

**Roseanna Michelle Heath**

Department of Political Science  
Texas A&M University  
4348 TAMU  
College Station, Texas 77843-4348  
Office Phone: (979) 845-2511  
Home Phone: (979) 846-5520  
Cell Phone: (979) 492-3638  
Fax: (979) 847-8924  
Email: [rheath@polisci.tamu.edu](mailto:rheath@polisci.tamu.edu)

***Academic History***

Ph.D. Texas A&M University, expected December 2006 (Political Science)  
Fields: Comparative Politics, Political Theory, Comparative Democratic  
Institutions  
Dissertation: *Explaining Congressional Organizational Reform: Electoral Laws,  
Congressional Organization, and the Balance of Power between Party Leaders  
and Backbenchers in National Legislatures*  
B.A. Texas A&M University, 1999 (Political Science)  
A.D. Blinn College, 1996 (Nursing)

***Publications***

“Presidential Elections in Chile, December 2005 and January 2006.” Forthcoming  
*Electoral Studies*.

“Parties, Fights, and Factions: A Comparative Analysis of Internal Conflicts and Political  
Party Splitting in Latin America.” Forthcoming *Party Politics*.

“Women on the Sidelines: Representation of Women in Committees in National Latin  
American Legislatures.” *American Journal of Political Science* 49(2005): 420-36,  
with Leslie Schwindt-Bayer and Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson.

“Do Women Legislators Have Different Policy Priorities than their Male Colleagues? A  
Critical Case Test.” *Women and Politics* 40(4) (December 2003): 77-101, with  
Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson.

***Working Papers***

“Trust in Democratic Institutions and Perceptions of Representation in Democratizing  
Countries.”

“The Effects of Resource Scarcity on Coalition Formation in Latin American  
Governments.”

“The Epistemology of Experimentation in Political Science,” with Nehemia Geva,  
Belinda Bragg, and Danette Brickman

***Research Interests***

Women and politics  
Latin American political systems  
Comparative democratic institutions

***Teaching Interests***

Women and Politics  
Latin American political systems  
Comparative democratic institutions  
Democratic Theory

***Research Experience***

***Assistantships***

2001- 2004

**Department of Political Science, Texas A&M University**

Research Assistant: I collected data, performed statistical analysis, and conducted research with Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson, which produced two published manuscripts. Also, I was a substitute lecturer in absence of professor.

***Field Research***

July-August 2003

**San José, Costa Rica**

I collected archival data in the National Assembly and governmental agencies.

March 2002

**Tegucigalpa, Honduras**

I collected archival data in the National Congress.

***Languages***

English

French

Spanish

***Conference Participation***

***Papers presented***

“The Effect of Political Ambition on Legislative Productivity in Unitary, Unicameral Systems.” To be Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, August 31-September 3, 2006, with Michelle Taylor-Robinson.

“Legislator Incentive to Join A Backbench Rebellion to Alter the Rules of Order: An Experimental Analysis.” Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, April 21-23, 2006.

“How Do Political Ambitions Affect Legislative Productivity in Unitary, Unicameral Systems? A Study of the Costa Rican and Honduran Legislatures.” Presented at the Latin American Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Juan, Puerto Rico, March 17-20, 2006.

“Incompatible Institutions: The Combined Effects of Electoral Rules and the Organization of the National Legislature on Party Leadership and Backbenchers in Latin American Democratizing Countries.” Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, April 7-10, 2005.

“The Effects of Resource Scarcity: An Experiment in Executive Budgetary Decision Making.” Presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, Montreal, Canada, March 17-20, 2004.

“All Dressed Up with No Place to Go? Political Ambition in Unitary Political Systems with Unicameral Legislators.” Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, August 28-31, 2003, with Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson.

“Women on the Sidelines: The Rationality of Isolating Tokens.” Presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 3-5, 2003 and the Latin American Studies Association Meeting, Dallas, TX, March 27-30, with Leslie Schwindt-Bayer and Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson.

“Parties, Fights, and Factions: A Comparative Analysis of Internal Conflicts and Political Party Splitting in Latin America.” Presented at the European Consortium for Political Research, Joint Sessions, Edinburgh, Scotland, March 27-April 2, 2003.

“Do Women Legislators Have Different Policy Priorities than their Male Colleagues? A Critical Case Test.” Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA, August 28-31, 2002, with Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson.

***Awards:***

Texas A&M University College of Liberal Arts Dissertation Research Award for the Social Sciences, Spring 2005.

Pan American Roundtable Grant Recipient for field research in Costa Rica, Spring 2003.

***Teaching Experience:***

*Department of Political Science, Texas A&M University*

Between the Fall semester of 2005 and now, I have taught the following courses: Introduction to American Government, Contemporary Issues in World Politics, Latin American Political Systems, U.S.-Latin American Relations, and Cross National Political Parties. In each class, I served as the sole instructor; therefore, I was responsible for the development of syllabi, lectures, and all grading for each course. The class sizes ranged from 25 to 40 students.

***Service***

*Texas A&M University*

- Member of the Political Science Graduate Student Organization
- Member of Office Allocation Committee, 2002, 2004
- Mentor: Aggie Women in Leadership Program, 2005-2006
- Judge: We the People Mock Congressional Hearings, May 2006.
- Member: Academic Honor Council, 2006-2007
- Member: Aggie Access Faculty Mentor, 2006-2007

***Professional Memberships***

American Political Science Association

Midwest Political Science Association

Latin American Studies Association

European Consortium for Political Research

Standing group on Latin American politics

***References:***

Professor Kim Q. Hill  
Department of Political Science  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, Texas 77843-4348  
979-845-8235  
e339kq@polisci.tamu.edu

Professor Patricia Hurley  
Department of Political Science  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, Texas 77843-4348  
979-845-8833  
pat\_hurley@polisci.tamu.edu

Professor Judith Baer  
Department of Political Science  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, Texas 77843-4348  
979-845-2246  
jbaer@polisci.tamu.edu

Professor Maria Escobar-Lemmon  
Department of Political Science  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, Texas 77843-4348  
979-845-1442  
Escobar@polisci.tamu.edu

Professor Guy Whitten  
Department of Political Science  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, Texas 77843-4348  
979-845-2511  
whitten@polisci.tamu.edu

Professor Nehemia Geva  
Department of Political Science  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, Texas 77843-4348  
979-845-1457  
E339ng@polisci.tamu.edu

### **Description of Dissertation**

Explaining Congressional Organizational Reform: Electoral Laws, Congressional Organization, and the Balance of Power between Party Leaders and Backbenchers in Latin American National Legislatures

The primary research question underlying the dissertation is when will legislators rebel against party leaders in modifying the rules of order so they can seek personal, political interests over partisan interests? The adoption of a single district nationwide is an example of electoral engineering that was common in Latin America in the 1990s. These changes in the electoral law altered the incentive structures of both party leaders and legislators. In some instances, the organization of the national legislatures (i.e., the rules of order) did not permit legislators to perform legislative activities and duties that would assist them in achieving political goals under the new incentive structure created by the modification in the electoral law. Following a change in the electoral law, legislators or party leaders may determine that they are not able to function effectively to achieve their electoral goals within the existing organization of the legislature. Their ineffectiveness may in fact lead to dissatisfaction among the electorate. It may further frustrate party leaders or legislators if the assembly's rules impede them in achieving their career goals, or make it difficult for parties to maintain the support of key constituencies. Consequently, a change in electoral rules, particularly one that alters what parties or legislators must do to pacify the electorate, may lead to a change in the chamber's internal rules of order.

In the dissertation, I present a theory that predicts when party leaders or legislators will pursue change in the rules of order, and when legislators are likely to rebel against party leadership and propose change when the latter does not want change (or backbenchers conclude that their interests are not served by the change proposed by the party leadership). I hypothesize that three factors influence the likelihood of changing the internal rules of order following a modification in the electoral law: (a) the effective number of parties in the chamber; (b) party discipline; and (c) the nature of legislator ambition. I use an experimental methodology to test the model and hypotheses in a controlled laboratory setting. Then, I use a statistical and case study approach to examine rule changes in the Colombian Senate and Peruvian Congress.

Findings suggest that as the number of effective parties in the chamber increases, it is less likely to result in a change in the internal rules of order, as there is a need to overcome the collective action problem and build majority support for the amendment to pass. Second, findings support the hypothesis that backbenchers are more likely to rebel and propose changes in the rules of order or vote against leadership proposals to alter the rules of order in less disciplined parties where leaders do not control the electoral future of legislators or have minimum capability of sanctioning rebels. Third, legislators that want to continue a career in politics outside of the congress or seek reelection to the congress are more likely to support leadership proposals and are less likely to rebel if party leaders control their political future. However, when leaders cannot sanction rebels, those legislators with political career aspirations are more likely to rebel.