticipate the opposite in Mexico. Since working-class deputies often neglect workers' interests at best, and actively undermine them at worst, we expect Mexican citizens will be skeptical of working-class deputies. In the next section, we evaluate this expectation by leveraging state/provincial-level variation in working-class representation over time to analyze trust in political institutions in Mexico and Argentina.

Evaluating our Expectations: Comparing Trust in Institutions in Argentina and Mexico

Now that we have established working-class deputies' weaker ties to workers in Mexico compared to Argentina, we evaluate whether working-class deputies in Mexico provoke backlash. In order to test this part of the argument, we develop a new dataset that traces working-class representation across Argentina and Mexico. Then, using our original data on the occupational backgrounds of Mexican and Argentine national deputies and public opinion data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), we investigate whether the presence of representatives with working-class backgrounds enhances citizens' trust in legislatures and political parties. We use all available survey data from LAPOP for our two countries, which includes six waves of survey data for Mexico, from 2006-2017, and five waves of survey data from Argentina, from 2008-2017.

A New dataset on working-class representation in Argentina and Mexico

One challenge with examining the relationship between working-class representation and citizens' evaluations of institutions over time in a single country is that in both Argentina and Mexico, working-class representation has continuously decreased since market liberalizing reforms were instituted in the 1980s. In Argentina, for instance, the percentage of deputies with union backgrounds decreased from 34 percent in 1973 to less than five percent in 2019 (Escudero and Moreno 2019). Although the overall number of working-class deputies is higher in Mexico, our original data collection from Mexico indicates a similar pattern. The share of legislators with working-class backgrounds in Mexico declined from 30 percent to 8 percent between 1976 and 2018. Thus, although working-class representation does vary overtime in both Argentina and Mexico, it follows a predictable downward trend.

To address this challenge, we look to state/province-level variation. We code the level of working-class representation in the congressional delegation from each state over time. Specifically, as explained in Chapter 1, we developed an original dataset that coded the occupational backgrounds of 4453 Mexican deputies serving from 1997 to 2018 and 1799 Argentine deputies from 2002 to 2016.⁶² Then, we evaluate how citizens' evaluations of parties and legislatures vary as the share of working-class legislators in their state increases or decreases.

Figure 5.1 shows the distribution of working-class legislators over time in Mexico and Argentina for each legislative session. In Mexico, working-class representation in the Chamber of Deputies ranges from a low of 5.8% after the 2006 elections, to a high of 12.6% after the 1997 elections. Notably, most of the legislators who hail from working-class backgrounds are men.

⁶² Although our occupational dataset encompasses a longer time period, the temporal domain of this study is ultimately restricted to the 2006-2017 period due to the availability of survey data.

18% of working-class deputies are women, while overall, 27% of deputies were women during the 1997-2018 period. Among working-class women, many held leadership positions in teachers unions, while a number of others held positions in hospital workers unions, social workers unions, and in peasant (*campesino*) organizations. The remaining women held a diverse number of positions, including unionized positions in the national telephone company, as well as non-unionized jobs as administrative assistants and in the service industry. Like women, many working-class men also held leadership positions in teachers unions and in peasant organizations. However, many of the men also held leadership positions in oil workers unions, electricians unions, sugar workers unions, railroad, and other transportation unions, as well as a number of leadership positions in national labor confederations. The handful of men who were not part of labor unions were mechanics or carpenters.

[Insert Figure 5.1]

Figure 5.1. Percent Working-Class Deputies Over Time

Note: Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of working-class deputies. Years on the x-axis correspond to the start of each legislative session in our dataset.

Argentina has fewer workers in office. In a given year, between 2.1% and 6.1% of legislators are workers. Most working-class legislators are men. From 2001 to 2016 only twelve different women from working-class backgrounds were elected to the Chamber of Deputies in Argentina. Whereas a few of the women with working-class backgrounds had positions as administrative assistants or merchants in clothing stores, most held a formal position in a labor union. Several held leadership positions in teachers unions. Others were employed by or occupy

leadership roles in labor confederations including the Central de Trabajadores de Argentina (CTA) and the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT), two of the largest and most powerful labor confederations in Argentina. Among working-class men, the vast majority also entered politics from careers in different labor unions. In addition to the CGT and CTA, several male workers were employed by truck driver, metal worker, and petroleum worker unions. Among the few male workers who did not hold formal positions in labor unions, they worked as newspaper vendors, metal workers, and administrative employees.

This figure illustrates two important points. First, the overall level of working-class representation is higher in Mexico than in Argentina. Second, and as previously mentioned, there is not significant variation over time *within* each country during the period under investigation. For this reason, we leverage variation in working-class representation at the subnational level in our analysis, which we described in more detail in Chapter 1.

While our theoretical argument is focused primarily on the ways workers are tied to parties through unions, our empirical analysis focuses on all deputies who can be classified as holding a working-class occupation prior to entering politics. However, there is substantial overlap since nearly all workers who reach office do so through ties to unions. For example, in Mexico, of all the workers we identified in the 1997-2018 period, 86 percent of those listed union ties in their official biographies. Similarly in Argentina, roughly 76 percent of the workers identified in the period under analysis came from union backgrounds. Of the remainder, many worked in occupations that were unionized, although did not specifically list union ties in their official biographies. Thus, it is safe to assume that for nearly all working-class deputies, we are also speaking of union-affiliated deputies. Media coverage in Mexico also commonly equates union ties and deputies with working-class backgrounds, and in our open-ended survey questions when

we asked respondents about working-class deputies, some respondents equated our mention of “working-class deputies” with union-affiliated deputies.

Analyzing Evaluations of Parties and Legislatures: Comparing Mexico and Argentina

The dependent variable in this analysis is trust in political institutions. In particular, we are interested in citizens’ feelings about the two main vehicles of representation in democracies: legislatures and political parties. To assess citizens’ attitudes about representative institutions, we rely on survey questions from LAPOP that gauges citizens’ trust in the legislature and trust in political parties. Respondents are asked to indicate how much they trust the national congress on a scale from 1 (none) to 7 (a lot), and how much trust they have in political parties on a scale from 1 (none) to 7 (a lot). For a more intuitive presentation of the overall relationship, we follow the same approach as in Chapter 3 and index the two institutional trust variables.⁶³

Our main independent variable of interest is the percentage of working-class legislators from each state or province that were in office during each wave of the survey. The percentage of

⁶³ Our results are very similar if we analyze trust in legislatures and parties separately. We also considered congressional approval as a dependent variable, as used in Chapter 3. While the results are in the same direction as we expect for the other two dependent variables, the main effect is not statistically significant. We could not use the other dependent variables presented in Chapter 3 since they were not asked in enough survey years to allow for sufficient variation across time at the state/province level.

working-class deputies in each province/state ranges from 0 to 40 in Argentina and 0 to 27 in Mexico.

To account for the possibility the relationship between the presence of working-class legislators and institutional trust could be spurious, we control for a variety of potential confounding variables at the state/province level. Given that subnational variation in economic development could simultaneously drive the supply and demand of working-class representatives, as well as citizens' attitudes about government (Cleary and Stokes 2006), we include a control for *gross national income* measured at the state or province level. Given the historic ties of unions to the PRI in Mexico and the Peronist Party in Argentina, we also account for the percentage of legislators in each state from the PRI or Peronist Party (PJ).

We also account for a number of individual-level sources of variation in our dependent variable. Given that citizens' political ideology and partisan attachments can drive evaluations, we first control for respondents' placement on a left (1) – right (10) ideological scale. Because non-response rates are high for questions about political ideology, and because of attitudinal differences between Latin American respondents who do and do not place themselves on the left-right scale (Zechmeister and Corral 2013), we collapse responses into five categories: non-response, left (1-3) center-left (4-5), center-right (6-7), and right (8-10). We also control for respondents' partisan attachments using the LAPOP question asking, "If you identify with a political party, which political party do you belong to?" In Mexico, our party ID variable is coded into five categories: non-response (coded 0), PAN (1), PRI (2), PRD (3), and other (4). Given that Argentina's party system is less institutionalized and more volatile than Mexico's we consider only three categories:

non-response (coded 0), Peronist (1), and non-Peronist (2).⁶⁴ In addition to political ideology and partisan identification, we also control for political interest, education, sex, age, wealth and respondents who reside in rural areas.

To evaluate our results, we follow a similar approach as in Chapter 3 and estimate multilevel linear models, this time with the province-year as the higher-order level. We note that LAPOP surveys do not include every state/province in their sample for every year, and samples are not drawn to be representative at the state or provincial level. Consequently, naïve estimations of how public opinion varies by state or province will result in biased estimates (Hanretty 2020; Hanretty, Lauderdale, and Vivyan 2018; Lax and Phillips 2009). To address this issue, we used census data for education and sex within each state/province to develop sample weights at the individual level and population data from the census to develop sample weights at the state/province level. We then specify a multilevel model with random intercepts and robust standard errors clustered at the state/province level. Our results are robust, whether or not we weight the data (see Appendix 5.1).

At the subnational level, we note the states and provinces excluded from LAPOP are not outliers with respect to the percentage of working-class deputies in office.⁶⁵ For instance, in Santa

⁶⁴ During the period under investigation, the main Peronist parties in Argentina include a variant of the Partido Justicialista (PJ) or the Frente para la Victoria (FpV).

⁶⁵ In Argentina, Santa Cruz is the only province not included in our analysis. Chaco, Formosa, Jujuy, San Luis, La Rioja, Chubut, and Tierra del Fuego are excluded from the 2012 – 2016 LAPOP waves. In Mexico, every state is included in the analysis, although Baja California, Baja California del Sur, and Colima are excluded from the 2006 – 2010 LAPOP waves.

Cruz, Argentina (the only state or province that never appears in our sample), working-class deputies made up an average of 4.0% of all deputies elected in the province across the period of analysis, compared to a country-wide average of 4.9 percent.

The full statistical models are available in the appendix to this Chapter (Appendix 5.1). To facilitate the interpretation of these results, Figure 5.2 plots the relationship between the share of working-class representatives and trust in political institutions. The results for Argentina in Figure 5.2 are consistent with the cross-national pattern we documented in Chapter 3. Increases in workers' numeric presence are associated with more trust in political institutions. Substantively, a change from no workers representing a province to 40 percent workers is associated with a .71-point increase in trust on a 7-point scale (a 22 percent increase).

[Insert Figure 5.2.a] [Insert Figure 5.2.b]

Figure 5.2 Working-Class Legislators and Institutional Trust in Mexico and Argentina

Note: Figure 5.2 plots the expected values of the *institutional trust* dependent variable in Argentina (left) and Mexico (right) across the range of *percent worker* values in each respective sample. Expected values (lines, surrounded by 95% confidence intervals) were calculated using the models 2 and 4 in Appendix 5.1.

The results in Figure 5.2 for Mexico, however, illustrate the opposite pattern. Increases in the percentage of working-class deputies in Mexico are associated with lower levels of trust in legislatures and parties. Substantively, an increase from the lowest (0 percent) to the highest (27 percent) level of working-class deputies in our Mexico sample is associated with a .46-point decrease in trust on a 7-point scale. The results in Mexico are consistent with themes we observed

in open-ended follow up responses in our original survey data, as well as our argument that working-class politicians who fail to represent workers' policy interests will be met with backlash. As one Mexican respondent who said working-class deputies do a poor job understanding people's needs explained:

“I have known some [deputies] who were from the working class and for some reason, they became deputies overnight and forgot their commitments. Those coming from the working class knew that we were hopeful and fought for them, and now all of sudden they have houses in las lomas [a wealthy neighborhood], even in Miami and ranches, they have a lot of money.”⁶⁶

Not only do Mexican respondents associate working-class deputies with an out-of-touch political class unable to empathize with ordinary citizens' concerns, but our open-ended survey data also sheds light on our state-level analysis by suggesting that working-class deputies actively work against workers' policy interests. Consider these responses which all suggest that a higher percentage of working-class deputies would be met with backlash:

⁶⁶ Por que yo conozco a algunos que fueron de la clase trabajadora y por alguna razón llegaron a ser diputados de la noche a la mañana y se olvidaron de sus compromisos. Ellos a venir de la clase trabajadora sabían que estábamos esperanzados y luchando por ellos y ahora, no se de donde de repente tienen casas en las lomas, hasta en Miami y ranchos, eso ellos con mucha Lana. Que más explicación quiere, podría pasarme aquí horas pero que caso tiene, nadie hace verdaderamente algo por eso. Creo que el presidente actual está reprimiendo a la clase trabajadora a la cual el vinia ayudar y recibió todo su apoyo, ya los corrió en fin.

“None [of the working-class deputies] have tried to improve the laws in favor of working people, power leaves them blind or blackmailed by other people...they don’t know what it is to work or earn money by the sweat of their brow.”⁶⁷

“The decisions they make do not benefit the working class, usually the working class is always affected!”⁶⁸

“I believe that by being in a position of power, they forget all their campaign promises and they vote for laws that will destroy the nation. They receive excessive salaries and bribes...in the past, even if senators or deputies were from the working-class, it didn’t matter because they became corrupt at the first opportunity.”⁶⁹

“Due to their lack of empathy, they haven’t tried to improve labor benefits. The vast majority of people lack [these benefits], and each modification to the law, far from protecting these rights, further reduces them.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Porqué ninguno ha tratado de mejorar las leyes a favor de la gente trabajadora, el poder los deja ciegos o son chantajeados por otras personas, así que de nada sirve tener una muy poca minoría contra una gran mayoría de sanguijuelas que toda su vida han vivido del pueblo, no saben que es trabajar o ganarse el dinero con el sudor de su frente.

⁶⁸ Porque la desiciones que toman no beneficia a la clase trabajadora, por lo regular la clase trabajadora es siempre la más afectada!

⁶⁹ Pues por que creo que al estar en la posición de poder se les olvida toda promesa de campaña y venden su voto de aprobación para leyes que van en deterioró de la nación, reciben sueldos excesivos y sobornos y asta estás últimas elecciones se empiezan a dar un cambio, en sexenios pasados aunque fueran cenadores o diputados de clase obrera no importaba igual se hasian corruptos a la primera oportunidad y lo mismo con los diputados nominales.

⁷⁰ Por la falta de empatia, ya que no gestionan mejoras en las prestaciones laborales, muchos o la gran mayoría carece de las mismas, y en cada modificación a la ley lejos de proteger sus derechos se reducen.

The results from Mexico stand in sharp contrast to the results observed in Argentina. Again, these results from Argentina are consistent with themes we observed in open-ended responses from our original survey data suggesting that working-class deputies have comparatively stronger ties to working-class citizens, as well as with our argument that working-class politicians will only foster confidence in representative institutions where they actually represent working-class citizens' interests. Consider these open-ended survey responses from Argentina which suggest that working-class deputies understand ordinary citizens' problems and needs, and that they act on this shared understanding to promote policies designed to improve workers' lives:

“Because they know firsthand what it is to be from the working class. They attended public school and know the problems [schools] have. The same with health and housing. I feel more represented by them than by upper-class deputies who argue that people who go to public school “lucked” into it rather than by choice, to name one example.”⁷¹

“Because the working-class [deputies] have a better understanding of the difficulties that arise when people are having economic problems, which are related to a variety of factors like opportunities for study or recreation, etc., because they have surely lived through it. And based on their experiences, they can make better decisions.”⁷²

⁷¹ Porque saben de primera mano lo que es ser de la clase trabajadora. Asistieron a la escuela pública y conocen cuales son los problemas que atraviesa. Lo mismo con la salud y la vivienda. Me siento más representada por ellos que por diputados de clase alta que sostienen que los que van a la escuela pública es porque "cayeron" en ella y no por elección propia, por citar algún ejemplo.

⁷² Porque los de clase trabajadora comprenden mejor las dificultades que se presentan al tener problemas económicos, que se relacionan con varios aspectos, como posibilidades de estudio, esparcimiento, etc, porque seguramente lo han vivido. Y en base a la experiencia pueden tomar mejores decisiones.

Altogether, these results are consistent with our expectations. In Mexico, a context where union representatives in Congress undermine the policy representation of the working class, and voters negatively evaluate working-class deputies, increases in the numeric representation of workers are associated with lower levels of trust in the legislature and political parties. Nonetheless, in Argentina, where union leaders have a better track record of representing the working class, and working-class deputies are more positively evaluated, increases in workers in the legislature are associated with higher levels of trust in legislatures and political parties.

Conclusions

How people get into office, and the ties they have to their constituents, matters for fostering trust in agents of representation. For this reason, the institutional incorporation of working-class representatives may weaken or reinforce working-class candidate's ties to working-class constituents. Where ties are weak, working-class representatives should generate backlash, leading to more negative evaluations of working-class deputies and eroding trust in legislatures and political parties. Where ties are strong, working-class representatives will improve trust.

In this chapter we make the case that Mexico represents one such case where working-class representatives' weak ties to workers and poor track record of policy representation should serve to undermine citizens trust in representative institutions. Argentina, by contrast, represents a case where working-class deputies from labor unions have historically fostered and maintained comparably stronger ties with constituents and a reputable policy track record. Using original data on working-class representation across Argentina and Mexico we show how an increase in working-class representation is associated with positive evaluations of representative institutions in Argentina, but is met with distrust in Mexico. These findings coincide with results from Chapter

4 where we found that Mexican survey respondents are less likely to think working-class deputies promote laws that benefit all citizens compared to Argentine survey respondents.

Our findings suggest the PRI's control over union leaders was a double-edged sword for the party's success. On the one hand, the PRI's ability to control union leaders holding political office meant they had to grant far fewer policy concessions. Thus, the incorporation of working-class legislators allowed party leaders in the PRI to further consolidate their political power over affiliated unions and their working-class constituents. At the same time, the incorporation of working-class representatives has undermined trust in government and parties. This suggests that in the long term, the strategy of co-opting working-class legislators may have backfired as dissatisfied citizens looked for outside options. Indeed, in the most recent presidential election in Mexico, the PRI garnered a mere 16% of votes following further neoliberal reforms in energy and education under President Peña Nieto that challenged the power of the oil workers union and teachers' unions.

As for Argentina, where working-class legislators have more autonomy to pursue legislative agendas that advance workers' rights, our results suggest that political parties would benefit from incorporating more workers onto their slate of candidates. As long as workers retain their autonomy to pursue a worker-friendly legislative agenda, parties can further leverage the political incorporation of workers to improve citizen trust in political institutions.

The evidence from this chapter suggests that simply paying lip service to underrepresented groups—without actually working to improve their quality of life through policy—will do more to erode trust in political institutions than to bring these group members into the fold. Although incorporation of representatives from historically marginalized groups is a critical first step in

making democracy work for all citizens, descriptive representation should serve as a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Appendix 5.1: Linear Models Predicting Trust

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Argentina	Argentina	Mexico	Mexico
Percent Workers in Legislature	1.770** (.864)	1.702** (0.698)	-1.653*** (.549)	-1.680** (.658)
<i>Individual-Level</i>				
Political Interest	.219*** (.022)	.218*** (.029)	.193*** (.018)	.195*** (.022)
Female	.035 (.039)	.031 (.039)	.058* (.030)	.053* (.029)
Ideology=Left	.019 (.077)	.023 (.101)	-.165*** (.058)	-.161** (.063)
Ideology=4-5	.103* (.058)	.099* (.056)	.086 (.053)	.084 (.056)
Ideology=6-7	.297*** (.063)	.292*** (.077)	.360*** (.057)	.362*** (.062)
Ideology=Right	.223*** (.075)	.216*** (.066)	.524*** (.055)	.525*** (.066)
Age	.002* (.001)	.002* (.001)	-.002** (.001)	-.002* (.001)
Rural	.220*** (.067)	.202** (.100)	.162*** (.041)	.166** (.065)
Education	.004 (.006)	.004 (.006)	-.030*** (.005)	-.030*** (.005)
Wealth Quintile	-.025 (.016)	-.027 (.017)	-.030** (.013)	-.029** (.014)
Party ID=None	-.502*** (.061)	-.508*** (.082)	-.258*** (.053)	-.250*** (.061)
Non-Peronist	-.431*** (.086)	-.432*** (.104)		
PRI			.135** (.065)	.133* (.075)
PRD			-.146* (.080)	-.141 (.091)
Other			-.539*** (.121)	-.537*** (.127)
<i>Province/State-Level</i>				
Percent PJ/PRI Deputies	.259 (.228)	.227 (.276)	.210 (.155)	.218 (.151)
GNI Per capita	1.398 (1.110)	1.318 (1.045)	-.417 (.557)	-.537 (.528)
Constant	1.838** (.742)	1.918*** (.732)	3.971*** (.453)	4.041*** (.448)
Province-Years	74	74	182	182
Observations	5,370	5,370	8,574	8,574
<i>Wald Chi</i> ²	304.60	200.74	697.43	626.65

Note: Linear multilevel model with random intercepts. Models 1 (Argentina) and 3 (Mexico) are based on un-weighted data. Models 2 (Argentina) and 4 (Mexico) incorporate survey weights at the individual and province/state level with robust standard errors clustered at the province/state-level. Weights are standardized using the Graubard and Korn (1996) method. Standard errors in parentheses. * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01. PID=Peronist (Argentina) and PID=PAN (Mexico) are excluded from the models as reference categories.

Chapter 6

How do Voters Know Workers Are in Office?: Political Incentives, Journalistic Dissemination, and People’s Ability to Infer Class

“The union leader who became a deputy, ended up an errand boy.”

Soy502, January 30, 2018

In 2014, Rubén Mazariegos was appointed to fill the seat of the recently deceased Guatemalan Deputy Amildo Morales, who died after being rammed by a bull. Upon appointment to the legislature, Mazariegos quickly switched his membership to the ruling party, was appointed to head the Health Committee, and then lost a reelection bid the following year. Although Mazariegos’ time in Congress was short lived, his name quickly garnered national attention. In a 2018 profile published by the Guatemalan news site *Soy502*, Mazariegos was described as being known for two things: first, for frequently visiting former president Alfonso Portillo during his time in prison, and second, for his 20 years of membership in the Trade Union and Popular Action Unit (Unidad de Acción Sindical y Popular, or UASP) (Gramajo 2018). In 2013, for instance, hundreds of trade unionists, led by Mazariegos, marched on the Capital waving banners demanding that Congress set price caps on basic necessities (Teletica 2013). The *Soy502* profile also described how becoming a deputy changed Mazariegos’ life. Going from being a poorly paid hospital technician with union responsibilities to a deputy nearly quintupled his income overnight. After narrowly losing his 2015 campaign, Mazariegos returned to a precarious economic situation, doing

a series of odd jobs as a driver, messenger and personal assistant, but he had no regrets about the time when he was known as the “union deputy” (*diputado sindicalista*).

This story about a Guatemalan Deputy who garnered significant name recognition despite a short-lived political career is noteworthy for a number of reasons. First, the case further highlights an important theme from the evidence we introduced in Chapter 4. Deputies with working-class backgrounds bring unique life experiences (and preferences) with them to office, and ordinary citizens perceive that working-class legislators share their experiences and understand their struggles. Second, and of particular relevance to the questions we address in this chapter, legislators’ working-class backgrounds are visible, even in countries like Guatemala where legislators theoretically have few incentives to cultivate a personal reputation.

In Chapter 3 we found that more workers in office leads to more positive evaluations of representative institutions, and in Chapter 4 we showed this effect is stronger when combined with policy representation. Importantly, however, the presence of working-class legislators can only alter how voters feel represented if voters are cognizant of workers in office. But, working-class status is arguably more difficult for citizens to observe than characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or gender. Citizens can see a picture of their national chamber, for instance, and easily assess the gender and racial/ethnic composition of the legislature. When citizens see a picture of a deputy from an ethnic minority group or hear a woman deputy talking on the radio, they can easily notice these descriptive attributes of politicians and incorporate this information into their perception of the composition of the legislature. These examples of gender and ethnic representation may leave readers wondering how it is that citizens can assess the class composition of legislatures. The example of Mazariegos in Guatemala suggests citizens are exposed to information about the class

status of politicians. Is this unique? Or is there more widespread evidence that voters know when workers are in office?

In Chapter 2 we argued citizens are generally aware of the extent to which workers are represented in the legislature. In particular, citizens are likely to be aware of the presence or absence of working-class deputies because politicians and parties have incentives to showcase class, the news disseminates information about class representation, and voters can infer the class status of politicians based on images and speech. This chapter is organized into three parts. The first part draws on anecdotal evidence to illustrate the type of information citizens may encounter when reading the news or observing candidates' campaigns. We draw on examples to show how some individuals and parties have featured class status in order to appeal to voters and constituents. Second, systematically examining the population of national congressional websites across Latin America, we document the presence of data archives on the class backgrounds of politicians and provide some examples of the ways this information is disseminated through the news. Third, we turn to novel survey experiments to systematically assess whether voters can recognize working-class legislators when they see them.

Politicians and Parties have Political Incentives to Showcase Class

Parties and individual politicians have incentives to communicate to voters about politicians' personal backgrounds (Hunter 2010). In Chapter 2, we explained that in campaign communications, candidate job experience is the most frequently cited personal quality (Shyles 1984), as it provides an extremely useful information shortcut for voters (Campbell and Cowley 2014; McDermott 2005; Mechtel 2014). At first glance it may seem like this type of information is more useful for candidates competing in districts where a candidate's individual characteristics

matter most, such as in electoral systems with strong personal vote-seeking incentives. Yet, individuals and parties can use a politician's class status to appeal to a variety of voters in many types of electoral systems. While individual candidates may have a stronger incentive to emphasize their class in candidate-centered electoral systems, political parties also have incentives to emphasize individual occupational backgrounds in party-centered electoral systems. Indeed, we demonstrated in chapter 3 that increases in working-class representation was associated with better evaluations of the government in both types of electoral systems. We argue this is because both political parties and individual candidates have incentives to make working-class status publicly known, regardless of the electoral system.

Although a systematic content analysis is beyond the scope of this research, in this section we draw on examples from across Latin America to illustrate how parties and candidates highlight information about politicians' status. Countries in Latin America vary substantially with respect to a legislator's incentives to develop a personal vote. Figure 6.1 shows the level of personal vote-seeking incentives from Johnson and Wallack (2012) in each Latin American country. Countries with the lowest personal vote-seeking incentives on this measure, such as Argentina and Costa Rica, are ones where parties control both access to the ballot and ballot order, where voters have one vote for a party, and where votes for co-partisans are pooled across all members in an electoral district. In other words, electoral competition is centered around the party's reputation, as opposed to the individual candidate's reputation. This is a fundamentally different form of electoral competition compared to what we see in countries with high levels of personal vote-seeking incentives, such as those systems with single-member district, plurality ballots.

Given this variation, we can compare countries across the region to assess whether incentives to make class status known are limited to countries with personal vote-seeking

incentives, or if politicians and parties in countries with strong party-centered incentives are also motivated to showcase class. In doing so, we draw on examples from campaigns, publicly available profiles of deputies, and other public appeals such as newspaper interviews and appeals made on social media. Leveraging examples from a wide variety of sources, we illustrate the ways that both individuals and political parties communicate class status.

[Insert Figure 6.1 here]

Figure 6.1 Personal Vote-Seeking Incentives Across Latin America

Source: Johnson and Wallack (2012)

Evidence of Class-Based Appeals in Personal Vote-Seeking Electoral Systems

Politicians operating in a political context that demands they develop a strong personal reputation in order to win elections and stay in office, regularly make strong appeals to their personal background in an effort to connect with voters. For working-class politicians, this means they often make their class status known by mentioning the economic situation they were born into, discussing their own occupational experience, and even explaining how these experiences shape their convictions to pursue difference policies. To illustrate this point, we turn to evidence from Brazil and Colombia, where deputies have some of the strongest incentives to develop a personal reputation.

In Brazil, candidates go to great lengths to appeal to voters using their class status (Hunter 2010; Johannessen 2019). Perhaps most famously was the use of Lula's working-class status to appeal to voters in his 1989 bid for president. As Hunter (2010) describes it, part of the PT's

(Partido dos Trabalhadores, i.e., Workers' Party) strategy was “the image the PT projected.” She elaborates:

A reflection of the PT's authenticity in 1989 was to have Lula appear before the public as who he really was: a former factory worker with few years of formal education who spoke grammatically imperfect Portuguese and was rough around the edges. This was someone who rose from grinding poverty to become a national union organizer and command an impressive strike over 100,000 workers in 1979. The image of the bearded labor leader in rolled-up sleeves said it all... (p. 111).

Candidates in down-ballot elections use similar tactics. Johannessen provides example after example illustrating the countless ways that Brazilian candidates craft images of working-class candidates that voters can connect to. He enumerates the ways candidates make biographical appeals—reminding voters they are a “proud son of small rural farmers – with whom he learned to read on the farm and live in a simple manner;” the “daughter of a stone mason and a maid;” or a “retired metalworker” themselves. Candidates tell voters they “had a poor upbringing, like many Brazilians, surrounded by difficulties, without access to education or health care;” or “battled as a taxi driver while finishing [their] degree in civil engineering;” and that their “childhood was the same as that of all poor children.” As a result of these hardships, they claim their “life in the community and [their] relationship with workers in [their] factory give [them] the credentials” to hold office, they promise to “fight, with seriousness and honesty, for better life conditions,” and to “defend and represent informal workers, wandering salesmen, and motorcycle deliverymen” (all cited in Johannessen 2019).

Importantly, it is not exclusively candidates with a working-class background who make these appeals. As Boas (2014, 41) explains it: “Given permissive electoral regulations, most Brazilian candidates use some sort of nickname or title.” Such nicknames frequently include information on their profession, such as “Pastor Paulo,” “Dr. Carlos” or “Marcelo the Bus Driver”

on official ballots in order to stand out in crowded open-list races (Boas 2014; Johannessen 2019, 13). In other words, most politicians in these types of electoral systems make personal appeals. Thus, voters are not left to assume politicians are from an upper-class background if they do not say otherwise.

Working-class deputies in Colombia make similar appeals on behalf of their class status. In publicly available profiles they regularly refer to their backgrounds and many of them maintain active social media accounts where they connect with their constituents and promote their personal brand. Some examples of this behavior include departmental representative Wilson Gómez Arango, who describes himself as a “family man... the son of a miner and a village nurse.”⁷³ Similarly, Congressman César Pachón describes himself as having peasant roots—born to a peasant family and working his way through school. He is frequently featured in his campaign material, in the media, and on his own social media accounts wearing a poncho and speaking out on behalf of poor rural peasants. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when the legislature in Colombia was suspended to enforce social distancing, César Pachón tweeted a video of himself working in the field with the text: “Our grandparents did it: We did too. This must be replicated

⁷³ “Soy un padre de familia, de Amalfi, médico, hijo de minero y enfermera de pueblo....”

<https://twitter.com/Wgomezarango/status/1106608197622812672?s=20> (Accessed January 15, 2023)

across the country. Although some believe that a congressman only works when he goes to Congress, we continue working for our countryside.”⁷⁴

What did politicians do before social media? That is, how did voters know about their class status before they could promote their brand on the web? A closer look at their social media feeds provides insights into how they relate to constituents. César Pachón from Colombia posts image after image of him interacting with people from his district, speaking at small meetings, and working alongside constituents. Consistent with research on non-policy legislative behavior, deputies work in their districts to get face time with voters and to sell their brand (Calvo and Murillo 2019; Taylor-Robinson 2010).

Whereas Colombia and Brazil represent two cases where representatives have the strongest incentives to cultivate a personal brand, in other countries such as Chile and Mexico, the average deputy relies on a combination of their own personal reputation and the party label. These countries are classified as having moderate incentives to cultivate personal vote-earning attributes. Here too, we observe that deputies from these countries often showcase their class status.

For instance, Chilean Deputy René Alinco Bustos, a construction worker by trade, campaigned for office using messages like this tweet: “I am a construction worker who needs your

⁷⁴ “Lo hicieron los abuelos: Nosotros también. Esto se debe replicar en todo el país. Nosotros seguimos trabajando por nuestro campo aunque algunos creen que el congresista solo trabaja cuando va al Congreso.”

<https://twitter.com/CesarPachonAgro/status/1247646519525769216?s=20> (Accessed January 15, 2023).

support to get to Parliament.”⁷⁵ His Twitter profile features a picture of himself in his construction clothing and writes: “Deputy for the Aysén Region. Today and always a construction worker. With clean hands and conscience, a left-wing politician.”⁷⁶ As in Colombia, these messages are disseminated through a number of other mediums as well. As deputy Bustos explains in his twitter feed: “Yesterday afternoon we were in #PuertoCisnes as always, in the territory; as always, talking and listening. This time with the fishermen of the sector. #ReneAlinco.”⁷⁷ According to his social media feed, he regularly attends neighborhood councils, townhall meetings, large informational sessions, and small gatherings with constituents back in his district to hear their concerns and to promote his brand.⁷⁸ In a newspaper interview with *La Segunda*, readers also learned about the

⁷⁵ “Soy un trabajador de la Construcción que necesita tu apoyo para llegar al Parlamento...”

https://twitter.com/alinco_rene/status/926909050171936768?s=20 (Accessed January 15, 2023).

⁷⁶ “Diputado por la Región de Aysén. Hoy y siempre obrero de la construcción. Con las manos y conciencia limpia, político de izquierda.” <https://twitter.com/renealinco> (Accessed January 15, 2023).

⁷⁷ “Ayer por la tarde estuvimos en #PuertoCisnes como siempre en el territorio , como siempre conversando y escuchando. Esta vez con los pescadores del sector.”

https://twitter.com/alinco_rene/status/1193610416108257280?s=20 (Accessed January 15, 2023).

⁷⁸ https://twitter.com/alinco_rene/status/1101871166543810560?s=20,

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=350620202271982>,

https://twitter.com/alinco_rene/status/1140308215151890433?s=20 (Accessed: January 6, 2022)

presence of workers in the Chilean Congress when Bustos stated, “he doesn’t want to be the only worker in congress” (Olivares 2011).

In Mexico, Morena Federal Deputy from Oaxaca, Daniel Gutiérrez, frequently makes appeals to his working-class roots. On his personal website, he describes himself as growing up in an indigenous peasant community and moving to the city at age 14 to get an education. In campaign videos, Gutiérrez describes himself as “working his way up from the bottom” and as being a person “just like you” and wanting to enter public office so that he can work for the people who have the least. His Facebook page is filled with pictures of him at numerous events in his community, meeting with farmers and working-class residents of his largely rural district.⁷⁹ Similarly, Federal Deputy Emmanuel Reyes Carmona identifies himself as a “proud son of a railroad worker” in his Twitter feed.⁸⁰

It may seem obvious that when candidates rely largely—or even in part—on their own personal reputation to win elections, that they will make personal appeals based on descriptive characteristics such as their class status or occupational background. But what about candidates competing in electoral systems with party-centered elections? How do voters learn about the presence or absence of working-class deputies in contexts where parties are the focal point of elections?

⁷⁹ <http://www.danielgutierrez.mx/index.php>. “viene trabajando desde abajo”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTYZVTGL7qI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrXPvTZ8dIY>

<https://www.facebook.com/DanielGutierrezMX/>

⁸⁰ <https://twitter.com/emmanuelreyesc> (Accessed: August 11, 2020).

Evidence of Class-Based Appeals in Party-Centered Electoral Systems

In contexts where electoral competition is centered around political party reputations rather than individual deputies, parties still have an incentive to showcase a deputy's class. Parties know they can appeal to voters if they have candidates on the ballot "who look like them, share their experiences, or at least can relate to their own lives" (Castañeda and Navia 2007). Political parties are thus likely to believe they will have an electoral advantage with some voters if they make known the extent to which they include working-class candidates on the ballot.

To this end, parties such as the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador and the Movement of Popular Participation (MPP, a faction within the Frente Amplio) in Uruguay display profiles of affiliated national deputies on their websites.⁸¹ Even though the party is hoping to get elected based on its larger brand, and deputies run on tickets where voters primarily choose between parties, the party takes the time to publish extensive profiles of each individual deputy. For example, Carlos Reutor's profile explains he was born in Montevideo, is a member of the MPP, and is a union and social activist. His birthplace and union activity are front and center. The MPP's website also includes notices informing constituents about ongoing activities involving the party and individual deputies. For instance, the MPP featured Deputy Daniel Placeres' introduction of a bill to promote the self-management of workers, alongside his

⁸¹ <http://gpfmln.sv/index.php/gpfmln/propietarios> (Accessed August 11, 2020),

<https://mpp.org.uy/equipo-609/>, <https://mpp.org.uy/carlos-reutor/> (Accessed December 30,

2022). Johnson and Wallack (2012) code Uruguay as a 3 on their personal vote-seeking (PVS) scale, indicating low levels of PVS incentives. That said, candidates competing on the top of the party or faction list have stronger PVS incentives.

bio describing him as a worker and union activist.⁸² The way the MPP crafted their website and the actions and bios of individual members suggest a guiding principle articulated by Castañeda and Navia (2007, 54): “Candidates who look like and share the experiences of the majority of the population tend to do better than those who are members of the elite or have a difficult time connecting with the electorate on a personal level.”

In countries with party-centered electoral systems, parties also tend to adopt a constituent-centered campaign style wherein voters become personally familiar with candidates from the party as well as the larger campaign apparatus. Although we tend to think of clientelism as the dominant strategy that political parties use to win elections, especially in Latin America, brokers also campaign in a traditional way (De Luca, Jones and Tula 2002; Zarazaga 2014). Clientelism is used to lure voters to campaign events, meetings, and rallies for candidates to introduce themselves (Muñoz 2014).

In Argentina, for example, *punteros* (or neighborhood-level leaders) are responsible for creating and maintaining neighborhood-level party organizations, mobilizing party members to attend mass rallies where they learn about candidates and the party platform, and regularly visiting voters' homes, leaving ballots and literature, and inviting voters to attend neighborhood gatherings where they can meet the candidates and learn about their ideas (De Luca, Jones and Tula 2002; Zarazaga 2014). By deploying candidates and party activists to campaign in neighborhoods, parties can relate to voters and garner larger vote shares. At the same time, this strategy allows voters to become aware of the individual candidates that represent them. As Calvo and Morrillo (2019, 24)

⁸²MPP website: <https://equipo609.uy/danielplaceres> (Accessed August 11, 2020).

explain: “activists allow voters to attach familiar faces to candidates, *forge descriptive ties*, interpret party messages, relay preferences, and access benefits” [emphasis added].

In the case of Costa Rica, Taylor-Robinson (1992) explains that despite the formal incentives in place that discourage personal vote-seeking behavior, national deputies hold regular “giras” or meetings with people in the district. They see these meetings as an opportunity to advertise what they have been doing in their district. It is difficult to imagine a politician holding regular meetings in their community where they do not talk about themselves and the ways they relate to the community.

In Mexico, MORENA uses a lottery system to select a majority of their party list candidates (Poertner 2022). As a result of this unusual method of selecting candidates, the party gains a lot of media coverage about the backgrounds of individual candidates running on the party’s list. In addition, much of this media coverage focuses on the working-class backgrounds of numerous politically inexperienced candidates running on the party’s label (De la Rosa 2018; Gutiérrez 2015).

Even in contexts where parties are the centerpiece of elections, it is not unusual for individual politicians—and their personal backgrounds or affiliations with unions—to gain media coverage. In Argentina, for example, National Deputy Facundo Moyano employs this tactic, telling constituents he was not “hijo de nadie poderoso” (the son of anyone powerful); rather he was raised by a working-class mother. He explained that even though his father was off working in the capital while his mother, a social work advocate for truck drivers, was left to raise the children in Mar del Plata, he remembers seeing his father on TV as a child: “I still have all the videos of the demonstrations and the marches that my old man did. We recorded them, and we watched them again and again” (Oliván 2012).

Taken together, there is ample evidence from social media, news coverage, campaign material, party websites, and personal websites that politicians have incentives to showcase class. In countries with strong personal vote-seeking incentives individual politicians have motivations to make their class status known in an effort to relate to voters. In political systems with strong party-centered electoral systems, party leaders have an incentive to make candidate attributes known. For this reason, we observe examples of both political parties and politicians communicating information about class across a wide range of countries in our sample.

Beyond Political Incentives: Data Archives and Journalistic Dissemination

Citizens are also likely aware of legislators' class status because government websites, NGOs, and academics systematically collect information on legislators' occupational backgrounds, and journalists distill this information for public consumption. Because the collection and journalistic dissemination of this information is unlikely to be motivated by personal vote-seeking attributes or by an incentive to develop the party brand name, we anticipate this type of data collection and dissemination is not explained by electoral rules or party systems. Instead, voters across different electoral systems are equally likely to be exposed to information published by journalists. It is, of course, possible that in some countries watchdogs that focus specifically on labor issues, or partisan newspapers, are more or less likely to publicize this type of information. As we discuss in the next chapter, voters who consume the news on a regular basis are more likely to encounter this information (thus explaining variation *within* countries), yet news consumption is not likely to explain variation in the availability of information across countries.

Overview of Biographical Data Archives

To get a better understanding of how prevalent information on deputy class status is, we visited the official website of the national congress for each of the countries in our sample. We documented whether the national website hosts information about each deputy's occupational status before entering office and (for reasons we detail in the next section) whether it included headshots of the deputies. The most common format we observed is that upon entering the website, visitors can choose to view all members of the legislature. Most websites organize deputies either in an alphabetical list, by party, by committee, or allow visitors to choose which of these formats they prefer to view. All of the websites provide a headshot alongside the names of each of the members. As we discuss in the final section of this chapter, this data is important because even if people do not have information on the occupational status of deputies, they are still remarkably adept at inferring people's class from facial images alone. Still, the details that accompany the name and headshot varies by country. Table 6.1 summarizes the information we observe across national legislative websites.

Table 6.1 Candidate Biographies

Country	National Government Websites			Other Systematic Collections
	Occupation	Freeform Bio	Headshot	
Argentina	Yes	No	Yes	Directorio Legislativo Candidate must list occupation when they file to run for office. This information is publicly available. National Library of Congress, Parliamentary Biographical Reviews archives profiles and bios of deputies dating back to the early 1900s ⁸³ Congreso Visible; ⁸⁴ Directorio Legislativo (new as of 2019) FMLN ⁸⁵ Sistema de Información Legislativa; Mexican Political Biographies (Camp) Life of the Candidates ⁸⁶ ; Perú Voto Informado ⁸⁷ Parties and union confederations (PIT-CNT) advertise affiliated candidates/deputies backgrounds ⁷
Bolivia	No	No	Yes	
Brazil	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Chile	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Colombia	No	Yes	Yes	
Costa Rica	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Dom. Rep	No	Yes	Yes	
Ecuador	No	Yes	Yes	
El Salvador	No	No	Yes	
Guatemala	No	No	Yes	
Honduras	No	No	Yes	
Mexico	No	Yes	Yes	
Nicaragua	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Panama	No	Yes	Yes	
Paraguay	Yes	No	Yes	
Peru	No	No	Yes	
Uruguay	No	No	Yes	
Venezuela	No	Yes	Yes	

⁸³Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile. Available at:

https://www.bcn.cl/historiapolitica/resenas_parlamentarias/

⁸⁴ Congreso Visible, Available: at: <https://congresovisible.uniandes.edu.co/elEspectador/>

(Accessed August 11, 2020).

⁸⁵ FMLN Party Website: <http://gpfmln.sv/index.php/gpfmln/propietarios> (Accessed August 11, 2020).

⁸⁶ JNEP: <https://votoinformado.jne.gob.pe/voto/CandidatosElectos> (Accessed August 11, 2020).

⁸⁷ Perú Voto Information. <http://peruvotoinformado.com/> (Accessed August 11, 2020).

The majority of national legislative websites (67%) provide some detailed biographical information. Of specific interest to us, in six of the eighteen (33%) cases the national website provides a formulaic bio space where it explicitly prompts deputies to provide information on their profession or occupation. In Brazil for example, website visitors can choose to view all the *Deputados* listed in alphabetical order. Clicking on an individual name reveals a headshot and some information about the legislator. Then, there is an option to view a complete biography. The biography is formulaic, with each deputy providing their current profession. Below there is a designated space for legislators to elaborate the history of their professional career. Deputies list multiple careers with the dates that they served in those capacities. Likewise, in Argentina, deputies are provided with a form to populate where they list their occupation along with their district, party, birthday, marital status, and contact information. In Argentina there is also space for them to upload a C.V.

More common is the option to include a free form biography. Ten of the eighteen countries (55%) provide space on their national websites for a more extensive bio where deputies would provide information of their choosing in free form. In Ecuador for example, there is less uniformity than what we described in Brazil or Argentina. Here, deputies are not given a specific form to populate, rather they have the option to provide a paragraph of text or more of their choosing. Specifically, by selecting the headshot of any one deputy visitors are given the option to view the deputy's full profile. Here, some deputies provide a brief paragraph. Others provide extensive information on their past professional and political activities and education. In such circumstances it was common for deputies to highlight their professional background front and center. Many deputies, for example state they are doctors or lawyers.

Four of the eighteen countries offer a combination of formulaic responses and free-form biographies. In Chile for instance, one only needs to select “Reseña biográfica” or “biographical summary” and they are directed to a formulated bio where deputies provide information about their personal, professional, and political background including a space to list their profession. Or visitors can navigate to the Library of Congress page where deputies provide longer biographies. In Chile, although the list of professions is dominated by white-collar professionals including doctors, lawyers, bankers, business owners, and engineers (and even some actors and musicians) if one were to click through the bios in 2020, they would also encounter René Alinco Bustos and Boris Anthony Barrera Moreno, both construction workers.

Five of the eighteen pages do not provide a formulaic response option or a free-form option. Still, in many of these countries there are other systematic efforts to collect data on national deputies’ occupational background. For example, in Mexico, the Chamber of Deputies website provides a form for deputies to list their political, administrative, educational and occupational background, along with other information about their legislative activity, although biographical information on the Chamber website is often incomplete and missing information about each deputy’s occupational background before entering politics. More systematic information is available in the *Sistema de Información Legislativa*, run by the Interior Ministry, although this website is not accessible through the Chamber’s website. Importantly, as we discuss in the section on journalistic dissemination, we find this information is also made publicly available by journalists.

Other Biographical Data Collections

Governments are not the only organizations that take an interest in developing systematic collections of legislators' profiles. Drawing on political science scholarship, references found on government websites, and extensive online searches of each country in our sample, we identified additional data collections on deputies' occupational status available outside congressional websites in 6 of the 18 countries. Although other systematic records of deputies' profiles may exist elsewhere, the point of this exercise is not to develop a comprehensive database, but to show that systematic information about deputies' backgrounds exists. This information can make its way into the hands of voters, informing their impressions of whether working-class deputies hold seats in office.

To preview, we observe that some governments across Latin America make occupational information for deputies available through electoral boards or other national archives. Beyond the government, NGOs, think-tanks, and academics have also spearheaded systematic data collections. Data from these sources also make their way into more popular accounts from the media or elsewhere.

Other government institutions often provide information on the occupational backgrounds of deputies. For example, the National Electoral Board (JNE) in Peru catalogues and publishes information about candidates, including their occupation and education, in an online database called the "Life of the Candidates" (Hojas de Vida de los Candidatos). In 2016 a Peruvian NGO Asociación Civil Transparencia utilized these data to present aggregate statistics on the education and occupational trends in the Peruvian National Congress. Similarly, in Brazil, all candidates for political office are required to document their occupational status with the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE) when they register to run for office. Many candidates incorporate this information into their campaigns and even integrate their profession into the nickname they use on official ballots. In

Chile, the Congressional Library archives both formulaic profiles and freeform bibliographies of deputies dating back to the 1900s, including all deputies who have served since the return to democracy in 1990.

In Colombia, Congreso Visible published profiles of deputies with headshots and paragraph-form biographies. Congreso Visible is a project run through the Department of Political Science at the Universidad de los Andes since 1998. In the most recent session, Directorio Legislativo from Argentina began collecting systematic profiles on deputies in Colombia following the same format used in Argentina.

Honduras and Guatemala stand out as two of the countries where there is a dearth of systematic data on deputy biographies. In both cases the national legislative websites appear to only provide headshots (which as we explain below are surprisingly useful at providing information about deputy class status) and we did not find any other evidence of deputy profiles provided by non-profits, NGOs or other stakeholders. Still, in cases like these there is good reason to believe that constituents are easily exposed to information about class status. The countries are very small, and politicians tend to have close ties to their constituents. In the opening example of this chapter, Guatemalan journalists reported on the class background of a deputy despite the lack of available systematic data.

In Honduras, Taylor-Robinson (2010) finds that one of the main roles in the Honduran legislature is the “constituency server.” They are well known in their communities, and their identity and self-image is based, at least in part, on “helping individuals” (136). She goes on to explain “[t]hey have attachments to the communities they represent, and few have occupations that require a college education, which supports their frequent statements that they are unprepared to legislate but that they know the needs of the people” (Taylor-Robinson 2010, 138). In the next

section, when we turn to journalistic dissemination of this information, this analysis rings true. Even without systematic data collection on the national legislative website, journalists learn and report information on politicians occupational background.

Let us be clear, it is unlikely the average citizen is visiting their national legislature's website or following watchdogs, think tanks, and NGOs that provide systematic collections of deputy backgrounds. Our intention is not to suggest that the public is consuming this information directly. Rather, the fact that this information is publicly available increases the likelihood that information on the occupational background of legislators is disseminated to the public more broadly through other avenues such as journalism.

Journalists Disseminate Information on Legislators' Class

There is ample evidence that at least some of this information makes its way into the public's hands. As we explain below, there are examples where journalists explicitly reference the aforementioned sources. Still the extent to which they use information from these resources or to which they generate their own information from independent research is not always clear. Regardless of where they obtain these data, the more important point is there is widespread evidence that journalism is central in disseminating information about the class status of legislators to the public.

Although there are a number of different ways information on legislators' class status can make its way into the news, we observed two general approaches. In the first approach, the news reports on descriptive statistics that inform readers about the general composition of the legislature or party slates during elections. The second approach presents individual-level data allowing readers to explore deputy backgrounds for themselves.

Reporting Aggregate Patterns

First, let us take a look at some examples that use the aggregate approach. In these cases, newspapers talk about the descriptive characteristics of congress as a whole. It is not uncommon to see journalists discussing trends about the type of people who hold office and how this has changed over time.

Consider the case of Argentina. In 2019 *Infobae* published an article tracing the decline in union representation in Argentina over the past 36 years (Klipphan 2019). A similar article was featured in *La Nación* almost twenty years earlier—indicating that the decline of union’s access to representation has figured prominently into the political dialogue in Argentina overtime (Dinatale 2000).

In the case of Honduras, where government websites do not include systematic data, journalists still find and report on information about the demographic characteristics of politicians. Ahead of the 2013 election, *El Heraldo* published multiple articles featuring candidates competing for office in various districts. The articles lead with a picture of the ballot, featuring candidate names and headshots. In the district of Santa Bárbara one article states, “The ballot is made of up of well-known teacher’s union leaders, teachers, lawyers, journalists, peasants...” (Fernández 2013). In the district of Copán, another article (Tejada 2013) elaborates: “Among the candidates seeking to occupy the seven positions in the National Congress for the department of Copán in the next government, engineers, lawyers, doctors and entrepreneurs from the area are running.” Likewise, *La Tribuna* (2015) ran an article after the 2015 election explaining that although Congress was historically dominated by priests, large property owners, and ranchers, today

lawyers, engineers, health professionals, and teachers, as well as some union leaders and peasant leaders hold office.

In Bolivia, we observe examples of newspapers reporting general patterns and backing them up with profiles of individual deputies. Consider an article published prior to the 2014 election by *La Razón*, a national Bolivian newspaper out of La Paz, explaining that the “lists of candidates for national deputies include laborers, miners, micro-entrepreneurs, peasants, indigenous people, truck drivers and merchants, among others” (Toro 2014). The article included statements from several union leaders announcing their candidacy, stating why they need representatives from their union in office and noting how many candidates are running from their union. Franklin Durán, the leader of the Transportation Union, explained he was motivated to run for office so that he could extend health insurance benefits to workers in the transportation sector.

We observed a similar example in Chile. *CNN Chile* (2018) documented the educational backgrounds of legislators and then included profiles of a handful of individual deputies with the highest levels of education in the chamber. Not surprisingly, since Chile has one of the lowest shares of working class-deputies in office, the article did not discuss the presence of workers, but instead focused on deputies with post-graduate degrees and featured profiles of deputies obtained from the Chilean Library of Congress website.

Reporting Individual Profiles

In other instances, news reports provide individual-level data on deputy backgrounds. Leading up to the 2018 Mexican election, a headline read “Do you know your senate and deputy candidates? This page tells you who they are and shows their CV,” and directed readers to a website cataloguing candidate occupational backgrounds (Reporte Indigo 2018). In Peru, multiple news outlets including the *Radio Programas del Perú* (RPP), *Gestión*, *Canal N*, and *Agencia*

Peruana de Noticias produced stories informing the public about the Life of the Candidates pages and explaining how to use it to learn about candidates.⁸⁸

Even in places like Uruguay, where the official congressional website does not appear to collect and publicize systematic data on legislators' professions and biographies, journalists publish articles introducing the personal and professional backgrounds of deputies. Ahead of the 2015 election, *Montevideo Portal* ran articles profiling senators,⁸⁹ deputies from the interior⁹⁰ and deputies from Montevideo (the nation's capital).⁹¹ *Costa Rica Hoy*, a national Costa Rican newspaper, launched a website "Yo Voto Elecciones 2018" where it reported information about all national deputy candidates prior to the election and the winners, along with their political party, age, and occupation.⁹² In February 2018, *El Mundo*, a national paper in El Salvador, ran a story listing all 392 candidates for national deputy along with brief biographies that included

⁸⁸ <https://rpp.pe/politica/elecciones/elecciones-2020-jne-esta-es-la-plataforma-para-conocer-las-hojas-de-vida-de-todos-los-candidatos-noticia-1231096>,

<https://rpp.pe/politica/elecciones/elecciones-2020-jne-esta-es-la-plataforma-para-conocer-las-hojas-de-vida-de-todos-los-candidatos-noticia-1231096>, <https://canaln.pe/actualidad/presidente-jne-pide-emitir-votos-responsables-y-revisar-hojas-vida-candidatos-n403022>,

<https://andina.pe/agencia/noticia-elecciones-2020-conoce-las-hojas-vida-los-candidatos-776147.aspx>

⁸⁹ <https://www.montevideo.com.uy/Noticias/Perfil-de-Senadores-uc261993>

⁹⁰ <https://www.montevideo.com.uy/Noticias/Perfiles-de-diputados-del-Interior-uc262180>

⁹¹ <https://www.montevideo.com.uy/Noticias/Diputados-electos-por-Montevideo-uc262112>

⁹² <https://www.crhoy.com/site/dist/especiales/elecciones-cr-2018/candidatos-diputados.html>

occupational information when available.⁹³ It is not known whether *El Mundo* collected this information or relied on another primary data source.

People Can See Class

A third way people become aware of the class-status of deputies is by seeing images of their faces. Candidate physical appearance can serve as an important heuristic for voters (Bernhard 2022a, 2022b). Previous research from psychology shows the average person is quite adept at inferring the class status of others just by viewing an image of their face. In this section we demonstrate that voters can infer politicians' class from facial images.

In politics, the average person is likely to frequently come across images of the deputies who represent them. For starters, some countries such as El Salvador and Honduras include candidate pictures on ballots (Tchintian 2018). In Honduras, for instance, the legislative ballots for every department feature headshots of each of the candidates standing for election. At a minimum, voters see these profiles when they go to the polls to vote. News sources, such as *El Heraldo* (2017) in Honduras, also feature previews of the ballots in advance so voters can familiarize themselves with their options before heading to the polls. Candidate images on official ballots mean that every voter has some visual image of the candidates who hope to represent them. In the buildup to the election, voters see images of candidates on campaign material, at campaign rallies, and on television. In Mexico, for example, it is extremely common to see a candidate's face on posters and billboards plastered throughout neighborhoods, in store windows, and alongside roads.

Once in office, people come into contact with images of deputies in the news, on TV, at government rallies and so forth. Table 6.1 above shows that every government website we

⁹³ <https://elmundo.sv/los-392-que-quieren-ser-diputados-de-san-salvador/>

consulted included headshots of deputies. These images grace the pages of government websites, but they also make their way into official news sources. For instance, *El Heraldo* posted a photo gallery after the 2017 election where they printed the headshots of all 128 deputies in the Honduran National Congress.⁹⁴ Beyond this, the media commonly features images of deputies during their regular news coverage. Canvas any national newspaper across Latin America and readers will regularly find examples of politicians' faces appearing in the news.

Even though people are regularly exposed to images of political elites, there may be reasons to think the findings from research in psychology using images of average people may not generalize to images of legislators or political elites. Indeed, for an individual to make their way to congress they must be more privileged than the average working-class person. As a result, their faces may be somehow different or not representative of the average working-class person. On the other hand, if people can infer the class status of deputies by seeing their faces, this provides important information regarding how people view members of congress and become aware of the descriptive representation of the working class.

When it comes to politics, can people see class? To find out, we turn to two experiments we fielded in Argentina and Mexico. We show evidence that people, just by seeing faces of deputies, can infer important information about their class status. In this third and final section of the chapter we describe our experiment and the results.

Experimental Evidence from Argentina and Mexico

⁹⁴ <https://www.elheraldo.hn/fotogalerias/1131985-468/estos-son-los-128-diputados-que-conforman-el-congreso-nacional-2018-2022> (Accessed January 15, 2023).

In early 2019, we administered online surveys with a series of embedded experiments in Argentina (February) and Mexico (July) using the survey firm Netquest. The samples in each country were drawn from a population of online panelists, and quotas were used to ensure the samples were nationally representative to sex, age, and socioeconomic status (household income).⁹⁵

To test our expectation about individuals' ability to recognize class status from facial features, we began by constructing an original dataset of the occupational backgrounds of Argentine and Mexican deputies. We drew on images and occupational information compiled by the *Directorio Legislativo* in Argentina, and the *Sistema de Información Legislativa* in Mexico. After coding each legislator's occupation-based social class, we identified all deputies that came from a working-class background, and we randomly drew a paired sample of upper-class legislators from the same time period. Using this sample, we next created a dataset of facial images. Specifically, we used legislators' professional headshots, cropped the images around the face (removing all clothing) and edited the images to remove the background. For each legislator in the image dataset, we saved a color photograph as well as a black and white version of the image. We hold the sex of the individuals depicted in the images constant by only using images of men.

In Argentina, our final sample consisted of 27 working-class legislators who served between 2006 and 2016, as well as a paired sample of randomly selected upper-class legislators from the same period (54 legislators in total). In Mexico, where workers have a greater presence

⁹⁵ This experiment was included on the same surveys used in Chapters 3 and 4. This experiment came after the experiment reported in Chapter 4 and was separated by other questions.

in the Chamber of Deputies, our sample consisted of 80 working-class legislators who served between 2009 and 2018, as well as a paired random sample of 80 upper-class legislators.

In the survey, participants were told:

We are going to show you a series of pictures of people's faces. For each picture, say whether it is more likely that this person is a member of the upper class or the working class, based only on their image. We are interested in your initial impression of each photograph. You don't need to devote much time to each photo. There are no right or wrong answers.

Participants were randomly assigned to see a selection of all color photographs or black and white photographs, creating two different experiments. We field the experiment in both color and black and white to improve the external validity of the experiment. There are a number of ways citizens may come into contact with images of politicians. Politicians' faces grace the cover of black and white newspapers, some ballots with images are printed in black and white, as are budget-friendly campaign materials. Color images are found all over the internet, on television, on some ballots (particularly electronic ballots), and on campaign material. Yet, it is possible that it is easier to infer class from color (or black and white) images. Color images, for example, may preserve more details or color differential that may be useful for discerning class status—this is an empirical question. Thus, to improve the likelihood that our findings are applicable to the consumption of both color and black and white images, we field two versions of the same experiment.

Once assigned to participate in either the color or black and white experiment, participants were then shown a random selection of facial images, and for each image, participants were asked if they thought the person was a member of the working class or the upper class. Participants in Argentina were asked to rate 10 images each, and because of the larger legislator sample size in

Mexico, participants there were asked to rate 20 images each. Figure 6.2 shows an example of what Argentine participants assigned to the black and white picture experiment might have seen.

[Insert Figure 6.2 here]

Figure 6.2. Example from Picture Experiment in Argentina

Experimental Results

Overall, 3,053 participants in Argentina rated 108 images (54 color and 54 black and white) for a total of 30,640 responses.⁹⁶ In Mexico, 3,566 participants rated 320 images (160 color and 160 black and white) for a total of 71,271 responses. Since images were randomly assigned to participants some images appear in the dataset more than others. On average, each image was classified 284 times in Argentina (min=236; max= 455; median=282; standard deviation=22), and 187 times in Mexico (min=187; max= 265; median= 223; standard deviation=15).⁹⁷ To visualize the frequency and correctness with which pictures were classified and participants' classification of the pictures, we create a picture-level measure that calculates the percentage of times that each image was correctly classified. A value of 0 indicates a picture was never classified correctly and 100 indicates that a picture was always classified correctly. Figure 6.3 provides histograms of these

⁹⁶ The first 181 participants during the soft open saw 11 pictures each with one image appearing each time and the other 10 images randomly selected, due to programing error. The results are robust when we exclude these participants from the sample.

⁹⁷ As responses were not forced (i.e., participants could advance without answering every question), a few participants skipped all or some of the images.

data for both countries by picture type. The y-axis represents the frequency with which each photo appeared in the sample and the x-axis depicts the percentage of time each photo was classified correctly.

It is clear from Figure 6.3 that although some pictures are correctly classified less than half of the time, a larger number of pictures are correctly classified more than half of the time. On average, Argentine participants classified the images correctly 56.8 percent of the time and Mexican participants classified images correctly 58.9 percent of the time.

[Insert Figure 6.3 here]

Figure 6.3: Distribution of Image Classification

Note: Figure 6.3 shows the number of times each image was classified correctly for Argentina (left panel) and Mexico (right panel).

We next use a one-sample t-test to assess whether participants classify images correctly at a rate better than chance. These results are plotted in figure 6.4. The gray bars show the percentage of times that participants correctly classified the class status of images, with 95% confidence intervals (dark bars) around the mean correct response rate. Participants in both Argentina and Mexico correctly classified the images at a rate better than random, regardless of whether they were shown color (center panel) or black and white images (right panel).

Although our results demonstrate that on average, participants in both Argentina and Mexico classify the images at a rate better than random, it is possible that participants are better at classifying one type of image than another. For example, it is possible that upper-class legislators look more like upper-class citizens, but there is more noise associated with the classification of

working-class legislators—after all the images are of national deputies. Even if deputies come from a working-class background it is likely they are better off than the average working-class citizen in their country.

[Insert Figure 6.4 here]

Figure 6.4: One Sample T-Test, Correctly Classified Facial Images

Note: Figure 6.4 depicts results from a one-sample t-test. The gray bars represent the percentage of times that participants correctly classified the class status of images for all images (left), color images (center) and black and white images (right). This is benchmarked against 50% for the one-sample t-test, the rate that we would expect participants to correctly classify images if they were randomly choosing. The capped bars depict 95% confidence intervals around the mean correct response rate.

To assess whether participants are better at classifying upper-class or working-class images, we next evaluate the rate that citizens classified the images as working class (as opposed to upper class) in Figure 6.5.⁹⁸ We compare this to the actual class status of each image. This is best thought of as the average treatment effect for having been shown an image of a working-class deputy (the treatment group), where an image of an upper-class deputy is the control group. In Argentina, when shown a picture of an upper-class deputy, the control group classifies this image

⁹⁸ The results in Figure 6.5 are robust to a series of modeling decisions including regression models using fixed effects for respondents, fixed effects for images, clustered standard errors for respondents and clustered standard errors for images.

as working class only 39 percent of the time. That is, only 39 percent of respondents guess that the upper-class image is working class—put differently, participants guess correctly 61 percent of the time. The treatment group (those shown images of a working-class deputy) by contrast, are 16 percentage points more likely than the control group to say that the image is working class. On average, the treatment group classifies the image as working class 55 percent of the time. The 16-point difference between participants shown a working-class image and those shown an upper-class image is significant at the $p < .001$ level using a two-tailed t-test.

[Insert Figure 6.5 here]

Figure 6.5: Average Treatment Effect of Seeing a Working-Class Picture

Note: Figure 6.5 depicts the average treatment effect for having been shown an image of an upper-class deputy for all images (left), color images (center) and black and white images (right) for both countries. The x-axis depicts the two categories of pictures, upper class and workers, and the y-axis shows the percentage of time each image type was classified as a worker.

The same pattern (albeit slightly larger) holds in Mexico. Here, the control group classifies upper-class images as working class only 40 percent of the time, contrasted with 58 percent among the treatment group—a difference of 18 percentage points. Again, the difference is significant at the $p < .001$ level using a two-tailed t-test. Thus, not only do participants classify the images correctly at rates better than random, but the differences in how they perceive working-class and upper-class images are far more pronounced when we compare the classification outcome of each image type. Importantly, these same trends are remarkably consistent regardless of whether the image is color or black and white, meaning that regardless of whether citizens encounter images

in print newspaper, paper ballots, on colored computer monitors, or television, they can likely correctly infer the class status of deputies.

It is important to keep in mind that our respondents are able to classify a person's class at a rate better than random with very limited information. Our results, as well as previous studies, demonstrate that people can infer information about a person's social class just from their face alone, although in reality citizens are often presented with much more information about politicians than just their face. A politician's clothing, speech, and body language can all communicate additional information about class. Thus, our findings are the result of a hard test of a respondent's ability to guess a politician's class status from much less information than they are commonly presented with in their daily lives. In practice, citizens are likely to be more accurate at guessing a politician's class when presented with more information.

I Know that Face

Given that we are using real images of national deputies, it is possible that some of the participants in our survey recognize some of the images. If a participant recognizes an image and has some information about the individual deputy in the photo, we should expect that they will be more likely to classify the images correctly. To account for this, we gave participants a follow-up question in which they were asked to indicate whether they recognized any of the pictures. In Argentina 35.23 percent of participants indicated they recognized at least one of the images and 13.11 percent did so in Mexico.

Using a difference-in-means test we assess whether participants claiming to recognize an image classify images correctly more frequently than those who do not recognize an image. In Argentina, participants who recognize an image classify pictures correctly 59 percent of the time

compared to 57 percent among those who do not recognize an image. This 2-percentage point difference is significant at the $p < .001$ level. This relationship holds among respondents classifying colored images, but it is smaller and weaker among participants classifying black and white images (difference = 1.4%, $p = 0.098$).

The same relationship does not hold among respondents in Mexico. In Mexico, respondents classify images correctly 59% of the time regardless of whether they report recognizing an image or not. There are likewise no differences between those who do and do not recognize an image when considering color or black and white images. Instead, the two groups correctly classify images at a statistically indistinguishable rate.

Regardless of whether participants who report recognizing an image are more likely to correctly classify images, both groups still classify the images correctly at a rate better than random. This is important because it provides clear evidence that even when an individual does not know or recognize the person in an image, they still can make some inferences about class status.

The results from Argentina suggest that perhaps people actually know something about their legislators. That is, perhaps those individuals who say they recognized an image may also be somewhat familiar with the backgrounds of national deputies such that they can recall their class status. This explanation would suggest that when national deputies' class status is made known through other means—e.g., newspapers, campaign material, government websites, ballots—citizens acquire this information and are thus aware of the class backgrounds of some deputies. This is probable given that participants are more likely to recognize the images of more famous deputies. The more famous the deputy is, the more likely it is that citizens know something about their class status.

An alternative explanation for the Argentine finding is that participants who report recognizing an image classify images better than those who do not recognize an image. In other words, the finding could simply indicate that people with stronger facial recognition skills (those who report recognizing a picture) also have brains that are wired to pick up on the nuances of facial images that are needed to classify the class status of the legislators in the pictures. But, given that the results do not hold in Mexico, and we have no reason to believe that this explanation would apply differently to Argentina than Mexico, this interpretation may be less likely than the former interpretation.

Instead, it is more likely that recognizing one of ten images (as would be the case in Argentina) improves the response rate more than recognizing one of 20 images (as would be the case in Mexico) and thus we observe statistically different responses in Argentina and not in Mexico. Regardless of the actual reason underlying this relationship, the results indicate that a subset of citizens are slightly better positioned to identify the class status of representatives. More to the point, however, the overall trend holds regardless of whether the respondent reports recognizing any of the images.

How Do People Infer Class from Images?

Some readers may find these results surprising. And—as is the case with many people—one’s gut reaction may be to want to explain how it is that people can guess the class status of people based on their pictures. These ideas are fun to entertain (and for curious readers we will provide a few insights from past research), but it is important to point out that for our purposes, *it does not matter how people can correctly identify the class status of deputies in office based on their picture.* Rather, the point is simply that they *can*. And the fact they can infer class from images is important

for understanding the link between increases in working-class legislators and positive evaluations of parties and legislatures. Nonetheless, it is fascinating to think about the potential ways that deputies' pictures convey information about their class status.

As a matter of fact, there are a number of different conjectures that may explain how people can infer class based on pictures of their faces. Previous research suggests skin tone, age, and attractiveness may explain why some individuals are perceived as working class (Bjornsdottir and Rule 2017; Weeks 2019). There is some evidence that more attractive individuals are more prone to political and economic mobility (Ahler et al. 2017; Busetta et al. 2013; Urbastsch 2018). Consequently, better-looking people tend to be economically better off (Hamermesh et al., 1994). If respondents perceive upper-class people are better looking in general, then when asked to classify the class status of deputies, they may be more likely to assume that better looking deputies are more likely to be members of the upper class.

With respect to age, Bjornsdottir and Rule (2017, 531) speculate the experiences of upper- and lower-class individuals become "etched" in people's faces over time, such that one can use the emotional expressions in people's faces to identify class status. If it is the case that class status becomes more apparent in one's face as one ages, classification accuracy may increase for pictures of older politicians. Although respondents may be more likely to correctly classify older deputies, age itself should not correlate with impressions of one's class status.

Finally, evaluations of skin tone (particularly in Mexico where the population is more racially diverse) may co-vary with class status. In particular, respondents may use skin tone as a heuristic to assume someone is working-class given that economic inequality disproportionately affects some racial and ethnic groups more than others. Evidence from Latin America shows that skin color is correlated with educational attainment and holding higher status occupations—that is

individuals with darker skin have fewer years of schooling and are more likely to hold lower status jobs (Telles 2014; Telles and Steele 2012). Among national deputies, skin tone may also be a useful heuristic for assessing the class status of deputies in Latin America. If survey respondents in our experiment are simply using skin tone as a heuristic to evaluate whether someone is from the working class or not, and if workers in office tend to have darker skin than non-workers, then it is possible that the relationships observed between working-class representation and evaluations of institutions in Chapters 3 and 5 are spurious. That is, the relationship could be driven by racial and ethnic diversity and not by class representation. For this reason, we want to know whether survey respondents can correctly identify working-class faces once we account for skin tone.

To evaluate whether the relationships observed above hold once accounting for skin tone, we coded the skin tone of each image used in the experiment. Given that perceptions of skin tone are socially constructed, highly context dependent, and change over space and time (Telles and Steele 2012), we asked coders in Argentina and Mexico to code the skin tone of color pictures from their respective countries.⁹⁹ We placed the skin tone palette from the AmericasBarometer survey beside each picture and asked coders to identify the color that most closely matched the image. The palette includes eleven skin tones, with “1” being the lightest and “11” being the darkest (Telles and Steele 2012).¹⁰⁰ Coders were randomly assigned a subset of the images such that 23 Argentines coded 24 images each and 48 Mexicans coded 50 images each. Each image in Argentina was coded an average of 10 times and Mexican images were coded an average of 15

⁹⁹ Coders did not code skin tone for black and white images.

¹⁰⁰ This is the same color palette developed by Princeton University’s Project on Race and Ethnicity (PERLA).

times.¹⁰¹ For Argentina, the mean skin tone of images in our experiment is 3.5 and for Mexico the mean is 3.7.

First, we want to know if respondents use skin tone as a heuristic to correctly classify facial images. We analyze the variable plotted in Figure 6.4 which indicates whether the respondent correctly classified the image or not. Then, to assess whether skin tone predicts correct classifications, we include the average skin tone rating for each image. Given that Telles (2014) shows that darker skin tones in Latin America are associated with lower levels of education and lower status occupations, we expect that respondents may be more likely to classify working-class images correctly when the skin tone is darker and upper-class images correctly when skin tone is lighter. To assess our expectations that darker skin is a heuristic used to identify workers and lighter skin is used to identify members of the upper class, we analyze two subsamples of our data. One subsample contains images of workers and one subsample contains images of upper-class deputies. To evaluate whether darker (lighter) skin tone is associated with correct predictions of working-class (upper-class) deputies we include a measure of the mean skin tone rating for each working-class (upper-class) image. Then, given that each respondent classified multiple images we cluster standard errors on the respondent.

¹⁰¹ Though we opt for each image to be classified by multiple coders, it is not uncommon for studies to rely on a single coder to identify skin tone (e.g., Canache et al. 2014; Telles and Steele 2012).

Table 6.2: Skin Tone as a Heuristic for Correctly Classifying Facial Images

	Argentina		Mexico	
	(1) Workers	(2) Upper Class	(3) Workers	(4) Upper Class
Skin Tone	0.332*** (0.016)	-0.247*** (0.023)	0.401*** (0.014)	-0.467*** (0.015)
Constant	-0.966*** (0.062)	1.274*** (0.082)	-1.317*** (0.060)	1.958*** (0.054)
<i>Responses</i>	7714	7534	18084	18068
<i>Respondents</i>	1,510	1,511	1,810	1,810
<i>Images</i>	27	27	80	80

Standard errors (clustered by respondent) in parentheses. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 6.2 shows the results for our analysis. It is clear from Models 1 and 3 that darker skin tone is positively and significantly associated with the likelihood that respondents correctly classify an image as working class. In both the Argentina and Mexico samples, the coefficient for skin tone is positive and significant, indicating that respondents are more likely to correctly identify images of working-class deputies as workers when they have a darker skin tone. We find similar results for images of upper-class deputies. Specifically, we observe that skin tone is negatively and significantly associated with the likelihood of correctly classifying upper-class images. Respondents are more likely to correctly identify someone as being from the upper class if they have a lighter skin tone.

Next, we want to know if the relationship between deputies' working-class status and respondents identifying someone as working class holds once we account for skin tone. In this analysis, the dependent variable is coded 1 if the respondent classified the image as a working-class deputy and zero otherwise. We then include a variable "worker" to indicate whether the image is of a working-class deputy (1) or a white-collar deputy (0). Our expectation is that the relationship between respondents classifying the image as a worker (the DV) and the person in the image belonging to the working class will be positive and significant. This is the same relationship

shown in Figure 6.5, only here we use a logit model to show the relationship as opposed to a two-tailed t-test. We display this bivariate relationship in Table 6.3, Models 1 and 3, for Argentina and Mexico respectively. As displayed in Figure 6.5 the relationship is positive and significant indicating that when respondents are shown a picture of a worker, they are more likely to classify it as a worker.

Finally, to assess whether this relationship holds when we control for the skin tone of the deputy, we include the average skin tone rating for each image. This relationship is displayed in Table 6.3, Models 2 and 4. Importantly, we observe the relationship between classifying the image as working class and being shown an image of a working-class deputy is positive and significant at the $p < .001$ level in both Argentina and Mexico, even after controlling for skin tone. In other words, even though skin tone does serve as a heuristic that helps respondents correctly classify the class status of different images, respondents are still able to identify working-class images independent of their skin tone. In Argentina the strength of the relationship between the classification of an image and the class-status of the deputy is largely consistent even when we account for skin tone. In Mexico, the relationship is smaller once we control for skin tone, but the relationship is still positive and significant at the $p < .001$ level. Taken together, the results in this section offer further evidence that working-class deputies are visible, and the public is capable of inferring class based on images of deputies.

Table 6.3: Ability to Identify Workers

	Argentina		Mexico	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Worker Image	0.653*** (0.032)	0.603*** (0.033)	0.759*** (0.023)	0.397*** (0.024)
Skin Tone		0.303*** (0.013)		0.432*** (0.011)
Constant	-0.431*** (0.024)	-1.465*** (0.051)	-0.418*** (0.020)	-1.841*** (0.043)
<i>Responses</i>	15248	15248	36152	36152
<i>Respondents</i>	1,512	1,512	1,810	1,810
<i>Images</i>	27	27	80	80

Standard errors (clustered by respondent) in parentheses. * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Conclusion

In this chapter we demonstrate there are a number of ways for the public to know workers are in office. We begin by presenting evidence that both individuals and parties have an incentive to tout deputies' working-class status. Drawing on newspaper coverage, social media, and party material, we show evidence of individual legislators in countries with personal vote-seeking electoral systems, and political parties in countries with party-centered electoral systems, advertising the personal ties of legislators to the working class.

Next, we show that governments, NGOs, and even academics have contributed to the systematic collection of data on legislators' occupational status. Although the average person is unlikely to consume this information from primary sources, this information is widely circulated in popular media. Regardless of whether or not politicians and parties have incentives to leverage a politician's class status, this information is made available through the media.

Third, we find average individuals can identify the social class background of politicians solely through an image of their face at a rate significantly greater than chance. These results are remarkably robust: they hold across two countries, regardless of whether or not survey participants

recognize any of the politicians, are similar for color and black and white versions of the photographs, and are independent of a deputy's perceived skin tone.

These results lend further evidence to previous studies that suggest people can perceive social class from another person's face (Bjornsdottir and Rule 2017). However, unlike previous studies, we use photos of actual politicians that are more similar to what the average citizen is likely to encounter. By using both color and black and white pictures we can account for the different ways that people may encounter pictures of politicians. Campaign flyers and television coverage are likely to be in color, whereas newspaper coverage and pictures on some ballots are more likely to be featured in black and white. Thus, our results have high external validity in terms of claiming that voters can infer social class by looking at their elected representatives.

Importantly, the ways we demonstrate the public can become aware of the presence of workers in the legislature either require that people follow the news or that they take an interest in learning about politics. If it is the case that people are most likely to learn about this information in the news and in political discourse, then it suggests that people who are interested in politics and those who are avid news followers are more likely to be aware of working-class representation than their counterparts who are not interested in politics or do not follow the news. Consequently, we should expect the relationship shown in chapter 3—i.e., the positive relationship between working-class representation and citizens' evaluations of representative institutions—should be strongest among people who take an interest in politics and follow the news. Put differently, if increases in working-class representation leads to more positive evaluations of institutions, then this relationship will be even more pronounced among those individuals who are most likely to be aware of working-class representation. We turn to this relationship in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

How do Voters Know Workers are in Office?: Interest in Politics, News Consumption, and Evaluations of Institutions

“These are not the same times. These are not the same actors. During the last 15 years, union representation in Congress has lost considerable ground...”

La Nación, January 21, 2000

In early 2000, the newspaper *La Nación* published a story to explain that although union representation in Congress was at historic lows in Argentina (down nearly 70 percent since the 1980s in the Peronist Party alone), that union presence would be a key issue in upcoming debates over labor reform (Dinatale 2000). In 2019, the Argentine NGO *Quiero Saber Iniciativa Ciudadana* published a report detailing legislators with labor union backgrounds in Congress (Escuerdo and Moreno 2019). The report explained that historically, Argentina had one of the highest levels of labor union representation across South American legislatures, and currently there are twelve deputies of “union extraction” in Congress. Authors of the report went on to name these deputies, as well as outline their committee appointments and legislative projects. Of note, eight of the twelve deputies served on the Labor Legislation Committee (*Legislación del Trabajo*), and the vast majority of legislation introduced by these deputies dealt with labor issues. After the *Quiero Saber* report was published, its findings were quickly picked up by some of Argentina’s major newspapers, including *Infobae* (Klipphan 2019). These examples demonstrate that should citizens have the means and motive to learn about what is going on in the government, or what scholars have referred to as citizens’ “monitoring capacity” (Taylor-Robinson 2010), information

on worker's representation – both in terms of numeric presence and policy consequences – is available.

In the previous chapter we explained that citizens are likely to learn about the presence and policy consequences of working-class legislators by reading the news and taking an active interest in politics. In particular, we demonstrated a large number of governments, candidates, and political parties include information about the occupational backgrounds of candidates and politicians on their websites and in their campaign material. Beyond this, we showed that newspapers—whether for explicit political reasons or for journalistic purposes—report on and disseminate information about politicians' occupational backgrounds and class status. Many of these news sources and government websites also include images of candidates from which citizens can further infer information about the working-class (or upper-class) background of political elites.

In Chapter 2 we explained the acquisition of information through these channels is important because it helps us understand which citizens are most likely aware of working-class representation. Reading the news and taking an interest in politics are the two most evident ways citizens can learn about politics, and the presence and policy consequences of working-class legislators. To the extent that working-class representation fosters positive evaluations of political institutions, this relationship should be strongest among those citizens who follow the news and take an interest in politics. By contrast, citizens who do not take an interest in learning about politics and who do not closely follow the news are less likely to be aware of working-class representation, and hence, working-class representation is less likely to shape their evaluations of political institutions. In this chapter, we empirically test this part of our argument.

Interest in Politics, News Consumption, and Evaluations of Institutions

In Chapter 3, we demonstrated an increase in the numeric representation of working-class citizens was positively and significantly associated with citizens' level of trust in the legislature and political parties, with individual evaluations of legislative approval, and with evaluations of how well political parties represent them. Nonetheless, not all citizens are equally likely to be aware of working-class representation. When asked what share of seats legislators from working-class backgrounds hold in Argentina and Mexico, survey participants responded with answers across the full range of possibilities (see Chapter 3). This range of responses should not be surprising. We know from copious research on political interest and attentiveness that some citizens are far more knowledgeable and aware of politics than others. Citizens who have a strong interest in politics and those who follow the news are more likely to be aware of working-class representation and to understand the policy consequences of such representation. Thus, it logically follows *the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations of political institutions will be strongest among citizens with higher levels of political interest and news consumption*. In the following section we focus on the conditional effect of political interest on individual evaluations of legislatures and parties as workers' representation increases. Afterwards, we turn to news consumption.

Empirical Investigation: Interests in Politics and Evaluations of Representation

In this section, we empirically test our expectations about the conditional relationship between working-class representation and evaluations of legislatures and political parties. To evaluate these expectations, we need to account for individual levels of interest in politics. LAPOP asks respondents, “How much interest do you have in politics: none (coded 1), little (2), some (3), a lot (4). Not surprisingly, there is substantial variation in reported levels of interest in politics. The left panel in Figure 7.1 shows the distribution of political interest across 48 country years from 2008 to 2014.

[Insert Figure 7.1.a] [Insert Figure 7.1.b]

Figure 7.1: Interest in Politics in Latin America

The majority of citizens in Latin America claim to be un-interested in politics. Notably, 33 percent of citizens respond they have no political interest and 35 percent say they have only a little or some political interest. Combined, 68 percent of citizens express fairly low levels of interest in politics. By contrast, 22 percent of respondents say they have some interest in politics and only 10 percent say they are very interested in politics. Importantly, political interest also varies substantially within and across countries in our sample. As the right panel in Figure 7.1 demonstrates, citizens in the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Argentina are some of the most politically interested in Latin America, whereas citizens in Chile, Ecuador, and Guatemala express the lowest average levels of political interest.

We contend that those individuals who are the most interested in politics are more likely to be aware of working-class representation and will have information about whether or not working-class legislators are working to advance workers’ rights. Figure 7.2 offers some initial support for this expectation in relation to political interest and institutional trust. Figure 7.2 shows

the aggregate correlation, along with the corresponding regression line, between percent workers in the legislature and institutional trust for individuals with no interest in politics (left) and at least some interest in politics (right).

[Insert Figure 7.2.a] [Insert Figure 7.2.b]

Figure 7.2. Interest in Politics & Institutional Trust

Note: Figure 7.2 shows the scatterplot and Pearson's r correlation coefficient for the aggregate relationship between the percent workers and average trust response in each country-year in our sample, as well as the fitted OLS regression line. Only the regression coefficients in the "at least some interest" panels are significant ($p < .05$).

The trends in this figure illustrate two important points that are in line with our expectations about the conditional effect of political interest. First, the correlation between percent workers in each country-year and the average level of institutional trust is stronger among the subsamples who indicate at least some interest in politics (right panels) compared to the sample with no political interest. Second, the relationship between working-class representation and institutional trust—depicted by the regression coefficient on the fitted line through each scatterplot—is larger and stronger ($\beta = 0.04$; significant at the $p < .05$ level) among the politically interested subsample than it is among the sample of individuals reporting they are not interested ($\beta = 0.02$; significant at the $p < .10$ level).

Results: Political Interest, Working Class Representation, and Evaluations of Political Institutions

To systematically evaluate this relationship, we turn to multivariate analysis. Using the same dependent variables from Chapter 3 we investigate how the relationship between working-class representation and evaluations of representative institutions is conditioned by individual political interest. We again examine *institutional trust* (indexed measure of trust in legislatures and political parties), *legislative approval*, and *external efficacy in political parties* (indexed measure of parties represent voters, and parties listen to voters).

Our empirical analysis builds on the baseline models from Chapter 3, which already include a measure of political interest. In this chapter, we use a series of interaction terms between political interest and the percentage of workers in office to evaluate if the relationship between increases in working-class representation and evaluations of representative institutions is stronger for citizens who express a higher level of political interest. The results for the analysis are reported graphically in the next section. The complete table of coefficients is available in Appendix 7.1.

To gain a clear understanding of the degree to which political interest strengthens the relationship between the descriptive representation of workers and higher evaluations of institutions we calculate the expected value of responses to each of the evaluative measures across the range of working-class representation in our sample for the lowest and highest levels of political interest. Figure 7.3 graphs the expected value of citizens' evaluations on the y-axis and the percentage of working-class deputies on the x-axis for three different evaluations: 1) institutional trust, 2) legislative approval, 3) external efficacy in political parties. Panels on the left graph the expected values for people with no political interest (coded 1), and panels on the right correspond to high interest (4).

The general trend in our results is consistent with the broad patterns seen in Chapter 3. Figure 7.3 shows that working-class representation is associated with more positive evaluations of

Congress and political parties. Nonetheless, it is also evident from the figure that individual levels of political interest have a substantial impact on evaluations of institutions. It is clear from these trends that people with higher levels of political interest (right panels for each dependent variable) display more institutional trust and better evaluations of the legislature. The positive relationship between working class representation and *external efficacy* that we observe in Chapter 3, however, is not conditional on interest in politics. Nevertheless, people with greater interest in politics have a higher baseline level of external efficacy in relation to political parties.¹⁰²

As the top left panel of Figure 7.3 shows, when workers are completely absent from the legislature, among citizens with no interest in politics, the expected level of institutional trust is 2.87 on a 7-point scale. Among citizens with a lot of interest in politics, by contrast, the expected level of trust in the legislature is 3.58 when workers are absent from the congress. This difference represents a statistically significant gap of 0.72 — almost a three-quarter point difference on a 7-point scale. Put differently moving from the lowest level (1) to the highest level (4) of political interest—while holding other individual and contextual factors constant—is associated with a 24.7 percent increase in the level of institutional trust. This same trend persists across the other two

¹⁰² In Appendix 7.1 the coefficient on the interaction term between interest and workers' representation is not statistically significant in the "External Efficacy, Parties" model. When we graph this relationship, the magnitude of the relationship is statistically the same for both groups, even though the baseline level is higher for the interested group. Moving from no workers in office to 17 percent is associated with a .40-point increase in efficacy among the non-interested, and a .47-point increase among the interested.

indicators. For each of the factors we considered, the baseline evaluation is more positive among respondents with higher levels of interest.

[Insert Figure 7.3.a]

[Insert Figure 7.3.b]

[Insert Figure 7.3.c]

Figure 7.3 Conditional Effect of Interest in Politics

Note: Figure 7.3 uses regression results from Appendix 7.1 to calculate and graph the expected value of our three dependent variables, across the range of working-class representation in our sample (0 to 17 percent), for individuals with no political interest (left panel) and high political interest (right panel). Lines represent the expected value of the dependent variable, and shaded areas indicate 95 percent confidence intervals.

More importantly, the difference between citizens with low and high levels of political interest grows as working-class representation increases for the institutional trust and legislative approval variables. Still focusing on institutional trust, the figure for respondents with no interest in politics shows that as working-class representation increases across the range in our sample (moving from 0 to 17 percent) trust in legislatures increases from 2.87 to 3.43 — a 19 percent increase. Thus, even among citizens who do not take an interest in politics, working-class representation still increases institutional trust. Yet, the magnitude of this relationship is much stronger among those who take an interest in politics. Specifically, moving from a chamber with no working-class legislators to one where workers comprise 17 percent of the chamber is associated with an increase from 3.58 to 4.43—a 24 percent increase. Not only is the magnitude of the increase much larger among the politically interested, but also the difference in the level of

trust between the disinterested and the highly interested is even larger in chambers with the highest levels of working-class representation than in chambers without workers.

We interpret these results to indicate that citizens who are not interested in politics are less likely to be aware of or to take interest in learning about working-class representation. Thus, changes in working-class representation do not weigh as heavily on their evaluations of congress. Even if they know that some workers occupy office, they are unlikely to be aware of the efforts workers make to advance the policy interests of working-class citizens.

Responses obtained from opened-ended questions in our original surveys help to illustrate this argument that people who are not interested in politics are unlikely to evaluate representative institutions more favorably when workers are represented among lawmakers. In Argentina—where there is substantial evidence that working-class deputies advocate for and advance the rights of workers—we reminded respondents: “Some people in Congress have working-class backgrounds.” Then we asked them, “To what extent do you think these legislators understand the problems of people like yourself.” One respondent said there was no difference between deputies from the working class and other deputies in terms of their ability to understand problems that people like them face. When we later asked why he responded this way he simply explained: “I don't participate in politics.”¹⁰³ Another respondent who likewise indicated that working class representatives are not better or worse positioned to understand people’s problems explained his response this way:

¹⁰³ “No participo en politica.”

“Excuse my ignorant answers because I don't know anything about politics, I'm 18 years old. And I only know the most basic things in the world of politics, so excuse me but I don't know how to answer these questions.”¹⁰⁴

These responses illustrate our point that citizens who are not interested in politics may be unlikely to associate the presence of working-class legislators with more positive evaluations of representative institutions. Instead, they are more likely to be indifferent toward workers' legislative representation.

Citizens with high political interest, by contrast, are characterized by a strong positive relationship between working-class representation and legislative approval. This finding is consistent with our argument that politically interested citizens are more likely to be aware that workers are in office in the first place, and they are more likely to be aware that working-class deputies promote workers' policy interests. One respondent from our Argentina survey indicates how his interest in politics—and, in particular, his attention to political protests—makes him aware of working-class deputies' presence and politics. As he put it:

“They [working class deputies] are seen accompanying demonstrations, complaining, asking for justice. In the factories occupied by their workers when they are laid off. They were repressed and assaulted just like the rest of the protesters. In the police stations, asking for information and the reasons for the arrest of protestors, including people who weren't protesting but were arrested just for being nearby. They receive unions that have conflicts with employers or the government.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ “Disculpen mis ignorantes respuestas pues no se nada de política, tengo 18 años Y solo se lo más básico del mundo de la política así que disculpen pero no se como responderles”

¹⁰⁵ Se los ve en las manifestaciones acompañando, reclamos, pidiendo justicia. En las fábricas ocupadas por sus trabajadores al ser despedidos. Fueron reprimidos y agredidos al igual que el resto de los manifestantes En las comisarías solicitando información y motivos de las

This above quotation helps contextualize the cross-national patterns in Figure 7.3. People who are interested in politics are more likely to be aware of working-class deputies and have a good idea of what they stand for. On the other side of the coin, another respondent who positively evaluated working-class deputies indicated that when white-collar politicians make policy for the working class, there are often unintended and negative consequences:

“I believe that the upper-class [deputies] sometimes promote laws without considering the effort and sacrifice of the working class. For example, our union, in my case I’m in the education field, partners with and works for their teachers, because they are teachers just like us. On the other hand, when we have to comply with laws that come from the Ministry of Education, the laws are imposed without knowing the consequences that they have on our day-to-day lives in educational institutions. In order to create education laws, those in power who enact them should first walk the halls of a school.”¹⁰⁶

In other words, this highly interested respondent is aware that workers will promote ordinary citizens’ policy interests, and that the policies they promote will ultimately be more effective at improving ordinary citizens’ lives.

detenciones de manifestantes e incluso de gente que no manifestaba y fue detenida por pasar el lugar. Reciben a los sindicatos que tiene conflictos con las patronales o el gobierno.

¹⁰⁶ Considero que la clase alta a veces promueven leyes sin tener en cuenta el esfuerzo y sacrificio de la clase trabajadora. Por ejemplo nuestro sindicato, en mi caso, que me encuentro dentro del ámbito de la educación, acompaña y trabaja para sus docentes, porque ellos son docentes igual que nosotros. En cambio cuando tenemos que cumplir leyes que vienen del ministerio de educación son leyes impuestas sin saber las consecuencias que tiene en nuestro vivir día a día en una institución educativa, para crear leyes en una escuela, los que están en el poder que las dictan deberían primero transitar los pasillos de una escuela.

It is further evident from Figure 7.3 that political interest also moderates the relationship between increases in workers' representation and congressional job approval. At the lowest levels of workers' representation, those without interest exhibit a 2.61 level of legislative approval compared to 2.79 among respondents with a lot of interest, a .20-point difference on a 5-point scale. But at the highest levels of workers' representation the gap is larger. The average level of legislative approval is 2.91 for those with no interest compared to 3.25 for those with high interest, a .33-point gap. Although the gap in levels of legislative approval between respondents with no interest and those with a lot of interest is significant at $p < .001$ at all levels of working-class representation, the increasing magnitude of the gap at higher levels of representation supports our expectation that the relationship between congressional job approval and representation will be strongest among those who are interested in politics.

Empirical Investigation: News Consumption and Evaluations of Institutions

We also expect the relationship between working-class representation and evaluations of institutions will be stronger among citizens who regularly consume the news. Although news consumption is not the only way for citizens to learn about working-class representation (e.g., attending political events, voting, and even talking to friends, colleagues, and family about politics all provide avenues for learning about representation) it is still one of the most readily available ways citizens learn about who represents them.

To evaluate this expectation, we incorporate a new measure into our baseline model: news consumption. In 2010, 2012, and 2014 (but not 2008)¹⁰⁷ LAPOP asked survey participants: “About how often do you pay attention to the news, whether on TV, the radio, newspapers or the internet?” Participants could respond in one of five ways: (1) Never (2) Rarely (3) A few times a month (4) A few times a week (5) Daily. The left panel in Figure 7.4 shows the share of respondents in our analysis that responded to each category. As Figure 7.4 illustrates, the majority of respondents in our pooled sample report consuming news daily. The right panel in figure 7.4 shows the average level of news consumption across the countries in our sample. Individuals in Guatemala and Honduras report some of the lowest levels of news consumption in Latin America, whereas those in Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Colombia report the highest levels.

[Insert Figure 7.4.a] [Insert Figure 7.4.b]

Figure 7.4 Share of Respondents Who Consume the News in Latin America

Note: Figure 7.4 shows the distribution of responses to the LAPOP question, “About how often do you pay attention to the news?” in the 2012 LAPOP survey. Not all countries in Figure 5.4 are included in the news consumption analysis.

¹⁰⁷ In 2008 the news consumption questions were broken down into four separate questions and the question did not ask about news consumption on the internet. As a result, we find that the average level of news consumption reported in 2008 is substantially lower than in other years since it does not account for internet news consumption.

Across Latin America, a large share of citizens report they pay attention to the news fairly regularly. Eighty-nine percent of respondents say they pay attention to the news daily or multiple times a week. Still others report they only view the news a few times a month, rarely, or never. It is our contention that this share of citizens—those who do not pay attention to the news—will be less aware of who represents them and what policies are advanced by government. Put differently, it is less likely they have a sense of whether or not working-class legislators are present in office. It is also less likely they follow the policy representation of workers (or non-workers for that matter) in office. For this reason, we expect the positive relationship observed in Chapter 3 between working-class representation and evaluations of legislatures and political parties will be attenuated for citizens who report they do not watch the news.

To evaluate the interplay between working-class representation and news consumption, the second set of models in this chapter incorporate our measure of news consumption and an interaction term between working-class representation and news consumption.¹⁰⁸ Here, we analyze the conditional relationship of working-class representation for two of the three evaluative measures introduced in Chapter 3 and discussed in the previous section. Specifically, we focus on institutional trust and legislative approval—excluding questions about parties representing and

¹⁰⁸ The measure for news consumption was only included in the 2010, 2012, and 2014 surveys. Thus, the analyses in this section focus on a smaller sample of 23-30 country-years. Despite the change in sample size the relationship between the percent of working-class deputies and both dependent variables are comparable (both in size and magnitude) to the relationships presented in Chapter 3. See Appendix Table 7.3 for a comparison.

listening due to data limitations.¹⁰⁹ A complete table of coefficients for this set of analyses is available in Appendix 7.2. As with the previous set of results, we facilitate the interpretation of the results by presenting them graphically in the section that follows.

Results: News Consumption, Working-Class Representation, and Evaluations of Political Institutions

As with our preliminary political interest analysis in Figure 7.2, we begin by looking at the correlation between working-class representation and trust in political institutions among individuals with low and high levels of news consumption. The panels on the top of Figure 7.5 show this between-country relationship for the subsample of respondents who report paying attention to the news less than once a week. The bottom panels in Figure 7.5 show this relationship for the subsample who pays attention to the news daily.

The trends in Figure 7.5 are largely consistent with our expectations. First, in the subsample of individuals who report low levels of news consumption, the relationship between working-class representation and institutional trust is nonexistent: these two factors are only weakly correlated, and the corresponding regression line is essentially flat. Among the subsample of individuals who report consuming the news daily, however, a different pattern emerges. The correlation between working-class representation and institutional trust at the country-year level

¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately, the questions about parties representing voters and listening to people like you were only asked in 12 of the country-years where the news consumption question appeared—there is not sufficient variation on working-class representation in these 12 observations to systematically analyze the relationship between representation and evaluations of institutions.

is much stronger compared to the subsample of individuals who rarely consume news media. Moreover, the fitted OLS regression line is positive and significant ($p < .05$).

[Insert Figure 7.5.a] [Insert Figure 7.5.b]

Figure 7.5 News Consumption and Institutional Trust

Note: Figure 7.5 shows the scatterplot and Pearson's r correlation coefficient for the aggregate relationship between the percent workers and average trust response in each country-year in our sample, as well as the fitted OLS regression line.

Next, we turn to multivariate regression for a systematic evaluation of the relationship between working-class representation, news consumption, and evaluations of political institutions. Looking first at institutional trust, Figure 7.6 graphs the relationship between representation and trust for respondents who report never following the news on the left and those who report following the news on a daily basis on the right. Among those who do not follow the news, the relationship between workers in office and trust in legislatures is positive, but it is not statistically significant. Recall that only 2.9 percent of respondents say they never follow the news. Importantly, a very small portion of the sample reports following the news less than once a week. Were we to look at the middle category, those reporting they follow the news a few times a month, we would observe a positive and statistically significant .46 increase ($p < .05$). And among those who say they follow the news on a daily basis, the relationship between representation and institutional trust is positive and significant. An increase from 0 to 13 percent workers in office (the highest level of workers' representation in this sample) is associated with a move from 3.18 points to 3.79 points of reported institutional trust. This represents a positive and statistically

significant increase of 0.61 points. Clearly, the more people pay attention to the news, the stronger the relationship between working-class representation and trust in legislatures and parties.

[Insert Figure 7.6.a]

[Insert Figure 7.6.b]

Figure 7.6. Conditioning Effect of News Consumption

Note: Figure 7.6 uses the regression results from the interaction models in Appendix 7.2 to calculate and graph the expected value of our dependent variables, across the range of working-class representation in our sample (0 to 13.2 percent), for individuals who never consume news and those who consume news daily. Lines represent the expected value of the dependent variable, and shaded areas indicate 95 percent confidence intervals.

The same pattern holds for legislative approval. Again, for the small category of citizens who say they do not follow the news, the relationship between workers' representation and legislative approval is positive but extremely modest—only a 0.06 increase that does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Among citizens who consume the news on a daily basis, however, there is a positive and significant increase from a 2.71 level of approval to a 3.15 level of approval. Additionally, it is worth pointing out the level of congressional approval barely differs between avid news consumers and those who never watch the news when workers are absent from office. But, when workers hold 13 percent of legislative seats, there is a statistically significant 0.27 difference in the two groups' levels of legislative approval, with avid news consumers being more likely to say they approve of the legislature. These results support our expectation that the relationship between positive evaluations of institutions and working-class representation would be highest among those who follow the news.

In our open-ended survey, we saw repeatedly that respondents felt like working-class deputies were prone to have shared life experiences with the average person and to work on behalf of their interests in the legislature. These perceptions likely go a long way to generating trust in the legislature—particularly among people who keep up with the news and can point to actual examples of when they have seen deputies advocate on behalf of workers. As one survey respondent from Argentina who reports reading the newspaper and watching the news on television daily explained, he thinks deputies from the working class are dedicated to promoting policies that improve the lives of all citizens. He justifies his opinion using examples of workers’ policy positions:

“I belong to the working class and when teachers or workers can occupy these positions, they do not deny their class and they work to make laws that prevent exploitation, as in the case of the representatives of FIT [Workers’ Left Front, or *Frente de Izquierda de los Trabajadores*]! They also get involved in issues related to public health, education (teacher salaries and infrastructure conditions) and human rights. They are the ones who throw themselves into defending workers and retirees. They are not corrupt, they do not compromise!”¹¹⁰

Other avid news followers echoed these sentiments. “On several occasions I have heard about bills from deputies who come from the working classes and who seek to significantly

¹¹⁰ Porque pertenezco a a clase trabajadora y cuando al docentes u obreros pueden ocupar cargos no niegan su clase y trabajan para generar leyes que eviten la explotación como el caso de los representantea de FIT! También se involucran en temas de salud pública, educación (salarios docentes y condiciones de infraestructura), ddhh [derechos humanos]; son los que ponen el cuerpo y defienden a los trabajadora y jubilados. No son corruptos, no tranzan!

improve the situation of the most vulnerable sectors.”¹¹¹ As another respondent put it: “The deputy who belongs to the working class and does not forget his roots, promotes projects that can improve the quality of life through useful labor laws, promotions to medium-sized companies that promote employment and regional economies.”¹¹² Here too, this respondent appears to be drawing on explicit examples of legislation he has learned about—perhaps by listening to the radio which he reports doing every day—that are intended to help the average person. Combined, these responses illustrate that people who regularly follow the news are likely to have clear examples and information to draw on when forming their opinions. To the extent working-class deputies actually represent citizens better, people who keep up with the news will have tangible examples in mind to incorporate into their assessments of political institutions.

Of course, news consumption is not the only way citizens learn about workers’ representation. As we demonstrated in the previous chapter, just by turning out to vote in countries that put candidate pictures on the ballot, citizens are exposed to information about class representation. In the buildup to elections, streets and subway lines are plastered with campaign propaganda, some informing voters about working-class representation. Thus, it is not surprising that we observe a positive relationship between workers and evaluations of institutions even among

¹¹¹ En varias oportunidades he escuchado sobre proyectos de ley en diputados de representantes que provienen de clases trabajadoras y que buscan mejorar considerablemente la situación de sectores más vulnerables.

¹¹² El diputado que pertenece a la clase trabajadora y no se olvida de sus raíces, promueve proyectos que pueden mejorar la calidad de vida a través de leyes laborales útiles , promociones a empresas medianas que fomenten el empleo y economías regionales.

citizens who report they do not follow the news. Nevertheless, the magnitude of this relationship is strongest among those individuals who consume news on a daily basis.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have offered empirical support for our expectation that the positive relationship we observed in Chapter 3 between descriptive representation of the working class and individual evaluations of representative institutions will be strongest among citizens who are interested in politics and who pay attention to the news. These individuals have a greater ability to monitor politics, are more likely aware that workers are in office, and are more attuned to policy outcomes that benefit the average voter. Although all citizens evaluate legislatures and political parties more positively when a greater percentage of workers are represented in office, the magnitude of this positive relationship is greatest among individuals who have the resources to monitor politics.

Although the analysis presented in this chapter is supportive of our general argument, greater monitoring capacity also means citizens are more likely to know if their legislators are not delivering on policy responsiveness, or if they are actively promoting anti-worker policies. As we demonstrated in chapter 5, increases in working-class representation are not always associated with better evaluations of the government. In contexts where political parties have been coopted by elites and do not promote the interests of working-class citizens—as is exemplified by the case of Mexico—we observed that more workers in office actually erodes trust in parties and legislatures and erodes evaluations of representative institutions. In these circumstances we would expect that higher levels of news consumption may even be associated with worse evaluations of legislatures. To illustrate, one of our survey respondents in Mexico who indicated that working

class deputies are not engaged in promoting projects to improve the quality of citizens' lives explained:

“I don't see projects in my community, nor do I hear about them from others, I watch the news and more and more of the budget is being taken from social projects that can improve the quality of life. When I hear about politicians, it is because they act only for their benefit and only see their interests regardless of the social class to which they belong, I think it shows that to enter politics and stay in it, one must be corrupt and forget the benefit of others.”¹¹³

Other responses also indicate that among individuals who hold negative perceptions of working-class deputies, their opinions about working-class representation are informed by watching the news. Consider these answers from respondents from Mexico who said workers do a poor job promoting policies that improve citizens' lives:

“Because from what I have read or seen in the news (if the few examples I've seen can be generalized), it seems that the deputies in general only work for their own benefit once they get their seat, they are lazy, corrupt, or flat out absent in their assemblies. A disaster for the people.”¹¹⁴

¹¹³ “No veo proyectos en mi comunidad, ni lo que escucho de los otros, veo las noticias y cada vez se quita más presupuesto a proyectos sociales que pueden apoyar en mejorar la calidad de vida. Cuando escucho sobre los políticos es por que actúan solo en su beneficio y solo ven sus intereses independientemente de la clase social a la que pertenezcan , creo que se demuestra que para entrar a la política y permanecer en ella se debe ser corrupto y olvidar el beneficio de los otros.”

¹¹⁴ Porque por lo que he leído o visto en noticias (por el ejemplo de unos pocos, se generaliza lo que se piensa) tal parece que los diputados en general sólo se dedican a trabajar en su beneficio propio una vez que llegan a la curul, se aprecian flojos, corruptos o de plano ausentes en sus asambleas. Un desastre de personas.

“Historically, and according to what one reads in news, the public image that the deputies have is detestable, one of disinterest, of lack of support, of lack of commitment towards their work, that they obtain their position only for cronyism and not because they’re qualified for the position.”¹¹⁵

“Because some chamber deputies are only qualified to go to sleep at work, or at least that is what you see in the news or on the internet.”¹¹⁶

The responses from these individuals—who suggest that workers do not work on behalf of the working-class—indicate the presence of workers in office is not enough on its own to promote support for political institutions. Instead, the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations of institutions must be driven, at least in part, by policy responsiveness as shown in Chapter 4. The monitoring capacity of individuals, along with the availability of information about the class background of politicians we discussed in Chapter 6, helps the average citizen learn about the presence of workers in office, and the policies they pursue while there. With these tools, citizens are able to evaluate how well they are represented in the democratic process.

¹¹⁵ Históricamente y de acuerdo a lo que uno lee en noticias la imagen pública que tienen los diputados es detestable de desinterés de falta de apoyo de falta de compromiso hacia su labor de que obtienen el cargo sólo por amiguismo y no por estar calificados para el cargo

¹¹⁶ Por qué algunos diputados de la cámara sólo están calificados par ir a dormir en su trabajo, o al menos es lo que se ve en las noticias o en el internet.

Appendix 7.1 Conditional Effect of Interest in Politics

	(1) Institutional Trust	(2) Congressional Job Approval	(3) External Efficacy, Parties
% Workers in Legislature	.028** (.012)	.022** (.009)	.023* (.013)
Political Interest	.239*** (.009)	.068*** (.005)	.228*** (.011)
% Workers X Interest	.006*** (.001)	.003*** (.001)	.001 (.002)
<i>Individual-Level</i>			
Woman	.088*** (.011)	.082*** (.007)	.057*** (.015)
Ideology=Left	.017 (.019)	.036*** (.012)	.110*** (.026)
Ideology=4-5	.098*** (.017)	.043*** (.011)	.156*** (.023)
Ideology=6-7	.290*** (.018)	.103*** (.011)	.373*** (.025)
Ideology=Right	.448*** (.018)	.152*** (.011)	.490*** (.024)
Age	-.001 (.000)	-.003*** (.000)	-.004*** (.000)
Rural	.211*** (.013)	.070*** (.008)	.081*** (.017)
Education	-.017*** (.002)	-.012*** (.001)	-.022*** (.002)
Wealth Quintile	-.019*** (.004)	-.008*** (.003)	.005 (.006)
<i>Country-Level</i>			
GNI per capita	2.584*** (.650)	1.183** (.502)	2.445*** (.709)
% Left Parties	-.001 (.002)	.001 (.002)	.003 (.002)
Constant	.804* (.468)	1.820*** (.361)	.883* (.506)
Observations	72099	61688	37667
Country-Years	48	41	30
<i>Wald Chi²</i>	3846.63	1219.72	1708.57

Note: Multilevel linear regression coefficients (estimated in Stata 17.1) from this table are used to calculate the substantive effects reported in Figure 7.3. * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01 (standard errors). Ideology=None is excluded as the reference category.

Appendix 7.2 Conditional Effect of News Consumption

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Institutional Trust		Congressional Job Approval	
% Workers in Legislature	.042*** (.015)	.018 (.016)	.029** (.013)	-.002 (.013)
News Consumption	.028*** (.007)	-.002 (.011)	.014*** (.005)	-.025*** (.008)
% Workers x News		.006*** (.002)		.007*** (.001)
<i>Individual-Level</i>				
Woman	.079*** (.014)	.079*** (.014)	.085*** (.009)	.084*** (.009)
Ideology=Left	.145*** (.025)	.146*** (.025)	.033** (.016)	.034** (.016)
Ideology=4-5	.193*** (.022)	.193*** (.022)	.066*** (.014)	.065*** (.014)
Ideology=6-7	.422*** (.024)	.423*** (.024)	.132*** (.015)	.133*** (.015)
Ideology=Right	.588*** (.023)	.589*** (.023)	.177*** (.015)	.177*** (.015)
Age	.001* (.000)	.001* (.000)	-.003*** (.000)	-.003*** (.000)
Rural	.239*** (.016)	.238*** (.016)	.109*** (.011)	.109*** (.011)
Education	-.006*** (.002)	-.006*** (.002)	-.010*** (.001)	-.009*** (.001)
Wealth Quintile	-.021*** (.006)	-.021*** (.006)	-.008** (.004)	-.008** (.004)
<i>Country-Level</i>				
GNI per capita	2.166*** (.810)	2.134*** (.808)	1.133 (.708)	1.088 (.703)
% Left Parties	.003 (.003)	.003 (.003)	.005* (.003)	.004* (.003)
Constant	1.186** (.596)	1.344** (.596)	1.872*** (.520)	2.080*** (.517)
Observations	44825	44825	34362	34362
Country-Years	30	30	23	23
<i>Wald Chi</i> ²	1186.60	1199.37	536.91	584.20

Note: Multilevel linear regression coefficients (estimated in Stata 17.1) from this table are used to calculate the substantive effects reported in Figure 7.6. * p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01 (standard errors). Ideology=None is excluded as the reference category.

Appendix 7.3: Direct Effect, Full vs. Reduced Sample

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Institutional Trust		Congressional Job Approval	
	Full	Reduced	Full	Reduced
% Workers in Legislature	.046*** (.012)	.045*** (.014)	.029*** (.009)	.030** (.013)
<i>Individual-Level</i>				
Woman	.046*** (.012)	.071*** (.015)	.064*** (.007)	.078*** (.010)
Ideology=Left	.119*** (.021)	.158*** (.026)	.058*** (.013)	.036** (.017)
Ideology=4-5	.139*** (.018)	.187*** (.023)	.060*** (.011)	.073*** (.015)
Ideology=6-7	.344*** (.020)	.413*** (.026)	.121*** (.012)	.132*** (.016)
Ideology=Right	.539*** (.019)	.580*** (.025)	.181*** (.012)	.177*** (.016)
Age	.000 (.000)	.001 (.000)	-.003*** (.000)	-.003*** (.000)
Rural	.215*** (.014)	.216*** (.017)	.062*** (.009)	.093*** (.011)
Education	-.008*** (.002)	-.007*** (.002)	-.008*** (.001)	-.008*** (.001)
Income	-.023 (.029)	-.082** (.035)	-.080*** (.019)	-.100*** (.025)
<i>Country-Level</i>				
GNI per capita	2.627*** (.648)	2.229*** (.796)	1.185** (.513)	1.137 (.708)
%Left Party in Legislature	-.001 (.002)	.003 (.003)	.001 (.002)	.005* (.003)
Constant	1.065** (.467)	1.254** (.585)	1.912*** (.369)	1.932*** (.520)
Observations	64843	40282	55627	30967
Country-Years	48	30	41	23
<i>Wald Chi</i> ²	1439.04	994.65	643.13	466.59

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Multilevel linear regression coefficients estimated in Stata 17.1.

* p<.10, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Buy-in is essential for a healthy functioning democracy. When citizens' perceptions of institutions erode—when they no longer trust the institutions that form the foundation of government—democracy and the decisions made by state actors are undermined. Waning trust in and skepticism of political institutions appears to be on the rise worldwide. Yet, citizen detachment from and negative evaluations of political institutions should not be surprising given that democratic institutions increasingly concentrate power and authority into the hands of a narrow, exclusive, group of citizens. Democracies across the globe are run by wealthy elites. With inequality on the rise, the gap between the narrow group of elites who have access to elected office and the average citizen is ever widening. Consequently, the policies produced, and the actions taken on behalf of government, continue to favor those in privileged positions of power.

When these inequalities are spelled out, it is evident why citizens may express overwhelmingly negative views of government. And yet, our research shows that even small increases in working-class representation go a long way towards increasing citizen attachments to the state. Importantly, this improvement is not just due to the fact that working-class deputies advocate and advance different policy positions than wealthy elites, but it is also a response to the class status of policymakers. Indeed, owing to political incentives, widespread media coverage and discernable markers of class status, citizens can observe the class status of the representatives claiming to legislate on their behalf. Consequently, the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations of representative institutions is much stronger among avid news followers and those individuals who take an interest in politics.

Our work paves the way for future research on the crisis of representation, the policy consequences of working-class inclusion, and the design of inclusive institutions. In this conclusion, we elucidate new research questions that emanate from our findings. We explain how our book contributes to classic debates about representation. In doing so, we consider the implications of our findings for institutional design and elucidate where more research is needed to make policy prescriptions.

To preview, one promising area for future work concerns the challenges and opportunities unique to working-class deputies. Our research shows that people can readily recognize working-class legislators in office. The visibility of working-class deputies among average citizens—people who are observing politics from the outside—suggests that political insiders (e.g., party leaders, policy entrepreneurs, other deputies, and even news media) can also readily recognize working-class deputies. Does the visibility of their class status present working-class deputies with unique obstacles or opportunities in the policymaking arena?

The recognition that working-class inclusion *improves* evaluations of institutions—a key finding from our work—provides important insights into classic debates about whether the presence of historically marginalized groups in political office bolsters or threatens democracy. Indeed, the common liberal critique of descriptive representation is that including members of historically marginalized groups into representative bodies is dangerous for democracy, because it could bring unqualified representatives to power (Mansbridge 2015; Williams 1998). The findings from our book inform the debate about the tradeoffs of cultivating more inclusive institutions that incorporate policymakers from a diverse array of backgrounds.

Finally, the findings from our research imply that political parties, and even entire governments, may do well to adopt tactics to improve worker's access. Yet, scholars and

practitioners know very little about how to best improve working-class representation (Hemingway 2020). What can we learn from previous research about how to best improve diversity in institutions, and to what extent are these solutions applicable to working-class representation? Before tackling these questions, we provide a brief review of our main argument and findings.

Main Argument and Findings: Summary

People with working-class backgrounds are largely absent from government decision-making bodies across the globe. In Latin America, the representation of working-class deputies has declined over time in many countries from already low levels. We begin with the question of whether voters want to be represented by members of the working class. We explain that because working-class inclusion in decision-making bodies extends procedural legitimacy to the policymaking process and increases the introduction of legislation designed to improve the daily lives of working-class citizens, most voters do want to be represented by the working class.

To evaluate these expectations, we first leverage original data we obtained from surveys fielded in Argentina and Mexico. We show that although respondents in Mexico and Argentina substantially overestimate the representation of working-class deputies in their own national congress, they remain dissatisfied with the perceived status quo and desire more working-class deputies in office. Further, evidence from our original surveys indicate that respondents—particularly those in Argentina—perceive working-class deputies are more likely to understand the problems that people like them face and to promote legislation that benefits all citizens. Using survey data from eighteen Latin American countries we show that higher levels of working-class representation are associated with more positive evaluations of key agents of representation across

the entire region. We also show this relationship holds for men and women, and across different racial and ethnic groups. Combined, these findings presented in Chapter 3 provide strong evidence that voters do want to be represented by working-class deputies, and when they are, they are more likely to feel represented.

It is unclear from the analysis in Chapter 3, however, if descriptive representation on its own is enough to improve perceptions of institutions, or if this relationship is better explained by the fact that working-class deputies are often more likely to represent workers' policy interests. Even if working-class deputies are more likely to advocate policies to improve the everyday lives of workers, the political reality of working-class representation is that once in office not all deputies have the same incentives or opportunities to introduce legislation that improves the lives of ordinary citizens. Thus, if the link between increased descriptive representation and more positive evaluations of institutions is explained—at least in part—by policy representation, this raises questions about how voters respond to workers who do not represent the policy interests of working-class citizens. We turn to these questions in the second part of the book.

To evaluate if there is a direct link between higher levels of descriptive representation and citizens' evaluations of institutions or whether this link is mediated by policy representation, in Chapter 4 we leverage a novel survey experiment designed to isolate each of these links. Experimental evidence from Argentina and Mexico demonstrates that in isolation, descriptive representation and policy representation only marginally improve evaluations of institutions. However, when working-class deputies advocate for the policy interests of the working class, this joint effect markedly improves how citizens feel represented in the political process.

Given the importance of policy representation for increasing positive evaluations of institutions, this raises the question: how do voters evaluate working-class deputies who fail to act

on behalf of workers? To address this question, Chapter 5 turns to an examination of the ties between working-class representatives and constituents, by taking an in-depth look at the relationship between labor unions, political parties, and workers in Argentina and Mexico. We first demonstrate the development of unions and parties overtime led to working-class deputies in Argentina having stronger ties to workers and a better track-record of policy representation than working-class deputies in Mexico. Then, analyzing our novel data on deputies' class status over time and across states in Argentina and Mexico, we show that whereas increases in working-class representation in Argentina are associated with positive evaluations of institutions, the increased presence of working-class legislators in Mexico provokes backlash and adverse assessments of legislatures and parties.

It is not apparent from our analyses in these chapters if and how the average person knows whether there are working-class deputies in office. Compared to some descriptive characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or gender, class differences may be difficult for people to recognize among their representatives. This raises a final question—can people see class in their government? That is, once deputies are elected and take their place in congress, are citizens even aware of the extent to which working-class deputies are included or excluded from office?

To tackle this question, in Chapter 6, we elucidate the myriad ways that voters are made aware of politicians' class status. First, we show that both individual politicians and political parties have an incentive to make class status known in an effort to relate to voters. As a result, we see copious amounts of evidence of class appeals during and after elections. This behavior is pervasive in both electoral systems with strong personal vote-seeking incentives and in systems where party reputations trump individual reputations during elections. Information on politicians' class status permeates campaign material, social media accounts, and party websites. Second, we

show that beyond the political incentives politicians and parties face, non-partisan actors such as governments, NGOs, and think tanks regularly collect systematic information on politicians' occupational backgrounds. This information is disseminated in the popular press wherein journalists report both general patterns about the composition of congress as well as individual level data on politician's bios. Regardless of individual candidates' or whole political parties' incentives to make class status known, this information also regularly surfaces as a product of the press. Finally, we show that people are quite adept at inferring class based on facial images alone, independent of other visible heuristics of class status such as skin color. We fielded a unique experiment wherein we randomly assigned individuals to view images of politicians' faces. Individuals were asked to report whether the face depicted someone from the upper class or the working class. Respondents classified politicians' faces correctly at rates better than chance. Seeing as how citizens regularly come into contact with pictures of politicians' faces, their ability to infer class from this limited information represents yet another way that people are aware of class status.

Finally, in Chapter 7, given that citizens are made aware of politicians' class status through exposure to both politics and the news, we show the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations legislatures and parties is stronger among those people who take an interest in politics and watch the news. If we assume that the relationship between working-class representation and positive evaluations of key agents of representation provides evidence that citizens want working-class representation, then it follows that this relationship should be strongest among people who actually know whether workers are in office. Given the myriad ways people learn about working-class representation, we assume people who both watch the news and who take a strong interest in politics are the people who are most likely to know whether workers are

included or excluded from office. Consequently, the relationship between worker's representation and positive evaluations of congress and parties should be strongest among such individuals. Using data from across Latin America from 2008 to 2014 we show the average relationship observed in Chapter 3 is the strongest among people who watch the news and are interested in politics. Combined, the evidence from Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrates support for our argument that citizens are aware of class representation.

Beyond contributing to our understanding of how working-class representation fosters improved evaluations of agents of representation, this book has important implications for understanding the potential challenges and opportunities that working-class deputies face once in office, the extent to which the inclusion of members of historically marginalized groups bolsters or threatens democracy, and how policies designed to foster more inclusive institutions may help improve citizen attachments to the state. We turn to these implications in the remainder of this chapter.

The Visibility of Working-Class Legislators: Challenges and Opportunities

The inclusion of marginalized groups in decision-making bodies improves citizens' perceptions of representative institutions through more than policy alone. However, for working-class inclusion to produce stronger ties to agents of representation, citizens must be aware of workers' presence in office. The same factors that inform citizens also make elites aware of their class status. Thus, the findings from this book can advance our understanding of the potential challenges and advantages faced by working-class deputies in the policymaking process.

Our finding that class is visible through facial cues reinforces findings from other research indicating that class is easily inferred from one's face, bodily appearance and non-verbal behaviors, and thus advances the position that class is a social identity that is apparent to others (Kraus, Piff, and Keltner 2011). If an individual's class background can be inferred from one's appearance, it is likely to have long-term consequences for their individual well-being (Bjornsdottir and Rule 2017); for their social interactions with others (Bjornsdottir, Alaei and Rule 2017); and—perhaps most importantly for the study of working-class representation—for the ways that workers access and navigate the political arena. Class status may influence the recruitment of working-class deputies to run for office. Once they are on the ballot, their visible working-class status may shape their likelihood of winning a seat at the table, and it may shape their experiences in office.

With respect to recruitment, party leaders tend to recruit candidates from established, homophilic, elite networks (Bjarnegård 2013; Kenny 2013; Verge and Claveria 2016). Unless parties are intentionally trying to broaden their electoral base or to appeal to the working class within society, most working-class people have few opportunities to gain access to the ballot. Within these networks, parties “seek candidates for elected office who mirror their own image” (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2016, 6). That working-class status is discernable from individual's facial features or verbal cues may mean that even people with working-class backgrounds that make their way into the immediate social, organizational, and occupational networks as party leaders, may have additional obstacles to overcome as they are less likely to “look” the part of a leader. Since people can infer class status with very limited information, it may be more likely that party leaders (perhaps unintentionally) overlook potential candidates with working-class backgrounds, assessing them to be a poor “fit” or even assuming they are less

qualified than people with similar skills. For these reasons, simply looking like a working-class person may limit workers' access to the ballot.

Even so, once working-class politicians are on the ballot, visible class status may have positive implications for one's electoral fortunes. Just as party leaders' ability to infer class status from one's looks may hinder their access, voters' ability to recognize class backgrounds could render them a more favorable candidate given that most voters would prefer to see far more workers in office. Voters' ability to infer politicians' class status may factor into how credible they view campaign promises from politicians—from those who do and do *not* appear to be from the working class. Examples abound of wealthy politicians adopting rhetoric or clothing choices to (falsely) signal a working-class background. Given that voters can recognize a politician's class through facial features, this information may influence the extent to which they interpret politicians' rhetoric as more or less credible.

It is also important to consider how the visibility of class status structures legislators' experiences once in office. In societies highly stratified by class, such as those in Latin America, working-class legislators may be marginalized by their upper-class colleagues, similar to the experiences of other marginalized groups (Barnes 2016; Erikson and Josefsson 2019). As with women, working-class deputies are unlikely to have access to “the formal networks that reinforce political power of historically advantaged groups” (Paxton, Hughes and Barnes 2020, 155). Deputies from working-class backgrounds are more likely to be political outsiders. They do not come to power via elite circles within society. That they are visibly distinct from their white-collar colleagues may make it more difficult for them to penetrate these networks once in office.

Exclusion from established networks surely disadvantages working-class deputies within the legislature. Networks “improve [legislators'] access, help them get things done, and facilitate

their moves up the political ladder” (Paxton, Hughes and Barnes 2020, 155). Just as women’s exclusion from these networks limits women’s appointments to prestigious committees and leadership positions within the chamber (Barnes 2014; Heath, Schwindt-Bayer and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Kerevel and Atkeson 2013; O’Brien 2015), their access to informal power such as “timely strategic information” (Barnes 2016, 23), and their ability to attain executive office after leaving the legislature (Kerevel 2019), it is also likely that working-class legislators exclusion from these established networks limits their access and influence in the chamber.

At the same time, deputies with working-class backgrounds may be viewed as better situated to design and influence the development of policies that disproportionately affect the working class. Just as citizens see deputies with working-class backgrounds as better situated to understand their needs (Chapter 3), deputies may also recognize this unique perspective. Politicians wishing to make good-faith efforts towards improving working-class citizens’ everyday lives may be more likely to seek out advice from, or collaborate with, working-class deputies. Thus, the perceived expertise that comes with looking like a member of the working class may ultimately yield them more influence over a host of policies that are more near and dear to their hearts. Their personal experience and perceived expertise could give them access to party leaders and government officials who are interested in designing policies to improve citizens’ daily lives, and it could facilitate appointments to relevant committees and leadership posts.

The visibility of working-class politicians may also be a double-edged sword. While our research clearly demonstrates that citizens want to be represented by legislators from the working-class, and in many cases, this representation leads citizens to feel better represented, it is also clear from our research that when working-class politicians are elected, they sometimes do not reflect the diversity of the working-class population. Our more comprehensive data from Argentina and

Mexico suggest that most deputies classified as members of the working-class are men and the overwhelming majority are elected due to their ties to labor unions. PELA data also demonstrate the gender imbalance among elected workers and that most workers in office do not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the population. Indeed, we find the unrepresentativeness of elected workers in terms of racial and ethnic diversity weakens the positive effect of working-class representation on evaluations of democratic institutions. Thus, greater efforts need to be made to ensure workers who are elected to office reflect the diversity of workers in the population, and more research is needed to understand the nuanced ways in which gender, race/ethnicity, and class interact to shape citizens' attitudes.

In sum, the findings from our research indicate that working-class representation is important for understanding more than just citizens' evaluations of institutions. On the one hand, working-class politicians may face more obstacles during the recruitment stage. On the other hand, for those who do manage to get on the ballot, their class status may ingratiate them with voters who want to see more workers in office and who are perhaps more inclined to view their campaign promises and policy successes as favorable to the working class. Once in office, the visibility of their class status may make it more difficult for working-class politicians to penetrate and navigate political institutions dominated by wealthy elites, thereby undermining their effectiveness in the policy-making process. At the same time, their colleagues may see them as having lived experiences relevant to average citizens. This may give them more credibility, allowing them to have more influence in the policy-making process. Future research should carefully consider both the challenges and opportunities created by the visibility of working-class status.

Is Inclusion Dangerous for Democracy?

Is inclusion dangerous for democracy? When put that way, this seems like a silly question. Inclusion is a core principle of democracy. Yet, a common criticism of descriptive representation is that incorporating members of historically marginalized groups into representative bodies is dangerous for democracy because it could bring unqualified representatives to power (Pitkin 1967; Mansbridge 2015). For example, when women first started gaining access to office in record numbers owing to the adoption of gender quotas, critics warned that quotas would give way to the election of unqualified women.

Ideas about the types of qualifications people need to weigh in on government decisions has long been used to exclude people from democracies. Throughout history, governments have erected property, education and literacy requirements to systematically prevent certain groups from voting. Arbitrary criteria like age are likewise adopted to define who can and cannot stand for office. Although these are formal requirements, informal norms—such as the idea that lawyers are best suited to make policies—have likewise been cultivated to limit groups' access to office.

However, our finding that higher levels of working-class representation is associated with better evaluations of the legislature contributes to a growing body of research demonstrating such fears are unfounded. Empirical research from Latin America and the U.S., for example, finds that leaders without formal education perform at least as well as their college-educated colleagues—calling into question conventional beliefs about leadership qualifications (Carnes and Lupu 2016b). Similarly, research on Swedish municipal politicians and national legislators finds little tradeoff between politicians' competence and social backgrounds such as class (Dal Bó et al. 2017) and gender (Besley et al. 2017). To the contrary, research shows that incorporating historically marginalized groups *improves* the overall quality of the decision-making body (Armstrong et al. 2022; Besley et al. 2017; Murray 2015). With respect to policymaking, descriptive representatives

are *at least* as effective as their colleagues: often bringing home more pork to their district (Anzia and Berry 2011); being more likely to follow-through on policy (Lowande, Ritchie, and Lauterbach 2019); providing more public goods (Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004; Tusalem 2022); and experiencing similar levels of success in advancing their legislative agendas (Volden et al. 2013; Senk 2021; Holman, Mahoney, and Hurler 2022).

In the same vein, our findings further rebut the criticism that workers' descriptive representation could be dangerous for democracy by demonstrating that it actually strengthens democracy by enhancing trust in political institutions among all citizens. Not only do workers meet all objective qualifications to serve as representatives, but prior work also finds they are active and successful participants in the policymaking process (Barnes, Beall, and Holman 2021; Micozzi 2018; O'Grady 2019). Moreover, most citizens are positively disposed towards working-class politicians (Barnes and Saxton 2019; Carnes and Lupu 2016a; Wüest and Pontusson 2018), which suggests working-class representation has the potential to wield a profound influence on citizens' attitudes and bolster the health of democratic institutions.

Beyond existing work on class representation, there is a more general body of research that demonstrates how diversity in groups results in disrupting entrenched ways of thinking and more careful processing of information, leading to more innovative and effective solutions (Lieberman et al., 2015; Nathan and Lee 2013; Philips, Liljenquist, and Neale 2009). As Levine and colleagues (2014: 18524) put it: "diversity facilitates friction that enhances deliberation and upends conformity." This knowledge appears to be gaining traction in the private sector. Outlets such as the *Harvard Business Review (HBR)*, *Forbes*, *Bloomberg* and the *Wall Street Journal* have published numerous titles like "New Research: Diversity + Inclusion = Better Decision Making At Work," "Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter," and "The Business Case for More Diversity" in

recent years (Holger 2019; Larson 2017; Rock and Grant 2016). Gender and ethnic diversity reached record highs on corporate boards in 2019. With respect to occupational background, a wider range of skill-sets (including non-traditional skills) was observed among newly appointed board directors in 2019 compared to directors who have held their position for at least five years (Mishra 2019). While profit-driven organizations are—at least in part—making changes in personnel to increase diversity in order to improve outcomes, most governments lag behind in this regard (Latura and Weeks 2022; Piscopo and Muntean 2018; Franceschet and Piscopo 2013).

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that much of the research coming from the fields of industrial organization, psychology, business, and economics tends to focus on features such as gender and ethnicity (Cooley et al., 2019; Hunt, Layton, and Prince 2015). Fewer studies directly consider how diversity in class shapes outcomes, nor is there a large focus on the ways that these various identities interact to structure policy design. Thus, future work should consider directly whether or not class diversity produces better outcomes in government, and how different identities such as gender, race, and class interact to shape policy outcomes (Barnes, Beall, and Holman 2021).

Institutions to Support Diversity

If lawmakers come from a wider range of occupational backgrounds fewer of them will have knowledge of technical legal matters. Some may argue this knowledge is necessary for them to make sound legislation. To be sure, at some point in the legislative process, legal knowledge is required. Yet, there is no reason representatives should be the only ones to supply this narrow, technical expertise. Working-class legislators, like the much larger number of white-collar elected officials who are doctors, professors, businessowners, and engineers, are likely to lack legal

expertise. Instead, institutions can be designed to address this concern so that representatives can do their job and maximize representation.

Indeed, to the extent institutions provide a strong apparatus for supporting legislators in the legal development of legislation—e.g., a strong bureaucracy, professional legislative staff, and legal counsel—it may be less important that elected officials possess technical knowledge of laws and more important that they have on-the-ground experience with the issues on which they are legislating. If, by contrast, institutions rely on lawmakers to know the technicalities of how law works, they essentially require lawmakers to have backgrounds in the legal field. As a result, lawmakers may be less likely to hail from a wide number of professional and occupational backgrounds.

This latter approach may have huge pitfalls for representation, because lawyers (as would be characteristic of any group where its members hail from a single profession) have limited experiences and exposure to the problems they are designing laws to address. Even lawmakers with the best intentions lack the necessary background to anticipate the myriad ways that new policies will shape the daily lives of citizens.

If governments are interested in designing policies informed by knowledge and expertise of the substantive issues at hand, it would be ideal to have an inclusive policy-making body comprised of individuals from a wide array of backgrounds that better reflect the composition of society (Barnes and Holman 2020b). To ensure their effectiveness in office, legislators should have the support of a professional technical apparatus, such as robust legal counsel, designed to help policymakers understand how their ideas can translate into effective policies.

Increasing Attachments to Democratic Institutions: Designs for Inclusion

The findings reported in this book have important implications for institutional design. The strong link between working-class representation and support for legislatures and political parties suggests that institutions more generally would benefit from incorporating a more diverse array of class backgrounds. This may be particularly helpful for countries struggling with support for democracy and democratic institutions, such as many countries in Latin America.

With that said, we still lack a clear understanding of the factors that lead to higher numeric representation of the working class. An analysis of 37 OECD countries indicates that workers are represented in higher numbers in office in countries with stronger labor unions and lower levels of income inequality (Carnes and Lupu 2023). Research on U.S. state legislatures similarly finds that union density predicts working-class representation (Carnes 2016). In our sample of Latin American countries, we observe only a weak correlation between working-class representation and union density, and we observe no correlation with income inequality. Other factors, by contrast, such as the strength of left-leaning parties and electoral systems are not consistently associated with workers numeric representation in OECD countries (Carnes and Lupu 2023). In our sample, we likewise do not observe strong correlations between class representation and left-leaning political parties, programmatic political parties, or party fragmentation. Overall, scholars have made few inroads when it comes to explaining the numeric representation of different classes, with the most comprehensive studies to date cautioning that existing explanations can only account for a fraction of the variability in class representation (Carnes and Lupu 2023). Despite some consistent trends from previous research, we are still left with an incomplete picture of the factors that predict working-class representation.

Even if political scientists are able to consistently explain variation in working-class representation, that may not be helpful for actually increasing worker's access to office. Some of the most promising explanations are all factors that are difficult to address with government policy solutions or internal political party reforms. There are, however, a number of known strategies for improving the numeric representation of politically marginalized groups—e.g., quotas, lotteries, targeted recruitment and candidate training, and campaign finance reforms.

Our research suggests that political parties should adopt such inclusionary strategies and strengthen representative linkages between citizens and the elected. Political parties vary widely in their inclusion and mobilization of marginalized groups (Boulding and Holzner 2021; Caul 1999; Kittilson and Tate 2005; Kittilson 2006; Weeks et al. 2022), but also have several tools at their disposal to remedy the dramatic underrepresentation of workers. Whereas most governments in Latin America have made major strides in the inclusion of women, other groups—such as marginalized urban and rural popular classes, indigenous communities, and the youth—remain on the margins of politics (Barnes and Rangel 2014; Hughes 2011; 2013; Krook and O'Brien 2010; Morgan and Meléndez 2016). Even when workers are elected, we find legislators from working-class backgrounds do not often reflect the diversity of the working-class population. Thus, traditional avenues to increase the representation of the working-class, such as strengthening ties between parties and labor unions, are unlikely to lead to more workers in office that reflect the diversity of working-class interests.

Indeed, as Barnes and Holman (2020a) put it: “increasing leaders’ diversity proves one of the most difficult challenges facing modern democracy.” Latin America, where class cleavages run deep and the gaps between the rich and poor are the largest in the world, is no exception. Political institutions such as the legislature and political parties increasingly draw their members

from a very narrow set of elites. If leaders are serious about improving citizens' ties to political institutions, they would do well to make intentional efforts to incorporate the working class. Parties and governments can employ a number of different linkage strategies to strengthen their ties with constituents (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). Herein we discuss potential solutions to consider in an effort to design more representative institutions.

As with party quotas for women, individual political parties could make commitments to expand and improve inclusion of the working class. For instance, parties could reserve a certain share of positions on their lists of candidates for members of the working class, they could work with labor unions to allow unions to choose their own representatives, and they could actively recruit candidates from the informal labor sector. Although party-level efforts would likely strengthen citizens ties to individual parties that employ such efforts, the payoff would likely stop short of improving citizen's support for institutions more generally. Moreover, the historical experience of informal party quotas in Mexico's PRI and Argentina's Peronist Party, suggest these voluntary quotas are fragile and easily discarded by elites.

To improve working-class access to political decision-making bodies more broadly—beyond individual political parties—Julia Cagé (2020) advocates the legal adoption of class-based candidate quotas (as opposed to voluntary class-based quotas at the party level). This route holds some promise for diversifying decision-making bodies. As a matter of fact, properly designed gender quotas are shown to be extremely effective at increasing women's numeric representation (Jones 2004, 2009; Schwindt-Bayer 2009). Beyond simply increasing the number of people in office from the targeted group, research on gender quotas demonstrates that when applied to all political parties, well designed institutional reforms can go a long way towards disrupting tight-knit networks that sustain mediocre leadership in power (Besley et al 2017), restructuring

pathways to leadership (O'Brien and Rickne 2016), and even redefining parties and potential candidates perceptions of what makes a “good” or “qualified” candidate (Barnes and Holman 2020a). Adopting class-based quotas may also create demand for more working-class candidates from outside traditional labor union recruitment networks, thereby increasing the representation of women workers and workers from marginalized racial and ethnic groups.

Class-Based Quotas

As a solution to address the overrepresentation of wealthy elites in power, Julia Cagé has proposed that countries adopt class-based candidate quotas to increase the presence of workers in legislatures. Cagé's specific proposal is designed with France in mind, where she suggests setting one-third of seats in the National Assembly to be elected by proportional representation, and where 50 percent of the candidates on the PR lists would be from the working class. The remaining two-thirds of the Assembly would continue to be elected as it currently is, with representatives elected in single-member districts and subject to a runoff election if they fail to obtain at least 50 percent of the vote.

This proposal has a lot in common with other institutional reforms that have already taken place throughout Latin America and the rest of the world. First, the election of two types of representatives is very similar to the adoption of mixed electoral systems, where some representatives are elected in single-member districts and others by PR lists, and is thus very familiar to voters in places like Mexico, Venezuela, and Bolivia that have experience with mixed electoral systems. Most Central American legislatures also elect two different types of PR deputies, some representing regions, and others representing the country. Since mixed electoral systems also exist throughout Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, as well as in Germany and New Zealand, the

proposal to elect two different types of representatives is relatively common in a wide variety of countries.

Second, the adoption of class quotas whereby a certain percentage of candidates from the working classes make up a portion of the PR list is very similar to how gender quotas function in most Latin American countries. Since most Latin American legislatures are elected by PR, and most also employ gender quotas, Mexico and Argentina included, the idea of quotas is one that is familiar in many countries. Equally important, quotas tend to be well received by the electorate. Public opinion research from Latin America shows that citizens tend to be quite supportive of quotas that require political parties to include women on their list of candidates (Barnes and Cordova 2016, 676). Consequently, Cagé's proposal to adopt class-based quotas, while it may appear radical to some, is not far removed from other types of institutional reforms that have been spreading throughout the world since the 1990s.

Importantly, if working-class quotas are adopted in countries that already have gender quotas, or quotas for another political marginalized group, there is a potential that class quotas could increase diversity among working-class legislators. Hughes (2011) demonstrates that when two types of quotas are designed in tandem with one another—such as gender quotas and ethnic minority quotas—they tend to result in a larger representation of doubly-marginalized groups such as ethnic minority women. In the presence of tandem quotas, adding ethnic minority women helps satisfy both gender and ethnic minority targets (Hughes 2011).¹¹⁷ Thus, if class quotas are adopted

¹¹⁷ The same logic does not apply to what Hughes calls “mixed” quotas, or quotas where one is adopted at the party level, and another is adopted at the chamber level.

in tandem with gender quotas, for example, we may anticipate an increase in the election of women who hail from the working class as parties seek to satisfy multiple targets with a single candidate.

Class-based quotas are also not far removed from the caste-based quotas in India, which have been used to increase the presence of the lower castes in political office, in schools, and in the bureaucracy (Dunning and Nilekani 2013; Bhavnani 2017). For instance, caste quotas are used in a number of legislative districts in which only members of the lower castes can run for office, to ensure that members of the lower castes are represented in the legislature in proportion to their presence in the population.

While caste quotas have been very successful at increasing the presence of members of the so-called “Scheduled Castes” among the political elite, they have been criticized as lower caste representatives often do not represent the interests of members of their caste (Jensenius 2017). However, the institutional design of India’s caste quotas mean that lower-caste representatives are almost always elected in districts where the lower castes make up a minority of the district’s population, and they must compete against other members of the same caste since the entire district was reserved to elect a member of the Scheduled Castes. Thus, beneficiaries of the caste quotas typically must represent the majority of non-Scheduled Caste voters.

On the other hand, the adoption of class-based quotas in most countries would most likely lead to the election of working-class representatives who represent constituencies made up of mostly working-class citizens. While some of the criticisms directed towards India’s caste quotas are unlikely to extend to class-based quotas, India’s experience also suggests careful attention should be directed towards how institutions are designed to increase working-class representation, since particular institutional configurations could weaken the incentives of working-class representatives to represent working-class voters.

Elections as Lotteries

Beyond adopting class-based quotas, other scholars have proposed alternative institutional reforms that would also have the effect of increasing working-class representation but do not have to address the potentially thorny problem of who qualifies as working class. Landemore (2013; 2017) has suggested that moving to the random selection of representatives, rather than using elections, would lead to more inclusive deliberative bodies. The use of lotteries to choose representatives would also increase working-class representation as the resulting legislatures would likely reflect the class distribution in society, rather than over-represent the middle and upper classes. Lotteries are also likely to lead to the selection of workers that reflect the gender, age, ethnic and occupational diversity of the working-class population.

While moving away from elections to random selection appears to be a more drastic reform than adopting class quotas, there are currently existing examples where the idea of random selection has been used to create more diverse and inclusive legislative bodies. MORENA in Mexico has adopted random selection to fill half of their PR lists, which appears to have been very effective at electing workers (Poertner 2022). Of the 49 working-class deputies elected in 2018, 18, or 37 percent, were elected from MORENA's PR lists. Overall, only 10 percent of MORENA's candidates elected in single-member districts were from the working class, whereas 20 percent of their candidates elected from the PR lists were. Thus, even limited reforms that adopt random selection to fill a portion of a party's list of candidates can be effective at electing more workers.

A number of countries have also experimented with forming citizen assemblies to address difficult political issues where some or all of the members are randomly selected, such as in Canada, Iceland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK (Landemore 2020). For example, in

2016, the Irish Parliament established a 99-member Citizen’s Assembly to deliberate on a number of contentious issues, where each member was randomly selected from the population such that the body would be broadly representative of Ireland as a whole based on gender, age, class, and urban/rural residence (Leahy 2017; McKay 2019). Random selection was carried out by a polling company, which resulted in roughly half of the Irish Citizen’s Assembly being selected from the working class, and roughly half of those selected were women.

In addition to reforming candidate selection to nominate more workers, as MORENA has done in Mexico, or forming entirely new assemblies to address certain political issues, others have proposed reforming bicameral legislatures where one chamber is elected through competitive elections, whereas the other chamber is randomly selected (Abizadeh 2020). Since random selection of representatives has not been used widely, there are only a few contemporary examples to study its effects on how voters might evaluate deliberative bodies where some or all members are selected this way. In any case, there are several possibilities, as mentioned here, on how to incorporate random selection to increase working-class representation.

Campaign Finance Reform

Another potential policy solution for incorporating more working-class legislators may be to address campaign finance laws that often limit access to the wealthy and those who are well connected to other wealthy elites (Cagé 2020; Ufen 2014; Walecki 2005). In many countries, access to office is defined by one’s ability to fund one’s own campaign. In these cases—where the lion’s share of campaign finance comes from private sources—the wealthy, and people with access to “monopolies of power” that can help fund their campaign, are at a clear advantage (Hinojosa 2012, 159; Casas-Zamora 2005). In Asia and Eastern Europe, for instance, “business leaders have

taken over political parties and even formed their own party systems” (Ufen 2014; Walecki 2005; cited in Paxton, Hughes, and Barnes 2020, 241). Even in countries with stronger regulations on private campaign financing, candidates and parties still rely on soliciting larger donations from wealthy individuals, which hinders access for working-class candidates and magnifies the voices of the upper classes (Cagé 2020).

Given the ways that campaign finance limits the access of non-wealthy individuals, campaign finance reform offers one possible solution to increasing diversity among elected officials. Research on women’s access to office, for example, shows that even though women disproportionately lack access to personal funds and wealthy networks of donors, governments can begin to level the playing field by providing historically excluded groups with campaign resources (Muñoz-Pogossin and Freidenberg 2018). Common sources of public financing are free airtime on public radio, campaign material, discounted filing fees, or direct public subsidies to support campaigns (Ballington and Kahane 2014; Bauer and Darkwah 2019; Wang et al. 2019). Although “the existence of public campaign funding does not ensure that money will be distributed fairly or equally” (Paxon et al. 2020, 143), it may be a step towards facilitating more access and opportunities for marginalized groups.

Nevertheless, existing evidence that campaign finance reform improves working-class representation is rather limited. In the United States, campaign finance regulations that level the playing field seem to do very little in terms of improving the descriptive representation of workers (Carnes 2018). Cross nationally, workers presence in office is low nearly everywhere, regardless of the nature of campaign finance in individual countries. Since campaign finance reform does not target workers specifically, it may only marginally help improve workers’ access to political office.

Candidate Training Reforms

Candidate training programs are another tool that can increase the visibility of historically excluded groups and help those groups to build the confidence, civic skills, political skills, and connections they need to successfully launch a political campaign (Shames et al., 2020; Bernhard, Shames, and Teele 2021). Scholzman et al. (1994, 974) explain that civic skills are the “communication and organizational abilities that allow citizens to use time and money effectively in public life” (e.g., public speaking skills, managing meetings, read a budget, use social media). Many of these skills are developed in work and in school. Yet not all jobs provide the same opportunities to develop civic skills. Wealthy, white-collar workers are more likely to have opportunities to develop important civic or leadership skills in their jobs. Differential access to civic skills may also help explain why workers are less likely to run for office and win campaigns. Candidate training programs can equip a broader range of people with the civic skills needed to run a campaign and serve in political office.

Beyond helping a more diverse set of citizens develop the civic skills to run for and navigate office, candidate training programs can also perhaps reshape ideas of what a potential candidate looks like. There is a narrow view of what politicians look like in terms of experiences and occupations (Barnes and Holman 2020a). Consequently, people may select out of politics when they do not fit this profile. Some research has shown that as members of disadvantaged groups are able to run, and win elections, bias against these candidates at the nomination stage dissipates (Shair-Rosenfield and Hinojosa 2014). These views are likewise perpetuated by the candidate recruitment process wherein party leaders seek to recruit candidates from their homophilic networks populated by individuals with similar life experiences and professional opportunities (Bjarnegård 2013). As with other interventions such as gender quotas, candidate

training programs can also reshape both potential candidates' and leaders' ideas about what a candidate looks like. They can provide a pool of likely candidates that enable party leaders to easily expand their recruitment networks. Candidate training programs can facilitate contact with party leaders and inform party leaders about promising potential candidates. While existing evidence is limited, targeted candidate training programs designed to recruit more workers appear to be effective (Carnes 2018).

Beyond government interventions that may require changes to the law or a country's constitution, candidate training programs provide a potential avenue for parties and non-profits to attempt to improve working-class citizens' representation in government. Alone, candidate training programs are unlikely to sufficiently change the face of government. However, when used in conjunction with other measures discussed here, candidate training programs may offer a promising pathway to more diverse decision-making bodies.

A Cautionary Note on Designs for Inclusion

Finally, we note that careful attention should be given to the design and implementation of any institutions intended to change the demographics of elected bodies. The relationship between workers numeric representation and evaluations of institutions will likely vary depending on whether there is buy-in for the institutions that govern political incorporation of the working class. Equally important, as shown in Chapter 5, the success of inclusive institutions will depend on the extent to which the institutional mechanism fosters incentives and opportunities for workers to substantively represent worker's policy interests.

With respect to buy-in, if institutions designed to promote working-class inclusion are met with low approval, working-class representation may ultimately undermine political legitimacy

(Meier 2008). As Barnes and Cordova (2016, 670) explain: “The legitimacy of the political system will always be in question as long as a large share of citizens does not perceive institutions designed to select representatives as “the most appropriate and proper ones” (Lipset 1983, 64). If citizens do not regard political institutions as legitimate, they may disengage from the political system, resulting in low participation and consequently in weak democracy.” Consistent with this point, Clayton (2015, 26) provides evidence that when reserved seats were adopted in Lesotho “without local buy-in,” they fostered “negative unintended attitudinal reactions.”

This is not to say that citizens will reject designs for inclusion. As a case in point, research on Latin America shows that support for gender quotas across the region is high (Barnes and Cordova 2016), that women legislators (elected largely due to quotas) increase political engagement among citizens (Desposato and Norrander 2009), and their presence is associated with higher levels of trust in government (Barnes and Jones 2018). Research from Mexico also finds that political efficacy, political interest, and support for political institutions is higher among constituents who are represented by deputies—chosen through candidate lotteries—with similar social backgrounds (Poertner 2022). By contrast, designs for inclusion are more likely to be met with backlash and mistrust when they are seen as exclusionary rather than inclusionary (e.g., only allowing members of one sex to compete in a given district), when the policy originates from an unpopular regime, or when they are viewed as a product of foreign influence (Clayton 2015, 361; see also Bush 2011; Bush and Jamal 2014). We thus caution that governments and political parties should avoid winner take all approaches when pursuing electoral reforms. Stakeholders should work to build widespread support by educating citizens on the efficacy of reforms and explaining how their initiatives stand to strengthen representation and democracy at large. Equally important,

domestic leaders should limit the influence of external actors during institutional reforms, and instead center impartial domestic actors that enjoy widespread legitimacy among the public.

Beyond cultivating buy-in among citizens, designs for inclusion should consider how they can effectively integrate workers into office and empower them to represent the policy interests of the working class. In doing so, it is important to consider how new institutions interact with the existing political party system. With respect to legal quotas, for instance, they tend to be most appropriate for cleavages that cut across all political parties (Htun 2004). When cleavages do not cut across all parties, and rather coincide with the interests of only some political parties, quotas tend to be less efficacious for policy representation because parties end up with token members from marginalized groups who do not represent the general policy interest of the entire group. Although class quotas would surely increase the numeric representation of workers, it is important to ask whether they would result in the election of workers who represent the policy interests of most working-class people. Otherwise, as we show in Chapters 4 and 5, their presence may undermine support for political institutions. To the extent that class does cut across parties in each country, legal quotas could be a useful solution. Where class coincides with specific parties, party-level quotas may be a better solution for attaining the best policy representation and improving evaluations of institutions.

Party-based quotas may also have a number of potential pitfalls. Our own findings presented here, as well as recent work by Schipani (2022), suggest the way in which workers are incorporated into political parties can have dramatic consequences for the incentives of legislators from working-class backgrounds to represent working-class policy interests. For example, Schipani finds the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) draws many of their legislators and other appointed officials from labor unions. However, these same politicians from working-class

backgrounds are recruited to become full-time politicians within the party, and they are thus pressured by party leaders to represent party interests, rather than those of their union base. Our own analysis of the Mexican case in this book suggests a similar logic was at work within the PRI. Thus, class-based party quotas may have the potential to lead to the recruitment of a particular type of working-class politician who is more beholden to elite, rather than working-class interests. As long as workers lack the incentives and opportunities to represent worker's policy interests, their inclusion may do more to thwart, rather than improve, evaluations of democratic institutions.

Although any institution designed to promote inclusion presents tradeoffs, the good news is that governments across the globe have been exploring similar tactics for increasing the representation of other politically marginalized groups. Many of them adopting, strengthening, and expanding, laws over the past thirty years to fine tune their intuitions (Piscopo 2018). This wave of electoral reforms has inspired a large body of research documenting the most effective designs and the best practices for successful reforms. This research and the experiences of governments worldwide should inform the design of inclusive institutions that target social class.

Despite these concerns, it is our position that adopting institutional reform with the aim of increasing working-class representation has the propensity to strengthen the average citizen's ties to representative institutions. It may seem far-fetched to propose such radical policy change intended to disrupt elites' capture of democratic institutions. To be sure, conventional wisdom suggests that people in positions of power will resist change to the rules of the game if doing so decreases the likelihood of maintaining power. Nonetheless, in the last three decades, governments the world over (comprised largely of majority ethnic, elite, men) have adopted institutional reforms designed to improve the representation of politically marginalized groups. Given that dissatisfied citizens have the ability to challenge elites' grip on power through protest, and inclusion has been

shown to improve evaluations of democratic institutions, politicians would do well to take steps create more inclusive policy-making bodies.

Intentional reforms, such as the use of quotas or randomly selecting representatives, are likely to be much more effective at electing more workers compared to less intentional reforms, such as campaign finance reform and candidate training programs. Globally there are a variety of existing models of successful electoral reform that provide a roadmap for reformers interested in changing electoral institutions to improve working-class representation. Even absent major electoral reform, political parties can voluntarily adopt changes to their candidate recruitment and selection processes that promote more working-class inclusion.

Although each of the reforms discussed here have tradeoffs and present their own set of unique challenges, the findings from this book suggest reforms intended to incorporate working-class policymakers will go a long way towards improving citizens attachments to the state. Citizens feel better represented when the working class is included. Although respondents in our surveys in Mexico and Argentina said they would prefer for over a half of the deputies in the national congress to come from a working-class background, our results indicate that even small increases in working-class representation are associated with improved perceptions of representation. Although a 50% quota may seem like an unlikely reform to be adopted by ambitious incumbents, our research suggests that even small, well-intentioned efforts to improve diversity and working-class inclusion may go a long way towards restoring citizens' faith in democracy.

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