34. By 2002, according to the Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers, the number of fugitives totaled about 40,000. According to the Right of Mother Foundation, 2,000–3,000 military personnel perish annually, not counting military losses in Chechnya. Many have committed suicide, and theft by top officers runs rampant (Izvestia, June 13, 2002, http://izvestia.ru/politic/article19460).

When reviewing the evolution of the US party system, Larry Sabato (1988) argued that the growth of the two-party structure throughout the United States was spurred less by strengths within the challenging parties than by weaknesses within the dominant parties in each region. By prodding us to look beyond party competition, Sabato reminded us that conventional models of party realignment may not always be the most useful tool for understanding party dynamics. For example, if we use a traditional approach to analyze Mexico’s Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional [PRI]) and its fortunes over the past decade, the PRI can be viewed as a once-successful party that lost its capacity to energize the electorate during the 1990s. However, when we consider that the PRI remains competitive after losing the presidency in 2000 and again in 2006, we cannot simply focus on elections or patterns of civic mobilization to understand party success and failure in Mexico. Following Sabato’s lead, I argue that single-party systems need to be judged by different criteria from those used to evaluate mature, competitive party systems. In an effort to move beyond traditional gauges of party success and failure, I concentrate on explaining how entrenched patterns of decision-making within the once-formidable PRI had deteriorated to such a degree by the end of the twentieth century that the party undermined its own electoral interests. By focusing on organizational patterns within the party, I illustrate not only how success eluded the PRI, but also how the party’s missteps have helped the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional [PAN]) prosper.

This approach is especially pertinent because the long-range success of the PAN—Mexico’s primary opposition party in the twentieth century—has not yet been secured. Indeed, despite helping to bring a sense that genuine democracy was on the horizon in Mexico in 2000, Vicente Fox found his entire sexenio (six-year presidential term) to be a constant battle, even within his
own party. This suggests that traditional approaches used to track civic mobilization and party loyalty are not yet sufficient for understanding party politics in Mexico. Indeed, data from the July 2003 elections show that the PRI and its coalition partner (the Green Party) secured more votes than the PAN nationally, 36.8 percent to 30.8 percent—the first time since the Mexican Revolution that the president's party failed to win a plurality of votes in a midterm election (see Appendix). To be sure, there is little doubt that traditional models of political parties can shed light on some aspects of the PAN's presidential political victories. However, they cannot fully explain why, given its long history of corruption and broken promises, the PRI remains a viable political option for many Mexicans.

This is interesting when we consider how political crisis in 1988 both undermined the PRI's legitimacy and pushed President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) to remake Mexico's state-led economy into a market-friendly system. Faced with voter disappointment and a stagnant economy, President Salinas was convinced that the primary challenge facing the nation was "financial populism." To shore up lagging electoral support Salinas attacked statism, believing this would help solve the PRI's mounting political problems. To do so he gutted popular but expensive programs that for years acted as Mexico's postrevolutionary social contract. Ernesto Zedillo would continue the same policy pattern during his presidential term (1994-2000). Unforeseen at the time was how the consequences of economic transformation and gutted social programs would remind people of the broken promises of the Mexican Revolution. Also unanticipated was how political corruption and violence—both reliable state and party tools from the past—would come under increased scrutiny as the country opened up to the world, thus undermining their utility by the end of century. With Mexico's postrevolutionary social contract under attack, and with state-sponsored violence and political corruption increasingly scrutinized, political space for opposition parties and other civic groups opened. All of this would become a catalyst for change in Mexico.

On the surface, these dynamics appear to sustain Guillermo O'Donnell and Phillippe Schmitter's claim (1986) that political opening leads to civic mobilization and to the "resurrection of civil society," which might explain the PAN's presidential victory in 2000. However, the relationship between cause (political opening) and effect (increased party competition) is not so simple when we consider that numerous changes in electoral laws during the 1960s and 1970s did not lead to party dealignment or realignment in Mexico in the 1970s. There is no doubt that opposition parties made some gains at the time, but the PRI continued to trounce their closest opposition by 40 percent in congressional elections as late as 1991. Traditional party models are limited here because they do not consider, for example, how new opportunities are lost when voters fail to vote or distribute their support in a manner that maintains the status quo. Put another way, conventional approaches do not explain why citizens and groups postpone acting in their best interests when presented with political openings. To understand, for example, why legal changes that encouraged opposition parties to grow did not lead to significant political change in the 1970s, we need to look at additional factors—like how system stress and other triggers push voters to begin abandoning a political party. I show here how policies developed by the PRI at the national level in the 1980s alienated lifelong supporters, as a result of which the party became more insular and lost touch with political developments on the ground. By reviewing the political life stories of two national-level politicians—Mariano Palacios Alcocer and Fernando Ortíz Arana, competing political players from the state of Querétaro—I will show how political decisions made in Mexico drew little, if any, inspiration from what the people wanted. We can better understand why there was no discernible or immediate impact on the structure of power when Mexico implemented electoral reforms in the 1960s and 1970s, and how weaknesses within dominant political parties create fertile ground for opposition parties to prosper. What we will also see is that the O'Donnell/Schmitter civic mobilization thesis is limited in helping us understand why opposition parties did not prosper in Mexico until the end of the twentieth century.

To understand how and why the PAN and the Party of Democratic Revolution (PRD) have been able to prosper in a one-party system, it is necessary to look at how the political missteps of the PRI triggered opposition-party mobilization and realignment at the end of the twentieth century. To do this we need to understand how strategists and policymakers in the PRI handled, and mishandled, their charge over time. This means concentrating on the divisions and deterioration within the PRI that led to internal intrigue, palace scheming, and the party's focus on short-term goals. To understand the dynamics of internal deterioration within the PRI we must turn to the insights of Herbert Simon (1982) and others on organizational sociology, organizational anthropology, and cognitive psychology. What we find is that while policymakers and defenders of the throne in Mexico may have had relevant information, the organizational norms and culture that evolved within party (and state) structures prevented party strategists from using that information efficiently.

How did this happen to a highly evolved party like the PRI, which had guided Mexico from postrevolution chaos in 1917 to relative economic and political stability? Most scholarship focuses on the demands of economic crisis in the 1980s and the PRI's subsequent decision to change its ideological direction. Other scholarship focuses on the dynamics behind party consolidation within the PAN and in the PRD (at least in the late 1980s). I break from this pattern by following the political careers of Ortíz Arana and Palacios Alcocer. This approach helps to explain both detachment (political dealignment) and reattachment (political realignment) at the state and national levels by focusing on political missteps made by the PRI that ultimately contributed to the PAN's successes.
More generally, I offer here an analysis of macro-level political dynamics and a case study of micro-level political processes in the state of Querétaro. Using partial life stories of key political players, opposition-party successes in Mexico are explained by focusing on the relationship between political careers at the state and the conceptual and institutional tools of the political scientist. The result is a more nuanced and interdisciplinary understanding of both structure and process at the micro (local and personal) and macro (national and institutional) levels. At the same time, I provide here a deeper understanding of the context behind the successes and prosperity of Mexico’s opposition parties as the country heads into the twenty-first century.

Macro-Level Dynamics

A Twentieth-Century Overview of Mexico’s Political History

Reflected alternately as “authoritarian,” “corporatist,” “statist,” a dominant one-party system, and somewhat admiringly as “the perfect dictatorship,” the Mexican political system during much of the twentieth century was designed to bring stability to postrevolutionary Mexico. To do so, Mexico’s postrevolutionary leaders had to bring rogue generals and regional warlords (caudillos) under state control. Democracy was a long-term “poststability” goal. In 1929, President Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–1928) created the National Revolutionary Party (PNR), made everyone in the country a member, and tied the party to the state by providing official patronage that effectively undermined opposition groups who could not gain state legitimacy. The end product was a multi-tiered, highly disciplined party that relied on state patronage, coercion, co-optation, and fraud to maintain control.

During the 1930s, with the revolution becoming a distant memory, the rationale for the party (and the state) went from centralizing power to mass mobilization and social reform. Specifically, President Lázaro Cárdenas realized that the party needed to find a way to control its power base, so he reorganized the PNR, in the process changing its name to the Mexican Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Mexicano [PRM]). At this time he shaped the party along corporatist lines and created four sectors to provide a structured and hierarchical process for expressing popular demands: a popular sector, a peasant sector, a worker sector, and a military sector (which withered and was abolished by 1946). By offering patronage, economic benefits, and, perhaps most important, political protection for key groups, these sectors eventually became the instruments of political control and electoral manipulation. As long as benefits and protection were provided by the state, the party could depend on the votes of these popular sectors. With stability secured, the PRM sponsored economic development and social welfare programs, building in the process the basis of Mexico’s social contract between state and society.

Once political centralization and social stability were secure, the revolutionary goals of Cárdenas were put aside after 1940 by successive presidents, who were more interested in economic growth. To illustrate the shift in state goals, and to emphasize that stability had become “institutionalized,” the party once again changed names, becoming the Institutional Revolutionary Party in 1946. With stability secured, the government initiated a state-sponsored development strategy that created economic growth rates averaging 6 percent in the 1950s and 1960s. Mexicans, who could only dream of improved standards of living in previous generations, began to see material and qualitative improvements in their lifestyles or in the lives of their children. These visible signs of progress helped sustain and legitimize the growth and power of the PRI, which the party was more than happy to take advantage of politically. With rogue caudillos under control, and with sustained economic growth a reality, many believed the goal of building a modern democratic state could be pursued. But power-brokers within the PRI had other thoughts. In particular, party leaders who had grown accustomed to power believed the party should be rewarded for the successes of the state, and demurred on the issue of democracy, preferring instead to strengthen the PRI’s hold on state power. It was at this time that the party began the bureaucratization process that would eventually help delink it from the people.

The primary reason for delinkage is that in the process of bringing stability and economic growth to the nation, the PRI also created a highly centralized, hierarchical system that was tied together by patronage networks, corruption, and various forms of political coercion. All of this contributed to a complex culture of political arrogance that was largely forgiven as long as growth and benefits were achieved. A political labyrinth, the genius of the PRI party structure lay in how it created a system that was rigid in its approach to maintaining power but had the capacity to rejuvenate itself. Managed by Mexico’s president, recruitment and co-optation tactics were combined with timely policy shifts, which helped provide flexibility. Elections were won by the PRI on a regular basis and were legitimated by the principle of no reelection of presidents, which promised opportunity and upward mobility for those who participated and were loyal to the system. Discipline became the hallmark of the PRI’s cadres, who patiently waited to be nominated by the party to run for office, and dutifully pointed to regular electoral cycles and a changing of the guard as evidence of Mexico’s adherence to democratic principles. With regular elections and new blood flowing into the system every election cycle, one could hardly claim that Mexico did not practice democracy, at least in principle. In reality, however, a set of rules and institutions masked the undemocratic nature of the Mexican state.

The first thing most observers noted about Mexico’s highly centralized political system was that the president operated with relatively few constraints on his authority. A modern-day caliphate, Mexico’s president was propped up by a highly structured and servile group of políticos (cabinet members, governors,
senators, etc.), who served because they knew or caught the attention of the president, and those within the party who hoped to climb up the PRI’s political ladder. Party members who filled both houses of Congress owed their allegiance to the president and, by extension, to the networks organized and controlled by the party. Left out of this democratic square dance were the people.

The process of delinking elected officials from the general population was endemic throughout Mexico. Mexico’s presidents regularly appointed and removed governors and other elected officials with little or no input from local or state citizen groups. In the process, the PRI went from being a responsive institution committed to stability (in the immediate postrevolutionary period) and social reform (the Cárdenas era) to a centralized but hydra-headed body committed to cronyism and promoting personal careers by the 1950s. Unconcerned with accountability and democracy, over time a governing elite with distinct functions was formed within the PRI, which permeated every level of the system. As the system created by the PRI became institutionalized at the national level, state and local political processes fell into place and were dominated by decisions made in Mexico City.

While exact dates can be debated, by the 1940s state- and local-level players from the governor on down played by rules dominated by the president and carried out by party and other officials at the state and federal levels. State governors understood that they were at the beck and call of the incumbent president and made sure their state conformed to the wishes of the president. Those who opposed the status quo—as defined by the president and carried out by the party—were ostracized or eventually removed from the system. By this time, Mexico’s revolutionary and progressive ideology came in a distant position party strong enough to challenge the PRI’s hegemonic position early on, any candidate who was nominated to run for office by the PRI was virtually assured election.

Interestingly, while the structure and processes within the PRI became entrenched, socioeconomic changes in society began to undermine cohesion and uniformity within the PRI. As frustration with the unresponsive and undemocratic nature of the system grew, the PRI’s responses to challenges from within would undermine party discipline, while assisting the emergence of alternative groups and organizations in Mexico.

**Challenge to Hegemony: The “Technocratic Revolution” Within the PRI**

Having had partial success with state-led development policies in the 1950s and 1960s (Calva 2001), Presidents Luis Echeverría (1970–1976) and José López Portillo (1976–1982) developed a series of programs they believed would speed up Mexico’s development effort (Riding 1989; Krauze 1997). Because these policies were not well thought out, were extravagant, and were plagued by bad luck, they created financial pressures that undermined public confidence and led to challenges from within the party. While opposing parties had always questioned the institutional authority of the PRI, most damaging were whispers from within that questioned the direction of the state. Those who questioned the system from within cannot be codified as party hacks, committed to protecting the ideals of the revolution. Rather, a group of technocrats (tecnocratas) rose through the party because of their specialized knowledge (as opposed to their commitment and work within the party), and began questioning approaches to problem solving within the party (Centeno 1997; Camp 2003). This group would eventually create fissures and factions that would contribute to splitting the party between new-style tecnocratas and old-style politicos. Each group had distinct functions, backgrounds, and professional profiles within the PRI.

The politicos represented the grassroots vanguard. Labeled as “dinosaurs” because they preferred state-led efforts from the past, this group understood the PRI’s working-class and peasant roots. Many politicos, who served as ward bosses for the system, were disdainful of the new elites and their policy approaches. They quickly became annoyed that many in this political group came from the upper echelons of Mexico’s economic and political elite, but were not party militants. To be sure, when tecnocratas found it useful to become party members, they did so, but most often not until late in their careers. Many studied economics at private universities (or at the National Autonomous University of Mexico), moved on to postgraduate studies at prestigious and private universities in the United States, and, due in part to their political contacts, were able to enter the party and the state bureaucracy at relatively high levels early in their careers. As the tecnocratas assumed positions of leadership and power in the 1980s, they would recast the PRI so that both its ideology and its policies became unrecognizable to many of the party faithful. These dynamics, especially the tecnocratas’ rapid promotions over politicos, raised the ire of traditional party supporters.

Making matters more difficult, the new technocratic elite—who included Presidents Miguel de la Madrid (1982–1988), Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988–1994), and Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000)—believed they understood Mexico’s troubled economic history better than anyone else. Many even exhibited a sense of contempt for those who did not share their views. In all cases, by the mid-1980s the party found itself challenged by dissension and an internal power struggle. With oil shocks and the debt crisis of the 1970s and 1980s undermining development policies, the political hand of the tecnocratas was strengthened by the 1980s. Alternative policy routes like socialism and state-led populism had been discredited by the populist excesses of previous administrations (and the decline of the leftists globally). Now the tecnocratas argued that a scientific and rational approach to development had to be undertaken. Their plan for fixing and modernizing the country was relatively simple: discard state-led development and open the economy to free trade.
Because many had overseas training and connections, and were buoyed by global trends toward market-oriented strategies, the tecnocratas were able to claim a special connection to, and a unique understanding of, the market policies needed to modernize Mexico. Aided by the support of the Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations in the 1980s, successive technocratic administrations used the power, discipline, and structures of the PRI to push market-oriented policies through Congress. Aided by a political and cultural milieu that thrived on secrecy and continued to stifle dissenting opinion, the tecnocratas promoted policy changes that were unthinkable a decade earlier (Weintraub 2000). For example, Mexico joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1986, which broke with past principles that mandated independence from foreign influence. This ideological shift forced conservative and populist-oriented factions within the PRI to the margins of the political arena and, later, marginalized them from recruitment and agenda-setting. In the process, an unwritten rule of the party and the revolutionary family, political inclusion, was broken. Another unwritten rule, no open criticism from within, also fell to the wayside, which would contribute to splitting, transforming, and undermining Latin America’s longest-standing political regime. Particularly damaging was the infighting that would damage the party’s electoral prospects at the end of the twentieth century.

Political and Organizational Challenges from Within the PRI

Dislodged from the primary positions of power, and uncomfortable with the party elites’ “neoliberal” policy prescriptions, the politicos began to complain and fight back. One of the first to openly express displeasure with the neoliberal policies promoted by the tecnocratas within the PRI was Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. Son of legendary president Lázaro Cárdenas, and backed by an influential group within the PRI, Cárdenas believed that the principles of the revolution were being undermined by the party’s new political elite. Angered by Mexico’s entrance into GATT, and later by the new elites’ attempts to marginalize their influence, traditional and leftist leaders within the PRI formed the Democratic Current (Corriente Demócrata [CD]) within the party in 1986. Many within the CD became frustrated when their demand for more democratic process went nowhere within the PRI. The CD soon found itself in a difficult position when the National Assembly of the PRI met in March 1987. At this meeting the PRI’s new hierarchy met and issued an ultimatum to the CD’s membership: shut up or get out of the party.

To ensure that everyone understood they were not bluffing, a few days after the assembly broke up, the PRI expelled Cárdenas from the party. This forced the hand of Cárdenas’s supporters within the party, which would lead scores of disaffected politicos to follow Cárdenas out of the party. Most of them would eventually become key supporters of Cárdenas’s presidential run in 1988. In this manner, one of the key operational constituencies within the party, the politicos, split along two lines. One group of politicos considered themselves political pragmatists, and went along with the technocrats in opposing internal democratization. Another group of politicos left the party and would become integral to creating the base of the PRD. Indeed, many of those who left were elected to office in the early 1990s and reaped the benefits of the 1994–1995 economic crises when the PRI lost the congressional elections and the mayor’s office of Mexico City in July 1997.

At the same time, things were becoming more difficult for the PRI throughout the rest of the nation, as the PAN began winning elections at the state and local levels. Amid these developments, many questions began to be raised throughout Mexico. On one level, people wanted to know if the PRI could solve the economic problems that confronted Mexico. On another level, political pundits wanted to know whether the PRI had the institutional wherewithal to withstand the political hits they were now taking in the larger political arena. How the PRI handled these questions would help determine its fate in future elections. In all cases, one thing was clear: the political world had changed for the PRI. In hindsight, the new elite chose a relatively simple and predictable path. Party leaders continued to deepen market-oriented policies, while using the political tools and weapons crafted over fifty years of PRI domination to maintain social order. And why not? The structure and logic of the party remained, which meant that discussions continued to take place in small insider groups, which the new technocratic elite dominated.

Also at the same time, talented groups within the PRI, and other civic groups who were close to the people, continued to be systematically excluded. It was at this point that organizational habits began to fail the PRI, as past methods of control were used in spite of information that clearly demonstrated that the PRI’s political world was crumbling. With the benefit of hindsight, these dynamics suggest that rather than following old political roadmaps—like redistributing meager resources and engaging in efforts to negotiate elections—the PRI should have begun remaking itself. Specifically, instead of promoting insiders preferred by the tecnocratas, the PRI should have promoted the candidates with the best ideas. Instead, the party’s new elites were more concerned with consolidating technocratic gains, which they could only do by employing the worst tactics of the party. This was hardly a recipe for long-term electoral success in a rapidly changing political environment.

At this point, the PRI’s political strategies and candidate selections are interesting not so much because of what they tell us about the new elites’ ideology. Rather, they are interesting because they tell us about decisionmaking dynamics, which, as James Wilson (1989) notes, helps us see how easy it is for seemingly rational strategists and decisionmakers to be constrained by an organizational environment clouded by the need of one group—the tecnocratas—to maintain power. In this manner, the PRI’s failures were not in gathering relevant
information, but in how one group within the party analyzed and used it within a larger organizational context. Put more bluntly, by becoming more and more insular, the PRI had started to rot from within. To better understand these dynamics, we need to look at how the organizational dynamics of the PRI compelled leaders to make decisions that alienated Mexico’s citizens and their own supporters. I will return to the topic of organizational behavior in the conclusion.

**Micro-Level Processes**

*Partial Life Stories in the State of Querétaro*

Historically the state of Querétaro is critical because of its acquiescence to the nation’s authoritarian and hierarchical political culture, which was played out here even before the dominant political party was formally unveiled in 1929. Stories of state delegates being called on to switch their support for presidential candidates after the Mexican Revolution are well-known. More recently, complaints leveled against the PRI nationally—hierarchical, disconnected from the citizenry, undemocratic, and the like—found fertile ground in the state when candidate Manuel Camacho Guzmán, who was from out of state, was imposed as the PRI’s gubernatorial candidate in 1980. These and other examples make Querétaro an interesting case study because state and local political affairs have often preceded or mirrored national-level political developments. This is why the political careers of Fernando Ortiz Arana and Mariano Palacios Alcocer—both federal senators who became presidents of the PRI nationally—are so important. Their careers help us understand the context of decisionmaking in the PRI at the end of the twentieth century. However, it is not the decisions these men made while in office that shed light on political processes within the PRI. Rather, it is the internal decisions that led to their appointments and promotions that help us understand decisionmaking, political calculations, and the increasingly distorted political picture the PRI developed over time.

**The Early Political Careers of Palacios and Ortiz**

A standout wherever he went, young Mariano Palacios Alcocer won numerous awards for public speaking and became known as a “winner among winners” (Bustillo 1992, p. 31). His speaking eventually caught the attention of Querétaro governor Antonio Calzada Urquiza (1973–1979), who sponsored Palacios for state assembly, where he won office in 1973 at the age of twenty-one and quickly became assembly speaker. With the support of the governor, Palacios was nominated to run for mayor (i.e., county president) of the state’s capital, a post he won handily and served in from 1976 to 1979. By this time, Palacios had also caught the attention of people close to President Luis Echeverría, which allowed Palacios to be seen at Los Pinos with influential members of Echeverría’s camarilla. In the company of powerful people at such a young age, Palacios was viewed as a rising star in Querétaro. This brought followers, as aspiring state and local politicians wanted to attach themselves to the growing Palacios camarilla—which further increased his influence and prestige in the state (Bustillo 1992, p. 32).

Having developed a legitimate and strong camarilla in his own right, after leaving the county president’s office Palacios became rector of the Autonomous University of Querétaro in 1979 at the age of twenty-eight, making him the youngest known university rector in the history of postrevolutionary Mexico. With access to national forums as rector of the university, he was again recognized and courted in important political circles in Mexico City (Bustillo 1992, p. 32). At the same time, Palacios became a trusted political ally of Querétaro governor Manuel Camacho Guzmán (1980–1986), who had been picked for the post by President José López Portillo (1976–1982). Because of his relationship with Governor Guzmán, Palacios was then nominated to run for a federal deputy post (equivalent to a seat in the US House of Representatives). It was here that the career paths of Mariano Palacios Alcocer and Fernando Ortiz Arana crossed.

At this time, Fernando Ortiz Arana and Silvia Hernández Enriquez were vying for the federal Senate candidacy in Querétaro. Unfortunately for both Ortiz and Hernández, Governor Rafael Camacho Guzmán openly opposed them. Because he especially disliked Ortiz, the governor actively proposed Palacios as the alternate candidate. With the support of the governor, Palacios won the Senate race handily at the age of thirty-one. Palacios’s speaking talents in the Senate chamber soon caught the attention of then-president Miguel de la Madrid (1982–1988), who through his secretary of internal affairs, Manuel Bartlett Díaz (governor of Puebla, 1992–1998), let Palacios know he was interested in his political career. When it was time to select a successor to Governor Guzmán, the paths of Palacios and Ortiz crossed once more, because Ortiz was one of the strongest candidates for governor. Again Guzmán opposed Ortiz’s nomination and, as before, nominated Palacios as the party’s candidate for governor in Querétaro. In this manner, and with the support of President de la Madrid, widely recognized as Mexico’s first technocrat president, in 1985 Palacios became the PRI’s gubernatorial candidate in Querétaro at the age of thirty-three. Admired for his rapid political trajectory, youth, and growing national political contacts, and respected for what he had done as rector of the Autonomous University of Querétaro, Palacios literally was the “pride” of his state. Palacios would win the governorship with what even opposition-party members considered a legitimate 99 percent of the vote.

It is at this point that Palacios moves from a classic case study of camarilla politics within the PRI to being a representative of all that would eventually go wrong for the party. Initially confident and respectful, Palacios became powerful and even arrogant with the resources at his disposal. He was convinced that except for the president, he could not be touched—primarily
because this is the way the system worked—and began granting generous concessions and favors to family and friends on an unprecedented level. By the time Palacios left the governor’s office, he was considered the most corrupt state executive in the history of Querétaro, and would leave the governorship as a political liability for the party in that state. For all his talents and relative youth (he was only thirty-nine when he left the governor’s office), after a brief stint in the bureaucracy in Mexico City, Palacios was shipped off to Portugal as Mexico’s ambassador. What is critical to understand here is that just as Palacios had become a negative symbol of all that was wrong in Mexico, the PRI found itself a party whose reputation had been tarnished by corruption, assassination, and political intrigue in 1995. Yet the party continued to operate according to past practices.

In fact, at the same time that Palacios was being shipped off to Portugal (in Mexico, with the exception of a handful of appointments, an ambassadorial appointment under the PRI was often viewed as a way of removing political liabilities), Fernando Ortíz Arana’s political star began to rise in Mexico City. A persistent man, Ortíz became a federal senator and quickly became a leading player in the party at the national level. At the end of Carlos Salinas’s presidential term (1988–1994), Ortíz was appointed president of the PRI, which meant he would be delivering the PRI’s announcement of the next presidential candidate. While everyone understood that the president of the PRI was only doing the bidding of President Salinas, the fact that Ortíz was selected to do so by such a popular president (populist at the time) was a sign that he was in the president’s good graces. President Salinas selected Luis Donaldo Colosio as the PRI’s presidential candidate, which Ortíz dutifully announced to the nation. After Colosio was assassinated on a campaign stop in Tijuana in March 1994, many believed that as president of the PRI at the national level, Ortíz had both the position and trust of the party to legitimately lobby for the presidency. Many also believed that Salinas needed an old hand and trusted “party dinosaur” to keep the party faithful in line. However, Ortíz proved to be too much of an old-style político for Salinas. Instead, Salinas selected Colosio’s campaign manager, Ernesto Zedillo, to be the PRI’s post-assassination candidate.

Once Ortíz had lost out to Zedillo, the conventional thinking was that he would dutifully accept his fate, regroup, and win the party’s presidential nomination in 2000. Part of this strategy included either going back to Querétaro to become governor or challenging Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas for mayor in Mexico City in 1997, which would give him a national stage. Cognizant of Cárdenas’s popularity in Mexico City, Ortíz opted to consolidate his power and run for governor of Querétaro. It was at this time that factions within the party, competing agendas, and the organizational logic of the party began to backfire on Ortíz’s political aspirations, and on the PRI’s political life.

At the time Fernando Ortíz Arana’s political star was rising, Mariano Palacios Alcocer returned from Portugal. Because he played by the rules of the game and left quietly, Palacios expected to be rewarded by the party after the 1994 presidential elections. However, since Palacios was a disgraced former governor, most observers understood that he could not win a seat if he ran on his own in the state of Querétaro. As such, the best the party could do was place Palacios on the state’s party slate as a plurinominal (at-large) candidate in 1997. Being rewarded for good behavior, however, only explains the outcome of party behavior. To understand why Palacios became an imposed candidate, it is necessary to focus on the dynamics of what one informant said were “larger political realities [within the PRI] in Mexico City.” In all cases, the following helps illustrate that the PRI had become so consumed with internal intrigue and palace brinksmanship that the party was not only out of touch with the Mexican people but also in decline. And this would make all the difference in the world for the increasingly organized and efficient opposition party, the PAN.

Commenting on the reputation of Palacios and his appointment as an at-large candidate by the PRI, one informant said, “Even the most blind pristas [supporters of the PRI] had to recognize that Mariano was going to seriously damage their chances to win [in the state].” Others commented that because of Palacios’s tainted reputation in Querétaro, he had to be “imposed from above.” While most everyone understood this practice, few high-level players had openly acknowledged the PRI’s nomination process. This is why many observers were surprised when the president of the PRI at the state level in Querétaro, Marco Antonio Leon Hernández, made an uncharacteristically public comment acknowledging that Querétaro’s slate of candidates would come from Mexico City. After being asked when he was going to announce the PRI’s 1997 candidates for statewide office, he remarked: “We’re just waiting for the phone call from Mexico City. The call from the Secretaría de Gobernación, or the presidency of the PRI, will go to the governor, and he’ll instruct the leader of the party . . . the way it’s always been done” (El Nuevo Amanecer de Querétaro, 1997).

While it was difficult to find pristas who would shed light on internal candidate selection processes, these comments help to explain which selected Palacios as an at-large candidate. However, they don’t explain why the PRI would risk losing a state by placing someone as radioactive as Palacios on the ballot. In interviews, several people commented that the PRI was just too arrogant and did not believe it was going to lose in Querétaro. In this scenario, Palacios wasn’t seen as a gamble. Others said that losing a small state like Querétaro was not such a big deal for the PRI because Ernesto Zedillo had bigger things in mind for Palacios at the national level, where Palacios would...
eventually become national president of the PRI and a cabinet minister in the Zedillo administration. Those who took the latter position—which most high-
level state políticos did—also provided a historical sequence and political rationale that help us understand the insular nature and organizational dynamics of party politics as the PRI headed into the twenty-first century.

While running for governor would have been a good option twenty years earlier, the need of the new factions and the technocrats to consolidate power worked against the interests of Fernando Ortiz Arana. For example, while everyone understood that Ortiz was not a rencocra, his real problem was that he had made powerful enemies within the PRI while in Mexico City. Among those was Secretary of Interior Emilio Chuayfett, one of the most powerful men in President Ernesto Zedillo’s administration (1994–2000). Chuayfett understood quite well that Ortiz had presidential aspirations. He also knew that, as a powerful and nationally recognized político, Ortiz also had the potential to rally key antitechnocratic prístas around him. As such, Chuayfett wanted to ensure that Ortiz would not gain the platform from which to begin a campaign for the PRI’s presidential nomination in 2000. This required a strategy that would derail Ortiz and make it difficult for him to develop a national political base.

Part of this technocratic strategy included blocking several of Ortiz’s political lieutenants from key political appointments. In fact, by early 1997, all of Ortiz’s handpicked candidates for key posts throughout Mexico had been shot down by Chuayfett, which prevented Ortiz from building a national-level camarilla that would help him maintain a national presence while in Querétaro. But many observers believe that the key blow to Ortiz’s national political aspirations came when the PRI announced its statewide candidates for the 1997 elections in Querétaro. First, the PRI offered few new names on the state ballot that might prove attractive to the younger generation of PRI supporters. Second, almost all candidates nominated to run for office were associated with a past that most Querétanos did not want to return to. Of the nominees, many agreed that Palacios brought back the most negative memories and guaranteed a popular backlash against the PRI in 1997. Ramon Lorence, president of the PAN in Querétaro at the time, recounted his sentiments when he heard of the Palacios nomination: “When we heard that Mariano was going to be one of the at-large candidates for the PRI we were elated. Nobody in Querétaro wants him here except for his family . . . he’s an embarrassment to the state. However, his selection served our interests because people saw that the PRI didn’t care about what the people think. It reinforced the non-democratic nature of the party” (personal interview, July 1997, Querétaro).

Telling in those sentiments is that several petition drives were initiated with the sole goal of removing Palacios’s name as the PRI’s at-large candidate. Commenting on the Palacios candidacy and the reputation of the PRI, one party supporter commented: “If the PRI had won they would have left us with nothing, they would have stolen everything. Where they got the balls to put [Palacios] on the ballot we’ll never know, but it sure made me think twice about voting for the PRI because it just showed how arrogant they were” (personal interview, July 1997, Querétaro).

When the PRI lost both the governor’s office and the two most important counties in the state in 1997, people began to look for answers. Some of the macro-level reasons given for the PRI’s loss in Querétaro were problems in the national economy (tied to the 1994 devaluation), political assassinations, the rise of the PRD and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in 1988, and the politics of Carlos Hank’s political camarilla, the Grupo Atlacomulco, to which Secretary of Interior Emilio Chuayfett belonged. While all of these factors had a hand in the defeat of the PRI in Querétaro, the one that gained currency among Querétaro’s political insiders was the intervention of Chuayfett and Grupo Atlacomulco.

**Palacios and National-Level Camarillas:**

“**Machiavelli would have been proud . . .**”

This role of Chuayfett and Grupo Atlacomulco is also critical because it helps us understand both how distant PRI managers had become from local-level realities and the insular nature of decisionmaking at the national level. Organizational and decisionmaking dynamics within the PRI had deteriorated to such a degree that party leaders were blinded to the long-term ripple effects that their arrogance in Querétaro would have. A closer look at the type of campaign run in Querétaro and the reasons behind Mariano Palacios Alcocer’s selection as an at-large candidate is particularly useful in helping us understand why the PRI lost on all levels in the state and saw the PAN rise to political power in a fashion that left even PAN supporters stunned.

Demonstrating how distant high-level party leaders had become, the style and excessive expenditures of former party president Fernando Ortiz Arana’s gubernatorial campaign were seen as obnoxious, especially for a developing country in the middle of an economic crisis. One family told me that they were invited to attend an Ortiz campaign “rally” in their colonia in the city of Querétaro. They declined to go because they had heard that these campaigns were “fancy events.” However, out of curiosity, they drove by and saw nothing but luxury cars and waiters wearing tuxedos and white gloves. Those who went commented that the colonia “rallies” had more of an upper-class party atmosphere than a political event. On another level, there was also the palpable arrogance of the people who worked in the Ortiz campaign, which turned even the party-faithful away. One state government worker who was transferred to Ortiz’s campaign told me:
All of this did not go over well, and suggested to the electorate in Querétaro that a crisis of leadership and vision existed within the PRI. As one observer put it, "It showed that the PRI was rotting from within and didn't even know it."

There is no doubt that, on the surface at least, making Ortz the party's gubernatorial candidate in 1997 made a lot of sense. He had been a viable presidential hopeful after the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio in 1994 (before Salinas selected Ernesto Zedillo), and there were numerous other individuals with high name recognition, including former governor Palacios, on the statewide PRI ticket. These political heavyweights were running against unknown politicians, like the PAN's Ignacio Loyola. However, by selecting or approving a slate of candidates who had less than stellar reputations within the state, the PRI demonstrated a level of political arrogance that locals could no longer abide. In particular, it suggests that the PRI of 1997 believed it could still control events, and people, that were clearly beyond their control. Evidence of this was the gubernatorial candidacy of José Ortiz Arana, Fernando's brother, who ran under the Frente Cardenista banner. His campaign siphoned off 3 percent of the vote and ignoted stories of political intrigue dominated by Mexico City. There was also the attitude of outgoing governor Enrique Burgos, whose indifference toward massive demonstrations by public schoolteachers contributed to undermining the PRI's credibility with a group who traditionally supported the party. Interviews with party insiders and other political observers suggest that the actions of Governor Burgos and the candidacy of José Ortiz Arana were orchestrated from Mexico City, with the primary goal of undermining the campaign of Fernando Ortiz Arana. The primary reason for these tactics? While Fernando Ortiz Arana was a loyal priista, he was seen as an uninspiring proponent of neoliberalism and had made several powerful enemies in Mexico City. In an era when party factionalism and technocratic agenda consolidation dominated the political scene in Mexico City, loyal party men could become expendable if they were viewed as a long-term threat. Simply put, Ortz's potential as a candidate for the PRI's presidential nomination for 2000 made him a threat to the technocrats in power.

With the powerful secretary of interior, Emilio Chuayfett, on the side of the technocrats, it should come as no surprise that a slate of candidates who would hurt Ortz's candidacy in the state would be approved at the national level. Considering these calculations, the president of the PAN in Querétaro, Ramon Lorenz, commented not only that this was possible, but also that if this was in fact what the PRI planned, then "what the Atlocomulco group did to Fernando was Machiavellian pure and simple. Machiavelli would have been proud" (personal interview, July 1997, Querétaro).

What the political careers of Mariano Palacios Alcocer and Fernando Ortiz Arana tell us is that the PAN's gubernatorial victory in 1997 had as much to do with internal developments within the PRI as with developments in the primary opposition party, the PAN. In particular, by 1997 the appointment of Palacios helps us see how the PRI had become consumed with internal party dynamics and egos, which helps illustrate the logic behind the disconnect that developed between party leaders and the Mexican people, both nationally and at the state level in places like Querétaro. For my purposes, this suggests that party decline—whatever its causes—needs to be viewed as a serious factor in political competition. Political parties don't always win because they are stronger or more efficient; rather they might win because of weaknesses and political missteps made by formerly dominant parties, like the PRI. Unfortunately for the PRI, they failed to learn the state-level lessons from Querétaro in 1997, and could not understand the nature of their decline, which goes a long way in explaining the decisions and mistakes made before the presidential elections in 2000 and 2006.

In the end, the political careers of Palacios and Ortz help us understand that decisionmaking cannot be explained by simply looking at individual choices. We need to understand larger motives, which is a complex undertaking, whether in a long-standing bureaucracy or in a small group. To be sure, there is no doubt that political science—especially the field of US politics—has gained much from employing a rational-actor framework. However, traditional rational-choice models do little to help us recognize how it was that intelligent and highly capable leaders within the PRI could ignore Mexico's new political realities. How, for example, do we explain how actors pursuing a rational end (electoral victory) tamed their better instincts so that they continued to make decisions and promote agendas that were parochial and better suited for another era? To understand this we need to investigate how professional habits and professional expertise can betray those who have spent careers developing them within a single context. Sidney Weintraub (2000), in a perceptive book on financial decisionmaking in Mexico, touches on this and writes of a cultural milieu that did not allow for dissent and thrived on secrecy. The end result was a series of fateful economic decisions made by arrogant policymakers who believed they alone understood the world. The end result was the peso collapse of 1994. Secrecy and arrogance within the PRI go a long way in explaining larger political decisions that led to the PRI's presidential defeat in 2000 as well.
Conclusion

This chapter began with a brief overview of Mexico's political system in the twentieth century to establish the structure and successes of the Institutional Revolutionary Party. Hierarchical, hegemonic, and secretive, the party was able to sustain its undemocratic nature as long as the country enjoyed steady growth rates while the middle class grew. Indeed, the primary reason the PRI was able to succeed for so long during much of the twentieth century was that it brought stability to postrevolutionary Mexico. In the process of bringing rogue generals and regional warlords under state control, the party promised democracy as a long-term “poststability” goal. This pacified many Mexicans, who grew accustomed to a party dependent on both state patronage and weak opposition parties who were either co-opted or denied state legitimacy. The end product was a multi-tiered, highly disciplined party that relied on state power, coercion, and fraud to maintain control.

Once political centralization and social stability were secure, the revolutionary goals of the state changed to embrace economic growth, which averaged 6 percent in the 1950s and 1960s. As economic growth visibly enhanced the standards of living of many Mexicans, the growth and power of the PRI became institutionalized. This helped the party succeed politically at all levels within the country. With social and political stability secured, many came to believe that Mexico's success was tied to keeping a single party in power, because the PRI, after all, kept the peace and maintained discipline within the political system. Adding to the strength and attractiveness of the PRI was how the party rewarded loyalty with political and economic privilege, which made the PRI the most attractive vehicle for social, economic, and political mobility. Stability, opportunity, and economic growth—all absent through the 1920s—legitimized one-party rule and helped the PRI succeed through most of the twentieth century. Unchallenged power, however, only served to reinforce the more negative aspects of the party's undemocratic culture, which was compounded with arrogance when a new political elite, the technocrats, came to power in the 1980s. During the party's political transformation from representative party to aloof and increasingly distant technocratic party, it began making strategic decisions that reflected the organizational and institutional logics of the PRI rather than the concerns of the Mexican people. This is critical for three reasons.

First, while party leaders and the president had always operated in an environment of decisionmaking secrecy, at least there had been a modicum of consultation with out-groups (both inside and outside the party). Second, as the selection of Querétaro's political candidates for 1997 revealed, decisions at the national level were made in a way that demonstrated that the PRI had little understanding or respect for local-level political realities. Third, internal dynamics within the PRI had evolved to the point that power-brokers were more concerned with their groups' political survival, which blinded them to growing external threats, like the growing popularity of opposition parties. In sum, despite President Salinas's declaration that one-party rule had come to an end, decisions continued to be made in a political vacuum, which demonstrated that the PRI's organizational and decisionmaking processes no longer reflected the demands of the new competitive political world. These three realities suggest that if we are to understand the success or prosperity of the PAN, and other opposition parties, at the end of the twentieth century, we must start by analyzing how the organizational dynamics of the PRI led to strategic failures, which ultimately undermined public confidence in the party.

To be sure, as numerous authors have pointed out, there is no doubt the PAN had matured both organizationally and politically, which allowed it to take advantage of the political opening created by the PRI's failings. In addition, while rational-actor frameworks might be useful for helping us understand the activities of Mexico's opposition parties, we gain a more complete understanding of party prosperity (and failures) if we recognize how bureaucratic dynamics and arrogance within the PRI contributed to the strategic decisions that undermined public confidence and led to detachment and reattachment in Mexico. By following the political careers of two high-level politicians, we get a good look at internal party dynamics, which reveals a party more concerned with maintaining old-style discipline and cronyism than with finding a realistic strategy to deal with Mexico's new political environment. Indeed, the party's decisions regarding Mariano Palacios Alcocer and Fernando Ortiz Arana reveal how the PRI had become a distant, bureaucratically driven organization focused on promoting power-driven agendas rather than assessing and reacting to the new realities. A rational-actor framework—the idea that people and groups act rationally in an effort to promote their interests—does little here, because there is no doubt that PRI leaders believed they were working to guarantee their party's future success. However, to explain the party's decision to promote a tired and discredited political slate in the state of Querétaro in 1997, we must turn to methods that are often ignored or downplayed in political science: organizational anthropology and organizational psychology, among others.

Here, Irving Janis's discussion (1972) of group dynamics also helps us understand how organizational failures can occur and lead to suboptimal results for any political party. To be sure, there is no doubt that the PAN was able to take advantage of opportunities the PRI handed it, because it had matured both politically and institutionally. However, the PAN's political victories, which began in the northern states in the 1980s and continued through the 1990s, would not have been possible—or at least would have been much more difficult—if the PRI had not handcuffed itself to the policymaking patterns of the past. Specifically these patterns included:
An undemocratic culture of secrecy, which led decisionmakers within the PRI to insulate themselves from new opinions and internal dissent by removing troublemakers and making sure committed technocrats managed key decisions.

Protecting the interests of the political camarilla, which led to focusing on the interests of the group, rather than the dynamics of growing popular dissent in the electorate.

Believing in the superiority of decisions made by elites, even when pertinent information and new ideas from local-level groups were brought forward.

Ignoring new realities that had long been recognized (like the end of one-party rule declared by President Salinas in 1988).

An inability to acknowledge the worst possible outcomes, because unchallenged elites wanted to believe that disaster and electoral failure would not occur on their watch.

If any one or all of these patterns had been addressed, different slates might have been selected and electoral outcomes would have changed on many levels. However, as we know, party leaders chose to ignore emerging political realities because of entrenched bureaucratic processes. Data from the 2003 midterm election—in which the PRI gained at least fifteen seats in the National Assembly while the PAN lost as many as fifty-four seats in the lower house—suggest the PRI may have begun to learn some of the lessons from its 2000 presidential loss. In particular, it appears that the biggest change is the PRI’s new openness and accessibility. From open primaries to new campaign techniques, which compelled the PRI “to knock on doors again” (Kraul 2003), the PRI gives the impression that it has begun to distance itself from habits and faces from the past. Unfortunately for the PRI in 2003, open primaries and a new, humbler approach by the PRI’s gubernatorial candidate, Francisco Ortiz Arana, could not cleanse the past, and Ortiz lost once again (45.1 percent to 42.0 percent) to the PAN’s gubernatorial candidate, Francisco Garrido Patron. The PRI also lost the county presidency in the state’s capital, and three out of four National Assembly seats.

These developments suggest that rational-choice frameworks alone cannot explain how it was that intelligent and politically astute party leaders in 1997 and 2000 could ignore changes that began to undermine the authority and hegemony of the PRI as far back as 1968. To understand this, we need to have a better understanding of how intelligent people, working within bureaucracies, disarm or normalize pertinent and potentially threatening information over time. This is especially the case when we find that for the 2003 midterm elections, the PAN held closed nominating conventions and, in the case of the state of Nuevo Leon (where the PAN lost by 20 percentage points), forbade candidates from criticizing either President Vicente Fox or the unpopular incumbent PAN governor (Kraul 2003). Why did the PAN do this? Now may be a good time to bring the ideas of bounded rationality and group-think back into the study of political science.

**Epilogue**

In 2006 the PAN’s Felipe Calderon was the acknowledged winner of Mexico’s closest presidential election, with 35.9 percent of the vote (15.0 million votes). The PRD’s Manuel Ló pez Obrador had secured 35.3 percent (14.7 million votes) (Instituto Federal Electoral 2006). Making things interesting on election night was that both the PAN and the PRD presidential candidates jumped the gun and declared themselves the winner well before the ballots had been officially counted. Both were widely criticized on election night for these “errors in judgment.” Making things almost surreal election night was watching the PRI’s national president, Mariano Palacios Alcocer, speaking on television on behalf of the PRI and mute PRI candidate Roberto Madrazo (who stood oddly silent next to Palacios), calling on the nation to respect the law and allow the process to work itself out. The PRI, it should be noted, could not join in declaring its candidate the winner, because Roberto Madrazo garnered only 22.6 percent of the presidential vote (9.3 million votes). What is important to acknowledge are three developments. First, with 35.9 percent of the vote, it is clear that the PAN did not capture the hearts of the majority of Mexicans. Second, it appears that Mexico may be on its way to a three-party system. Third, in what is especially pertinent to this chapter, it became clear during the presidential campaign that internal strife and open political divisions within the PRI helped ensure that the PRI would not occupy Los Pinos (the presidential mansion) in 2006.

Indeed, after Mariano Palacios Alcocer was appointed president of the PRI in 2005, he was immediately criticized—along with Roberto Madrazo—for the way the “new” party leadership muscled its way to the top. Apart from the criticisms from within the party’s rank and file, former governors were also outbreak about their discomfort with internal bickering and the leadership’s direction. Some even went so far as to openly suggest that the PRI was on “the path toward defeat” (Perez Silva 2005). While some of this can be chalked up to personal agendas and sour grapes, the reality is that many of the tactics, personalities, and political ghosts from the PRI’s past were rejuvenated. From tapping Palacios to lead the party’s renovation, to the haughty removal of “troublesome” party members (like Elba Esther Gordillo), to accusations of “unexplained wealth” against a pre-presidential candidate (Arturo Montiel Rojas), it was clear that there were open divisions and internal intrigue within the party. This would undermine the PRI’s once-famed organizational coher-
ence and doom its presidential prospects in 2006. There were even concerns that Roberto Madrazo would once again yield the dedazo (nod of approval) for the PRI's political candidates (Perez Silva 2005a). More simply, it appears the PRI learned very little from its presidential loss to Vicente Fox in 2000.

Several developments during this election cycle are also significant for what they tell us about democracy in Mexico.

- Apart from the early claims of Manuel López Obrador and his supporters, very little was said about electoral fraud across the country. This is a positive development.
- With the election results upheld by Mexico's Federal Election Institute, there can be no denying that Mexico came within one-half a percentage point (243,934 votes) of having its third political party legitimately elected to the presidency since 1994. Competitive elections are also a positive development.
- Anyone who closely watched how the PRI-dominated Congress pursued Manuel López Obrador for his actions while mayor of Mexico City could argue that Mexico has matured as a democracy. Going after a political opponent with innuendo and slander speaks more to Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton than it does to Porfirio Díaz and authoritarianism.
- Fourth, President Vicente Fox was attacked often, and had many of his initiatives blocked in Congress. This, too, is a positive development.

At the time this book went to press, initial claims of fraud and demands for a recount by the PRD had largely been dismissed. Months after the 2006 elections, Manuel López Obrador would often complain that he was the winner. But if demands for recounts, rather than boycotts and widespread claims of fraud, are any indication of political advancement, then Mexico may be on its way to a competitive party system. This suggests that whatever benefits continuity may bring, the type of political change Mexico is now experiencing bodes well for Mexico's political future. In the end, no one can deny that the PAN was able to secure very comfortable pluralities in the Chamber of Deputies (33.4 percent, PAN; 29.0 percent, PRD; 28.1 percent, PRI) and the Senate (33.5 percent, PAN; 29.7 percent, PRD; 28.1 percent, PRI) (Instituto Federal Electoral 2006). All of this suggests that while Mexico might still claim to have a "delicate" democracy, it appears very close to creating a viable, competitive, three-party system. What appears certain then is that while the PRI and its dinosaurs remain stuck in their own political tar pit, the electoral openings created by the PRI's political missteps are going a long way in helping Mexico's party system prosper.

### Appendix

#### Percentage of Total Votes Won in Mexico's Chamber of Deputies, by Major Party, 1961–2006 (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Year</th>
<th>PRI</th>
<th>PAN</th>
<th>PPS</th>
<th>PARM</th>
<th>PRD</th>
<th>Other*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>86.3%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988a</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000a</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Notes: Figures represent percentages of valid votes and may not sum to 100% due to rounding, the omission of votes to nonregistered candidates, and, for 1988, exclusion of parties that did not receive 2 percent of the vote. PRI = Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional); PAN = National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional); PPS = Popular Socialist Party (Partido Popular Socialista); PARM = Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution (Partido Autónomo de la Revolución Mexicana); PRD = Party of Democratic Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Democrática).

a. Through 2000, this column refers to the vote of "parastatal" parties, which were small parties that operated under the leadership of disaffected PRI party members like Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. The vote of the PRI/Cárdenas coalition listed here was 31.2 percent and included three parastatals—the PPS, PAS, and the PVEM (Green Party). For 2003, "Other" parties were the new and independent parties: Convergencia, Puebla (Green Party), PSN (National Socialist Party), PAS (Social Alliance Party), PMS (Socialist Party of Mexico), PLM (Mexican Liberal Party; i.e., classical liberals), and FC (Civic Force).

b. The 1988 presidential election can be seen as the official "coming out" party for the PRD, which was formed under the leadership of disaffected PRI party members like Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. The vote of the PRD in 1988 listed here was 32.1 percent and included three parastatals—the PPS, PAS, and the PARM (now the PUSM). The PRD was then a "parastatal" party in the sense that it was controlled by PRI elites and had its executive board dominated by PRI politicians.

c. The PRI's Christian Democratic wing (PDC) merged into the PSUM in 1988. The PAN won 24.6 percent of the vote in the National Assembly elections. This number is included in the "Other" category for the 2003 elections.