

OSTROM WORKSHOP COLLOQUIUM SERIES

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"I'd Rather Do It Myself: An Experiment on Mayoral Preferences for Managerial Autonomy"



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12:00–1:00 PM • Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park

This research explores the drivers of chief executives' preferences for delegating or retaining managerial autonomy. When considering whether to delegate responsibilities for projects, chief executives assess their perceived opportunities for ex post credit claiming against the perceived potential ex post cost of accepting blame. We argue that in calculating these tradeoffs, contextual decision characteristics shift the balance of perceived costs and benefits in the decision-making process. We consider three contextual decision levers: visibility of the decision issue, salience of decision beneficiaries, and policy stage (formulation vs. implementation). To test chief executives' preferences for delegating, we conducted a survey-experiment with 239 incumbent Colombian mayors. Mayors were presented with a hypothetical migration scenario in which we manipulated two decision features: (i) project visibility (classroom construction vs. vaccination campaigns) and (ii) salience of beneficiaries (whether or not migrants have municipal ties). Results reveal that when presented with a classroom construction project—rather than a vaccination campaign project—mayors are statistically and significantly less likely to delegate project implementation autonomy to the national government.

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[Claudia N. Avellaneda](#) specializes in governance and public management in Latin American subnational governments. Her research explores the determinants of municipal performance by focusing on the local chief executive. She explores the impact of mayors' education, experience, networking, and political support on social service delivery, public finances, and decision-making. She has extended this line of research to Brazilian, Chilean, Honduran, Mexican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Peruvian, Ecuadorian and Salvadorian municipalities.

Presentations are open to the public and are live streamed (see our website for URL and papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu; 812/855–3151).