

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Policy Change and Voter Realignment in Mexico, 1982-1994

by

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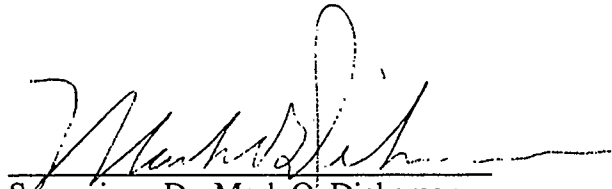
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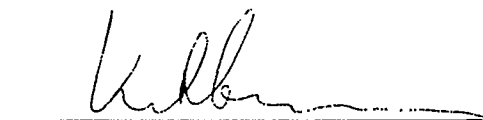
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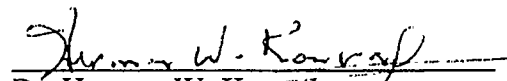
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Policy Change and Voter Realignment in Mexico, 1982-1994" submitted by Gino C. Marrelli in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



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ABSTRACT

The electoral process in Mexico has become increasingly significant to the Mexican public. In the last two presidential elections, the political opposition has captured fifty per cent of the total popular vote. The PRI is still the most dominant political force in the country, but their opponents can no longer be viewed as irrelevant in the electoral arena. The final outcome of electoral contests today are not simply a formality. Because of the more competitive nature which has evolved there is more at stake in the electoral decisions of voters. This thesis provides an empirical examination of Mexican voting behavior. It is argued that electoral patterns in Mexico have shifted since 1982 due a fundamental change in the economic policy direction of Mexico's "official party." Strategies of economic development are identified as a key variable for the Mexican electorate. The social bases of support among Mexico's political parties are a reflection of the contrasting public opinion towards the state and its role in Mexico's political economy.

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INTRODUCTION

Stability is often identified as a fundamental characteristic of Mexico's political system. For more than sixty-five years the same political party- the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)- has governed Mexico. Without question, it is the most influential political institution of twentieth century Mexican society. The PRI, however, is more than just a political party; it is a social institution and its impact on Mexico's social and economic development has been substantial. As with most sociological phenomena, political systems are susceptible to change. Although constitutionally defined, the system is itself operated and directed by individuals and cannot, therefore, be expected to remain static forever.

Change in Mexican politics is a point which has been well established by analysts for years- including those who classify Mexico as a one-party state (Smith, 1979). The locus of change was said, however, to be limited to the political circles of the PRI. In this sense, the politics of change operate within the governing party, and not the political system. Mexican politics may change, but the system itself remains static. Central to this point is the nation's elections. The PRI has won almost every election since its formation, including every presidential contest. Political opposition parties competed, but at no time was their participation seen as a threat to the political dominance of the PRI. Hence, because elections often are interpreted as having little or no meaning, the political system is not foreseen as a watershed for change (Croan, 1970).

The final results of the 1994 Mexican presidential election proved to substantiate this point. In what was the first free and competitive federal election in Mexican history, the PRI candidate easily defeated his closest rivals (See Table A). For many observers, including numerous local academics and dissident political activists, the final results proved to be quite shocking (*The News*, 22/08/94:2). In spite of the numerous electoral reforms

introduced prior to the 1994 vote, the PRI was victorious once again. The election was scarred by numerous irregularities. Yet, and as many observer groups have conceded, it is unlikely that any of these irregularities would have significantly altered the final outcome (*The News*, 08/24/94:5-6). Recognizing this, one is left somewhat astonished as to how the PRI won, and in such decisive fashion. What explains the fact that the politics of change could not overcome the politics of stability?

Table A

The 1994 Final Results of the Mexican Presidential Election

Total % of the Popular Vote

Ernesto Zedillo (PRI)	48.87
Diego Fernández (PAN)	26.09
Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (PRD)	16.42

Source: *El Nacional*; August 29, 1994: pg. 5.

The following investigation examines how electoral decisions are made in Mexico. Although the Mexican electorate did opt for the familiar as opposed to the unfamiliar in 1994, the governing party has undergone fundamental changes over the past decade. At the nucleus of these changes is the PRI's strategic policies on economic development. Prior to 1982, Mexico's economic agenda was strongly dictated by a very active and influential state. Strategies of economic development followed a statist economic approach. Mexico's economic crisis of 1982, however, forced the governing party to revamp its core economic policies. Fundamental to this adjustment was the declining presence of the state in the economy and an increasing emphasis on private investment. This shift in economic strategy marked a significant change in the PRI's political philosophy. It is the impact of these changes on Mexican electoral behavior that is explored in this thesis.

While the PRI victory in 1994 did reaffirm its political supremacy in the electoral arena, Mexico's national party system has undergone dramatic changes since 1982. In the last two presidential elections, the political opposition has captured fifty per cent of the total

popular vote. The 1994 presidential election, regardless of the final outcome demonstrated that Mexico's one-party dominant system was obviously on its last leg. A multi-party political system, featuring both a left-wing and right-wing legitimate political alternatives, has fully emerged in Mexico. This structural change has fundamentally altered the electoral arena for the voter. With three parties competing for the top prize, the importance of the ballot box is further enhanced. This study will illustrate how the evolution of a multi-party political system in Mexico was sparked by the changes in economic policies adopted by the governing party after 1982.

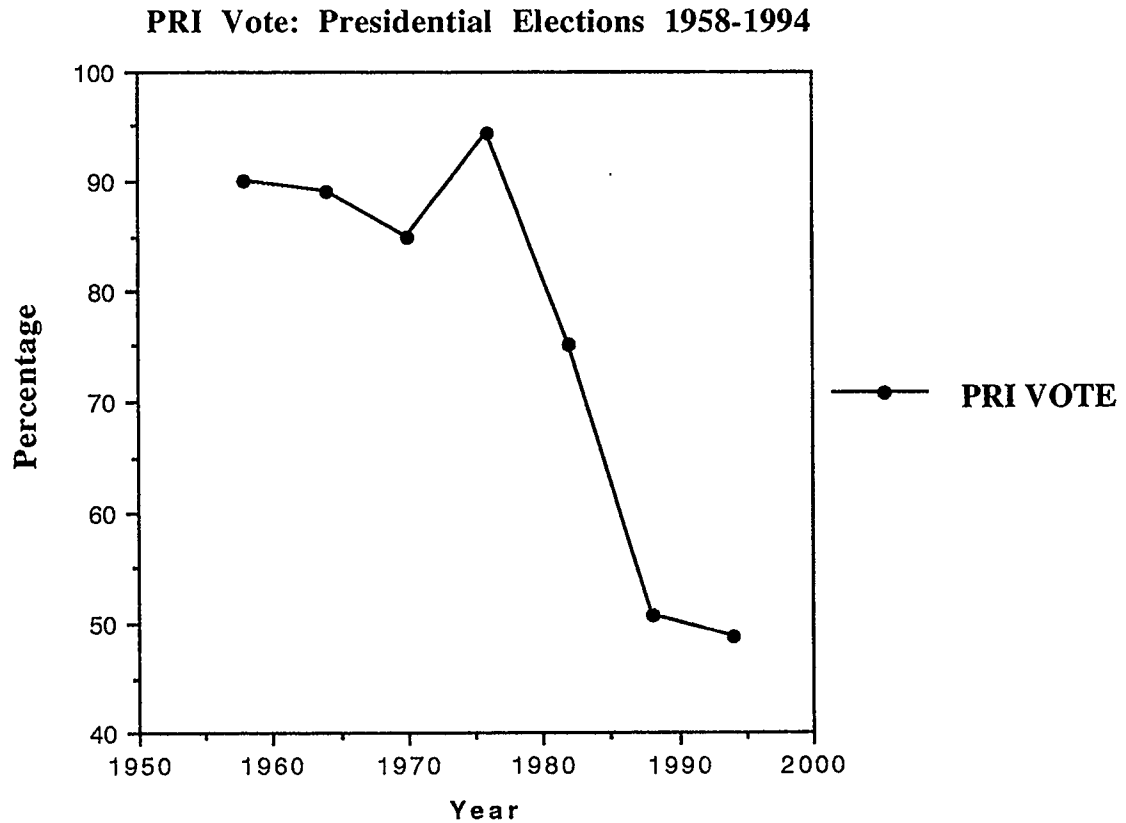
The PRI's total share of the national vote in presidential elections has steadily declined since 1958 (See Figure A).¹ Paradoxically, however, this initial decline was rather marginal up until 1982. It was not until 1988- when the electoral support of the PRI shrunk to an all-time low of only 50%- that Mexico's one-party dominant system was seriously threatened. Going into the 1988 presidential election campaign, unquestionably, the biggest change was found within the political opposition. For the first time, the PRI encountered a serious political alternative on the left with the candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. Cárdenas, a former PRI governor of Michoacán, received more than 30% of the total popular vote in 1988. While Cárdenas was not victorious, his emergence as a national political figure had a profound impact on Mexico's national party spectrum, and subsequently, the national electoral arena.

This investigation highlights the important links associated with policy change and Mexican voting behavior. It is argued that changes in the PRI's economic developmental strategies, after 1982, generated a significant realignment in Mexican voting behavior. The

¹ Only in 1976- a presidential year- was there an increase. This, however, was due to the fact that its primary opposition, the PAN, did not field a presidential candidate for that year.

PRI was victorious once again in 1994. However, it does not necessarily follow that its social bases of support remain the same from one election to the next. It is argued that due

Figure A



to the systematic changes in economic policies of the PRI, the voting patterns of today are no longer a reflection of voting patterns of the past.

Of course, in focusing on voting patterns alone, this investigation does not cover the full scope of electoral politics in Mexico. Specifically, there are various other factors and variables, such as fraud and political cooptation with the ruling party, that may operate independently from the final results of national and state elections. Even the 1994 vote, recognized as the most democratic and fair elections in Mexican history, suffered from a number of electoral irregularities, including voters with the proper credentials being turned away. Similarly, it is also widely suspected that the PRI helped to finance the campaign of one of Mexico's minor satellite parties- the Labor Party (PT)- in the hopes of dividing the

national left-wing vote. On the whole, it proved as no surprise that Cecilia Soto, the Presidential candidate for the PT, was one of the first opposition candidates to recognize the PRI victory, and openly criticize the presidential candidate for the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, for not accepting his party's defeat (*The News*, 08/25/1994:4). It is also important to stress, however, that it is these features of Mexican electoral politics which are very difficult to measure, and therefore, will not be covered as part of this empirical analysis.

Instead, this study provides a quantitative analysis of electoral politics in Mexico. It begins with a brief commentary into the historical origins of the PRI and Mexico's national party system in chapter one. This investigation attempts to explain Mexican voting behavior. Thus, chapter two provides a theoretical overview of the contrasting methodologies applied to voting behavior research. The chapter focuses on the methodological contributions of three distinct approaches to understanding electoral decisions, and its impact on Mexican voting studies. The empirical components of this thesis are broken down into two sections. The first, chapter three, examines the social bases of support of Mexico's national party system. A longitudinal analysis of the past three presidential elections (1982-1988-1994) is included to measure the impact of the governing party's policy change on voting behavior. In chapter four, a theoretical framework is developed which outlines how economic policy change during the de la Madrid administration (1982-1988) generated an electoral realignment among the Mexican electorate. The second empirical section, chapter five, centers specifically on Mexican electoral behavior, and how voters calculate their electoral decisions. In effect, it sets out to test what is argued in the previous chapter- that voting behavior in Mexico is strongly conditioned by party policies on economic development. It is argued that the electoral patterns today are merely a reflection of the divergent economic policies which are represented from left to right within Mexico's contemporary multi-party political system.

CHAPTER ONE

MEXICO'S NATIONAL PARTY SYSTEM

Although constitutionally defined as a federal representative democracy, Mexico is traditionally identified as a one-party dominant political system (Huntington and Moore, 1970; Reyna and Weinert, 1977). The Institutional Revolutionary Party have dominated Mexican politics throughout most of the twentieth century. Up until the 1988 presidential election, its political hegemony had never been seriously challenged. Ironically, it was not that political opposition has not been tolerated. Opposition parties have competed in elections for many years. Their success, however, was rather limited due to the widespread popular appeal of the "official" governing party. At present there are three major political parties which make-up Mexico's national party system- the PRI, the National Action Party (PAN), and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). This chapter examines the historical development of each party. While the PRI remains in power, the political opposition has steadily expanded its social bases of support over the past decade. Mexico's one-party dominant system has gradually eroded as a multi-party political system emerges.

The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)

The historical development of Mexico's official party is generally associated with three important stages (Ozbudun, 1970). Founded in 1929 by Plutarco Elías Calles, a former President of Mexico (1924-1928), the party's initial objectives centered on establishing political stability. Prior to its formation, Mexico had just emerged from what was undoubtedly the bloodiest civil conflicts in Mexican history- the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). Ironically, while the revolution was primarily seen as a means to overthrow Porfirio Díaz, the former dictator of Mexico from 1876 to 1910, his eventual resignation did not bring an end to the political turmoil. The revolution may have won with the defeat

of Díaz, but it was far from over. More than 1.5 million lives were lost during the civil conflict which continued for many years after Díaz's departure. The formation of the "official" party by Calles, and its first stage of development, is recognized as a key turning point in the nation's political stability. As many analysts have pointed out, the official party, then called the National Revolutionary Party (PNR), was successful in bringing a lasting consolidation among the various political forces which emerged from the revolution (Scott, 1964; Ozbudun, 1970; Philip, 1988). In effect, the PNR was primarily formed "to limit civil conflict and establish some kind of political order" (Philip, 1988:99).

The presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) is regarded as a pivotal era in the structural organization of the governing party. Apart from its revolutionary origins, the PRI is perhaps most distinguished by its institutional character. While Calles is usually accredited with bringing the elite power-holders of Mexican society into the party, it is Cárdenas who expanded the party's base through the incorporation of both the peasant and working classes (Kline, 1962; Padgett, 1966). It is during this second stage of development that the party was reorganized within a centralized corporatist structure, consisting of four distinct sectors- agricultural, labor, popular, and military (Ozbudun, 1970). The party structure is recognized as corporatist in that the key sectors of society are incorporated within the party, as opposed to operating independently. As a result, public demands are more readily channeled and controlled by the governing party through peaceful mechanisms (Wiarda, 1981)

Mexico's official party structure is also recognized as centralized due to the widespread powers which are enjoyed by the president. As some writers have argued, this is attributed to the traditional patterns of political rule established during Mexico's colonial past (Wiarda, 1981; Véliz, 1980). This aside, one must also recognize the impact of Cárdenas and his role in strengthening the office of the presidency (Schmidt, 1991). Prior to Cárdenas, Mexico's official party was centralized, but very much under the control of

Calles. The successive presidents who followed after 1929 were all merely puppets of Calles' (Philip, 1988). It was not until Cárdenas assumed the presidency that Calles' control of the official party was finally broken. After establishing his own power base within the party, Cárdenas, a former military general, repeatedly acted unilaterally by introducing numerous economic and social reforms during his term in office. These included the redistribution of more than twenty six million acres of land, and the nationalization of seventeen foreign oil companies. In sum, his independent style of governing laid the groundwork for what latter PRI presidents enjoyed after him- absolute power. As Schmidt (1991:4) has observed,

the transition from one "sexenio" (six-year presidential term) to another often marks a turning point in the system. Each president's term tends to impose a particular stamp on the composition of the state and on its activities and functions with regard to civil society. These characteristics acquire significance because they remain in the structure to become the new reality for the presidents that follow.

The rise of Mexico's official party also brought an end to the participation of the military in Mexican politics. From 1920 to 1946, every elected Mexican President was a general. Since then, the role of the military has gradually diminished within the PRI, and subsequently, the Mexican political system. The first step in this process began when the military sector was formally removed from the party's corporatist structure in 1940. The implications of this development have proven to be very dramatic. Civilians have dominated the Mexican political system throughout the post-World War II era. Indeed, every president since 1946 has been a civilian. If compared to its Latin American neighbors, Mexico boasts an astounding record with respect to civilian rule. Military intervention, and the "coup d'etat" have been a steady and familiar phenomenon in the Latin American region during most of twentieth century. In stark contrast, civilian politics in Mexico has steadily continued, and with no significant military interruption. Clearly, the formation of the PRI has "contributed greatly to taming Mexico's military" (Levy and Székely, 1987:38).

A third stage of development for Mexico's governing party is said to have commenced with the presidency of Miguel Alemán (1946-1952). Here, a growing movement emerged from within the popular sector- this being the party's middle class members- in response to the sectorial organization of the party (Padgett, 1966). The corporatist structure which was established by Cárdenas provided the peasant and labor wings of the party with substantial power. To a great extent, this was attributed to the fact that the large numbers in these two sectors provided great leverage within the party. In the post-Cárdenas era, the popular sector of the party sought to improve its position within the party, and in effect, reverse a great deal of what was achieved when Cárdenas was in power. While its initial efforts were blocked, since then the bargaining power of both the agricultural and labor sectors has steadily diminished (Ozbudun, 1970:392). On balance, the Mexican middle class, in spite of its smaller numbers, wields considerable influence "vis-a-vis" the party structure.

Sectorial organizations of the PRI have played a prominent role in maintaining a core of support for the government. Its political hegemony, as Ozbudun (1970) has argued, was very much linked to its ability to incorporate broad sectors of society into the party. This corporatist strategy encouraged political participation as public perceptions of their ability to influence government decision-making was strong, regardless of the fact that "few of them actually attempt to exercise such influence" (Ozbudun, 1970:399). On balance, the PRI has consistently generated strong support due to its deep and influential corporatist links throughout Mexican society. Its long-standing identification as the not merely a party, but the ruling party provide the PRI with an immeasurable advantage which it holds over its competitors. At one level, this has manufactured a core traditional support which is based on the symbolic synthesis which coexists between the "party" and the "state." This has ensured that the electoral activities of both peasant and labor unions- the National Peasant Federation (CNC), and the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM)-

are channeled within the governing party (Collier, 1992). At another level, however, and clearly the most influential, its historic stranglehold on government power has provided the PRI with a political resource which effectively mobilizes a broad basis of support across Mexico's mainstream. Political analysts of Mexican elections have referred to this as the PRI's corporative vote (Kelsner, 1987; Philip, 1988; Needler, 1987). As both Cornelius and Craig (1991) have argued, it is the PRI's complete monopolization of the government process which contributes most to its position as a hegemonic party.

For many sectors of the population, symbols are supplemented with particularistic material rewards: ... the personal receipt of some material "favor" from the official party-government apparatus, or the hope that such benefits might be received in the future, ensured fairly high levels of mass support for the system (Cornelius and Craig, 1991:98).

On the whole, Mexico's official party has carried widespread support throughout most of the post-World War II era. It has won every presidential election since its formation, and has overwhelmingly dominated the electoral arena. From 1934 to 1982, Mexico's official party averaged 88% of the total popular vote in presidential elections. For many writers, this impressive electoral record is attributed to a party structure which has generated tremendous popular appeal for the PRI (Needler, 1961; Ozbudun, 1970; Almond and Verba, 1963; Purcell, 1990). As Juan Molinar Harcasitas has observed, while its ability to commit electoral fraud is obviously a key advantage of the PRI, even "[i]n completely free and fair elections, the PRI would still win a majority" (Cornelius, 1987:17). To large extent, this is attributed to its nationwide network of mass organizations which "[n]one of the opposition parties can come remotely close to" (Cornelius and Craig, 1991:62).

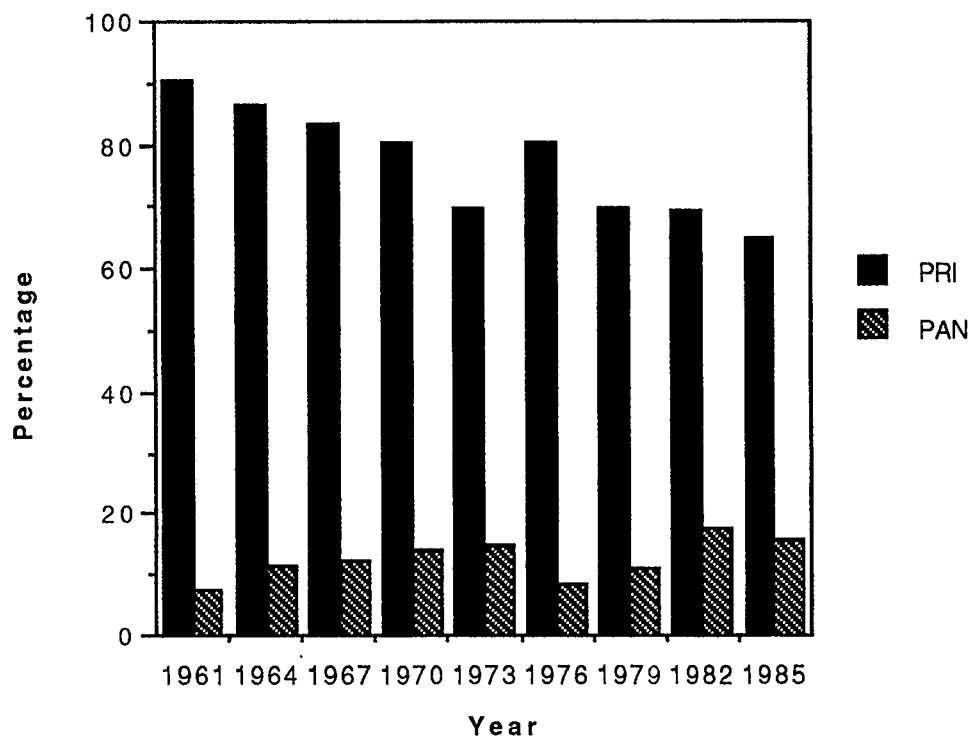
The National Action Party (PAN)

Not surprisingly, many of the earliest interpretations of Mexico's electoral system were generally quite negative. As Huntington (1970) argued, because the PRI is victorious

in almost every contest, the electoral process is largely meaningless. Later studies eventually challenged this popular interpretation (Gómez Tagle, 1987; Needler, 1987; Kelsner, 1987). The chief impetus for this change of thought was the gradual decline in electoral support for the PRI. The political hegemony of the PRI was not perceived to be in danger, yet, the growing support of the political opposition via the ballot box acknowledged the fact that elections in Mexico were not without meaning. One need only examine the PRI's total share of the national vote in federal deputy elections since 1961-1985 (See Figure #1.1). The governing party's electoral support has steadily declined from one election to the next. The primary beneficiary of this initial decline was the National Action Party (PAN), the nation's second oldest party and most recognized political opposition in Mexico since its inception.

Figure #1.1

Electoral Support for the Chamber of Deputies 1961-1985: The PRI & PAN



Note: All other parties received less than 5% of the vote up until 1988.

Founded on March 16, 1939, the birth of the PAN is often associated with the controversial issue of church/state relations. In contrast to the official party, which is traditionally recognized as repressing the actions of the Catholic church, the PAN and the church have generally been regarded as allies. Of course, the PAN did attract minor support early on in religiously alienated areas (Kelsner, 1987). As a catholic alternative to the Mexican Revolution, however, the PAN was an electoral failure. In part, this was due to the fact that "[i]dentification with the church, or Catholicism is counterproductive to political success" in Mexico (Mabry, 1973:xi).

By the 1970's, the PAN had undergone numerous fundamental changes in party philosophy. The party abandoned its open support of, and religious affiliation with, the Catholic church. This political alliance offered little or no rewards at the ballot box for the party. At the same time, the party's ties with the nation's business sector gradually began to expand- particularly during the Mexican Presidency of Luis Echeverria (1970-1976). With Echeverria in power, the policy platform of the PRI shifted significantly to the left, subsequently alienating Mexico's business community (Mabry, 1973). This fracture allowed the PAN to emerge as the most significant political opposition to the PRI. As its ties with business steadily deepened, the PAN's ideological roots became more clearly defined to the right of the PRI (Story, 1987; Camp, 1986). In effect, the PAN is generally recognized as the strongest right-wing alternative to the PRI.

Ideologically, the PAN is perceived as not only Mexico's most conservative political party, but also the most closely associated with liberal-democratic political culture (Bartra, 1989). In part, as many have argued, this is attributed to its perceived strong links with American political and business interests (Story, 1987; Camp, 1986). Politically, the party is said to enjoy a close relationship with the United States' Republican Party. In 1984, for example, it is believed that several representatives of the PAN were actually

invited to the U.S. Republican convention of 1984 (Story, 1987). Simultaneously, it is speculated that U.S. business interests in Mexico favor the PAN over the governing party (Pastor, 1992). So much so, in fact, it is believed that the PAN has received substantial financial contributions from American business interests. While the PAN has sought to tone down its public association with the United States in recent years, it is debatable as to what extent its relationship with U.S. business has declined. In one poll taken of U.S. foreign investors during the 1994 Mexican presidential election campaign, the majority of respondents expressed clear support for the right-wing PAN (*Mexico City Daily Bulletin*, 08/18/1994:4).

Altogether, the PAN is traditionally recognized as the PRI's principal opposition at both the national and state level. The PRI has lost only three governorships since its formation- all of them to the PAN, and in the last six years. This occurred in the states of Baja California, Guanajuato, and Chihuahua. The 1994 presidential election, at the same time, proved to be relatively successful for the PAN. With more than 26% of the total popular vote, the party substantially improved on its previous historic high- 17% in 1988. More importantly, the PAN recaptured its traditional status as Mexico's leading political opposition force. In 1988 this position was lost to the National Democratic Front (FDN), a third and legitimate national political alternative which emerged that year. Although the FDN eventually dissolved in 1989, the core of its membership went on to form the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)- the youngest of Mexico's three major political parties at the national level.

The Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)

The historical development of the FDN, and subsequently the PRD, is directly associated with Mexico's official party. During the mid-eighties, the PRI was found to be seriously fractured. A growing movement within the party, initially referred to as the

Corriente Democrática (CD), had emerged as a challenge to the PRI's leadership. The group was initially led by Porfirio Muñoz Ledo- a former party president of the PRI and now the current party president of the PRD. The CD reflected a democratic crusade within the PRI which sought a more open political process in the party structure. Its aim, as some have argued, "was not to divide the PRI but to democratize its internal procedures" (Cornelius et. al. 1989:17).

While the CD did enjoy significant popular support early on, its social base had grown extensively once Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the former PRI governor of Michoacán (1980-1986), joined the movement. The leadership of Cárdenas provided the movement with a clear distinction of its political principles. As the son of the revered Lázaro Cárdenas (PRI president 1934-1940), the younger Cárdenas was very popular among Mexico's peasant class. To a large extent, this was attributed to his father's political legacy on policies of land reform. On a whole, his impact on Mexico's political scene is undeniably difficult to measure. Even his name symbolizes for many Mexicans an affinity with the nation's pre-columbian past (Cuauhtémoc), and the principles of the revolution (Cárdenas).

By July of 1987, the CD announced that Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was its choice for the PRI's presidential candidate in 1988. After accepting the nomination, Cárdenas began a tour of the nation which attracted thousands of supporters. In spite of his broad popularity, the PRI still chose Carlos Salinas de Gortari as its candidate in October of 1987. It was shortly after that Cárdenas accepted the presidential nomination for the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution (PARM). As Cárdenas' popularity steadily rose, more and more political forces threw their support behind the former PRI member. By January of 1988, the FDN was formed, uniting most of the country's leftist parties under the candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. While this marked an end to Cárdenas' political association with the PRI, it also served as a catalyst to his future role in Mexican national politics.

The PRD was eventually founded on May 5, 1989. And yet, in spite of the record level of support attained by Cárdenas in the 1988 presidential election- the highest ever for an opposition candidate since the formation of the official party (31%)- many of the smaller parties which joined the FDN in 1988 rejected the formation of the PRD. In part, as Cornelius and Craig (1991) note, this was due to the prominence which is held by former PRI members within the new party. The political executive of the PRD is dominated by a core membership who are identified as former "*priistas*." As others have argued, the leaders of the PRD "are none other than the authentic children of the PRI" (Cornelius et. al. 1989).

Although the PRD did not fare as well in the 1994 presidential election, capturing only 16% of the vote, it is still recognized as a major political player in Mexican politics. It represents the most significant political alternative which is ideologically to the left of Mexico's official party. Furthermore, with Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas as its leader, the PRD is assured of remaining a relatively significant force at the national level. Of course, this is also perhaps the key weakness of the party. Unlike the PAN, Mexico's strongest political opposition, the electoral support of the PRD is perceived as very much dependent on the degree of appeal which is generated by its leader. This, as Collier (1992:163) has argued, is reflected in the weaker organizational structure of the PRD. So much so, "the fate of the PRD" is regarded as directly linked to its "capacity to translate his (Cárdenas) charismatic appeal into more institutionalized support" (Collier, 1992:130).

Conclusion

The political system in Mexico has undergone fundamental changes over the past decade. While traditionally recognized as a one-party dominant state, the electoral support of the PRI has gradually declined at both the national and state level. Its political hegemony, as a result, has fallen substantially short of what it represented in the past.

Mexico's political opposition, meanwhile, has steadily expanded its share of support in the electoral arena. At the forefront of this development is the PAN and the PRD. These two parties are regarded as the only major alternatives to the PRI in Mexican politics. Simultaneously, with the PAN to the right, and the PRD to the left, the political opposition in Mexico offers two distinct approaches to governing. Together with the PRI, these three political parties are identified as the primary choices at the ballot box for the Mexican electorate.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO VOTING BEHAVIOR

What are the predominant factors which can best explain how a citizen will vote? In essence, this is the goal behind all studies of electoral behavior. The inherent challenge is to determine what factors are more prominent than others. This chapter explores the various theoretical approaches of research in voting behavior, and examines their influence on previous case studies of Mexican electoral behavior. Among the three schools of thought which have evolved from voting behavior research- the sociological, psychological, and economic- each has made a significant impact on studies of Mexican voting, particularly the sociological model. Recent electoral studies, however, have adopted a more economic approach, outlining the effects of historically divisive issues such as land reform, and church/state relations on voting behavior.

The Sociological Approach

The initial development and employment of the sociological approach is often accredited to the Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research. Led by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, the Columbia team sought to determine what factor or factors were responsible for producing changes in American voter intentions during the 1940 election campaign. Their research centered on a series of repeated interviews with a randomly selected group of voters (Lazarsfeld et. al. 1944).

Ironically, the Columbia group's original hypothesis- that one's vote is determined by what one believes- was proven wrong. Their data reported that only a handful of voters had altered their initial voting intention. This led the authors to reconsider their initial position. Specifically, the groups focus turned to socio-demographic patterns of voting behavior. In this sense, voting was said to be determined more by who one is (ie. race,

religion, or class), as opposed to what one believes. An ensuing study of the 1948 U.S. election conducted by Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee further reinforced this revised position. As they concluded, voting "[i]ntentions supported by one's social surrounding are more predictably carried out than are intentions lacking such social support" (Berelson et. al. 1954:283).

Not surprisingly, the sociological model to voting research emerged as a valuable framework to numerous landmark election studies which followed. In Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) analysis of *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, for example, the structure of a nation's party system is shown as merely a reflection of the historical sequence of political conflicts and the accompanying social cleavages which develop. At the pinnacle of the sociological paradigm are the pivotal cleavages of class and religion. Studies measuring the impact of class on voting behavior have typically stressed the strong correlations found between the working class and left-wing parties, and the middle class and right-wing parties. Religious affiliation, at the same time, was also said to have a profound effect on voting behavior due to the contentious issue of church/state relations. In a cross-national study of 16 western countries, Rose and Urwin (1969) concluded that it was religious cues, and not class, which were more closely associated with a voter's choice. In sum, electoral studies which utilize the sociological approach center their analysis on socio-demographic cues that condition how one will vote.

The sociological approach to voting did serve as a powerful structure in establishing how social cues conditioned electoral outcomes. As a theoretical paradigm, its strengths were in explaining stable or persistent electoral decisions. U.S. Catholics and blacks, for example, are more likely to vote Democrat. The sociological model faltered, however, in that it carried little value in explaining shifts in voting patterns of the electorate.

The Psychological Approach

Shortcomings in the sociological model provided the impetus from which researcher's from the University of Michigan developed the psychological alternative to studies of voting behavior. Sociological variables are largely constant over short periods of time and, therefore, are unable to explain significant or even sporadic changes in the vote from one election to the next (Campbell et. al. 1960:17).

For the authors of *The American Voter*, electoral decisions are better understood through an examination of political attitudes (Campbell et. al. 1960). In this sense, the psychological model fundamentally differs from the sociological approach in that voting behavior is said to be a "resultant of psychological forces" (Campbell et. al. 1960:9) . The pivotal element of this approach is partisan identification. Party identification (P.I.D.) functions as a crucial determinant in how individuals evaluate their political environment. It serves as a powerful psychological tool in shaping the political world of individuals, providing them with a political road map which dictates not only what party to vote for, but also how to interpret important issues or evaluate specific candidates. In short, the psychological approach to voting

centers primarily on the role of the party as a supplier of cues by which the individual may evaluate the elements of politics. The fact that most elements of national politics are far removed from the world of the common citizen forces the individual to depend on sources of information from which he may learn directly ... In the competition of voices reaching the individual the political party is an opinion-forming agency of great importance (Campbell et. al. 1960:128).

An ensuing study undertaken by the Michigan team in 1966, *Elections and the Political Order*, sparked further interest in the psychological model (Campbell et. al. 1966). In fact, many of the electoral case studies which followed employed the psychological approach. P.I.D. eventually became the major theoretical tool in voting behavior research. Its predictive power with respect to voting behavior was no match for the sociological

approach. Partisanship ties are regarded as long lasting, and therefore, a strong correlation is usually found between voting decisions and an individual's P.I.D. For other scholars, meanwhile, partisanship is recognized as a crucial ingredient in the political stability of a national polity (Almond and Verba, 1963; and Converse, 1969).

The Economic Approach

Of the three major approaches to studies of voting behavior, it is clearly the economic model which offers the most complex and sophisticated understanding to electoral decisions (Dalton and Wattenberg, 1993). Rather than focusing on sociological cues, or partisan identification, this third approach suggests that voting decisions are rationally calculated choices formulated by individual voters based on key attitudinal factors such as candidate evaluations and issue opinions. Anthony Downs' *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957) is perhaps the most commonly cited publication from this school of thought. For Downs, the act of voting is a rationally directed choice based upon a voter's perceived benefit in supporting a specific political party. A voter's perception of each party is influenced by two factors: "(1) the information he has about its policies and (2) the relation between those of its policies he knows about and his conception of the good society" (Downs, 1957:46).

Of course, each voter's decision is contingent upon a number of pragmatic considerations. For example, should a voter's favorite party appear to have no chance of winning, this voter will likely shift his or her support to a second party, whose platform is perceived to hold the greatest benefit among those political parties which have a justifiable chance of winning the upcoming election (Downs, 1957). It is this phenomenon which political scientists today refer to as strategic voting.

Although achieving reasonable success in its explanation of numerous other social behaviors, the economic approach faced considerable criticism initially from voting

behavior theorists. Researchers from both the Columbia (sociological) and Michigan (psychological) school's regarded the rational voter model as far too idealistic. The act of voting, as they saw, was no where near as complex as depicted by Downs. For Campbell and others (1960:543), most voters

are completely unable to judge the rationality of government actions; knowing little of particular policies and what has led to them, the mass electorate is not able to appraise either its goals or the appropriateness of the means chosen to serve these goals.

In recent times the field of electoral behavior has seen a revival of the economic approach. In part, this is attributed to the decline of both the sociological and psychological models of voting. As stated before, social cues, such as class and religion, no longer carry the same impact on the act of voting. The psychological model, meanwhile, has also undergone a similar decline in recent years due to what some have referred to as "partisan dealignment" (Inglehart and Hochstein, 1972). In this sense, the decline of partisan identification is attributed to the electorate's "gradual moving away from all parties" (Dalton and Wattenberg, 1993:202).

A further reason as to why recent voting studies have adopted the economic model is the perceived changes in the electorate's capability to understand the political environment. While *The American Voter* (Campbell et. al. 1960) concluded that most voters knew very little about issues, a latter study of *The Changing American Voter* (Nie et. al. 1976) contended that due to changes in recent years, voters are far more sophisticated in their knowledge of political issues, and are cognitively more perceptive and capable in measuring the different policy platforms of each political party. Others, such as Samuel Popkin (1994), have attempted to reconstruct the rational voter paradigm based on Down's earlier framework. For Popkin, the key element drawn from the Downsian perspective is his analysis of "information shortcuts," and how voters processed political information as a means to gauge their electoral decisions. Information shortcuts, he

concludes, provide voters with the necessary means to understanding how they may benefit from the electoral choices they make (Popkin, 1994:13-14). On balance, this rational voting perspective has made a return to studies of electoral behavior in western democracies due to the increasing importance of issue voting and candidate evaluations. As summed up by Dalton and Wattenberg (1993:207),

regardless of whether voters are now more sophisticated about the issues, ... if social cues and partisanship are less central in electoral decision making, ... voters must be turning to other factors- such as issues and candidates- to make their political decisions.

Mexican Voting Studies

The majority of Mexican voting research has followed a sociological path of analysis. As in most other parts of the world, the first case studies of Mexican voting behavior were structured to identifying a key socio-demographic variable which could explain how Mexican's voted. Of course, electoral studies in Mexico are fundamentally different from most western studies in that Mexico is characterized as a one-party dominant state. The general aim is not to establish links between the support for a particular political party and a specific social stratum. Instead, voting studies are designed to establish correlations between those who support the political system, and those who do not. In the Mexican case, therefore, the purpose is to understand why some citizens support the PRI, and why others do not.

The Sociological Approach

While both class and religion are recognized as primary social cleavages in studies of western voting behavior, this is clearly not the case in Mexico. In contrast, studies of Mexican voting which follow the sociological model have expended a great deal of effort in examining the important division between urban and rural voting patterns. It is not that class, or religion have no impact. Both are regarded as major social characteristics which

largely parallel and further highlight the urban/rural cleavage of Mexican society. Alschuler (1967), for example, in his examination of *Political Participation and Urbanization in Mexico*, argues that increasing levels of urbanization has generated a social decline in political participation, and subsequently, loss of support for the political system. Cornelius (1969) presents an almost identical study two years later in his analysis of urban migrants. As he argues, urban migrants who previously voted for the PRI are likely to remain loyal to the governing party. Their children, on the other hand, regardless of what social stratum they occupy are less likely to support the PRI. In effect, it is urbanization, and not class which acts as a powerful source of influence of how Mexican's vote.

Studies which followed did not attempt to refute the importance of urbanization, but instead sought to redefine urbanization as an intermediate variable which was merely linked to the presence of a much stronger and more instrumental variable with respect to voting behavior. Walton and Sween (1971), for instance, explore the effects of industrialization and socioeconomic development on Mexican voting behavior. Although an impressively strong correlation was found between both variables, their overall results were found to be inconclusive as urbanization still proved to be slightly more puissant to understanding the act of voting in Mexico. Barry Ames (1970), on the other hand, is relatively successful in demonstrating the close association binding levels of development to the "Bases of Support for the Dominant Party" in Mexico. The author illustrates that the PRI receives its greatest support from regions which are least developed. Rates of development, in turn, are measured by levels of urbanization, the proximity of the U.S. border, and historical non-integration.² Thus, urbanization remains influential, but is designated as essentially an intermediate variable in the process of voting.

² Measurements of historical non-integration reflect differences in state traditions with respect to its relationship with the national political system.

Recent studies examining Mexican voting behavior through the sociological paradigm have departed little, if at all, from Ames (1970) earlier thesis. In fact, as urbanization rates soared after the oil boom of the seventies, the electoral support for the governing party continued to decline. Consequently, levels of development are still heralded as a powerful measure in locating who are the PRI's strongest allies, and staunches enemies. While the latest research has become more sophisticated, providing a multivariate analysis of numerous other variables including class and education, measures of socioeconomic development remain the most predominant source of explication to Mexican voting. Ironically, Carlos Salinas de Gotari (1982), the former President of Mexico from 1988-1994, in his doctoral dissertation examined the negative effects of public spending in relation to popular support for the Mexican political system. Salinas concluded that the governing party is electorally least popular in regions which receive the greatest public expenditures and are the highest developed socioeconomically. Guillén López (1989), in his analysis of the 1988 presidential election, provides a similar conclusion. As he argues,

the PRI finds its greatest support among the population which has received least satisfaction of its material needs and, in contrast, its weakest support among the principal beneficiaries of the development model (Guillén López, 1989:251).

All in all, the sociological model has proven to be an invaluable and lasting framework to the direction of Mexican voting research. While the investigation for better explanations continue, the underlying assumptions guiding such research remain unaltered. In essence, solutions to understanding how Mexicans choose to vote are sought from the social context of who individuals are, and moreover, the primary social characteristic which defines them.

The Psychological Approach

Elections in western democracies are generally regarded as a contest between different political parties. The impact of partisanship, consequently, is regarded as very significant to studies of western voting behavior. In comparison, Mexican voting studies have placed little emphasis on the role of partisan identification. Primarily, as stated before, this is explained by the fact that Mexico is characterized, at least up until very recently, as a one-party state. And, as Almond and Verba (1963:292) have correctly noted, "the impact of partisanship in a one-party nation will obviously differ from that in a nation where there are competing parties."

Of course, this does not by any means take away from the more general impact of the psychological approach in other areas of Mexican political studies. Consider, for instance, Almond and Verba's analysis of Mexico in their 1963 landmark empirical study, *The Civic Culture*. While theoretically recognized as a systems model, the civic culture paradigm employs a "psychocultural approach" to explaining how the Mexican political system operates (Almond and Verba, 1963:13). The political lines of analysis adopted by Almond and Verba, moreover, are virtually identical to the psychological model for voting developed earlier by the authors of *The American Voter* (Campbell et. al. 1960). As stated before, Campbell and others hypothesized that electoral behavior was best understood through an examination of individual political attitudes. Political attitudes, meanwhile, are said to be strongly influenced by an individual's partisan identification. For Almond and Verba (1963:473), the civic culture study was an effort to establish how political attitudes are associated with "the structure of politics and to the general attitudes toward people and society." The issue of partisanship, at the same time, is a pivotal aspect of the civic culture argument. As written by the authors, "[a]n individual's attitudes toward political parties ... are, in a sense, the political equivalent of his general attitudes toward people" (Almond and

Verba, 1963:288). On balance, the political languages of *The Civic Culture* and *The American Voter* models are essentially parallel. Both employ a psychological basis of analysis to the understanding and investigation of specific political phenomena.

So, of what utility is Almond and Verba's analysis of Mexican political culture to understanding Mexican electoral behavior? To start, one must note that the primary assumption underlying the civic culture paradigm is that political culture is related to political systems. A democratic system, for example, is built upon a society where individual political attitudes and values are democratic in character. In *The Civic Culture*, the political attitudes and values of each respondent is classified as reflecting either a parochial, subject, or participant political culture. According to Almond and Verba, the backbone of a stable and democratic political system was a participant-like political culture. In their analysis of Mexico, the authors found that less than 10% of Mexican respondents could be classified as participants. They concluded that the Mexican political system was far from democratic as its political culture was characteristically authoritarian. The survey also found that the political system enjoyed widespread legitimacy as the great majority of Mexicans still supported the PRI. In the end, there are two critical points which are drawn indirectly from the civic culture study with respect to Mexican voting behavior. First, the political subculture of those who support the PRI are likely to be authoritarian in character, while the opposition is more likely to attract the support of individuals whose attitudes and values are more liberal-democratic. And second, the legitimacy of the national political system and the PRI's electoral support would eventually decline should Mexico's political culture become more democratic and less authoritarian in nature.

Numerous other studies which followed only reaffirmed Almond and Verba's earlier findings. The social bases of support for the political system, and subsequently the PRI, rested in what many viewed as a fundamentally authoritarian political culture (Hansen, 1971; Needler, 1971; Segovia, 1975). Only Booth and Seligson, in their 1984

study, "The Political Culture of Authoritarianism in Mexico," attempted to challenge this position. They discovered, contrary to what most scholars had maintained, that Mexico's political culture was not authoritarian. Of course, this study did take place more than twenty years after *The Civic Culture* project. Likewise, all of their respondents were from urban areas, and primarily from Mexico's northern region where the political opposition enjoyed its strongest support.

Booth and Seligson (1984) are undoubtedly correct in postulating that Mexico's political culture was no longer wholly authoritarian. Yet, it is unclear that their findings can negate the general hypothesis that the PRI receives its weakest electoral support from Mexicans with the strongest democratic values and political attitudes. Instead, Booth and Seligson's study is perhaps an even clearer understanding of why the PRI's initial decline in national support was primarily found in Mexico's northern urban and industrial regions. In this sense, the political culture of urban Mexico is fundamentally different from rural Mexico. This was in fact the conclusion reached by Kenneth Coleman in his study into the diffuse support of the Mexican political system. As Coleman argues (1976), Mexico's political opposition is likely to find its core support from the cities. In part, he (Coleman, 1976:40) suggests this is attributed to what he identifies as "a changing political psychology among urban Mexicans." Taken one step further, Guillén López (1989:258) has posited that the PRI's electoral decline in urban areas is associated with the rapid process of modernization and its closer identification with liberal-democratic political culture.

There is little doubt that the psychological approach to voting studies in western countries is inherently limited in its application to a one-party state such as Mexico's. Nevertheless, this has not rendered the generic psychological model as completely ineffective to studies of Mexican politics. While the psychological approach to Mexican voting behavior is a significant departure from what Campbell and others had first

developed, it has, nonetheless, proven to be a powerful research tool in understanding electoral decisions in Mexico.

The Economic Approach

Voting studies of western democracies which employ an economic approach often focus on different issues from one election to the next. In Mexico, voting studies which focus on the impact of issues follow a different path of analysis. To a large extent, this is attributed to the fact that Mexico, at least up until very recently, has been classified as a one-party state. Newer issues are unlikely to make an impact on electoral decisions when a legitimate political alternative is not present. As a result, Mexican voting studies which focus on the impact of issues, tend to center their analysis on historically key issues which can explain the electoral domination of the governing party.

Consider, for example, Miguel Básañez' *La Lucha por la Hegemonia en Mexico, 1968-1980* (1981). Recognized as an authority on Mexican politics, the author is also widely heralded as one of the nation's most prominent intellectuals in studies of Mexican voting behavior. Hence, although centered upon an analysis of the Mexican political system as a whole, the basic premise of Básañez' argument provides a strong explanation as to how electoral decisions are calculated by Mexican voters. According to the author (Básañez, 1981), there are four historically controversial and highly influential issues which define Mexico's political system: church/state relations, non-reelection, the labor movement, and agrarian reform. Because these issues carry a strong majority opinion among the public, they are regarded as pivotal variables to explaining the political hegemony of the PRI.

The debate on church/state relations, an issue which dates back to the Wars of Independence (1810-1821) and the Cristero rebellion (1926-1929), centers on how involved the church should be in politics. Non re-election refers to whether or not an

incumbent President can compete in the next election. While both of these issues were essentially dealt with in the Constitution (1917) following the Mexican Revolution, they remain, according to Básañez, crucial pillars to the PRI's continuing electoral dominance. The latter two issues- the labor movement and agrarian reform- are conceived as more contemporary, and which developed after the 1968 crisis of Tlatelolco. This event involved the innocent killings of numerous civilians during a student demonstration in Mexico City- just prior to the 1968 Summer Olympics. As a number of analysts have argued, Tlatelolco is perceived as a key turning point in the governing party's philosophy, and subsequently, the Mexican polity. Taken altogether, the PRI is perceived as the most popularly recognized political symbol on all four issues. In other words, the majority opinion on these issues- secularization, no reelection, the right to strike, and greater land distribution- reflects the primary tenets of the PRI's party development and consequently explains its lengthy electoral success over the years. An empirical study conducted by Básañez in 1983 reconfirmed his initial position. The Mexican political system, he writes, "still seems to be organized around the four great pillars of the existing hegemony, education, the labor movement, agrarian reform, and non-reelection" (Básañez, 1987:187).

An almost similar path of analysis is presented by Joseph Kelsner (1987) in his examination of Mexico's "Changing Patterns of Electoral Participation." Through the use of aggregate data at the level of Mexico's 32 states, Kelsner demonstrates that the distribution of the vote in Mexico (1961-1982) is directly related to the combined levels of industrialization and urbanization. During this period, the PRI's total share of the national vote had significantly declined. The PRI's social bases of electoral support, for example, was predominantly voters from rural and agricultural areas, whereas the political opposition received its strongest support from religiously alienated catholic areas, greater urban and industrialized centers, and northern regions. For Kelsner (1970:105), Mexico's changing electoral patterns were generated from two issues- secularization and socioeconomic

development policy. The issue of secularization, as stated before, is linked to the birth of the PAN and distinguishes it as Mexico's most conservative political alternative. Socioeconomic development policy, at the same time, is also regarded as an influential issue as it ideologically positions the PRI closer to the center than the PAN, and yet, less radical than the left. In effect, the issues of secularization and socioeconomic development provide the electorate with ideological cues of the Mexico's emerging multi-party system, and subsequently, guiding their electoral decisions. Hence, in spite of the impressive correlations found between Mexican voting patterns and the sociological aspects such as urbanization, or industrialization, these findings are regarded as merely sub-findings to the more primary determinants of the vote- the issues of secularization, and socioeconomic development policy.

It is clear that studies of Mexican voting behavior which employ the economic approach are slightly modified if compared to its application to case studies of advanced industrial states. In western democracies, the resurgence of the rational voter model is often linked to the declining impact of both the sociological and psychological paradigms. This does not appear to have been the case in Mexico. In fact, neither Básañez, nor Kelsner, suggest that sociological factors in Mexico do not influence the vote. Both authors admit that measures of urbanization and class, and religion are strongly correlated to Mexican voting patterns. Yet, unlike some of the earlier studies conducted by Alschuler (1967) and Cornelius (1969), these sociological aspects are regarded as essentially interdependent variables, and in the end, simply manifestations of the more primary determinants of the vote- the electorate's opinion on key issues.

A Common Theme in Mexican Voting Studies

As outlined in this chapter, the field of electoral behavior has undergone significant changes and additions from time to time. The Columbia team argued that electoral decisions

were heavily linked to who one is (class and religious denomination), as opposed to what one believes. This position was in turn challenged by researchers from the University of Michigan who highlighted the impact of partisan identification as a psychological cue which guided the electoral decisions of voters. The rise of partisan dealignment in western countries, however, forced voting theorists to reconsider the economic approach and its focus on the short-term impact of issue voting and candidate evaluations.

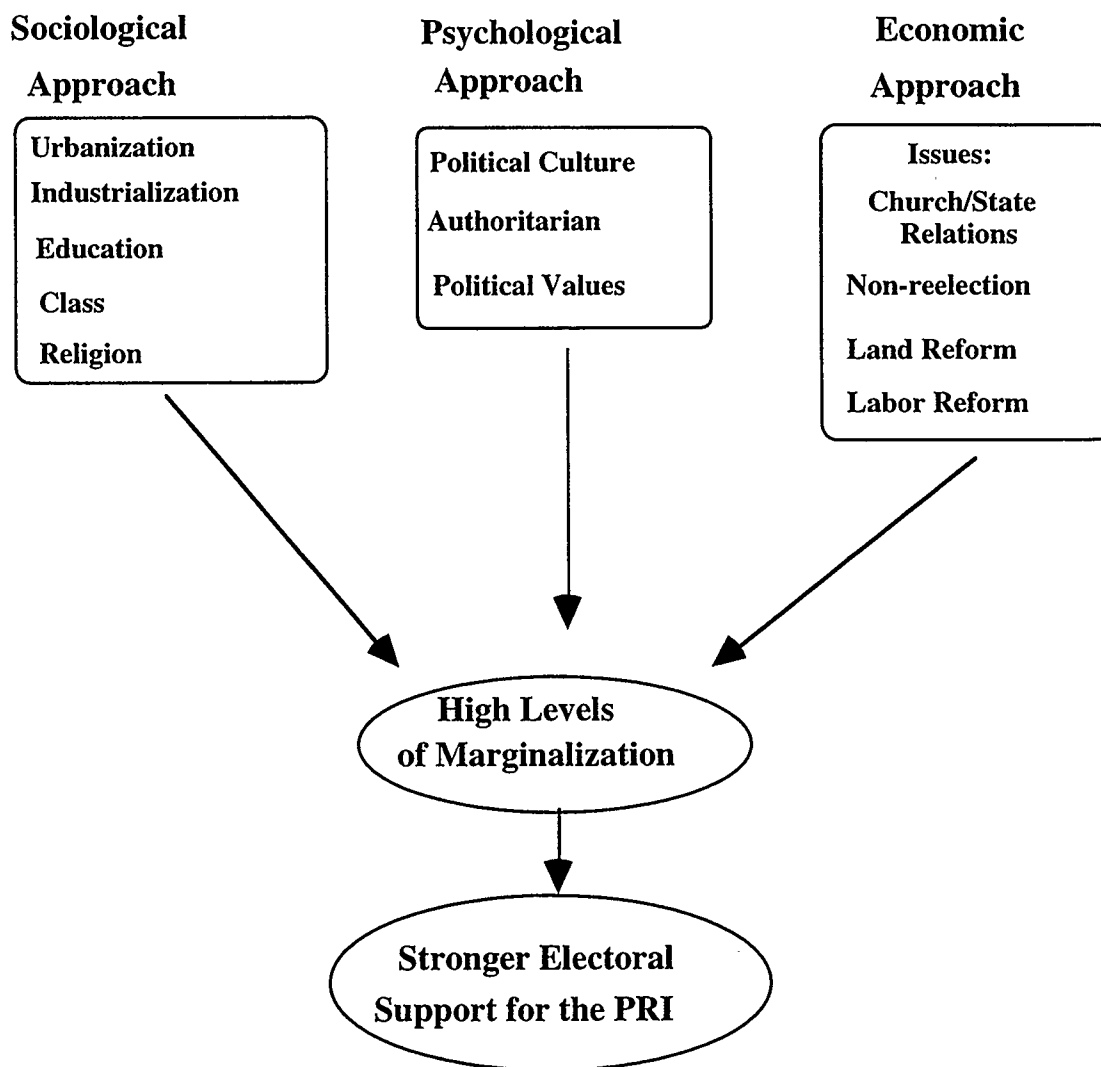
Simultaneously, it would be misleading to suggest that the three primary models of voting behavior are mutually exclusive from one another. For instance, the impact of issue and candidate evaluations on electoral campaigns is widely recognized as playing a huge role in the electoral decisions of voters for all three schools of thought (Lazarsfeld et. al. 1944; Campbell et. al. 1960; Downs, 1957). Indeed, one may recall that it was the Columbia school (sociological) which had first set out to test the impact of issues on changes in voting preferences during election campaigns (Lazarsfeld et. al. 1944). Likewise, the Michigan school (psychological) identified issue opinions as a primary determinant of partisan identification, and "a major source of favorable evaluation" for political parties (Campbell et. al. 1960:169). The point which is made here is that the basic tenets of one model may actually compliment another to provide a greater understanding of electoral behavior from a whole. The latest research by Popkin (1994), in fact, has demonstrated how the application of both the sociological and economic models produces a clearer and detailed understanding of the voter and the role of issues in his or her electoral decision. As he suggests (Popkin, 1994:14),

Downs's application of the economics of information to politics complements the Columbia studies. Indeed, Downs's central insight about the information shortcuts is a generalization of the Columbia findings about the role of party identification and informal opinion leaders... This is a key insight for building a model of the voter that can be used to study the role of campaigns and issues in presidential elections.

Mexican electoral studies, regardless of the methodology employed, are characteristically far less divided in comparison to case studies of western nations. Indeed, a careful reading of the literature brings to light two strong themes which are repeated time and time again. First, the governing party receives its strongest electoral support in the most marginalized areas of Mexico. Mexico's political opposition, meanwhile, has steadily increased its total share of the national vote, but this has primarily taken place in the nation's least marginalized areas. Although each of the three models of voting behavior offer a distinct approach to understanding how electoral choices are made in Mexico, there is little disagreement to the fact that the social bases of support for the PRI is predominantly found in Mexico's poorest regions. In effect, the only feature which distinguishes Walton and Sween's sociological approach from Kelsner's economic approach is the means employed to reach their respective conclusions. Walton and Sween, for example, highlight urbanization as the pivotal independent variable to explaining why the PRI is least popular in Mexico's least marginalized areas. Kelsner emphasizes the impact of two issues-secularization and socioeconomic development policies. It is these factors, he (Kelsner, 1987:114) suggests, that explain why "the upper and middle classes probably most strongly support the opposition."

A third, and nonetheless, alternative understanding is provided through the psychological model. Here, Mexico's most marginalized and least marginalized areas are conceptualized as traditional and modern Mexico respectively. The PRI is said to be more popular in traditional areas of Mexico, due to the political attitudes and values which reflect a characteristically authoritarian political culture (Coleman, 1976). A more detailed understanding and illustration of this point is provided in Figure #2.1. As shown below, the various case studies of Mexican voting behavior examined in this chapter offer three different methodological approaches to explaining the vote. This methodological distinction, nevertheless, does not depart from the fact that a central theme has dominated

Figure #2.1
Mexican Voting Studies

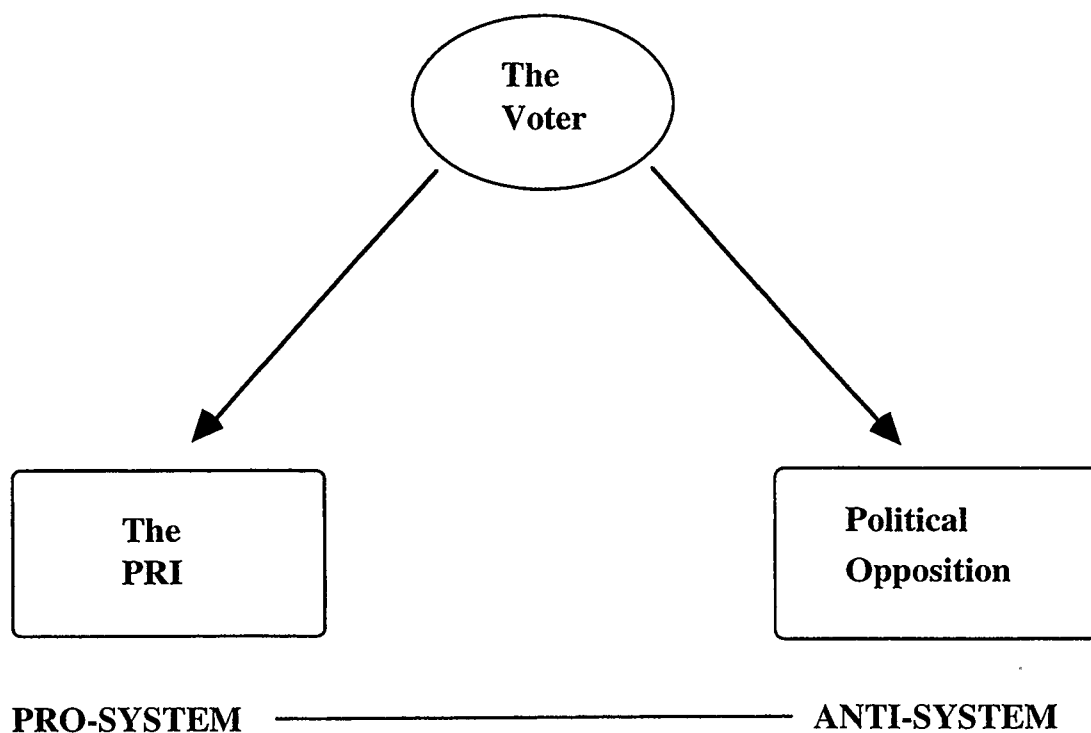


the literature; the political hegemony of the PRI is unlikely to decline so long as it remains politically unchallenged in Mexico's poorer regions.

A second theme which permeates throughout the literature is the framework from which voting studies of Mexican electoral behavior are typically structured. Specifically,

the political lines of analysis focus on the primary cleavages- be they sociological, psychological, or economic- which separate those who support the governing party from those who do not. There has been little effort put forth to examine the differences in voting patterns among Mexico's opposition parties. To some extent, this is attributed to problems associated with a small N. The total vote for the opposition has historically been very marginal, and subsequently, attempts to pursue a more narrow focus on electoral patterns are likely to be worthless. At the same time, studies which have explored the social bases of support for different opposition parties have repeatedly found that the core supporters of Mexico's opposition, regardless of ideology, tend to reside in the same areas, and reflect similar political attitudes toward the state and important political issues (Kelsner, 1987). Figure #2.2 illustrates the pivotal features of this general framework from which Mexican

Figure #2.2
Voting Behavior in a One-party Dominant State



voting studies are shaped. As shown above, the voter's decision is not perceived to be a

choice between different political parties, but instead, a choice to support the system (pro) or vote against (anti) the system. On the whole, the parameters of this framework bring to light an important distinction which characterizes Mexico's electoral process. Rather than being viewed as a competition between competing political parties and their respective ideologies, elections in Mexico are regarded as more or less a referendum measuring the public support of the political system (Philip, 1988).

Conclusion

How do voters determine their choices at the ballot box? This is the key question which has guided the growing literature on electoral behavior in industrialized nations. Each of the three methodological approaches have attempted to answer this question, and each have enjoyed periodic success. At present, however, the field has seen a "resurgence in the rational voter model" due to the declining impact of both social cues and party I.D. on electoral decisions (Dalton and Wattenberg, 1993).

Mexican voting studies have been strongly influenced by the theoretical literature dealing with western electoral behavior. It is also important to stress that the character of Mexico's political system is inherently unique, and therefore, the basic tenets of each model have at times been modified. Central to this point is the matter of change. The same political party has governed Mexico for more than sixty-five years and has dominated the electoral arena quite handily. Consequently, the case study of Mexico does not offer a great deal of change, if compared to western democracies, for researchers in the political environment. The message that must not be lost is that while different means have been applied to understanding the same political phenomenon- the Mexican voter- repeatedly the descriptive findings of Mexican voting studies have remained unchanged.

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL BASES OF SUPPORT FOR MEXICO'S NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES

The 1994 presidential election will be remembered as a critical juncture in Mexico's political future. Major electoral reforms introduced by the Mexican government, prior to the election itself, set the stage for this momentous historical event. These included the restructuring of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), an independent government body which oversaw the whole of the electoral process, the formal registration of election observers, improved access to media sources for political opposition parties, and the use of photographic voter registration cards to guard against fraud (Mexico, 1993). All of these reforms played a significant role in the Salinas administration's (1988-1994) goal to legitimize the Mexican political system. This goal was outlined during President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's meeting with the nation's governors and municipal presidents on July 22, 1994. In an unprecedented move, a Mexican president reminded his audience that a victory by the opposition was possible and must be respected (*The News*, 07/23/1994:38).

Ironically, while considerable emphasis was given to the likelihood of political change following this latest election, Mexico's official party- the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)- successfully retained its stranglehold on the political system. Although many pre-electoral polls predicted a PRI victory, most observers were surprised by the large margin of victory the PRI candidate held over his closest opponent. Almost immediately a debate arose among analysts over explanations of the PRI victory. Nora Lustig of the Brookings Institute attributed the PRI victory to the importance of tradition. As she argued, "many people voted for the PRI out of an attachment to the familiar." Others, such as Jonathan Heath, an economic analyst for *Macro-Asesoría Económica*, suggested that the final results were accredited to the economic legacy of the Salinas administration. Rejecting these two points of view, however, was Arturo Sanchez, a political analyst of the Mexican

Institute of Political Studies. According to Sanchez, the PRI were triumphant due to voters' fear of violence. Recent events, explained Sanchez, such as the January 1 rebellion in Chiapas, and the assassination of PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colossio, prompted many Mexicans to support the governing party "as they saw a guarantee of peace in the PRI" (*The News*, 08/24/1994:4).

The logic behind Sanchez's argument essentially parallels what is an incessant interpretation of Mexican voting behavior. Electoral studies of Mexico, regardless of the methodology employed, have repeatedly stressed that in spite of the ongoing decline in electoral support for the PRI, its political hegemony did not appear to be in danger. Central to this theme is the fact that while the governing party was losing ground to the opposition in Mexico's least marginalized areas, its electoral dominance remained virtually unchallenged in the nation's rural or poorer regions. In this sense, "the social classes that back the PRI are those that it can most completely control through fear, violence, and economic pressure, the rural classes: the campesinos, especially ejidatarios, and the landless proletariat" (Kelsner, 1987:111). Thus, so long as the PRI could draw upon its historical social base of support- the nation's most marginalized areas- its political supremacy would remain unchecked.

A multitude of factors affected the final outcome of the 1994 Mexican presidential election. The difficult task for all electoral studies is determining which factors are more prominent than others. This chapter sets out to determine whether the political hegemony of the PRI is in fact explained by its electoral domination in Mexico's poorest regions. Simultaneously, this investigation seeks to explore the current direction of Mexican voting patterns. Its statistical inquiry, therefore, will cover the past three Mexican presidential elections (1982-1988-1994) to measure linear associations which are said to be hypothesized in the literature. In sum, the general aim is to empirically test what scholars before have claimed for years; the PRI receives its strongest electoral support from

Mexico's most marginalized areas, whereas the opposition is electorally more successful in the nation's least marginalized areas.

Data and Methods

Joseph Kelsner (1987), in his study of the "Changing Patterns of Electoral Participation" in Mexico," provides an empirical examination of Mexican voting behavior through the use of aggregate data at the level of the 32 federal entities (31 states, and the Federal District). This investigation follows a similar path of analysis, measuring the electoral support of Mexico's three major political parties- the PRI, PAN, and PRD- by each state in the last three presidential elections.

The 1994 presidential election was the first for the PRD, thus, a linear comparison to 1988 and 1982 is not directly possible. Instead, the 1994 PRD results are compared to the 1988 FDN (same candidate), and Mexico's Unified Socialist Party (PSUM) in 1982 who represented the strongest independent leftist coalition up to then. The PSUM, later the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS), did eventually join the FDN coalition in 1988. After the FDN fell apart, the PMS did formally agree to dissolve in 1989, paving the way for the formation of the PRD.

General census statistics of each state, measuring levels of marginalization, education, class, urbanization, and industrialization are also included so that correlations can be drawn, or nullified between national voting patterns and state-level demographics. The data are equally scaled from low to high based on the national averages of both a party's vote and the various social demographics focused upon in this investigation. And finally, as a test of validity, this study's empirical findings of 1982 will be measured- when possible- in its accuracy through a comparison with the statistical correlations computed by Kelsner for that same year.

Analysis

The objective in the analysis is to measure the empirical differences in electoral behavior which divide Mexico's most marginalized and least marginalized regions. This exercise will of course include the task of identifying the social bases of support for Mexico's governing party, and the political opposition since 1982. The analysis is broken down into several sections, focusing on various socioeconomic indicators measuring individual state levels of marginalization and its correlation with the national electoral patterns of Mexico's three major political parties.

Urbanization

Levels of urbanization are an important measure of economic development in Mexico. Unlike many advanced industrialized nations of the world, where agricultural production is mechanically driven, Mexico's agricultural sector is still very labor intensive. As a result, the disparities of wealth between Mexico's rural and urban regions are noticeably larger. Rural Mexico is significantly much more marginalized socio-economically based on income levels. Consider, for instance, that in Oaxaca, where 60% of its population live in rural areas, less than 45% of those employed earn more than the minimum wage. At the other end, in Baja California- the nation's third highest urbanized state (89%)- it is estimated that more than 90% of those employed earn more than minimum wage (Pazos, 1994).

Numerous studies of Mexican voting behavior have identified urbanization as a powerful indicator of national voting patterns. While some analysts attributed this relationship to the rapid pace of growth in urban areas (See Table #3.1), others argued that the political psychology of urban Mexicans is fundamentally distinct from the rural populace. On balance, nonetheless, a general consensus did exist. Higher levels of

urbanization was said to produce weaker electoral support for the PRI. The opposition, meanwhile, found its strongest support in these regions.

Table #3.1

Population Growth in Mexico: 1940-1990

(Based on millions)

	<u>1940</u>	<u>1990</u>
Rural	17.2	23.3
Urban	17.7	58.0

Source: INEGI, 1994

Table #3.2 examines the correlations between urbanization and support for the Mexican governing party in the last three presidential elections. Beginning with 1982, there is a very strong negative correlation found with levels of urbanization and the electoral support of former PRI president Miguel de la Madrid. The strength of the relationship is essentially parallel to the prior study undertaken by Kelsner. In 1994, however, the relationship reported between urbanization and the total national vote for Ernesto Zedillo is significantly weaker. The correlation is still statistically significant, yet, if compared to 1982, the relationship is much weaker. Likewise, the relationship between urbanization and the PRI presidential vote has steadily declined in a linear direction. The 1988 PRI vote shows a stronger negative correlation than 1994, but a weaker correlation than 1982. Altogether, the data indicate a significant shift in the social bases of support for the PRI since 1982. In this sense, the total share of the 1994 PRI vote is less rural, and more urban based than in the past.

The correlations between Mexico's political opposition and urbanization are also presented in Table #3.2. As shown, a very strong positive correlation is reported between the electoral support for the opposition and levels of urbanization in 1982. The relationship

was not as strong for Mexico's independent left (PSUM), but its social bases of support was still disproportionately more urban. By 1994 there are noticeable differences. The

Table #3.2

Levels of Urbanization and Mexican Voting Patterns 1982-1994

	<u>Kelsner- 1982</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
PRI	-.72	-.71	-.48	-.35
PRD	+.23	+.20	+.08	-.45
PAN	+.69	+.70	+.64	+.76

Shown are the Zero-order Pearson's r correlation coefficients. N=32

Statistical significance = .10 level if $r > .30$, .01 level if $r > .45$.

Based on 1990 census data.

Source: Census Data- INEGI. 1982 Election Results- Salomón, 1988. 1988 Election Results- La Jornada, 08/18/1994. 1994 Election Results - El Nacional, 08/29/1994.

relationship between the PAN and higher levels of urbanization has gradually strengthened over time, while the exact opposite trend appears to have happened with the PRD. So much so, the social bases of support has shifted from a modest positive correlation to a very strong negative correlation between urbanization and the electoral support for Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and the PRD in 1994.

It seems clear, then, that the impact of urbanization on Mexican voting patterns is still significant. The character of this impact, however, has changed quite substantially since 1982. Figure #3.1 illustrates the linear shifts in social bases of support for both the governing party and the political opposition based on measures of urbanization. The electoral support of the PRI in urban states in 1994 is almost equal to its total share of support in rural states. Consequently, as a voting cleavage, the significance of urbanization has declined in relation to the electoral support for the PRI- particularly if compared to the political opposition in 1994. As shown, levels of urbanization did have a significant impact on where the electoral support of Mexico's political opposition was found in 1994. The PAN was more successful in urban regions, whereas the PRD performed noticeably better

in rural regions. Hence, as a voting cue in 1994, urbanization emerges as a much stronger measure for those who supported the PAN or the PRD, and not the PRI.

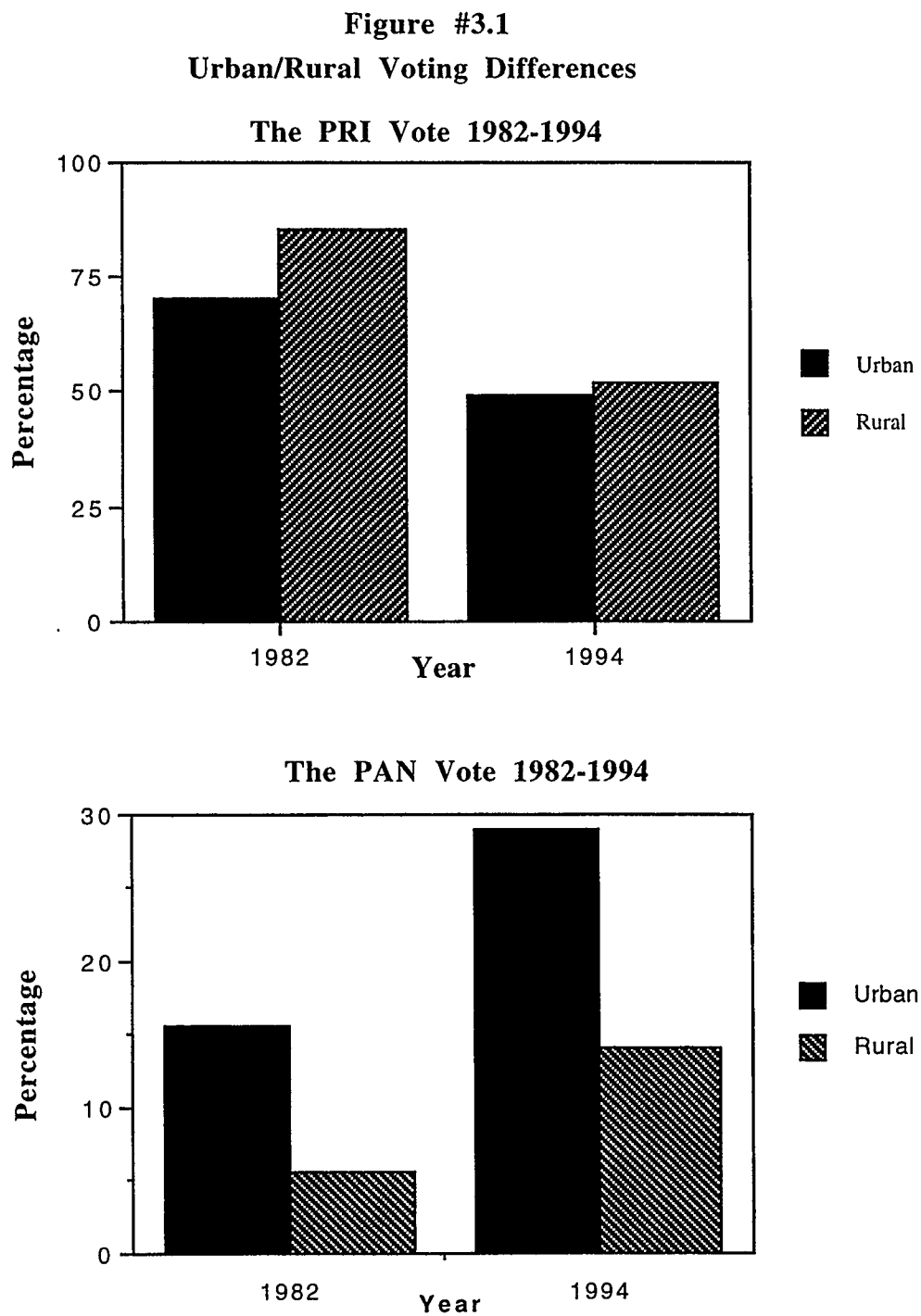
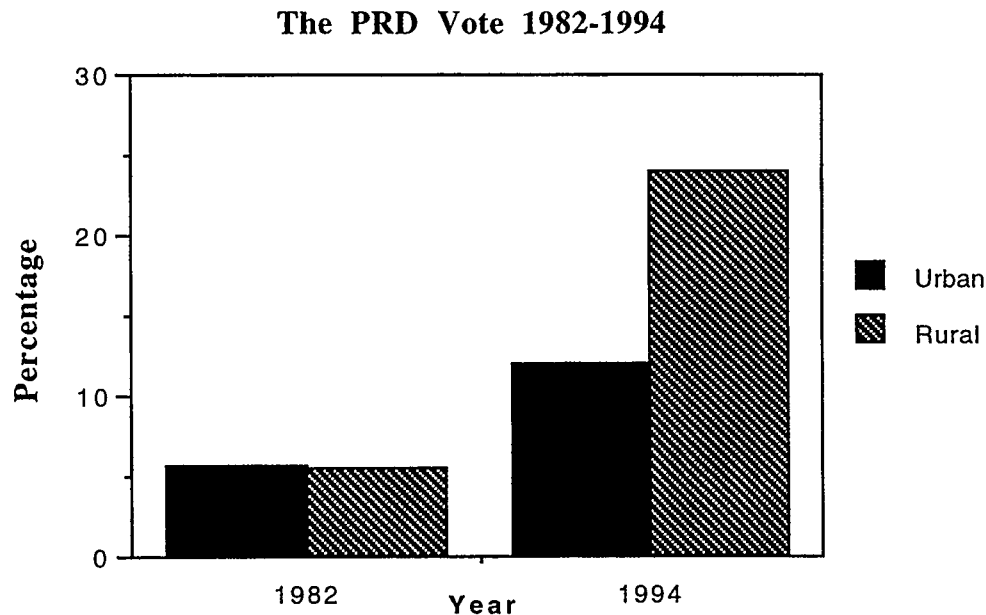


Figure #3.1 (Cont'd)



Note: Based on state averages of each party. Urban = all states with more than 50% of the population residing in an urban setting. Rural = all states with more than 50% of the population residing in a rural setting

Industrialization

Levels of industrialization are a critical measurement of socioeconomic condition for Mexican states. Unlike the agricultural sector, Mexican industry has experienced dramatic increases in production with annual growth rates soaring well over 20% during the previous decade. To a large degree, this is accredited to its rapidly expanding export market. In 1982, manufactured products accounted for 14% of Mexico's total exports. By 1989, this figure had climbed to 55% (Ramirez de la O, 1991). While industrialized states have steadily expanded, Mexico's agricultural regions continue to wallow in poverty. In Chiapas, for example, Mexico's least industrialized state, per capita income levels in 1990 were equal to only 50% of the national average (Pazos, 1994:118). Higher levels of industrialization are unquestionably a strong indicator of Mexican levels of wealth.

Studies of Mexican electoral behavior, not surprisingly, have also focused on differences in voting between those employed in the agricultural sector, and those employed in the industrial or service sector. In many respects, this phenomenon was regarded as merely a reflection of the inherent differences between rural and urban regions. In effect, because the governing party was found to be electorally stronger in rural regions, it was hypothesized that the PRI would be more popular with peasants, as opposed to the industrial sector work force. Other factors were also taken into account. In particular, the PRI was said to enjoy greater support within the rural labor force due to its closer association with the public sector. Básañez (1987:185) notes that it is no coincidence "that the highest percentage of PRI sympathizers is mainly drawn from groups more directly linked to the public sector." Likewise, in comparison to the agricultural sector, the majority of the industrial work force is not unionized. This, as Kelsner (1987) argues, provides industrial workers with greater electoral freedom in comparison to rural labor due to the governing party's close association with organized labor. All in all, the voting patterns among Mexico's labor force was said to be rather consistent. The PRI finds its greatest support within the agricultural sector, whereas the political opposition is more likely to be supported by those in the industrial sector.

Just as Kelsner had found, the data in this study show a strong negative correlation between the PRI vote in 1982 and the industrial work force (See Table #3.3). In comparison, a strong positive correlation is produced with agricultural labor and the 1982 vote for the governing party. Notwithstanding these findings, however, much like urbanization, the relationships between Mexico's labor force and the electoral support for the PRI has shifted since 1982. There is essentially no correlation found between the PRI vote in 1994 and industrial labor. Similarly, the data also indicate that the size of the agricultural sector is no longer a strong determinant of the PRI vote. In the end, the PRI's social bases of support have shifted in a steady and linear direction. Based on its total share

of the vote from one election to the next, the PRI's support reflects a much more balanced representation of Mexico's labor force since 1982.

Table #3.3

The Sectorial Work Force and Mexican Voting Patterns 1982-1994

Industrial Labor

	<u>Kelsner- 1982</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
PRI	-.77	-.58	-.28	-.15
PRD	N/A	-.09	-.08	-.44
PAN	+.71	+.74	+.52	+.38

Agricultural Labor

	<u>Kelsner- 1982</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
PRI	+.73	+.72	+.38	+.25
PRD	N/A	-.08	+.05	+.50
PAN	-.72	-.68	-.63	-.74

Shown are the Zero-order Pearson's r correlation coefficients. N=32

Statistical significance = .10 level if $r > .30$, .01 level if $r > .45$.

Based on 1990 census data.

Source: Census Data- INEGI. 1982 Election Results- Salomón, 1988. 1988 Election Results- La Jornada, 08/18/1994. 1994 Election Results - El Nacional, 08/29/1994.

Table #3.3 also illustrates the correlations between Mexico's labor force and the vote for the opposition. The correlations with the PAN vote in 1982 are virtually the opposite of what was found with the PRI in that same year. In contrast with the PRI, however, the relationships have remained fairly constant and still significant. There is a noticeable decline in the relationship with industrial labor, but nevertheless, its impact on the PAN vote is still influential. Furthermore, the negative relationship between the rural sector and the PAN vote has actually strengthened. Thus, the social bases of support for the PAN have not altered. Higher levels of industrialization produce stronger support for the Mexico's right-wing opposition.

Much like the governing party the correlations between Mexico's left-wing opposition and the sectorial labor force have shifted quite substantially over the past three elections. Both in 1982 and 1988, there is no relationship between the left-wing vote and Mexico's industrial or agricultural sectors. By 1994, this situation had fundamentally changed. A strong negative relationship is found between the PRD vote and the industrial work force. Consequently, the PRD is unlikely to be popular in Mexico's more modernized and industrialized regions. In addition, an even stronger, but positive correlation is reported with agricultural labor. The degree of support for the PRD, therefore, will vary in relation to state levels of industrialization.

The differences in voting patterns among Mexico's agricultural and industrial sectors has not subsided since 1982. As expected, the political arena as seen by a peasant from Oaxaca is very different to what is perceived by an industrial laborer from Monterrey. Changes, nevertheless, have taken place. The political hegemony of the PRI can no longer be explained by its electoral domination of the agricultural work force. Its overall appeal in modernized regions has steadily improved. On balance, the ongoing voting cleavage which separates Mexico's primary and secondary workers has evolved into a much stronger measure of where the political support of Mexico's opposition- both left and right- is found.

Education

Education is an important source of political socialization for individuals. It can influence the political attitudes and values of citizens in numerous areas, including electoral politics. According to Almond and Verba (1963), it serves as an important vehicle in shaping the political culture of a nation. Of course, in Mexico there are widespread differences in levels of education among the general populace. Literacy rates in 1990 ranged from 69% in Chiapas to 96% in Mexico City (INEGI, 1994). It should be of no

surprise, therefore, that education is often identified as a crucial variable in studies of electoral behavior. The evidence from prior studies have generally been unanimous. The PRI is said to enjoy its strongest support among individuals with lower levels of education. Its support, however, steadily decreases as educational levels increase. The political support for the opposition, meanwhile, is greatest among those with a college or postgraduate degree (Guillén López, 1989).

Table #3.4 examines the empirical relationships between state levels of education and the social bases of support for Mexico's political parties in the last three presidential elections. As shown below, a strong negative relationship is found with the PRI vote and education in 1982. Like previous studies, the data indicate that the PRI is preferred by those with lower levels of education. The 1994 presidential election, on the other hand, is characterized by a much different set of circumstances. Although the relationship between lower levels of education and greater support for the PRI remains relatively significant, its impact has declined steadily since 1982. In effect, the PRI vote in 1994 was drawn from individuals of much more varying educational levels.

Table #3.4

Levels of Education and Mexican Voting Patterns 1982-1994

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
PRI	-.57	-.36	-.26
PRD	+.15	+.09	-.33
PAN	+.55	+.47	+.68

Shown are the Zero-order Pearson's r correlation coefficients. N=32

Statistical significance = .10 level if $r > .30$, .01 level if $r > .45$.

Based on 1990 census data.

Source: Census Data- INEGI. 1982 Election Results- Salomón, 1988. 1988 Election Results- La Jornada, 08/18/1994. 1994 Election Results - El Nacional, 08/29/1994.

The political opposition in 1982 found its greatest strength among those with higher levels of education, particularly the PAN. These findings substantiate the prior correlations outlined by Guillén López (1989) in his study of "The Social Bases of the PRI." By 1994,

however, there are significant changes in the voting patterns which emerge. The PAN's appeal among those with higher levels of education has increased if compared to 1982. Thus, the degree of support for the PAN is strongly influenced by one's level of education. In contrast, correlations between levels of education and the 1994 PRD vote is reported to be the opposite. A relatively strong negative relationship is found, indicating that the PRD is more popular among those with lower levels of education. This correlation stands as a crucial shift in the electoral support for Mexico's left-wing political opposition. The independent left in 1982 was slightly more popular among those with higher levels of education. In essence, the correlations between education and the left-wing vote has shifted full circle from a modestly greater preference among those with higher levels of education, to a clearly more dominant appeal from those with lower levels of education.

Class

The impact of class on voting decisions was at one time a key feature of the sociological approach in western electoral studies. While recent voting studies have suggested that class is no longer a strong determinant of the vote in advanced industrial states, it remains an influential variable for researchers in Mexico. In this sense, the economic condition of individuals shapes their electoral decisions. Ironically, the impact of this phenomena in Mexico is rather incongruent. Generally, one might assume that the political opposition would find its strongest appeal among individuals with the lowest standard of living. Up to now, however, this has clearly not been the case. Studies by both Guillén López (1989) and Kelsner (1987), for example, found that the PRI receive its greatest support among Mexico's lower classes. In comparison, the PAN was said to be more appealing among the upper classes, whereas the PSUM in 1982 attracted most of its support "among intellectuals and disaffected middle-class members" (Kelsner, 1987:112). In sum, the governing party captures its strongest support among those who "received least

satisfaction of its material needs and, in contrast, its weakest support among the principal beneficiaries of the development model" (Guillén López, 1989:251).

The data in Table #3.5 show the correlations between social class and the electoral support of the PRI and the political opposition since 1982. There are fundamental differences in voting behavior due to social class. In 1982, the relationship between class- measured from low to high- and the PRI vote produces a strong, and negative correlation. Just as studies before had reported, the governing party, with Miguel de la Madrid (1982) as its candidate, was more preferred among Mexico's lower classes. The data also indicate a noticeable shift in the PRI's social class base. The correlation between class and the 1994 PRI vote remains positive, but its significance has declined steadily over the past three presidential elections. Consequently, the social bases of support for the governing party is no longer a phenomena which can be measured by ones social class.

Table #3.5

Social Class and Mexican Voting Patterns 1982-1994

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
PRI	-.50	-.40	-.18
PRD	+.15	+.09	-.33
PAN	+.55	+.47	+.68

Shown are the Zero-order Pearson's r correlation coefficients. N=32

Statistical significance = .10 level if $r > .30$, .01 level if $r > .45$.

Based on 1990 census data.

Source: Census Data- INEGI. 1982 Election Results- Salomón, 1988. 1988 Election Results- La Jornada, 08/18/1994. 1994 Election Results - El Nacional, 08/29/1994.

Correlations between the political support for the opposition and class in 1982 substantiate the general conclusion established by earlier studies. Both the PAN, and the PSUM, were more likely to attract upper and middle-class voters- particularly the PAN. Likewise, the relationship between class and the PAN vote has actually strengthened since 1982. As a result, one may conclude that due to the growing impact of class on the PAN vote, its social bases of support has likely become more concentrated among Mexico's

upper and middle-classes. In contrast, the electoral support for Mexico's left-wing opposition has shifted in the opposite direction. What was once a weak, but still positive correlation with class in 1982, is now a strong negative relationship in 1994. This suggests that the PRD in 1994, with Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas as its candidate, attracted most of its support among Mexico's lower classes.

Class cleavages in Mexico are closely related to the subsequent voting cleavages which transpire in Mexican electoral behavior. This was the case before, and it still is today. What has changed, however, is the character of its impact in the electoral arena. Social class was at one time an important measure of those who supported the PRI, and those who supported the political opposition. The contemporary nature of Mexican electoral politics no longer reflects this pattern. More than anything, measures of social class provide a clearer understanding of those who are likely to support the PAN, and the PRD.

Levels of Marginalization

To this point, the analysis has focused on four of the crucial sub-measures of marginalization in Mexico- class, education, industrialization, and urbanization. A consistent trend has dominated this study's findings. Since 1982, the correlations between the PRI vote and these sub-measures of marginalization has steadily declined in significance. This suggests that the PRI's social bases of support has shifted away from what was at one time a more popular appeal among those residing in Mexico's highest marginalized regions. On balance, the correlations are still relatively significant, but as the data indicate, the overall impact of these variables has weakened substantially.

As a further test of this point, this study has included a more sophisticated calculation of Mexican levels of marginalization by state based on the combined measurements of urbanization, industrialization, education, class, basic services, and

various other indicators of economic development. Grades of marginalization range from very low to very high based upon a scale of zero to five (See Table #3.6).

Table #3.6

Marginalization by States in Mexico 1990

Nuevo Leon	.5	Querétaro	2.0	Puebla	3.7
Mexico City	.6	Morelos	2.1	Zacatecas	3.8
Baja California	.7	Sinaloa	2.1	Veracruz	4.0
Jalisco	1.1	Quintana Roo	2.5	Hidalgo	4.1
Sonora	1.1	Guanajuato	2.6	Tabasco	4.1
Aguascalientes	1.2	Nayarit	3.0	Guerrero	4.5
Coahuila	1.2	Durango	3.1	Oaxaca	4.8
Baja California Sur	1.3	Tlaxcala	3.2	Chiapas	4.9
México	1.3	Yucatán	3.2		
Chihuahua	1.4	San Luis Potosí	3.3		
Colima	1.6	Campeche	3.4		
Tamaulipas	1.8	Michoacán	3.4		

Source: BANAMEX, 1994

Table #3.7 displays the correlations between the PRI vote and levels of marginalization in the last three presidential elections. Beginning with 1982, there is a strong positive relationship reported. As argued by numerous scholars in the past, "[h]igh levels of marginalization ... correspond to high levels of PRI presence and support" (Aziz Nassif, 1989:88). The data also correspond to much of the earlier findings established in this chapter. Electoral support for the governing party has shifted. The relationship between higher levels of marginalization and higher levels of support for the PRI remains moderately significant. The message that must not be lost, however, is the declining significance of this measure with respect to those who vote for the PRI. The PRI's total share of the vote in 1994 reflects a much more balanced representation of the national landscape based on levels of marginalization. An examination of Figure #3.2 brings to light the shifting social bases of support of the governing party from 1982 to 1994. The PRI's average share of the vote in Mexico's least marginalized states is almost equal to its average among regions with the highest levels of marginalization in 1994. Thus, one must question

to what extent the PRI victory in 1994 can be attributed to factors of fear given its declining appeal in Mexico's poorer regions?

Table #3.7

Levels of Marginalization and the PRI Vote 1982-1994

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
PRI	+ .74	+ .48	+ .34

Shown are the Zero-order Pearson's r correlation coefficients. $N=32$

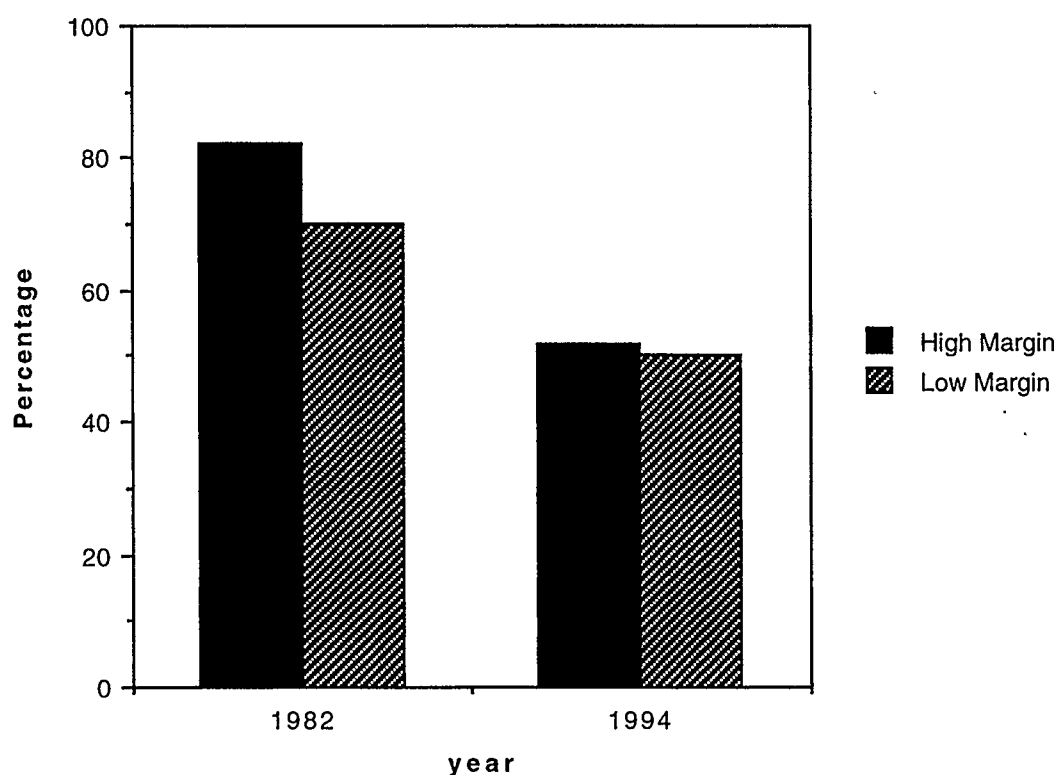
Statistical significance = .10 level if $r > .30$, .01 level if $r > .45$.

Based on 1990 census data.

Source: BANAMEX, 1994 with INEGI Census Data. 1982 Election Results- Salomón, 1988. 1988 Election Results- La Jornada, 08/18/1994. 1994 Election Results - El Nacional, 08/29/1994.

Figure #3.2

PRI Vote: Based on Levels of Marginalization



At the other end, the data also suggest that the social bases of support for the political opposition is no longer homogeneous. This is evident from the polarized correlation coefficients reported between the 1994 vote for the opposition and the four

measures of class, education, industrialization, and urbanization. As shown in table #3.8, the social bases of support for the PAN, and the PRD are virtually the opposite. The PAN is more likely to draw support from upper or middle-class individuals who are highly educated, and live in a predominantly urban and industrialized setting. The PRD, in contrast, is more appealing to Mexico's lower classes, the least educated, and those residing in rurally concentrated and agricultural areas. If viewed from a much broader and cumulative level, the following assumption is formed; higher levels of marginalization produce greater support for the PRD, whereas lower levels of marginalization produce greater support for the PAN.

Table #3.8

Measures of Marginalization: A Comparison of Support for the PRD and PAN in 1994

	<u>PRD 1994</u>	<u>PAN 1994</u>
Urbanization	-.45	+.76
Industrial Labor	-.44	+.38
Agricultural Labor	+.50	-.74
Education	-.33	+.68
Class	-.45	+.68

Shown are the Zero-order Pearson's r correlation coefficients. N=32

Statistical significance = .10 level if $r > .30$, .01 level if $r > .45$.

Based on 1990 census data.

Source: Census Data- INEGI. 1982 Results- Salomón, 1988. 1988 Results- La Jornada, 08/18/1994. 1994 Results - El Nacional, 08/29/1994.

Reported in Table #3.9 are the correlations between levels of marginalization and the electoral support of Mexico's political opposition over the past three presidential elections. As shown, the data provide further validation of the earlier findings produced measuring the social bases of support for Mexico's left-wing and right-wing political opposition. Since 1982, the negative relationship between the PAN and state levels of marginalization has strengthened over the past three elections. In effect, the current electoral support for the PAN is more than ever concentrated in Mexico's least marginalized regions. The opposite is shown for the PRD. In 1982, the independent left (PSUM) was found

slightly more appealing in Mexico's least marginalized areas. This prior negative relationship, however, has shifted to an impressively strong and positive relationship with the 1994 PRD vote. The majority of Mexicans who voted for Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in 1994 resided in the nation's poorest regions. Accordingly, the social bases of support for Mexico's political opposition no longer reflects an homogeneous group. The PAN finds its greatest support where the PRD is least appealing, and in contrast, the PRD obtains the majority of its votes from those who are least likely to support the PAN.

Table #3.9

Levels of Marginalization and Mexico's Political Opposition 1982-1994

	<u>1982</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1994</u>
PRD	-.16	-.03	+.55
PAN	-.75	-.66	-.80

Shown are the Zero-order Pearson's r correlation coefficients. N=32

Statistical significance = .10 level if $r > .30$, .01 level if $r > .45$.

Based on 1990 census data.

Source: BANAMEX, 1994 with INEGI Census Data- INEGI. 1982 Election Results- Salomón, 1988. 1988 Election Results- La Jornada, 08/18/1994. 1994 Election Results - El Nacional, 08/29/1994.

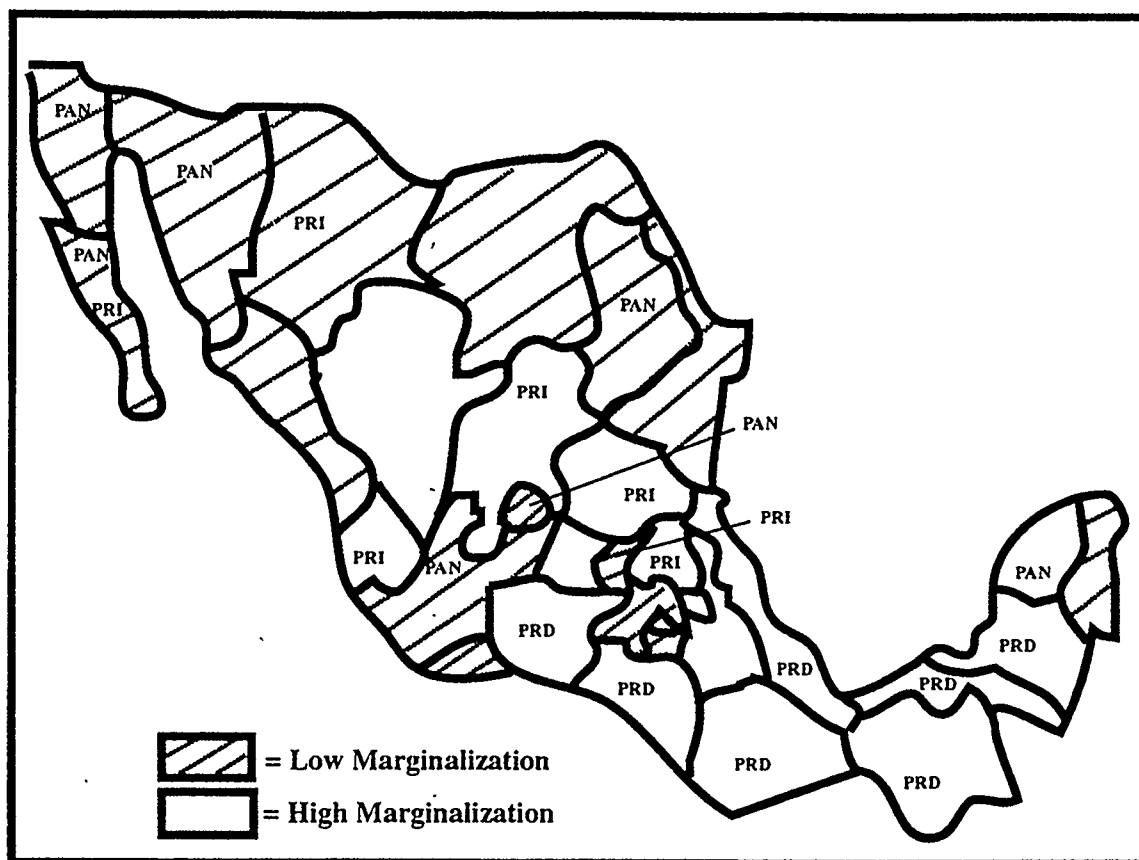
Mexico's New Electoral Map (1994)

The empirical findings reported in this analysis indicate that fundamental changes have overtaken Mexico's political system. The one-party dominant system is obviously in decline, and is perhaps dead. In its place, an emerging multi-party system is taking form in Mexico's rapidly changing political environment. This is reflected in not only the diverse political forum which backstaged Mexico's most open and competitive presidential election ever, but also the shifting electoral patterns which have since emerged. What were once the key voting cleavages which defined the social bases of support for the governing party and the political opposition is today a more instrumental measurement separating those who voted for the PAN in 1994, from those who supported the PRD. In this respect, a new electoral map of Mexico's political system has evolved. What is most interesting, however,

is the electoral fault lines which define the current political map. Although the character of Mexico's 1994 political system has shifted, the most dominant sociological fault lines of the past- measures of marginalization- remain the same. Hence, the changes which have unfolded are not structural. Instead, what has taken place is a voter realignment. The voting preferences among those living in Mexico's wealthiest regions are still substantially different from those residing in the nation's poorest regions. All that is changed is the dynamic of this division. Rather than explaining who supports the governing party, and who does not, this ongoing and pervasive voting cleavage highlights the social bases of support of Mexico's two strongest political opposition parties.

To illustrate these developments, a diagram of Mexico's current electoral map is provided based on the 1994 final election results in Figure #3.3. This exercise focuses on the top seven scores of each political party based on their respective voting averages of each state in August of 1994. Likewise, each state is classified as either more marginalized, or less marginalized than the national average. As shown below, one will quickly recognize the geographical concentration of Mexico's poorest and wealthiest states. While Mexico's northern region is characterized by low levels of marginalization, the south features much higher levels of marginalization. Paradoxically, the PAN obtains its greatest electoral support in the north, whereas the PRD's main area of strength is found in the south. In total, six out of the top seven PAN states are ranked as less marginalized than the national average, as opposed to the PRD, whose top seven states are all ranked as more marginalized than the national average. A more equitable representation of regions, on the other hand, is achieved by the PRI. Out of the top seven states which voted PRI, four are recognized as poorer national regions, whereas the remaining three are regarded as wealthy.

Figure #3.3
Mexico New Electoral Map: 1994



The social bases of support for Mexico's governing party has shifted since 1982. The empirical data presented in this analysis overwhelmingly support this position. The 1994 presidential election saw smaller differences in the degree of support for the PRI based on levels of marginalization. Of course, national measures of marginalization still condition electoral decisions in Mexico. This is evident from the fact that support for the PAN, and the PRD is disproportionately concentrated in Mexico's modern and traditional regions respectively. The consequences of these changes are serious. They indicate the need for newer variables in Mexican electoral studies so that explanations can be formed to identify who supports the PRI, and why?

Summary and Implications

Carlos Monsivais, a prominent Mexican academic, has argued that because the PRI won in 1994, Mexico did not want democracy. In his view, "the vote was a vote for authoritarianism" (*The News*, 08/24/1994:4). But if this is so, what is to be said of the final results in Mexico's latest presidential election. The Mexican electorate did opt for the status quo. Yet, unlike in the past, the general character of the PRI's support was more equitably balanced across Mexico's lowest to highest marginalized regions. The impact of this electoral shift proves to be very significant. Authoritarianism is generally applied as a powerful characterization of the political culture in Mexico's poorer regions, and thereby explaining why the governing party is more appealing in the nation's traditional regions. The data from this investigation suggest that this is no longer the case. The PRI was victorious in 1994, and to a large extent, this is accredited to their more broad appeal in both modern and traditional areas. As a result, authoritarianism emerges as a misleading description of the course of events which unfolded in August of 1994. The general findings of this investigation suggest that due to the more heterogeneous composition of the PRI's popular support- based on levels of marginalization- the 1994 vote was not simply couched in fear.

CHAPTER FOUR

POLICY CHANGE AND VOTER REALIGNMENT

Mexico's electoral arena has undergone fundamental changes over the past three presidential elections. As demonstrated in chapter three, the social bases of support for the PRI has shifted. Its total share of the popular vote in 1994 was no longer exceedingly concentrated in Mexico's poorer regions. Thus, prior explanations as to how the PRI maintained its political hegemony are no longer applicable. In this sense, the underlying assumption of previous electoral studies- that the PRI finds its greatest support in the nation's poorer regions- fails to explain how electoral decisions are formulated in Mexico today.

This chapter will highlight the impact of policy change on Mexican voting behavior. The presidency of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) is often characterized as an era of profound change for Mexico. Major political and economic reforms were undertaken by the PRI government during this period. At the nucleus of these developments were the economic policies introduced by the de la Madrid administration. For many observers, the economic policy platform adopted by the governing party after 1982 constituted a significant shift in its economic history (Levy and Székely, 1987; Cornelius, 1987). The objective of this chapter is to outline how policy change during the de la Madrid presidency generated a voter realignment among the Mexican electorate. It is argued that the social bases of support for the PRI has shifted since 1982 due to fundamental changes in the economic philosophy of Mexico's official party.

Understanding the Shift

The data reported in chapter three demonstrated that Mexican electoral patterns have steadily shifted since 1982 from one election to the next. Based on its national average, the

PRI in 1994 increased its electoral support in Mexico's modern zone, and yet, lost support in the country's traditional areas. As a result, high levels of marginalization is no longer as strong a determinant for the PRI vote. But this alone falls short in providing an understanding of the full magnitude of Mexico's shifting electoral patterns during this era.

Since 1982, the social bases of support for Mexico's political opposition has also shifted. Prior voting studies in Mexico argued that those supporting the political opposition- be they the left or the right- were generally an homogeneous group if measured by levels of marginalization. This is no longer the case. Electoral support for the PAN has become even more concentrated in regions with low levels of marginalization. At the other end of the ideological spectrum, the PRD in 1994 obtained its greatest support where levels of marginalization are exceedingly higher than the national average. Consequently, the social bases of support for Mexico's political opposition reflect a much more heterogeneous group.

To fully appreciate the context of these changes, Figure #4.1 has scaled the shifting social bases of support of the Mexican party system along a continuum measuring its relationship to national levels of marginalization since 1982. Measures of association are drawn from the Pearson's R correlation coefficients reported in Tables #3.7, and 3.9. While the PAN vote has altered very little, support for the PRI and Mexico's left-wing opposition has steadily shifted in the opposite directions. The PRI vote is moving closer to the middle, whereas the PRD vote is moving farther to the positive end of the scale. Two trends appear to be developing. First, the social bases of support for both the PRD and the PAN are becoming increasingly polarized. And second, among the three major political parties which make-up Mexico's current multi-party system, each draw upon a distinct sector of society based on levels of marginalization. The PAN is preferred in Mexico's most modernized regions, the PRD in the nation's most underdeveloped regions, while the

PRI's social bases of support is gradually reflecting a more balanced representation of both.

Figure # 4.1

Shifting Electoral Patterns 1982-1994:

Based on Levels of Marginalization

de la Madrid-----	Salinas-----	Zedillo		PAN
1982	1988	1994		1988--1982--1994
+.74	+.48	+.34		-.66 -.75 -.80

+ 1 // ===== .5 ===== 0 ===== .5 ===== \ - 1

Cárdenas-----	Cárdenas-PSUM
1994	1988 1982
+.55	-.03 -.16

Recent Explanation

In searching to explain shifts in the political environment, political scientists often identify critical economic changes. In this sense, there is a general assumption that transformations in the economic arena lead to changes in the political arena (Tufte, 1978; Rosenstone, 1983). A classic example of this point was perhaps the economic depression of the 1930's. The impact of this event in western democracies was said to be very significant leading to, among other things, the development of the contemporary welfare state.

At times, voting theorists have also followed a similar path of analysis. In attempting to explain electoral decisions, researchers have focused on economic factors (Fiorina, 1981). Recent studies, in fact, have argued that a voter's choice is heavily conditioned by the economic performance of the incumbent government. This is commonly referred to as "performance based voting." From this perspective, the electorate's final decision is directly influenced by "their evaluations of their own personal economic situation (egocentric voting) or the performance of the broader national economy

(sociotropic voting)" (Dalton and Wattenberg, 1993:208). An incumbent government, therefore, will likely be returned power if there is an economic upswing during its term. Paradoxically, most incumbent governments are likely to be rejected by the electorate during an economic recession.

Up to now, the bulk of Mexican voting studies have emphasized that the PRI is somewhat of an aberration with respect to performance based voting. The governing party consistently obtains its greatest support among regions which benefit the least socio-economically. The data in chapter three, at the same time, effectively demonstrated that this prior electoral alliance has gradually eroded. The PRI has steadily increased its total share of the vote among regions which rank above the national average socio-economically. A recent study conducted by Clark Reynolds (1993) has also pointed out this change in Mexican electoral behavior. The author examines the differences in voting patterns from the 1988 presidential election to the 1991 mid-term elections. He concludes that the PRI increased its electoral support in wealthier regions, whereas its support in the nation's poorest regions has declined significantly (Reynolds, 1993:131). The author attributes this shift, albeit very marginal (2%), to the economic reforms of the Salinas government. Policies such as NAFTA, Reynolds explains, highlight the PRI's greater concern for industrial production as opposed to agricultural production. Consequently, the PRI's support is increasing in Mexico's modern regions due to the presence of higher levels of industrialization.

Reynolds' methodology is weakened due to the dynamic of his analysis. The differences between a presidential and mid-term election are very large. During a mid-term election, there is a greater emphasis on the party, and less on the candidate. This situation functions as a huge disadvantage for the opposition, particularly the PRD whose primary strength is in their leader, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. In addition, the PRI increased its total share of the vote from 1988-1991 in every region except one. Hence, the biggest flaw in

Reynolds' study is that he fails to compare the PRI's average share of the vote in one region to the national average on the whole for that election. For example, although the PRI vote in Baja California Sur rose from 54% in 1988 to 64% in 1991, this increase should be measured from within the context of each election. In essence, because the PRI captured only 50% of the vote nationally in 1988 and 66% in 1991, it would be misleading to suggest that the PRI's social bases of support represented more voters from Baja California Sur in 1991 than 1988.

An almost parallel argument is offered by Básañez (1993) in a recent study examining the political support for the PRI. Through the use of survey data compiled in 1991, the author illustrates that the PRI is preferred among respondents who are upper-class. The opposition, at the same time, is least preferred by this group. Básañez attributes these findings to the economic and political reforms introduced by the Salinas administration. According to the author, it is the upper classes who are currently the most receptive to the governing party's economic reforms. He demonstrates this point with various attitudinal polls measuring the support of the PRI's recent policy platform. Issues such as NAFTA and the decision to privatize Mexico's banks, for example, are reported to be strongly supported by Mexico's upper classes (Básañez, 1993:149-151). The shifting social bases of support for the PRI, therefore, is associated to its policy performance over the last presidential term.

By and large, the explanations put fourth by both Reynolds and Básañez center on the performance of the previous Mexican administration. While Básañez' methodology is stronger, both studies employ a performance based voting approach to understanding Mexican voting behavior. The PRI, in other words, generates stronger support among those who perceive that their own personal economic situation, and the national economy as a whole, has improved due to the governing party's recent economic reforms. To some extent, this emerges as a strong explanation of Mexico's current shifting electoral patterns.

In fact, in an exit poll conducted on election night in 1994, the majority of those identified as PRI voters rated both the broader national economy and their own personal economic state as better off than six years ago (Fernández del Castillo, 1994:251). It is not surprising, therefore, that some analysts have attributed the PRI victory in 1994 to the economic record of the previous administration. Others, such as Roderic Camp, identify the economy as the pivotal key to the PRI's success in 1994. As he explains, "the single most important variable in the PRI victory was not politics, but economics" (*The News*, 08/24/1994:4).

The economic track record of the Salinas administration did have an impact on the 1994 vote. President Salinas embarked upon an ambitious program to modernize Mexico, introducing a series of bold and intense economic reforms which transformed the structural make-up of the national political economy. On the whole, Salinas' economic legacy proved to be fairly positive. As shown in Table #4.1, economic growth rates rose steadily, inflation was cut, and greater control of the national deficit was also achieved.

Table #4.1

The Salinas Legacy

Economic Growth Rates:	1987 (2%)-----1991 (3.6%)
Inflation	1987 (150%)-----1993 (9.8%)
National Deficit (% of GDP)	1987 (17%)----- 1992 (0.8%)

Source: *Countries of the World*, 1994: pg. 909 and *The Europa World Yearbook*, 1994: pg. 2000-1.

Apart from these findings, there are three noteworthy points which must also be considered. First, the PRI may have increased its support among Mexico's upper classes, and in the nation's least marginalized regions, but in comparison to the political opposition, their total vote is still far less concentrated. As was depicted in chapter three, the PRI vote in 1994 is more equitably balanced across Mexico's least marginalized and high marginalized areas. Second, a performance based approach may explain how the PRI

increased its total support in wealthier regions, but it fails to account for the PRI's loss of support in lesser developed regions. Previous voting studies demonstrated that economic performance carried little impact on the electoral decisions of those residing in Mexico's poorest regions. The PRI, at one time, attained its greatest support in the nation's highest marginalized regions- "those communities that it benefits least" (Salinas de Gotari, 1982:37). Thus, a performance based approach, as adopted by both Reynolds and Básañez, falls well short in explaining the full magnitude of Mexico's shifting electoral patterns. And lastly, although the economic legacy of the Salinas administration was undoubtedly a key factor in the 1994 vote, the changing social bases of support which were examined in chapter three are shown to trace back to the 1982 presidential election. Therefore, in attempting to explain Mexico's current shifting electoral patterns, one must focus on the political and economic circumstances which took place during the presidency of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988).

1982-1988: The Roots of Change

The government of Carlos Salinas (1988-1994) will likely be remembered as an historic turning point in Mexico's economic development. Numerous economic reforms were introduced which represented a fundamental shift in the PRI's economic philosophy. These included: NAFTA, the privatization of former public industries, and the relaxation of laws on trade and foreign investment. These changes- commonly referred to as the Salinas reforms- symbolize what many political observers have characterized as a neo-liberal revolution in Mexico. In this sense, they emerge as a dramatic shift from the hyper-nationalist, corporatist and statist agenda of former PRI administrations. Consider, for example, the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement. While it is undeniably a key achievement for the PRI and its revamped strategy to modernize the nation, the political language of the agreement stands as a huge departure for the Mexican state. Central to this point is its whole hearted acceptance and promotion of the international market. And while

many will undoubtedly look back on the Salinas era as something revolutionary, the roots of this revolution date back to a much earlier period.

Mexico's Economic Crisis

On August 13, 1982, ironically almost ten years prior to the signing of the NAFTA, Jesus Silva Herzog, Mexico's minister of finance, met with U.S. Treasury officials and representatives to inform them of the tragic economic situation of Mexico. The country was essentially broke, and its foreign reserves were so depleted that the PRI was unable to meet any of its external obligations (Wooton, 1988, Gentleman, 1987). With no economic relief appearing in the horizon, and its economy submerged in a debt of 80 billion dollars, the future did not look bright for either Mexico, or the PRI. This was unmistakably an economic crisis for the peoples of Mexico.

It is difficult to identify exactly what had went wrong. Admittedly, former President Jose Lopez Portillo (1976-1982) is singled out as seriously mishandling the affairs of the national economy, and subsequently, the cause of the economic crisis. Public expenditures were exceedingly high if compared to the national income during his term. Government projects, as a result, were overwhelmingly financed through foreign capital. The international banking community was, indeed, a more than willing creditor due to the nation's vast oil reserves. This, however, proved to be very costly once world oil prices began to decline, and inflation rates gradually rose as the peso began to decline (Levy and Székely, 1987:162). To some extent, therefore, the crisis of the eighties was sparked by the economic shortsightedness of Lopez Portillo.

It would be misleading to suggest that the crisis of the eighties was caused by a specific event or individual alone. While the situation did undoubtedly escalate due to the ineptness of Lopez Portillo, by no means can the whole crisis itself be attributed to a single person or event. Instead, as many analysts have suggested, Mexico's economic crisis was

more systematically linked to an economic approach which stemmed back many decades (Wooton, 1988; Gentleman, 1987; Levy and Székely, 1987; Cornelius and Craig, 1991). Underlying this economic strategy was the enhanced role of the state.

Since 1940, the state functioned as a pivotal actor to Mexico's economic development. This was reflected in not only the mammoth public infrastructure projects undertaken, but also in the dominant position of the state "vis-a-vis" the economy. As shown in Table #4.2, public sector investments steadily rose from 1941 to 1982. By 1982, this statistic represented over 23% of Mexico's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In comparison to most advanced industrial states, this ratio is significantly larger (Levy and Székely, 1987:133). By and large, the government was recognized as the primary director of national economic matters. As interpreted by both Cornelius and Craig (1991:105), during this era (1940-1982)

[t]he state facilitated private accumulation and protected the capitalist system by limiting popular demands for consumption and redistribution of wealth; it established the rules for development; and it participated in the development process as the nation's largest single entrepreneur, employer, and source of investment capital.

Table #4.2

Public Sector Investments 1940-1982 (% of GDP)

1941-46	8.2
1947-52	13.7
1953-58	17.2
1959-64	16.4
1965-70	18.9
1971-76	20.5
1977-82	23.1

Source: Levy and Székely, 1987:134.

At one level, one might conclude that Mexico's state-led developmental strategy was successful. Economic growth rates averaged 6% annually from 1940 to 1970, and if compared to other Latin American countries, Mexico was at least semi-industrialized (Levy and Székely, 1987:132). As time passed, industry gradually became Mexico's most

productive economic sector. This was reflected in the composition of its national workforce. As shown in Table #4.3, the percentage of those employed in Mexico's industrial and service sectors is currently estimated to be more than double than the agricultural workforce. Paralleling these positive aspects of Mexico's economy was its rate of inflation, which held at a respectable 5% annually from 1955-1972. It was not surprising, therefore, that Mexico's impressive economic growth was often characterized as a developmental miracle during this period.

Table #4.3

Composition of Mexico's Workforce 1940-1990

(Based on % of National Totals)

	<u>1940</u>	<u>1990</u>
Agricultural Work Force	65	24
Industry and Service Sector Work Force	20	60

Source: INEGI, 1994

Unfortunately, there was also a darkside to Mexico's "economic miracle" and its rapid process of industrialization. Central to this point was the PRI's policy of import substitution industrialization (ISI). As a government controlled strategy for domestic production and development, this was clearly the most pivotal feature of Mexico's former state-centered blueprint for industrialization. The primary goal of ISI was to replace imported manufactured products with locally produced goods. The assumption was that this would generate both employment and growth within Mexico, as it did early on. Over the long-term, however, there were serious problems which evolved. Like many other developing nation's which adopted an ISI strategy, industrialization can prove to be very costly. While domestic production should obviously be encouraged, Mexico did not possess the necessary complex technology, nor capital to finance its push to industrialization. Consequently, two important trends emerged. Mexico's negative balance

of trade steadily rose from 1960 to 1981 (See Table #4.4)- reaching an all-time low of -12.5 billion dollars- as did its total foreign debt, climbing from 12.1 billion in 1970 to 82 billion in 1982 (Cornelius and Craig, 1991:113). On balance, rather than promoting economic growth or development, the opposite transpired. The nation's debt gradually began to swell and disparities of wealth continued to expand. In one study of Mexican income distribution, it was reported that disparities of wealth in Mexico were larger in the mid-1970s than in 1910, just before the Mexican Revolution (Felix, 1982). In total, it was estimated in 1977 that the lowest income group in the nation (20%) accounted for only 3.3% of the total national wealth (Levy and Székely, 1987:148).

Table #4.4

Mexico's Balance of Trade 1960-1981

(Based on Billions of Dollars)

	<u>Total</u>
1960	-.300
1965	-.314
1970	-.945
1976	-3.06
1980	-6.596
1981	-12.54

Source: Levy and Székely, 1987:140

Policy Change

By 1982, it was quite apparent for the PRI that its statist economic approach would no longer suffice. Policies such as ISI exceedingly faltered due to its inherent inability to discriminate between inefficient and efficient enterprises. And yet, the problem, as many maintained, was not capital but structural. Because ISI is an inward led growth strategy, as opposed to export-led, public expenditures often surpassed the actual net wealth of their production. This forced the de la Madrid administration to retool its developmental strategies for the economy. While the goal- modernization- remained the same, the means

employed would change. Fundamental to this adjustment was the declining presence of the state in the economy and an increasing emphasis on private investment. From 1982-1988, the PRI sold off more than two-thirds of what were former state-owned companies. In comparison to the rest of the third world, Mexico was regarded as a prominent leader in its "retreat from state ownership" (Collier, 1992:92). Not surprisingly, due in part to these efforts, total government spending was cut by more than a third during the de la Madrid administration (Collier, 1992:73). And finally, in relation to measures of gross fixed capital formation after 1982, private sector investments steadily represented a greater share of the national total (See Table #4.5).

Table #4.5

Private Sector Investments 1977-1985

(Based on % of National Gross Fixed Capital Formation)

	<u>Total %</u>
1977-82	55.5
1983	55.5
1984	60.5
1985	64.1

Source: Levy and Székely, 1987:134

Consistent with this new emphasis on the private sector was the PRI's shift in economic policies on international trade. The de la Madrid administration gradually began to dismantle many of the former trade barriers on Mexican imports. In 1982, 75% of Mexican imports were subject to import licenses. By 1987, this figure was reduced to only 20%. This push towards trade liberalization stood as a dramatic change for the PRI. Previous administrations were often skeptical of international capital, and therefore, pursued a much more protectionist and nationalistic approach in the economy. And yet, the de la Madrid administration was far from tentative in its pursuit of stronger ties with the international market. This was reflected in its decision to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1986- "reversing a decision of 1980" (Collier, 1992).

The economic changes introduced by the PRI after 1982 symbolize what was a significant shift in its strategies of economic development. At the apex of these developments was the role of the state. While there were numerous changes in economic policies, the primary aim of the de la Madrid administration was to reduce the economic activity of the Mexican state. This shift in economic strategy marked a significant change in the PRI's philosophy. As summed by Jorge de la Vega Dominguez (1992:14), Mexico's former ambassador to Canada,

modernization in Mexico has required fundamental reform of the state. Nowadays, we have a state that deals less with owning enterprises and more with national life itself.

In October of 1987, the PRI announced that Carlos Salinas would be the presidential candidate for the PRI in 1988. As a Harvard graduate in economics, and the former secretary of budget and planning (1982-1988), President de la Madrid was assured that Mexico's economic path would remain on the same neo-liberal course which was set during his presidency. Salinas' selection, nonetheless, was marred by considerable controversy. As a result of the radical economic changes adopted by de la Madrid, the PRI faced growing internal dissention within the party. Those who approved the economic measures undertaken after the crisis, supported the selection of Salinas. This group was commonly referred to as the "economic modernizers" (Cornelius et. al. 1989; Pastor, 1992). Opposing both the selection of Salinas, and the economic reforms introduced by de la Madrid, however, were the *Corriente Democrática* (CD), the very same group who went on to form the FDN, and subsequently the PRD.

PRI Split

The CD represented a group of PRI dissidents who were increasingly pushed to the fringes of the policy process of the governing party following the crisis. They reflected a democratic movement within the official party which sought a more open political process

in the selection of the 1988 presidential candidate for the PRI. In part, this was somewhat correct. But central to the group's formation, and the primary issue which separated them from the economic modernizers, was its contrasting views on the role of the state in economic matters. Not only did they oppose the neo-liberal economic approach adopted by President de la Madrid, the CD sought to revive many of the PRI's historic traditional themes which emphasized economic statism and nationalism (Cornelius and Craig, 1991).

The CD was eventually expelled from the PRI in 1987 for refusing to endorse the candidacy of Carlos Salinas. Their decision to challenge the official party in the 1988 election is linked to two significant, and yet, interrelated factors. First, as a movement that opposed the economic measures introduced by the governing party, they did attract considerable popular support. To a large extent, this was due to the tough economic times which characterized this period. As shown in Table #4.6, from 1982 to 1986, real minimum wages had fallen by 35%, while unemployment rates had essentially doubled. Underemployment, meanwhile, is said to have "reached as high as 35 to 44 per cent" (Levy and Székely, 1987:147). A government survey in 1987 reported that up to 20% of Mexico's population lived in "extreme poverty" (Cornelius and Craig, 1991:108). And second, as a center-left dissident faction within the official party, the CD were unable to influence the economic policy direction of the governing party. Thus, with Carlos Salinas as the heir apparent, it became more than obvious for the CD "that the party's left-wing would be reduced to permanent obsolescence and irrelevance" (Cornelius and Craig, 1991:73).

Table #4.6

Social Costs during the de la Madrid Era

Real Minimum wages	1982-----1986: -35%
Unemployment	1982: (7-8%)-----1986: 15.6%

Source: Levy and Székely, 1987:147; Cornelius and Craig, 1991:110

Going into the 1988 Mexican presidential election, the governing party found itself in a very unusual position. For decades, the PRI monopolized the electoral arena. The electoral process, therefore, was not perceived to carry any real significance. When the PAN had first entered into national politics, this had changed to some degree. The PRI's total share of the vote steadily declined at the national level- particularly in Mexico's northern industrial and urbanized region. And yet, as most had observed, the PRI had "hardly lost its hegemonic status" (Kelsner, 1987; Básañez, 1987; Gómez Tagle, 1987). The emergence of the FDN in the 1988 election challenged this position.

As a legitimate alternative from the political left, the FDN represented the biggest electoral challenge nationally for the PRI. Prior to 1988, the Mexican left had found little or no success in the electoral arena. The FDN, however, was strikingly different than Mexico's other leftist parties. It was not really a party, but instead a movement. In this sense, they arose in response to the economic changes undertaken by the PRI after the 1982 crisis. Likewise, while their ideals were associated with the goals of the revolution- economic nationalism and land distribution- they could hardly be considered Marxists, or even socialists for that matter. With Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas as its candidate and spiritual leader, the FDN was very much a conservative group. Far from seeking radical changes, the *Cardenistas* sought a political agenda which mirrored Mexico's past. Revolutionary principles are espoused, but these are aims which were established long ago. Central to this fact was the incredible appeal which Cárdenas generated due to the historical impact of his father's legacy. Although the *Cardenistas* are definitely farther to the left than the PRI, their principles are not ideologically derived. Much of what the FDN symbolized can be sketched from Mexico's history books. As some have pointed out,

[t]he original *cardenista* project still has great influence among the Mexican people, even those born long after Lázaro Cárdenas left the Presidency....To most Mexicans, *cardenismo* signifies social justice, a setting of the limits on what the government can do to benefit economically privileged, standing up to the United States and other foreign powers (Cornelius et. al. 1989:24).

Explaining the Shift

The final results of the 1988 presidential election demonstrated that Mexico's national party system had passed into a new era (See Table #4.7). The PRI's total share of the vote fell to a record low 50.7%. The opposition, meanwhile, had made significant gains. The PAN increased its share of the total popular vote, obtaining 17% of the electorate's support. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, however, was the biggest winner as he captured over 31% per cent of the national vote. With the PAN as a strong contender to the right, and the FDN as a legitimate challenge to the left, a multi-party political system characterized by intense competition had arrived in Mexico. The difference in 1988 was of course the emergence of the FDN. They represented a new political force, but with a platform of the past. Consequently, they were able to draw upon an existing electorate core. *Cardenismo*, according to Collier (1992:123), stood as a "powerful opposition to the economic policies of the PRI and offered an alternative that was more popular among the Mexican mass constituencies."

Table #4.7

Final Results of the 1988 Mexican Presidential Election

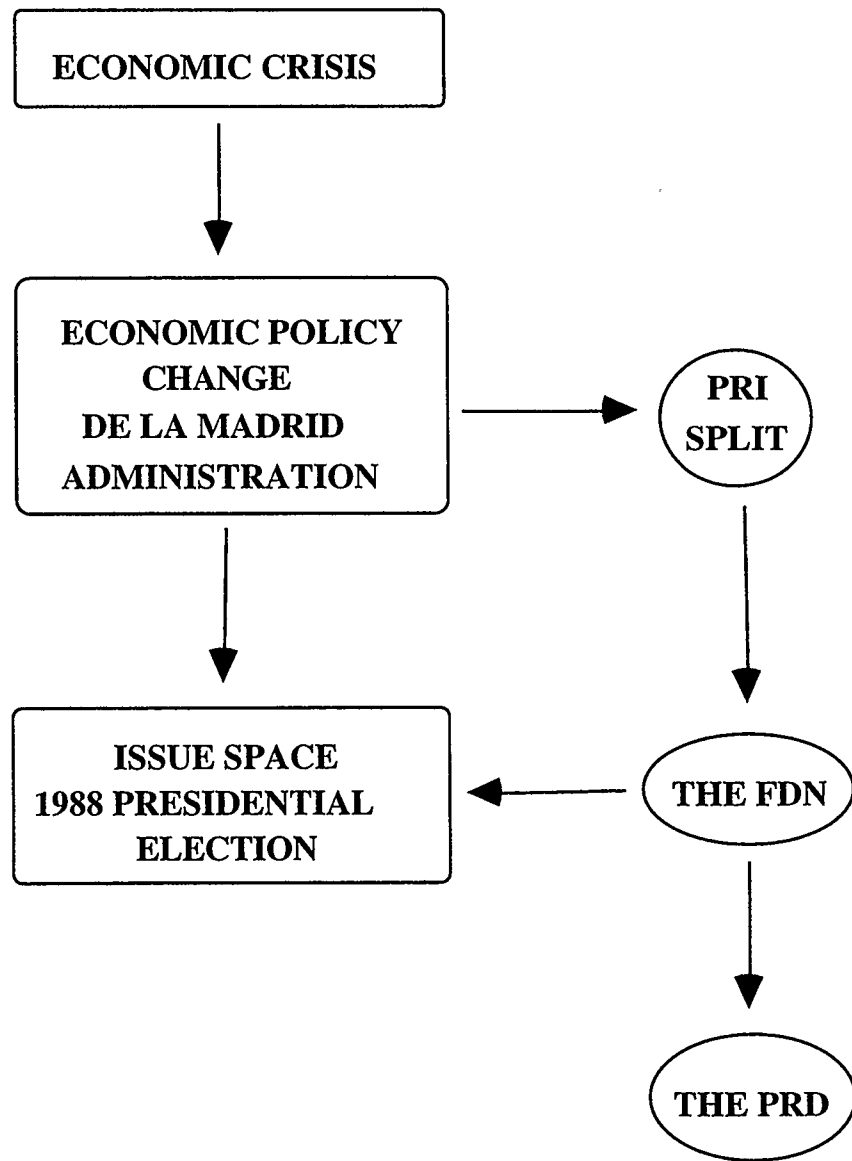
Total % of the Popular Vote

Carlos Salinas (PRI)	50.70
Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (FDN)	31.10
Manuel Clouthier (PAN)	16.80

Source: Cornelius and Craig, 1991:65.

The message that must not be lost in the analysis is that policy change, and not the FDN, can explain and account for the changes which evolved from Mexico's national

electoral patterns since 1982. The emergence of the FDN was merely the capitulation of a process of events which transpired prior to its formation. Figure #4.2 highlights the chain of events which preceded the 1988 election and the formation of the FDN. From the economic crisis of 1982, to the economic reforms introduced by President de la Madrid, and the dissident faction within the PRI, each of these three events are interrelated. The economic crisis of the eighties led to the PRI's shift in economic philosophy. This was reflected in the economic reforms adopted by the PRI after 1982. The CD, at the same time, surfaced as a negative response to the economic policies undertaken by the government during this era. Altogether, these events had set the stage for the FDN prior to the 1988 presidential campaign. If there was no crisis, the pressure for economic reforms would never have arisen. Likewise, if the PRI had not altered its economic agenda after 1982, the political issue space to the left would never have materialized as it did in the 1988 election campaign. In this sense, by moving farther to the right on issues of economic development, this provided the opportunity for a third political party to emerge at the national level. As Downs (1957:131) has argued, the birth of a new political party is made possible when an existing party's policy platform shifts closer to the center as "its extremist supporters may form a new party to pull the policies of the old one back toward them." And finally, without the emergence of the CD, the leadership of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, and the subsequent formation of the FDN, it is debatable to what extent an alternative political force could have capitalized on the potential issue space presented to the political opposition in 1988. In the end, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas proved to be a powerful national force in the 1988 election. His performance, nonetheless, cannot be attributed solely to his popular appeal or personal magnetism. Instead, one must also recognize the impact of the PRI, and its policy shift "which had created the opportunity that Cárdenas and his political strategists were able to seize" (Cornelius et. al. 1989:17).

Figure #4.2**The Impact of Policy Change****Conclusion**

The data in the previous chapter demonstrated that the social bases of support for both the governing party and the political opposition have shifted since 1982. This shift was illustrated in the national electoral map which has evolved from the final results in the

1994 presidential election. Mexico's new electoral map is a reflection of the changes which resulted in the national party system. Specifically, it demonstrates the transition from a one party dominant system to an intensely competitive multi-party system. The origins of these developments can be traced to a crucial chain of events which preceded the 1988 election. These events, moreover, shed light on the primary reason why electoral patterns in Mexico shifted after 1982- policy change.

Beginning in 1988, and continuing in 1994, the changes which followed in Mexico's electoral arena are rooted in the economic policies pursued by the PRI after 1982. The economic policy platform adopted by the de la Madrid administration is regarded as the key factor which triggered Mexico's transition from a one-party dominant state to a multi-party political system. The PRI is still the most powerful political institution in Mexico, but its dominance is no longer secured in the electoral arena.

CHAPTER FIVE

UNDERSTANDING ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR IN MEXICO

The evolution of a multi-party political system in Mexico has fundamentally altered its electoral landscape. Manifestations of this change were evident from the shifting social bases of support for both the governing party and the political opposition. The previous chapter highlighted the precise course of events which led to this development. It sought to explain how policy change within the PRI led to changes in Mexico's electoral arena after 1982.

This chapter attempts to explain how electoral decisions are formulated in Mexico. Its aim is essentially twofold. First, it sets out to establish a new voting framework from which electoral behavior in Mexico can be explained. The political lines of analysis employed by prior studies of Mexican voting behavior centered on distinctions between those who supported the governing party from those who did not. This traditional framework within Mexican voting studies proves insufficient to understanding contemporary electoral behavior. The national party spectrum in Mexico today is strikingly different from the way it was characterized thirteen years ago. And second, an empirical analysis is provided for measuring how Mexican voters determine their choice at the ballot box. In this study, I argue that changes in economic strategies of development produced a voter realignment after 1982. The objective of the investigation, therefore, is to demonstrate how voting behavior is conditioned by issues of economic development.

Developing a New Framework

Previous electoral studies of Mexico have been structured within a bivariate framework examining the differences between the social bases of support for the PRI, and the political opposition. Electoral decisions were construed as being either pro-system,

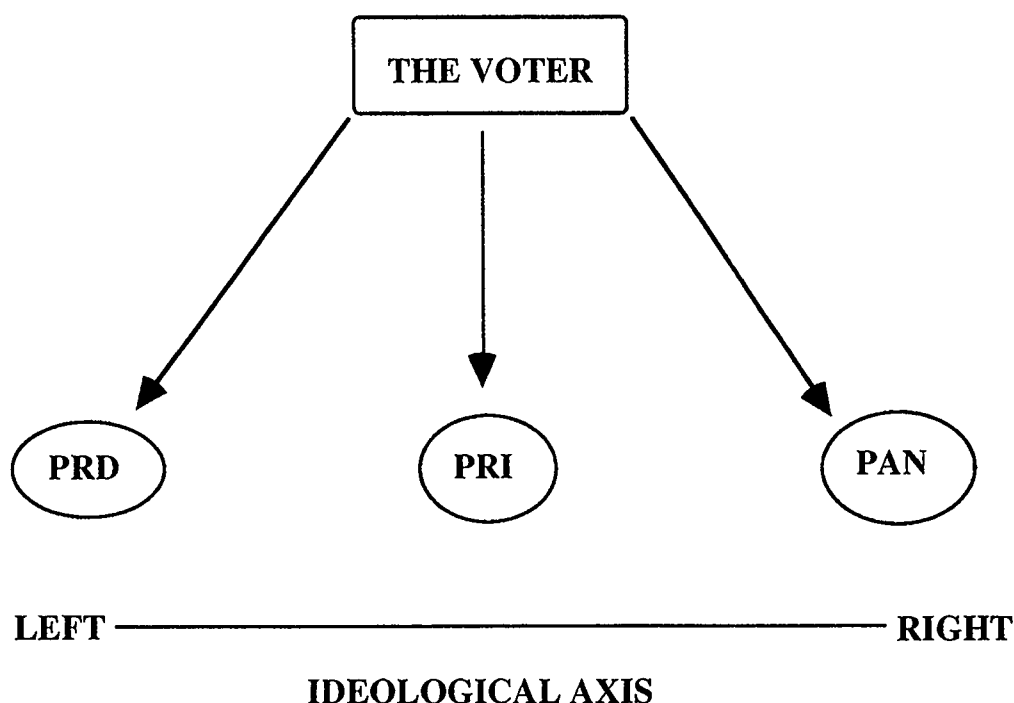
voting for the governing party, or anti-system, voting against the governing party (See Fig.#2.2). With the emergence of a multiparty political system, however, a more sophisticated framework to understanding electoral choices is required. What is needed is a new methodological structure which will explain not only the differences between the PRI vote and the opposition, but also significant differences within the opposition vote itself.

Prior to 1988, Mexico's political opposition was rather limited. Only the PAN could be regarded as making a significant presence through electoral means, and this was limited to mainly urban areas. Mexico's left-wing parties, on the other hand, were consistently marginalized from the electoral process. To some extent, this was explained by the PRI's strategy of cooptation. Against this, nevertheless, even the independent left had largely failed at the polls. The PRI's political dominance, therefore, was still assured as it remained virtually unchallenged electorally in poorer regions of the country.

The PRI's policy change and the resurrection of *Cardenismo*, however, generated a fundamental change in Mexico's national party spectrum, and subsequently, the electoral arena. It brought new definition to the national party system. As a legitimate alternative to the PRI's left, the PRD is ideologically distinct from not only the governing party but also the rightist PAN. The PAN is no longer simply the opposition, it is Mexico's strongest right-wing political opposition. The PRI, at the same time, with the PAN to the right and *neo-cardenismo* to the left, is more firmly entrenched within Mexico's political center. Consequently, Mexico's national party spectrum is today more ideologically distinguished from left to right. This translates as a fundamental change in how the electorate perceive the national party spectrum. For instance, the PAN is not simply an alternative to the governing party, it is also a right-wing alternative. Likewise, the PRI is not merely the governing party, it is closer to the center than the PAN, and is farther to the right than the PRD. In effect, electoral decisions in Mexico can no longer be interpreted through a bivariate framework which simply distinguishes voters as either pro-system, or anti-system. In

contrast, as shown in Figure #5.1, due to the structural changes to Mexico's national party spectrum, political parties are more ideologically placed from left to right. It is hypothesized, therefore, that the Mexican electorate carry a strong ideological identification with the three major national parties.

FIGURE #5.1
MEXICAN VOTING BEHAVIOR
IN A MULTI-PARTY POLITICAL SYSTEM



For many studies of electoral behavior, ideology is recognized as a powerful framework through which a voter may determine their position on any number of political issues. Indeed, for Downs (1957), ideological labels of "left" and "right" are regarded as an information shortcut for voters- much like partisan identification (P.I.D.). This does not suggest that voters simply abandon their position on issues because of ideology or party I.D. Unlike the proponents of the psychological approach, party I.D., as with ideology, is

conceived by Downs as merely an economical means to understanding political issues. As he (Downs, 1957:98) explains, with ideology "a voter can save himself the cost of being informed upon a wide range of issues." And yet, while each voter does possess a political ideology- a general image of what is a good society, and how it should be formed- it is not identified as the primary measure of how voters calculate their electoral decisions. In staying within the economic model, voters base their decisions primarily on the perceived benefits or losses which are attached to the electoral outcome.

For the purposes of this study, ideology is regarded generally as a means to how voters distinguish the policy platforms of Mexico's three major political parties. In this sense, it operates as a framework through which electoral decisions are calculated. Ideology does not explain how the electorate determine their final choice. Instead, it serves as a measure of how voters perceive not only differences between the governing party and the political opposition, but also differences within the opposition itself. When voters attach ideological labels to political parties, they are based upon "samples of all differentiating stands" between them (Popkin, 1994:51). Ideologies, therefore, function as a bridge in connecting policies with parties, not benefits.

Understanding Mexican Voting Behavior: An Economic Approach

While electoral studies of the past focused on the voting differences between those who supported the PRI and those who chose not to, levels of marginalization are repeatedly identified as the most influential voting cleavage in Mexican society. Ironically, this traditional feature of Mexican voting behavior remains unchanged. The 1994 vote resulted in significant voting differences between those residing in Mexico's least marginalized and highest marginalized regions. In contrast, nonetheless, this cleavage no longer provides an understanding of those who vote for the PRI and those who vote for the opposition. Instead, it serves as a crucial determinant for those who are most likely to support the PRD,

and those who are more likely to vote for the PAN. In effect, the electoral fault lines of the past have not altered. What has changed is the pattern in how this has transpired in the electoral arena.

In light of this development, one should recognize an important element to understanding Mexican electoral behavior today. Measures of class, education, industrialization, and urbanization produce strong correlations with voting patterns both today, and in the past. And yet, unlike before, these social indicators distinguish the social bases of support of the PRD from the PAN. This suggests that sociological variables like class, and education are not the primary determinants of the vote. Stable voting cues, in other words, cannot explain shifts in electoral patterns. It is for this reason that rather than focusing on sociological variables, this study shall employ an economic approach to understanding Mexican voting behavior. It draws from many of the original insights developed by Anthony Downs (1957), and also, some of the more recent literature on rational voting behavior such as Samuel Popkin's (1994), *The Reasoning Voter*.

At first glance, one may be skeptical as to how effective or relevant the economic approach is to Mexican voting. Specifically, on what basis can one assume that the general Mexican voter is at all concerned with the national political process? *The Civic Culture* project, recall, found that more than 40% of Mexican respondents showed absolutely no interest in politics (Almond and Verba, 1963). A latter study of Mexican political attitudes in 1982 further substantiated these earlier claims, finding more than 70% of those surveyed having no interest in politics (Hernández Medina et. al. 1987). Hence, if the general populace is largely disinterested in politics, to what extent can electoral decisions be linked to a rationally calculated measurement of issues or candidates?

This is, of course, a question which parallels the ongoing debate as to how informed is the public on important political issues. For Downs (1957), ironically, this

debate does not even enter into his analysis. Voters, according to the author, draw upon the information they possess- regardless of its accuracy or complexity- on party platforms and candidates to determine how to vote in their best interest (Downs, 1957:98). Many of the rational-choice theorists of today, meanwhile, have simply expanded on the original ideas developed by Downs, focusing on lowered information costs. Popkin (1994), for instance, argues that it need not matter how educated voters are, or how much information they possess of the political system. Indeed, recent empirical studies have revealed that voters may decipher a great deal about the political system based on small bits and pieces of information here and there (Popkin, 1994). Therefore, voting studies that employ an economic approach, regardless of the population's level of apathy or education, should not be seen as lacking credibility or understanding. As Popkin (1994:70) points out,

[w]hatever their level of education, voters use information shortcuts and cost-saving devices in thinking about politics, candidates, and issues. They use shortcuts to assess ideology, platforms, individual competence, and character.

In attempting to explain how electoral choices are made, this study focuses on the primary variable which defines Mexico's national party spectrum. In Downsian terms, what is sought is the critical issue or issues which the electorate perceive as most significant to their voting decision. While it is ideology that structures the national party spectrum, it is the policy platform of a political party which generates an ideological attachment. A voter's reading of the national party spectrum, in other words, is systematically linked to their evaluation of party policies on important issues.

Of course, not all policies or issues are interpreted as salient. As Popkin (1994:14) notes, "[w]hat makes an issue central are the voters' motivations to gather information about it." Simultaneously, a voter's motivations will be directly related to the degree to which an issue is perceived to have an impact in their lives. If issue A, for example, is regarded as very important, a voter will likely determine their choice based on the

differentiating party policy positions on issue A. Their final decision, in the end, is predicated upon a cost/benefit estimation of which party's position will produce the greatest benefit for them.

Due to the economic crisis of 1982, the PRI was forced to retool many of its strategic policies on economic development. At the core of these changes is the role of the state in economic matters. Since 1982, the PRI has gradually diminished the role and impact of the state in Mexico's economic sphere. This change in economic philosophy is identified as the key factor in why the social bases of support for the PRI has shifted over the past three presidential election. Consequently, the primary issue which defines the national party spectrum, and thus, conditions electoral behavior in Mexico is strategies of economic development.

The National Party Spectrum

From left to right, Mexico's three major national parties each offer a distinct approach as to how economic development within the process of modernization should be achieved. Beginning with PAN, which is traditionally regarded as the nation's most conservative political party, there is a greater emphasis on the private sector with respect to economic matters. Indeed, studies which have examined the internal party structure of the PAN repeatedly point out its strong ties with the business community- particularly in the nation's most industrialized and northern regions (Story, 1987; Camp, 1986). It is not surprising, therefore, that the business sector is often identified as a crucial core of the party's social base (Story, 1987).

While the economic reforms undertaken by the PRI since 1982 have brought Mexico's official party closer to the right, the PAN is still significantly more conservative. This was clearly evident during the 1994 presidential campaign. In spite of the neo-liberal reforms introduced by the Salinas administration, the PAN consistently attacked the

governing party for moving to slow. Central to this point, is the powers of the state. For the PAN, the state is generally conceived as having a negative impact in the nation's economic arena. The huge disparities of wealth which reflect Mexican society are said to be caused by an overly protectionist and authoritarian government. The market place, in contrast, is perceived to carry greater rewards for Mexicans if left unrestrained, including foreign interests. Not surprisingly, foreign investment is recognized as a necessary resource to fuel Mexico's economy. It was for this reason that the PAN had called for a devaluation of the peso prior to the 1994 vote so that greater foreign investment would be attracted (*The News*, 07/26/1994:1). Thus, the most dominant theme which underlies the economic policy platform of the PAN is less government.

At the other end of the ideological spectrum there is the PRD, whose economic platform is fundamentally at odds with many of the core principles espoused by the PAN. For the PRD, the capitalist forces of the market place are regarded with a certain amount of skepticism. In many respects, their concerns reflect a popular economic perspective which dominated the historic literature on Latin American development for some time- dependency theory. As a theory of development, the dependency perspective focused on many of the negative features of the world capitalist market. Writers such as Frank (1966), and later Cardoso and Faletto (1979), argued that levels of underdevelopment are directly related to levels of development found elsewhere. Latin American development, in other words, is hypothesized to be directly correlated with the degree to which its economic production is dependent on world market prices. Hence, economic development is seen to have greater potential so long as key economic sectors are not heavily dependent on the fluctuating prices of the world capitalist system.

The PRD, of course, emerged as a political alternative to the dramatic economic reforms introduced during the presidency of de la Madrid. Its developmental policies are grounded in a economic approach which is state driven. An active and regulatory state is

seen as a necessary prerequisite to not only economic growth, but also economic and social development. Protectionist measures are also supported by the PRD, particularly with agriculture. Foreign investment and trade, on the other hand, are viewed with considerable caution. It proves as no surprise, therefore, that the PRD is the harshest critic of NAFTA. As Robert Pastor notes, the PRD "asserts a more historic defensive nationalism" as was followed by past PRI administrations (Pastor, 1992:196). Unlike the PRI of today, however, the PRD "have faith in a bigger state and distrust the private sector and the United States" (Pastor, 1992:196).

Firmly entrenched within the center of Mexico's national party spectrum is the PRI. The structural changes introduced by the governing party over the past three presidential terms reflect a change of attitude in how to govern. Specifically, the role of the state in Mexican society has been redefined by the PRI. The former all encompassing corporatist state has slowly given way to what may be described as a "neo-liberal" experiment in Mexico (Cornelius et. al. 1989). The magnitude of these changes is perhaps most noted in the nation's economic sector. The state in Mexico is no longer the monolithic economic giant as it was during the presidency of Lopez Portillo. For the PRI, the duties of the state have declined with respect to economic matters. The economic goals of both the de la Madrid and Salinas administrations represented a greater faith in the private sector. To some extent, the PRI's economic policies have pushed the party closer to the PAN ideologically. Of course, unlike the PAN, the state is still expected to play a more than marginal role in Mexico's economy- particularly in the nation's oil industry. The PRI "prefer a leaner state that respects the efficiency of the market but tries to compensate where the market fails" (Pastor, 1992:196). On balance, the PRI's economic agenda since 1982 is characterized by a much more moderate role for the state in national economic goals if compared to the political opposition.

Summary of the Hypotheses

Based upon the theoretical framework developed in chapter four, a series of hypotheses emerge that explain not only Mexico's shifting electoral patterns, but also how the electorate determines their choice at the ballot box. The formation of these hypotheses centers on the changes in economic policies introduced by the governing party after 1982, and from the subsequent changes in Mexico's national party system that followed. The hypotheses to be tested are as follows.

- 1) Due to the inherent changes in the Mexican political system with the emergence of the FDN in 1988, and the PRD which followed in 1989, the national party spectrum is more ideologically defined from left to right. It is hypothesized, therefore, that ideology functions as a powerful tool in how voters differentiate Mexico's three major national parties.
- 2) The crucial course of events which took place during the presidency of de la Madrid is said to have opened up the electoral arena for a potential third political alternative. The PRI's shift in economic philosophy is identified as the key factor explaining why. This study argues that the national party spectrum is formed along this important issue of strategies in economic development. Electoral decisions, therefore, are hypothesized to be based on the voters' cost/benefit estimation of which party platform offers the greatest benefit to them.
- 3) Ideology is hypothesized to operate as a framework through which a voter may distinguish the policy platforms of political parties. Simultaneously, if the national party spectrum is formed along differentiating strategies of economic development, it is hypothesized that a strong relationship should be found between a voter's ideology, and their position on the state with respect to economic matters.
- 4) Mexico's new electoral map is highlighted by notable differences in party preferences based on geography. Specifically, the PAN is very dominant in Mexico's least marginalized regions (north), whereas the PRD is electorally more appealing in the nation's highest marginalized regions (south). In spite of these findings, it is hypothesized that individual measures of marginalization, such as class, are not as strong a determinant of electoral decisions if compared to an individual's attitude toward the state and its role in the economy.

Data and Methods

The data for the analysis are drawn from the 1990 Mexican segment of the World Values Survey which carry a wide range of attitudinal measurements on political issues. These survey data have been employed by numerous preceding studies from all over the

world, including a recent publication by Nevitte, Básañez, and Inglehart (1992) which focuses on North American Value Change. A total of 1530 respondents make-up the 1990 sample. Thus, it is more than recognized as a sufficient data base for measures of public opinion in Mexico. This investigation taps into several measures of political attitudes in Mexico. These include an individual's ideological self-placement, his or her party preference, and their attitudes on the state and the economy. Through the use of these data, the hypotheses formed in this chapter may be tested.

Ideology

While previous electoral studies outlined the important differences between those who voted for the governing party and those who voted for the opposition, this simple bivariate framework is no longer applicable to the current electoral patterns which have evolved since 1982. The national party spectrum in Mexico was fundamentally altered with the emergence of the FDN in 1988. The critical voting cleavages of the past- levels of marginalization- are no longer as strong a measure of the social bases of support for the PRI. Instead, it highlights the larger differences which separate those who vote for the PAN, from those who vote for the PRD. The emergence of a multi-party political system in Mexico has changed the political dynamic for the electorate. With a third, and legitimate political force at the national level, ideological measurements of national political parties have become more defined. This study hypothesizes that ideology is an important measure of party preference from left to right in Mexico today. Those who prefer the PAN, are more likely to be identified as leaning to the right, whereas those who prefer the PRD should more than likely be identified as leaning to the left.

Shown in Table #5.1 is a cross tabulation measuring the impact of ideological self-placement with party preference. There is a strong relationship reported between an individual's choice of party and ideological self-placenment. Of those respondents who

prefer the PAN, a greater percentage are reported to be right-wing. Similarly, the data also indicate that individuals who are identified as left-wing, are more likely to prefer the PRD. From left to right, ideology stands as a powerful measurement in how the electorate distinguish political parties at the national level. This is reflected in not only the table, but also the very significant statistical correlation which is reported.

Table #5.1

Party Preference and Ideology

(Based on Column %)

	<u>Left</u>	<u>Center</u>	<u>Right</u>
PRD	54.9	15.9	8.4
PRI	26.8	57.1	63.3
PAN	18.3	26.9	28.3

Gamma Value= .35 N=828 Statistical Significance = .001

Source: World Values Survey, 1990

The State and the Economy

Since 1982, the role of the state has gradually diminished in Mexico's national political economy. The origins of this development trace back to a critical chain of events during the presidency of de la Madrid. It was argued that due to the PRI's shift in economic philosophy, a leftist alternative was able to emerge in 1988. Subsequently, the national party spectrum is said to be formed along this important issue- the role of the state in economic development. From the PAN, to the PRI, to the PRD, each party is differentiated from one another on this issue. The PAN prefer a very small state, with no restraints on private capital. The PRI do prefer a smaller state, but they also support limited state regulation where the market proves to be ineffective. In contrast, the PRD distrust the

private sector, and subsequently, believe the state should play a greater role in Mexico's economic development. On a whole, Mexico's three major national parties are easily distinguished from their positions on strategies of economic development. The role of the state proves as a powerful gauge in how the electorate measure a party's position on this issue. This investigation posits that electoral decisions in Mexico are calculated based upon individual attitudes on the position of the state vis a vis the private sector in strategies of economic development. It is hypothesized that party preference- ranging from the PAN to the PRD- is directly correlated to a voter's preference for a smaller to bigger state in economic matters.

In constructing a measure of individual attitudes toward the state and the economy, an index was created based on two survey questions gauging a respondent's preference for a smaller to bigger state.³ A statistical comparison was then undertaken correlating the impact of this issue on party preferences. Table #5.2 summarizes the findings reported. Respondents who believe the Mexican state should play a smaller and less active role economically indicate a stronger preference for the PAN. Paradoxically, of those who prefer a bigger state, there is a stronger preference for the PRD. In sum, there is a strong correlation found between individual attitudes toward the state and the economy, and one's party preference. Based on these findings, it is suggested that electoral decisions in Mexico are calculated by an individual's cost/benefit estimation of which party's policy on economic development offers them the greatest benefit.

³ The two questions used were as follows: 1)How would you place your views on this scale: Private ownership of business should be increased (1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10) Government Ownership of business and industry should be increased. 2) How would you place your views on this scale: Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves (1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10) The State should take more responsibility to ensure everyone is provided for.

Table #5.2The Impact of Attitudes Toward the State on Party Preferences

(Based on Column %)

	<u>PAN</u>	<u>PRI</u>	<u>PRD</u>
Smaller State	26.9	21.7	14.5
Average State	56.6	53.1	53.8
Bigger State	16.5	25.2	31.7
Gamma Value= .21 N= 955	Statistical Significance= .001		

Source: World Values Survey, 1990

Ideology: Linking Policies to the Party

This study has argued that ideology provides a means through which voters link policies to a party. Table #5.1 demonstrated that party preferences in Mexico were in fact differentiated, based upon ideological self-placement. In light of this fact, and the corresponding evidence reported in Table #5.2, ideological self-placement should be directly correlated to individual attitudes toward the state and the economy. It is hypothesized that those who prefer a smaller state are likely to be identified as leaning to the right, whereas those leaning to the left are more likely to desire a very active and bigger state.

Does ideology function as a bridge in linking policies to a party? The evidence produced in Table #5.3 suggests that this is likely the case. Of those who prefer a smaller state, 26% are reported as being right of center, as opposed to only 13% to the left. A parallel relationship is found at the other end of the ideological spectrum. Almost 35% of respondents who prefer a bigger state are also reported as being left of center, whereas only 20% are identified as right-wing. A strong relationship is produced between ideology and a political issue which is directly correlated to party preferences. The evidence, in fact, substantiates this study's earlier findings. Ideology links policies to parties, and therefore,

it operates as an influential framework through which political parties are distinguished by the electorate.

Table #5.3

Ideology and Attitudes Toward the State and the Economy

(Based on Column %)

	<u>Left</u>	<u>Center</u>	<u>Right</u>
Bigger State	34.0	20.9	20.0
Average State	53.0	60.0	53.4
Smaller State	13.0	19.0	26.6
Gamma Value= .21 N=1206 Statistical Significance= .001			

Source= World Values Survey, 1990

North/South Differences

In chapter three, Mexico's electoral patterns were shown to have a geographical expression reflecting the divergent social bases of support for the political opposition. While the PAN is electorally more successful in Mexico's northern industrialized regions, the PRD, in comparison, finds its strongest electoral support in the more rural south. To a large extent, this regional division is attributed to contrasting levels of marginalization. The south is the nation's most marginalized region, whereas the north is essentially the opposite. Both the PAN and the PRD vote are reported as directly related to critical measures of regional marginalization.

Levels of marginalization were at one time a powerful expression of the voting differences found between those who supported the governing party, and those who did not. Shifting electoral patterns, however, and the social bases of support for the PRI have since changed. Consequently, as a stable voting cue, socio-demographic variables such as class prove to be insufficient in explaining the changing electoral patterns which have evolved. Instead, what did change was the economic platform of the governing party. The

economic powers of the state have significantly diminished since 1982. The PRD, in turn, has brought forward an economic approach which is similar to the PRI of old. Not surprisingly, the social bases of support for the PRD in 1994 is almost parallel to that of the PRI vote in 1982 (See Table #5.4). In the 1994 election, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (PRD) attained his greatest support in the south and the nation's highest marginalized regions. Simultaneously, this study also demonstrated that the PRD vote is strongest among those who favor a bigger state. In many respects this throws into question whether high levels of marginalization were an important voting cue in the past. In this sense, given that it was the party platforms which changed, it is very likely that the PRI obtained its greatest support in the past among those who favored a bigger state. This, of course, raises an even larger question. Which explanation is more powerful in explaining electoral decisions, levels of marginalization or public attitudes toward the state and the economy?

Table #5.4

A Comparison of the 1982 PRI Vote and the 1994 PRD Vote

(Listed are the Pearson's r Correlation Coefficients)

	<u>PRI-1982</u>	<u>PRD-1994</u>
Urbanization	-.71	-.45
Industrial Labor	-.58	-.44
Agricultural Labor	+.72	+.50
Education	-.57	-.33
Class	-.50	-.45

Before determining which voting cue has a stronger impact on Mexican voting behavior, a comparison is provided measuring the relationship of an individual's socioeconomic status to their preference for a smaller to a more interventionist state. Individual levels of socioeconomic status are constructed through a four level index combining income levels, occupation, education, and class. As shown in Table #5.5, the correlation is found to be relatively weak, and therefore, measures of association between party preference and socioeconomic status are likely to produce different results.

Table #5.5Measuring Attitudes Toward the State with Socioeconomic Status

(Based on Column %)

Socioeconomic Status

	<u>Upper</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Lower</u>
Smaller State	24.8	18.6	19.9
Average State	55.9	54.5	56.1
Bigger State	19.3	26.8	24.1
Gamma Value= .05 N=1503 Statistical Significance= .19			

Source: World Values Survey, 1990

Table #5.6 illustrates the empirical relationship between party preference and an individual's socioeconomic status. If compared to public attitudes toward the state and the economy (.21- Table# 5.2), the relationship between party preference and socioeconomic status falls significantly short in strength (.04).⁴ From both right to left, and left to right there is a lack on consistency across the table. The evidence suggests that electoral decisions are more likely to be conditioned by a voter's estimation of which economic platform- be it the PAN, the PRD, or the PRI- will produce the greatest benefit for them.

⁴ The findings reported in Table #5.6 should not be regarded as contradicting, or in disagreement with the earlier findings reported in Tables #3.7, and #3.9 (State levels of marginalization). The empirical measures reported in Tables #3.7, and #3.9, are based upon three independent bivariate correlations calculated separately between levels of marginalization by state, and the electoral support for each political party. This differs quite substantially from Table #5.6, which measures the impact of socioeconomic status on party preferences from within one table, and thus, one measure of association for the whole party spectrum. In effect, data in Table #5.6 provide a measure of association which calculates the impact of socioeconomic status on party support based upon not only the relationship between socioeconomic status and party preferences, but also in how each party's support is related to one another.

Table #5.6Measuring the Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Party Preferences

(Based on Column%)

	<u>PAN</u>	<u>PRI</u>	<u>PRD</u>
Upper	26.8	16.4	23.8
Middle	42.0	43.5	45.0
Lower	31.2	40.1	31.2

Gamma Value= .04 N= 970 Statistical Significance= .42

Source: World Values Survey, 1990

Comparing the Evidence

Based upon the evidence reported, Mexican electoral behavior is shown to be heavily influenced by public perceptions of the state and its relationship to the economy. To a large degree, these findings should not be seen as anything surprising. The state has historically played a dominant role in Mexican society. Thus, when the PRI set out to redefine the parameters of state influence, it was no wonder that this generated a significant shift in the national party spectrum, and subsequent changing electoral patterns. The message that must not be lost is that the hypotheses formed in this chapter are not unusual by any means.

Consider, for instance, Miguel Básañez' (1993) recent publication on "Hacia La Quinta Crisis." He argues that Mexico's electoral patterns have shifted due to the political and economic reforms introduced by the Salinas administration. The PRI is increasingly more popular among Mexico's higher classes due to the stronger support for such reforms among this class sector. With NAFTA, for example, strong support is found among the upper classes, whereas the lower classes are reported as being less supportive (Básañez, 1993:151).

Básañez' findings, at the same time, should not be interpreted as contradicting the evidence produced in this investigation. One must recognize that the issue of NAFTA essentially centers upon a similar debate between those who prefer a smaller state versus those who prefer a bigger state. Nevertheless, as a further test of validity, a comparison is provided measuring the impact of NAFTA on party preferences (See Table #5.7). The issue of NAFTA is reported as having little or no impact on party preferences in Mexico. From right to left, levels of support for the agreement are virtually identical. Ironically, of those who are opposed to NAFTA, a slightly larger percentage are identified as PAN supporters. This aside, the data's findings are more than clear. Perceptions of NAFTA, unlike other issues, is not as strong a determinant of voting preferences in Mexico.

Table #5.7

Measuring the Impact of NAFTA on Party Preferences

	<u>PAN</u>	<u>PRI</u>	<u>PRD</u>
Pro-NAFTA	44.2	45.2	50.6
Indifferent	37.7	38.1	36.6
Anti-NAFTA	18.2	16.4	12.8
Gamma Value= -.07 N= 870		Statistical Significance= .16	

Source: World Values Survey, 1990

Summary and Implications

Mexico's political system has undergone numerous fundamental changes over the past decade. The one-party dominant system has slowly given way to a newly emerging, and competitive multi-party democracy. The roots of this development stem back to a critical change of course in the PRI's economic approach to modernization. The data from this analysis illustrate the impact of this change on electoral behavior in Mexico. The social bases of support for the governing party has shifted due to the changes in its economic policy platform which began during the presidency of de la Madrid. The PRI, moreover, is

no longer perceived as state interventionists. A policy vacuum emerged which was quickly filled by a third political alternative at the national level. From left to right, the national party spectrum is today ideologically differentiated based upon the distinct economic strategies of development offered by each of the three major political parties. At the core of this distinction is the role of the state.

In the same light, this study highlights the impact of the state on voting behavior in Mexico. Public perceptions of the state in relation to the economic sector vary from left to right, and small to big. These differences in political attitudes are translated into significant differences at the ballot box. In employing an economic approach to understanding electoral behavior, the analysis sought to demonstrate how voting in Mexico is greatly influenced by political issues which the electorate perceive as producing dissimilar benefits due to the contrasting positions which differentiate the national party spectrum. For Mexicans, the primary issue of today is economic development. It should be of no surprise, therefore, that electoral decisions are strongly correlated to the different partisan means which are favored to achieve this end.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF THE PRI

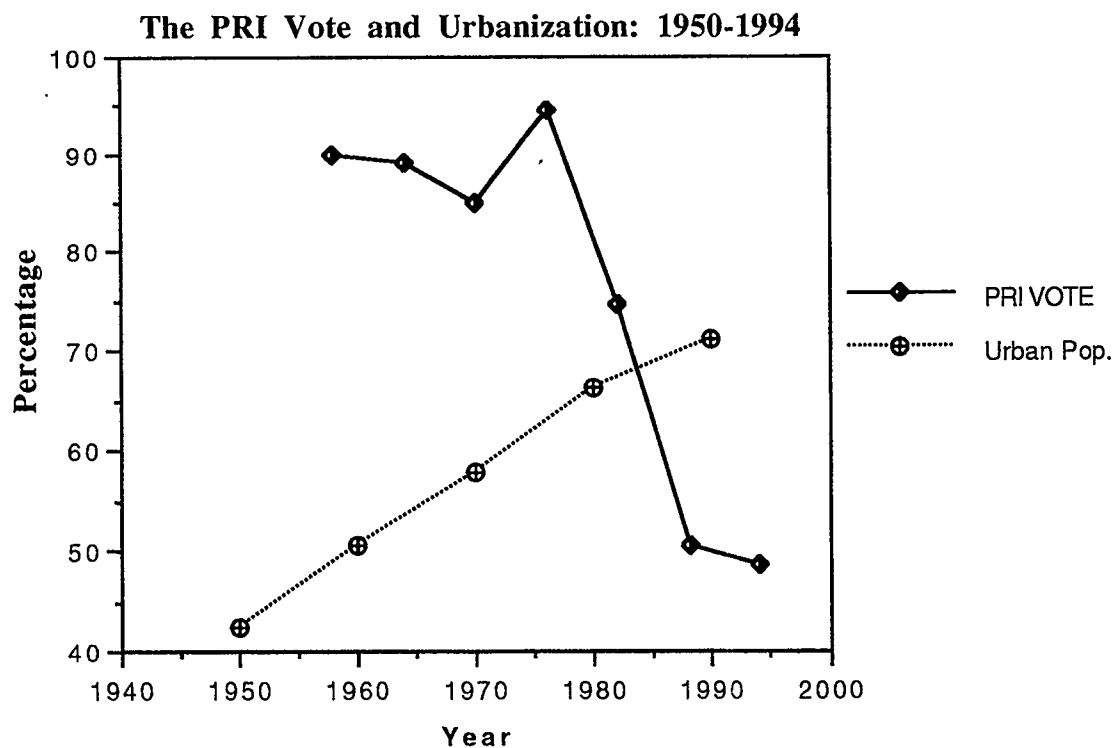
This study had sought to demonstrate the impact of policy change on Mexican electoral behavior. As outlined in the analysis, national electoral patterns have steadily shifted since 1982. The PRI vote in 1994 was no longer as heavily weighted in Mexico's rural and poorer regions. This does not suggest that the governing party receives its highest electoral support in urban areas. Admittedly, the PRI is still more popular among rural Mexicans, than urban Mexicans. What has changed is the differences in degree of PRI support found between urban and rural Mexico. The social bases of support for the PRI in 1994 is significantly more balanced from one region to the next, regardless of lower or higher levels of urbanization. This is reflected in the voter realignment which has evolved over the past three presidential elections. On balance, this electoral shift- should it continue- may prove to be a critical turning point for the PRI, and its status as a hegemonic party within a multi-party political system.

A great deal has been said about the political hegemony of the PRI, and its gradual decline due to Mexico's rapid transformation from a predominantly rural society in 1940, to a semi-industrialized and increasingly urban national setting today (Alschueler, 1969; Kelsner, 1987; Básañez, 1993; Cornelius and Craig, 1991). While the PRI vote has steadily diminished for more than 30 years, this was limited primarily to Mexico's northern and urbanized regions. It was argued that the PRI's decline was linked to Mexico's impressively high rate of urbanization. Indeed, throughout most of the post-World War II era, urbanization rates in Mexico averaged close to 5% (INEGI, 1994). Urbanization, therefore, was identified as not only a crucial determinant of the vote, but also the future of the PRI. In essence, because urbanization had a negative impact on the PRI vote, the

political hegemony of the governing party was perceived as directly related to the rate of growth in Mexico's urban regions (Kelsner, 1987).

The historical decline in the PRI's electoral support was initially concentrated within Mexico's urban regions. As urbanization rates continued to soar after 1950, the electoral dominance of the official party gradually began to decline. As shown in Figure #6.1, urban areas in 1950 accounted for less than 45% of Mexico's total population. By 1990, however, census statistics estimated that 72% of the population reside in an urban setting. In contrast, the PRI vote has steadily declined from one election to the next during this same period (1958-1994). This led many observers to conclude that so long as urbanization rates continued to climb, the PRI's political dominance at the ballot box would eventually crumble.

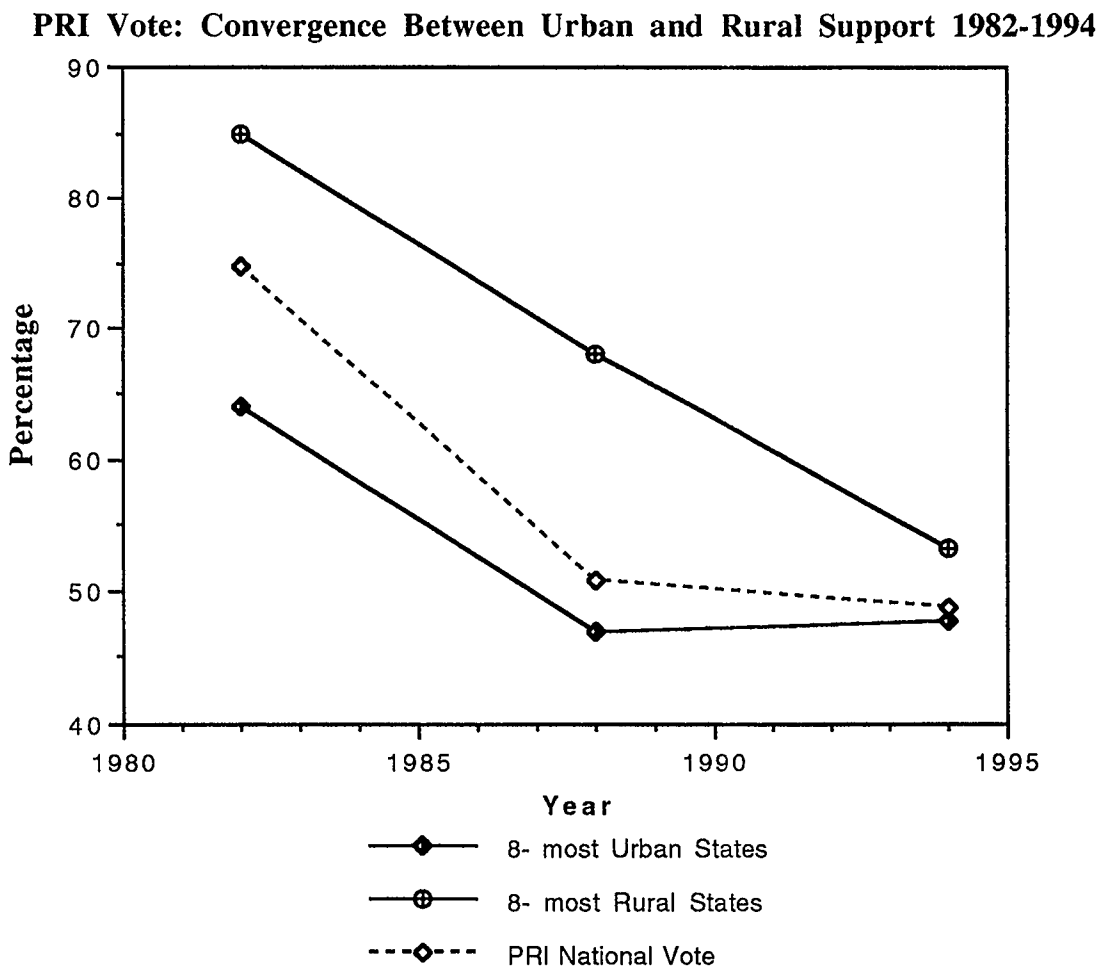
Figure #6.1



To some extent, this prediction was in fact correct. The 1988 presidential election saw the PRI's total electoral support shrink to a record low 50.7%. Urbanization was pointed out as a key factor due to the governing party's poorer showing in many of Mexico's urban regions. And while the PRI urban vote did significantly depreciate in 1988, an equally impressive decline was also experienced in many of Mexico's rural areas. To illustrate this point, a graph is provided highlighting the differences between urban and rural areas reported with the PRI vote from 1982 to 1994. These are calculated based on the electoral support of the governing party in the eight most urban and rural states (See Figure #6.2). As shown, the electoral decline of the PRI in 1988 was attributed to not only its growing dissatisfaction among urban Mexicans, but also rural. This is followed by a similar decline with the PRI rural vote in 1994. The urban vote, in comparison, had actually increased, but only slightly. In the end, and as was demonstrated in chapter three, the PRI vote among urban and rural Mexicans has steadily converged since 1982.

The implications of this shift, I would argue, is likely to be substantial for the future role of the PRI. This investigation has demonstrated that policy change generated a voter realignment in the electoral arena. The social bases of support for the official party is no longer as heavily concentrated in Mexico's traditional and lesser developed rural areas. The 1994 PRI vote reflected a much more balanced representation of voters from both traditional (rural), and modern (urban) regions. In light of this development, one may conclude that urbanization, which continues to expand, is perhaps no longer the same threat for the PRI as in the past. In effect, while policy change during the de la Madrid administration was followed by a substantial loss of support for the PRI in 1988, it may in the end have secured at least the immediate future for the party.

Figure #6.2



The PRI vote in urban centers had declined for numerous years before 1982. Consequently, had the PRI's economic policy platform remained unaltered, its electoral decline in urban regions would likely have continued. The PRI's rural vote, in contrast, was still very strong prior to the economic reforms introduced after 1982. Hence, what was different in 1988 was the governing party's first signs of weakness in rural Mexico. Policy change, therefore, should be interpreted as having its greatest impact on the PRI's rural vote.

After the 1994 election, there are further changes which transpire with the PRI vote. While its electoral support in rural regions continued to slide, its total support at the national level was reduced by only 2%. Ironically, this was largely due to its electoral support in urban regions. It was not that the PRI vote in urban regions had increased dramatically- it did not. Yet, it did remain constant, and moreover, because the contemporary urban population represents a significantly greater proportion of Mexico's total population, its impact on the overall results is simply much greater than the rural vote. Thus, in spite of its electoral collapse in 1988, the PRI's change in economic philosophy did finally bring a halt to its declining support among the urban electorate. In the end, policy change within the official party produced a significant short-term loss, but in the long-term it may prove to save the PRI as its future will continue to rest on its ability to maintain a strong level of support in Mexico's urban regions.

The primary objective of this thesis was to demonstrate the impact of policy change on Mexican voting behavior. A voter realignment did take place after 1982 due to a fundamental shift in the economic philosophy of Mexico's official party. The social bases of support for the PRI in 1994 is characterized as much more balanced based on measures of class, education, industrialization, and urbanization. In contrast, the electoral support for the political opposition is much more concentrated among specific sectors of Mexican society. The PRD receives its strongest support where levels of marginalization are highest, whereas the PAN is electorally more successful in Mexico's wealthier regions. On balance, the political hegemony of the PRI is perhaps far from extinct. Unlike the political opposition, it still carries wide spread appeal in both modern and traditional areas of Mexico. Indeed, the PRI will more than likely continue to play an important role in Mexico's future. Unlike the church or the military, it may be the last remaining vestige of contemporary Mexico that bridges the gap between two distinct, and generally incompatible political cultures which characterize modern and traditional Mexico.

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