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Publication Date

2014

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

**The Definitive Reform. How the 1996 Electoral
Reform Triggered the Demise of the PRI's
Dominant-Party Regime**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

Sebastián Garrido de Sierra

2014

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

**The Definitive Reform. How the 1996 Electoral
Reform Triggered the Demise of the PRI's
Dominant-Party Regime**

by

Sebastián Garrido de Sierra

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Barbara Geddes, Chair

This research offers a new explanation of the demise of the authoritarian dominant-party regime led by the PRI in Mexico from 1929 to 2000. I claim that this was largely triggered by the electoral reform of 1996. The reform changed the structure of incentives for many PRI faction leaders at the federal and state level. This started the rapid erosion of the PRI's elite unity, leading to the migration of experienced cadres and the valuable clientelistic machines under their control to other parties. This, in turn, reduced the clientelistic advantage that the PRI had enjoyed for decades, leading to its eventual defeat in the 2000 presidential election.

But if the 1996 electoral reform was the main catalyst of the demise of the authoritarian regime led by the PRI, then why this party proposed, actively promoted and approved it? On the one hand, I argue that President Ernesto Zedillo proposed the reform in an attempt to reduce the recurrent post-electoral conflicts that characterized Mexico's state and municipal elections between 1988 and 1994. Zedillo aimed to eradicate this source of political instability by achieving an electoral reform that would modify the incentives of the opposition parties in such a way that they abandoned their extra-legal tactics in favor of electoral com-

petition and the legal mechanisms to settle any potential dispute. The PRI, on the other hand, supported the reform not only because certain parts of it significantly benefited the party, but also because the president still had the institutional and extra-institutional powers to decisively influence the political future of most *Priísta*. This allowed Zedillo to convince and, if necessary, force the members of the PRI to approve those aspects of the reform that went against the official party's interests.

I test my argument by combining archival research, interviews and the statistical analysis of two original datasets constructed for this project. My results indicate that the 1996 electoral reform increased at least 400% the probability of defections of high-ranked faction leaders from the PRI, even after controlling for alternative explanations. Additionally, the empirical results indicate that these defections had a significant impact on the PRI's electoral performance. For instance, this party lost almost twice as many votes in those gubernatorial races where it had suffered the defection of a high-ranked *Priísta* than in the states where the PRI remained united.

The dissertation of Sebastián Garrido de Sierra is approved.

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2014

To Jimena. Eight years after we started planning this adventure, the marathon is finally over, preciosa. I am deeply grateful for your love, patience and support throughout these years, and, of course, for those tender hugs. A otra cosa mariposa.

To Flavia. Who constantly reminds me what really matters in life.

To my parents, Tere and Celso. Who have always been an inspiration. Thanks for all your love, support and guidance over the years.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the effort and support of a large group of people and institutions. Many, many friends, colleagues and teachers have stimulated my thoughts throughout the last six years. Thanks to the luck of the draw, I was very fortunate to have Barbara Geddes as my advisor from the beginning of my doctoral program at UCLA. My debt to her is hard to measure. I learned from Barbara as her student and advisee, as well as her teacher and research assistant. Her thoughtful and honest comments saved me from walking into many dead ends and, more importantly, encouraged me to strengthen my arguments. Barbara's devotion to this profession, as well as her willingness to discuss any idea –including her own– redefined the standard for what I aim to be in many aspects of my life.

I am equally grateful to the rest of the members of my committee. Kathleen Bawn, Iván Berend, James DeNardo and Michael Thies all contributed in significant ways to improving my dissertation through their valuable insights and constructive feedback on the many iterations of this project. This dissertation was born as the final project for Jim's legendary PS 200 C class, in the Spring of 2009. A lot has changed since then, but not my admiration for Jim's commitment to his students and his capacity to create a methods class with layers of assessable knowledge for all audiences.

Kathy has been an invaluable source of encouragement and optimism in every stage of this project. She played a particularly important role when I formalized part of my ideas in a model that greatly helped me clarify and develop my argument. Apart from everything I learned from her in the classroom and our conversations, Kathy's capacity to balance her personal and professional life with joy will always be an example for me.

Mike was the first professor I met when I arrived at UCLA. He soon became

a very good friend. Mike's capacity to ask relevant and insightful questions on almost any kind of research in political science is astonishing. My research not only benefited from that, but also from his vast knowledge on political institutions and English grammar. The readers and I deeply thank you for carefully proofreading the manuscript more than once. Ally, if you ever read this, Mike more than fulfilled his promise of taking good care of me at UCLA.

This project received generous support from a number of sources. My doctoral education at UCLA would not have been possible without the financial support I received from Mexico's *Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología* (CONACyT), Fulbright-García Robles, and the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (SEP). My dissertation research and field work were supported by UC Mexus, as well as by UCLA's Department of Political Science and the Latin American Institute. UCLA's Dissertation Year Fellowship provided support during my last year of writing. I also thank the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at UCSD for inviting me to be a Visiting Scholar during the last stage of this project.

While doing my field work in Mexico, I was very fortunate to have an excellent team of research assistants that helped me review 15 years of newspapers to build one of the databases needed for this project. Many thanks to Maricruz Aquino, Tania Calvillo, Berta Díaz, Lucero González, Pablo Hernández, Celeste Mansuy, Itzel Moya, Marcos Mújica, Alejandro Ornelas, Carlos Reyes and Mariana Robles for their hard and meticulous work during those long hours at UNAM's *Hemeroteca Nacional*. I am also very grateful to Miguel González Compeán for supporting this research since the beginning, as well as for helping me arrange a large part of the interviews I conducted with several politicians directly involved in the bargaining of the 1996 electoral reform.

Many parts of this research benefited from the feedback and insights of several colleagues and friends. At UCLA, Jesse Acevedo, Raffa Asquer, Joseph Asunka, Joonbum Bae, Saritah Brierley, Ruthilia Carlitz, Marika Csapo, Miguelito La-

Cour, Julia Lee, Paasha “Passion” Mahdavi, Felipe “Picanhita” Nunes, Laurita Peritz, Amanda Rizkallah and Andrea Vilán generously listened to my arguments more times than any human should. Several of them even read parts of my dissertation more than once. I am particularly grateful to Sarah, Ruth, Lauren and Andrea who copyedited the last version of the document. All the improvements (which are many) are theirs. Needless to say, any remaining errors are mine.

At CIDE, my alma mater, I received very sharp and insightful comments and criticisms from Javier Aparicio, Allyson Benton, Carlos Elizondo, Joy Langston, Claudio López, Ignacio Marván, Gabriel Negretto and Julio Ríos. I am especially in debt to Ally, who not only helped me get into UCLA, but also read, commented and criticized several parts of this project. At UCSD, the comments and suggestions of Francisco Cantú, Froylán Enciso, Vanessa Freije, Mike Lettieri, Casey Lurtz, Marco Morales, Alex Ruiz, Peter Smith and David Shirk helped me polish the dissertation during its last stage.

Finally, I would like to thank all my friends in Mexico, Elei and other latitudes for always helping me put the Ph.D. in perspective. Borrowing Gustavo Cerati’s words, *esta tesis no hubiera sido nada sin ustedes. Algunos siguen hasta hoy. ¡Gracias...totales!*

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The end of the authoritarian regime led by Mexico's *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) for over seventy years has been a difficult case for the most influential theories that try to explain the demise of autocracies. If the survival of a dominant-party regime¹ depends on the unity of its factions (Van de Walle, 1994; Geddes, 1999), then why was the PRI able to survive for many decades after the factional defections led, for instance, by Juan Andreu Almazán in 1940 or Miguel Henríquez in 1952? Likewise, if economic development was the main driving force behind this process, as modernization theory proposes, Mexico should have democratized at the beginning of the 1950s (Przeworski et al., 2000, 87). However, it was not until 2000 that the PRI lost its first presidential election. In addition, Mexico's transition can hardly be explained as a concession made by the rich (or elite) to the poor (or citizens) in their historical struggle to reallocate wealth (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Boix 2003). Democratization was demanded by members of all social strata and the redistribution of income was not a central issue during this process.²

¹Dominant-party regimes are also called *single-party* regimes, *one-party* regimes or *hegemonic-party* regimes. I prefer the term “dominant” because this includes cases in which the dominant party is the only one formally allowed to exist (e.g., Senegal's Socialist Party (PS) before 1978 or Taiwan's *Kuomintang* (KMT) before 1987), as well as cases in which there might be more than one party that can compete but one of them is clearly dominant (e.g., Malaysia's United Malays National Organization (UMNO), Singapore's People's Action Party (PAP), Mexico's PRI). I adopt Geddes's definition of an *authoritarian* dominant-party regime as one in which “one party dominates access to political office and controls policy, though other parties may sometimes legally compete” (2004, 3), and the party has enough institutional autonomy to constrain the dictator's discretion over policy and personal choices.

²This does not imply, however, that the Mexican public opinion was not confronted around other economic issues. Dominguez and McCann show, for example, that before the 1988 election

The Mexican case is even more puzzling if we consider that even when this country experienced recurrent economic crises (Magaloni, 2006), the liberalization of its economy (Greene, 2008) and several electoral reforms (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000; Langston, 2006) between 1976 and 1994, by the end of 1995 the PRI was still the country's dominant political force. Although this party was not longer at its political peak, the PRI still controlled the presidency, 60% or more of the seats in both houses of the national congress, governed almost 90% of the states and held more than 50% of the seats in 94% of the state legislatures.³ Five years later, though, the PRI had lost its historical dominant position. By 2000 it no longer controlled the national executive, had lost the majority in both houses of congress, governed roughly half of the states and had a majority of the seats in around 60% of the state assemblies.

1.1 The argument in brief

What triggered the demise of the PRI regime in the second half of the 1990s? Why, if this party had been able to maintain its dominant position despite the economic and political changes that shocked Mexico for over 20 years, its hegemony finally ended in the late 1990s? This dissertation offers an answer to these questions. Building on the literature on authoritarian elites and clientelistic politics, I propose that while the survival of a dominant-party regime depends on the unity of its elite, not all splits entail similarly negative consequences for the future of the regime, as the existing theories have implicitly assumed (e.g., Van de Walle, 1994; Geddes, 2004). Given that most dominant-parties regimes tend to base their power on a

Mexico's electorate was deeply divided by issues like the debt rescheduling, the liberalization of foreign investments and trade, as well as the privatization of many public companies (1996, 53-65).

³The data on the composition of both houses of the federal congress was obtained from IFE (www.ife.org.mx). The number of states governed by the PRI and opposition parties was calculated using the data from Banamex (2001) and states electoral commissions. The share of seats controlled by the PRI in the state legislatures was calculated using the figures on Annex 1 of Lujambio (2000).

clientelistic machine organized in factions,⁴ my theory proposes that the damage that a defection can cause to these regimes is directly related to the amount of voters and resources that would migrate to other political parties or organizations as a result of one or more factional splits.

In turn, the number of voters and resources that leave the dominant party when it suffers a factional defection will be determined by at least two factors. The first is the *hierarchical position* of the defecting faction leader. The higher his ranking within the clientelistic pyramid, the larger the amount of resources, sub-factions and voters that will be under his control, and, consequently, the bigger the potential loss that his departure would represent for the dominant party. The second factor is the *number* of factions that leave the party. The larger this number, the bigger the amount of voters and resources that will migrate from the dominant party to other political organizations.

Consequently, my theory predicts that dominant-party regimes are likely to survive the defection of a small number of factions headed by low-ranked leaders, as well as the defections led by mid- or even high-ranked party leaders if these splits only involve a few factions and their resources. In contrast, what poses a much more serious threat to the regime's survival is when many mid- and high-ranked leaders decide to defect from the dominant party, taking with them the resources and the parts of the clientelistic machine under their control. Only these massive defections cause a systematic and severe damage to the dominant party's clientelistic machine because they considerably reduce the ruling party's capacity to mobilize and monitor voters, while simultaneously improving these same abilities for the opposition parties that adopt these factions.

Based on this theoretical innovation, I argue that until the mid-1990s the

⁴In Chapter 4 I define a faction as a group of politicians that share common goals and act together in order to advance their agenda and win positions within the party and the political regime. Factions might control different types and amounts of human, material, organizational and financial resources.

PRI was able to maintain the electoral market so uneven in its favor that most *Priístas* did not have incentives to leave the dominant party in order to join or create an opposition party. This, in turn, allowed the PRI to retain many of its most experienced and qualified cadres and, more importantly, to preserve its significant comparative advantage to mobilize voters by keeping control over its clientelistic structure. Hence, by limiting widespread defections of mid- and high-ranked party leaders and their factions⁵ the PRI was able to remain as Mexico's dominant political force until the mid-1990s.⁶

This situation was drastically changed by the approval of the 1996 electoral reform.⁷ Several authors have noted that this reform generated a more competitive set of electoral conditions at the federal and state level, improving the situation of the opposition forces (e.g., Castellanos, 1998; Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000; Molinar and Weldon, 2001). What has been less noticed, though, is the profound impact that this reform had on the PRI's internal life. The institutional changes implemented in 1996 opened an unprecedented opportunity to many PRI's faction leaders to continue their political careers in an opposition party in case they did not receive the benefits (e.g., nominations, perks) they ex-

⁵The PRI suffered some factional defections before 1996, the most famous one being the split of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, among other members of the *Corriente Democrática*, in 1987 and 1988. I discuss this case in greater detail in Chapter 4, as well as why this and other defections that included a relative small number of factions and/or factions of low hierarchy did not cause the end of the PRI.

⁶Again, it is unquestionable that several factors worked against the PRI's electoral performance during the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. While the repeated economic crises alienated a growing sector of the population, the five electoral reforms implemented between 1977 and 1994 reduced the regime's capacity to commit fraud, improved the electoral commission's autonomy, and increased the proportionality of the political system, among other things. In addition, the increasing degree of modernization and urbanization of different regions of the country raised the likelihood of citizens opposition to the regime and reduced the number of voters dependent on clientelistic handouts (Molinar, 1991; Magaloni, 2006). Another important factor is the historic –though politically contained– split of the *Corriente Democrática*. Still, what is remarkable is that by the mid-1990s these and other factors did not change the PRI's position as Mexico's dominant party.

⁷I agree with the scholars that have emphasized the relevance of the electoral reforms implemented between 1977 and 1994 (Molinar, 1991; Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000). Nevertheless, I argue that it was not until the 1996 reform that the structure of incentives of most PRI faction leaders was decisively transformed.

pected from the ruling party. Thus, by transforming the structure of incentives for many of the PRI's faction leaders, the 1996 reform initiated the progressive and systematic erosion of the party's unity across the country. As a result, the PRI not only lost experienced cadres but it also saw the migration of many parts of its clientelistic structure to other parties, breaking its historical advantage over the mobilization of voters. Eventually, the increasing number of factional defections, in addition to the deterioration of the public perception of the PRI after seven decades in power, caused the defeat of this party in several municipal, gubernatorial and legislative races, and, eventually, the 2000 presidential election.

But if the 1996 electoral reform was the main catalyst of the demise of the authoritarian regime led by the PRI, then why did this party propose and unanimously approve it? The answer to this question is particularly relevant because the reform could have been presented and ratified by those *Priístas* who wanted to leave the party in the first place. If this was the case, then the causal arrow should go in the opposite direction to the argument proposed here. However, there is substantive evidence that this was not the case. For instance, the most important parts of the reform (e.g., the modifications to the electoral law, the appointment of the electoral commission officials) were directly negotiated by the party leaders and the Secretary of Interior outside Congress. Once an agreement was reached, the PRI legislative groups were told how to vote. Also, none of the government high-ranked officials (e.g., Esteban Moctezuma, Emilio Chuayffet, Arturo Núñez) nor PRI leaders (e.g., Santiago Oñate, Humberto Roque Villanueva) directly involved in the negotiation of this reform defected from the party during the following eight years after its approval.

As I argue in Chapter 5, President Ernesto Zedillo proposed the electoral reform *against* the wishes of many sectors of the party in an effort to reduce the political instability generated by the recurrent post-election conflicts that characterized Mexico's state and municipal elections between the late 1980s and

the mid-1990s. These post-election disputes increased the level of conflict between the federal government and the opposition parties, as well as within the PRI. Thus, the main goal of Zedillo's reform was to eradicate this source of political instability by modifying the incentives of the opposition parties in such a way that they abandoned their extra-legal tactics in favor of electoral competition and the legal mechanisms to settle any potential dispute.

The PRI approved the reform partly because some of its elements significantly benefited the interests of the party. In particular, the reform reduced the president's capacity to intervene and modify the results of state and local elections, benefiting the interests of local PRI bosses, while increasing the financial independence of the national and state branches of the party from the federal executive, as well as the transparency of these resources. All these had been elements of tension between the president and the official party for decades. Additionally, even when many of the changes proposed in the reform went against the interest of the PRI, the party's legislators approved it by unanimity largely because even by 1996 the president was the most powerful political actor within Mexico's political system, capable of defining the political future of most members in the official party. This predominance, derived from formal and informal sources, allowed Zedillo to mobilize his party to approve the central components of this reform (and several others).⁸

1.2 Dissertation's outline

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Given that several authors from different social disciplines have argued that the end of an authoritarian dominant-

⁸Many authors, journalist and observers have argued that Zedillo was a weak president. Although in Chapter 5 I give a detailed explanation of why I think this is not the case, for now it is enough to mention that the Mexican constitution was reformed 76 times during Zedillo's administration, many of which were proposed by Zedillo. This is the highest number of constitutional reforms for any PRI administration to date. Each of them was approved by a two-thirds majority in both houses of the federal Congress, as well as the majority of the states assemblies.

party regime is strongly associated to the situation of its economy, I start my dissertation by empirically testing this hypothesis. In particular, in Chapter 2 I study how the economic performance of more than 65 dominant-party regimes affected their likelihood to stay in power during the period 1950-2009. In order to test for alternative causal mechanisms, I explore the consequences of short- and mid-term crises, as well as the effect of drastic economic changes in a particular year with respect to the average growth of the previous years. The results of different models consistently show that although statistically significant, the performance of the economy has a small effect on the likelihood that a dominant-party regime survives. The evidence indicates, for instance, that the probability that these regimes end after experiencing a deep and sustained recession (i.e., an average economic growth of -3% over five years) is as low as 2.6%.

But if economic performance is not a particularly good predictor of the demise of a dominant-party regime, then how can we explain the end of these kind of autocracies, and, in particular, the one that ruled Mexico for over 70 years? To answer this question I present my Clientele Migration Theory in Chapter 3. I start the chapter describing the characteristics of the clientelistic nature of most –if not all– dominant-party regimes, as well as why this element is key to understand the survival and eventual demise of these dictatorships. Based on this theoretical pillar, I propose a new explanation for why the survival of a dominant-party regime depends on the unity of its leaders (and the factions under their control).⁹ Then, I claim that in order to maintain the cohesion among its ranks and stay in power, all dominant-party regimes must create a situation in which most of their faction leaders perceive the ruling party as their “safer bet”.¹⁰ As long as this happens,

⁹According to my argument, the unity of the party’s elite is a more complex equilibrium than has been proposed before. One that is likely to hold under very different circumstances, including when the party’s faction leaders receive an expected utility that although low in absolute terms, is relatively higher to what they could get in any other party.

¹⁰As I explain in more detail below, a dominant party will be the “safer bet” as long as it is able to provide its factions leaders an expected utility that is *relatively* higher than what any other political organization could offer.

few faction leaders will have incentives to defect from the ruling party and the regime has higher chances of remaining in power.

I conclude the chapter proposing that while a dominant party might experience different types of defections, the regime's survival will only be seriously threatened when many mid- and high-ranked leaders decide to leave the party along with their faction and resources. Consequently, in order to explain the demise of a dominant-party regime we need to understand what factor(s) trigger these type of massive factional defections, as well as why this leads to the end of the regime.¹¹ The remainder of the dissertation is devoted to answer both of these questions for the PRI's case.

In Chapter 4 I use this theory to explain the demise of the PRI. I first describe how this dominant party managed to remain as the "safer bet" of Mexico's political system for almost seventy years and, consequently, to prevent the massive defection of most mid- and high-ranked factions. The mechanisms used by the party changed over time, allowing the PRI to largely maintain the cohesion among its ranks even after the country started experiencing recurrent economic crises, the liberalization of its economy and several electoral reforms in the late 1970s. Then, in the second part of this chapter I explain why the 1996 electoral reform transformed this situation in a drastic way, triggering the unprecedented and systematic wave of mid- and high-ranked factional defections that this party experienced in the late 1990s.

In the last section of Chapter 4 I test two of the core observable implications of my argument. If the explanation proposed above is correct, then we should see:

¹¹These elements are strongly related to the particular mechanisms used by the dominant party to remain as the regime's safer bet. They might include political reforms, as in the case of Mexico, or international shocks. For instance, if the mechanisms and resources used by a dominant party to maintain the unity of its factions relies on the economic, military or political support provided by a foreign regime or institution (e.g., the communist regimes in East and Central Europe), or even the exports of a particular commodity, the structure of incentives of the member of these parties –and, consequently, the cohesion of the elite– might be upset, at least theoretically, by an event that suddenly interrupts the flow of the crucial resources that the regime requires.

i) a low number of defections before the reform was approved and a significant increase after this happened; and, ii) a strong correlation between the occurrence of high-ranked factional defections and the PRI's electoral decline, on the one hand, and the electoral rise of the opposition party that received the defecting factions, on the other.

In order to test the first observable implication I constructed two new comprehensive datasets on the topic. The first measures the total number of defections of PRI members reported by five Mexican national periodicals between 1986 and 2000. The second database focuses on the defections of mid- and high-ranked PRI members. It measures if one or more of the PRI members that contended for this party's gubernatorial nomination defected immediately before, during or after the party selected its candidate for the 112 governor elections held between 1987 and 2006. The evidence of both databases supports the argument presented here. The first dataset shows that more PRI members left this party in the two and a half years that followed the 1996 reform's approval than in the ten and a half previous years. In addition, the statistical analysis of the second database illustrates that the 1996 reform increased by almost 400% the probability that a mid- or high-ranked PRI leader defected from the party, even after controlling for socioeconomic levels in the state, economic growth and, importantly, the PRI's earlier electoral performance in the party leader's state.

I test the second observable implication by comparing the average change of the PRI's vote share between gubernatorial elections (period 1987-2000) in those states where the ruling party suffered the defection of a gubernatorial contender and where it did not. The results indicate that the PRI lost 96% more votes in those races where a high-ranked member defected right before the election than in the states where the PRI remained united. And if we replicate this analysis for the opposition parties, the evidence illustrates that between 1988 and 2000 these parties won, on average, 149.5% more votes in those gubernatorial elections

where they received a PRI gubernatorial contender that had defected from the dominant party, than in the elections where they did not.

Finally, in Chapter 5 I address why President Zedillo proposed the 1996 electoral reform the day he took power, as well as why his party approved it. In order to answer these questions I collected qualitative and quantitative evidence from primary and secondary sources. In the first case, I interviewed seven politicians directly involved in the negotiation of Mexico's 1996 electoral reform. These actors had been either part of Zedillo's close political team and cabinet, or PRI legislators that played an important role during the bargaining of this reform at the Chamber of Deputies.¹² In addition, I use a wide array of secondary sources to support the explanations proposed above.

1.3 Dissertation's contributions

This dissertation makes several contributions to understand the survival and demise of dominant-party regimes in general terms. My theory builds on two branches of the literature on authoritarian regimes that have historically been separated: one that emphasizes the importance on authoritarian elites on the survival of a dictatorship, and another that highlights the important role that clientelistic machines play for the future of a dominant-party regime. By combining these two theories, the argument presented in this research improves our theoretical leverage to predict when and why factional defections are likely to cause the end of this kind of autocracy (i.e., when many mid- and high-ranked factions leave the dominant party). This explanation also solves an apparently contradiction between the theory and reality (i.e., not all defections cause the end of a dominant party). Additionally, while several authors have argued that the survival of a dominant-party regime largely depends on the unity of its elite or

¹²See the Appendix for a list of the institutions at which these politicians worked and the positions they held during the negotiation of the reform.

factions, this research offers the first empirical test –to my knowledge– of this hypothesis.

This project also improves our capacity to explain the end of the PRI-regime in important ways. This is the first research that highlights and explains why the 1996 electoral reform had such a profoundly negative impact on the unity and discipline among the PRI's factions, and, consequently, on the survival of this dominant party. My theory explicitly emphasizes that one of the central advantages that the PRI was able to maintain until the mid-1990s –one that proved particularly valuable when the electoral competition started to increase in the mid-1980s– was its unparalleled capacity to mobilize voters through its extensive clientelistic networks. It was not until the PRI's clientelistic machine started to weaken as a result of the systematic erosion of the party's unity, that the opposition parties substantially improved their capacity to mobilize voters, mainly by incorporating former PRI leaders along with their respective factions or local clientelistic political machines. Hence, Mexico's democratization was possible not because the PRI's clientelistic structure disappeared, as some authors have implicitly or explicitly argued, but because it fragmented and parts of it migrated to other parties. This, in turn, gave way to a more competitive clientelistic market in which opposition parties could construct and maintain their own clientelistic network. To be clear, my point is not that the persuasion and coordination of voters were irrelevant strategies for the opposition parties, as previous authors have proposed (Magaloni, 2006; Greene, 2008), but that they were insufficient to defeat the PRI.

In addition, the results of this research indicate that the PRI did not require oversized electoral majorities to remain as a united party, as some authors have argued (e.g., Magaloni, 2006). Instead, what this party needed was an institutional framework that allowed it to be, at the margin, the most competitive option or “safer bet” for the average high-ranked *Priísta*. The evidence also illustrates

that the decisive fracture of the PRI did not start at the national level, as many expected, but at the state level, and these defections occurred at different moments. This helps explain the variance in the PRI's electoral results across states after 1996, as well as why this party was able to remain as the largest political force at the federal level until the end of the 1990s.

Moreover, the conceptualization of Mexico's democratic transition proposed in this dissertation is consistent with many facts that challenge previous theories. For instance, the argument presented here is able to explain the temporal lag between the economic crises, the liberalization of the economy and the electoral reforms that took place between the late-1970s and the mid-1990s, on the one hand, and the final defeat of the PRI in the 2000 presidential election, on the other. This theory also accounts for why the PRI suffered massive defections after the 1996 electoral reform, but was largely able to maintain its internal unity after the five previous electoral reforms. Likewise, this argument helps us understand why if by the mid-1990s voters had so many complaints against the PRI and its members, many former hard-core *Priístas* were elected as governors, mayors or legislators under an opposition banner, just a few months after leaving the dominant party.

The theory proposed in this study also provides a new framework to examine some of the most relevant features of Mexico's current political system. It sheds new light on questions such as why the PRI did not collapse and disappear after losing the presidency, as many observers forecasted? Why has clientelism been so persistent and common across Mexico's parties after the transition (Osorio, 2010), when this type of political relationship used to be only associated with the PRI? How and why has the opposition parties' electoral base of support changed since 1996, both in terms of magnitude and geographic distribution? What is the relationship between these changes and the factional defections suffered by the PRI? Why only two of the nine national political parties created after 1994 (i.e., *Convergencia Democrática* –later *Movimiento Ciudadano*– and *Nueva Alianza*) have

been able to maintain their national register for more than one federal election?
I discuss tentative answers in the Conclusions chapter of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

Does Poor Economic Performance Explain the End of Dominant-Party Regimes?

Several authors have argued that the end of authoritarian dominant-party regimes (henceforth, DPRs) is strongly associated to sustained periods of poor economic performance (e.g., Berend, 2009; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994; Greene, 2008; Magaloni, 2006). According to these scholars, repeated or prolonged economic crises increase the likelihood that a dominant-party regime ends because they reduce the standard of living of the population, raising the grievances against the regime while reducing its legitimacy. Additionally, poor economic performance and the common quasi-forced liberalization of the economy significantly shrink the resources that the regime can distribute to maintain its clientelistic structure. Consequently, support from the political elite and the population in general diminishes. Eventually, these elements combine and lead to the end of the dominant-party regime by either military coups, popular protests or electoral defeats.

Despite the logical appeal of these arguments, all of them have been derived from and tested in single-case and small-N studies.¹ The few large-N studies that statistically analyze the survival chances of an authoritarian regime and its economic performance have found contradictory results (e.g., Geddes, 2004; Przeworski et al., 2000). Whereas Przeworski et al. conclude that dictatorships

¹While Mexico's PRI is the central case of Magaloni and Greene's theory, Bratton and Van de Walle study Sub-Saharan Africa's "plebiscitary" and "competitive" one-party regimes, and Berend's analysis focuses in the former communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe.

–in general– are less sensitive to economic crises than democracies,² Geddes suggests that economic crises have a negative effect on the probability of survival of a dominant-party regime, but these results are not statistically significant at the 10% level (see page 24 and Table 2 of her paper). Furthermore, none of these cross-national studies has analyzed the relationship between the short- and mid-term economic performance and the chances of survival for the universe of dominant-party regimes *alone*.³ Thus, while we know that dominant-party regimes are more likely to survive economic crises than military regimes, but more susceptible to collapse than personalist dictatorships (Geddes, 2004), we still do not know what is the magnitude of the effect of the economic performance of a dominant-party regime on its survival chances.

This chapter offers a new statistical analysis of how the economic performance of more than 65 dominant-party regimes affected their likelihood to stay in power during the period 1950-2009.⁴ Unlike previous studies, which limited their analysis to the effect of short-term economic changes (i.e., yearly GDP change) on the survival chances of these type of regimes, in this chapter I explore the consequences of economic performance using three metrics: i) short-term crises; ii) mid-term crises; and, iii) drastic economic changes in a particular year with respect to the average growth of the previous years. Using two economic databases (i.e., Penn World Table Version 7.0 and Angus Maddison’s dataset), the results of different Weibull and Logit models show that although statistically significant,

²This result should be considered with caution, though, because Przeworski et al. coded the end of an authoritarian regime only when there is a transition from a dictatorship to a democracy, but not when one authoritarian regime replaces another. As a result, in their database dictatorships last longer than they would if the end of an autocracy was coded every time it is followed by a different kind authoritarian regime. This might affect their results.

³These authors have either studied how the economy affects the stability of an authoritarian regime without distinguishing among types of dictatorships (e.g., Przeworski et al., 2000), or how the economy impacts the survival chances of a dominant-party regime vis-à-vis military and personalist regimes (e.g., Geddes, 2004).

⁴For reasons that I explain below, although the descriptive analysis presented in the first section of the chapter includes 76 dominant-party regimes and covers the period 1946-2010, the statistical models in the second section consider between 66 and 70 regimes during the period 1950-2009.

the performance of the economy has a small effect on the likelihood that a DPR prevails. This holds true regardless of which of the three operationalizations of economic performance just described is used.

I start the chapter providing a descriptive analysis of the duration in power and rate of failure the universe of dominant-party regimes considered, as well as of their economic performance. After describing some characteristics of the dependent and main independent variables of this study, in the second section I present different Weibull and Logit models that analyze the relationship between these variables while controlling for other factors. I conclude by discussing the main contributions of this analysis.

2.1 Descriptive Analysis

The analysis that follows is based on all 76 dominant-party regimes⁵ included in the database on political regimes constructed by Geddes, Wright, and Franz (2012, hereafter GWF).⁶ The database covers the period 1946-2010 and contains a total of 4,587 country-year observations of authoritarian regimes. Within the database, 2,262 country-year correspond to authoritarian DPRs; this is the initial universe of observations considered in this study.⁷ Each observation has information on 15 variables, including the calendar year, the name of the country, the type of political regime in place, its duration in power up to the respective calendar year, as well as the status of the regime (i.e., still in power or not).

⁵See the Appendix for the list of cases.

⁶It is worth mentioning two points. First, I reclassified the South African dictatorship that ruled from 1910 until 1994 as a “pure” dominant-party regime (GWF coded it as an “oligarchy” within the larger category of “party”). Second, I recoded the beginning of Mexico’s dominant-party regime as 1929 (originally coded as 1915), because it is then when the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR), predecessor of the PRI, was founded.

⁷As I explain below, in certain parts of the analysis the number of country-year observations decreases either because the lack of economic data or because the way I constructed certain measurements of economic performance inevitably implies losing observations.

2.1.1 The Dependent Variable

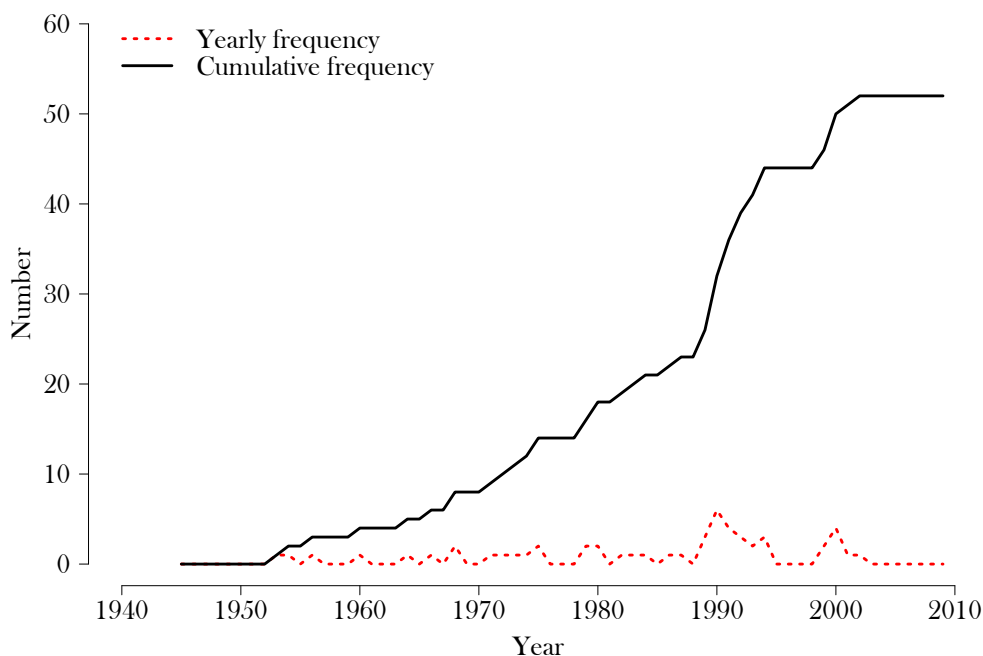
By December 31, 2010, 52 of the 76 DPRs included in GWF database have ended. Figure 2.1 offers a chronological illustration of this process. The red dotted line represents the number of DPRs that ended every year between 1946 and 2010 and the black solid line shows the cumulative number of failed regimes over this period. Interestingly, the red dotted line shows that even when at least one DPR ended in 29 of the 65 years analyzed, two periods had a significantly higher frequency of regime failures. The first period goes from 1989 to 1994, when 21 regimes ended, and the second took place between 1999 and 2000, when 6 more regimes failed. Put in comparative terms, more regimes ended in the 12 years between 1989 and 2000 (27 cases, 52% of the total) than in the remaining 53 years under study (25 cases, 48%).⁸

The black line offers a different perspective of these numbers and suggests that we can divide the 65 years analyzed in four periods. The first one includes the initial eight years (1946-1952), a period in which no regime ended. The second goes from 1953 to 1988, when the average number of regimes that ended every year was 0.59. In the third period, from 1989 to 2000, this average grew to 2.25 (between 1989 and 1994 this figure reached its maximum with 3.5 regimes ending per year). The last period goes from 2002 to 2010 and it is the longest period of consecutive years (nine) without the end of a DPR.

As can be noted, the slope of the black line does not suffer drastic jumps between 1970 and 1988 (0.83), indicating that the average number of failed regimes did not change after the 1973 and 1979 oil shocks, neither in the short- nor mid-term. In contrast, the drastic increase in the average number of ended regimes between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s is temporarily correlated with two spe-

⁸Of the 52 regimes that ended, 20 of them (38.5%) did so between 1990-1999, 10 (19.2%) failed between 1980-1989, 8 (15.4%) ended between 1970-1979, 6 (11.5%) brokedown between 2000-2009, 5 (9.6%) failed between 1960 and 1969, and 3 (5.8%) ended in the period 1946-1959.

Figure 2.1: Frequency of Dominant-Party Regimes' Ends, 1946-2010



cific events: first, the profound transformation of the Soviet foreign policy towards the Central and Eastern European communist regimes in the late-1980s,⁹ and, second, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. These two political events led to the end of the nine communist regimes of Central-Eastern Europe,¹⁰ two more in Central Asia,¹¹ as well as five other DPRs around the world that defined themselves as socialist or communist.¹² In sum, 16 of the 21 DPRs (76.2%) that ended between 1989 and 1994 were communist or socialist regimes. This is an important fact

⁹Shortly after taking power, Mikhail Gorbachev made clear that he would tolerate –and even promote– the political liberalization of these regimes. He later confirmed this significant policy shift by progressively reducing the size of the Soviet military in the region (Brown, 2007; Bunce, 1999).

¹⁰These regimes are Albania (1944-91), Bulgaria (1944-90), Czechoslovakia (1948-89), the German Democratic Republic or East Germany(1949-90), Hungary (1947-90), Poland (1944-89), Romania (1945-89), the Soviet Union (1917-91) and Yugoslavia (1945-90). All, except Albania and Yugolsavia, were also part of the Soviet Bloc.

¹¹These cases are Afghanistan (1978-92) and Mongolia (1921-93).

¹²The self-definition as socialist or communist regimes was either formal, through the constitution, or informal by the policies adopted by the leaders of the party or governments. The five countries included in this category are Algeria (1962-92), Congo-Brazzaville (1968-91), Nicaragua (1979-90), South Yemen (1967-90) and Zambia (1967-91).

to keep in mind when analyzing and modeling the relationship between economic performance and the survival chances of a dominant-party regime, particularly because some of these regimes might have been maintained in power by the direct occupation or the threat of military intervention by the Soviet Union (see footnote 14). Consequently, the duration of this group of foreign imposed regimes seems to be largely explained by events outside domestic control (Geddes, 2004, footnote 9). I return to this point below.

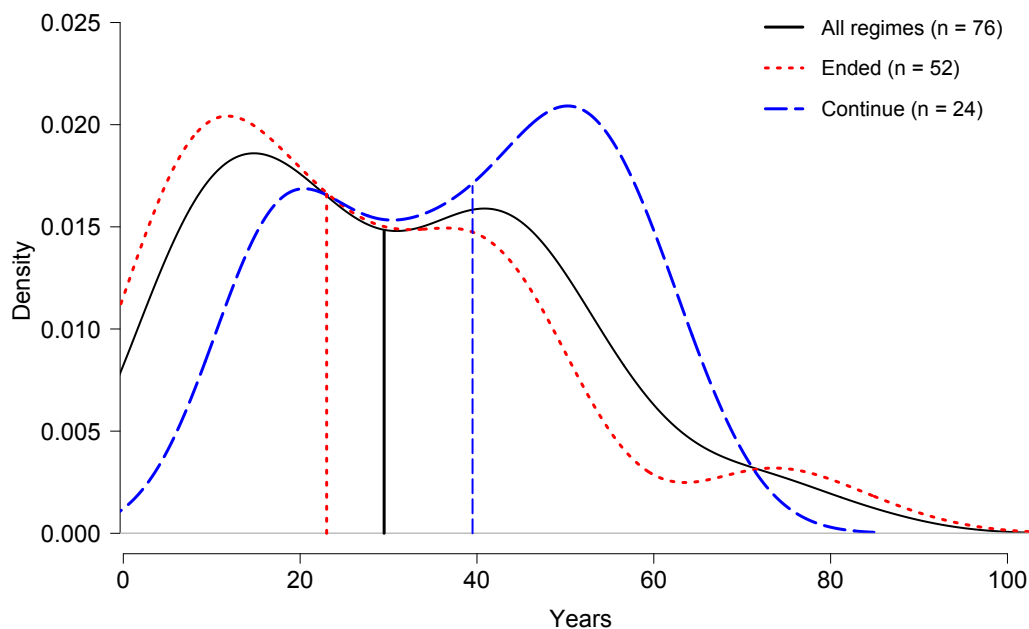
Along with analyzing the number of regimes that ended and survived between 1946 and 2010, it is also important to understand how long each of these dictatorships has lasted. Figure 2.2 shows the distribution of the duration in power of the dominant-party regimes. While the solid black line describes the density of the whole universe of cases (76), the red dotted line represents the density of the regimes that ended (52) and the blue dashed line describes the density of the regimes that continued as of 2010 (24). The corresponding vertical lines illustrate the median duration of each group of cases.

The distributions of these three groups of regimes illustrate at least two relevant points. The first is the significant variation in the longevity of DPRs. While Turkey's Democrat Party lasted 4 years in power, South Africa's National Party ruled for 84 years.¹³ The median duration for the whole universe of DPRs is 29.5 years (the mean is 30.6), which drops to 24 years (and 29.9 for the mean) if we exclude the regimes that were sustained by an external regime.¹⁴ In addition, the distribution of the whole universe of regimes is bimodal, with the first peak around year 12 and the second around year 42. The second point revealed by Figure 2.2

¹³Despite this significant dispersion, it is important to mention that, unlike other works that study the survival of dominant-party regimes (e.g., Greene, 2010), I do not exclude cases from the analysis as a result of their (short) duration in power.

¹⁴Following Gedde's (2004) criteria on this point, the excluded regimes are Afganistan (1979-93), Bulgaria (1947-90), Czechoslovakia (1948-90), German Democratic Republic (1945-90), Hungary (1949-90), and Poland (1947-89). Cambodia's regime is also excluded because between 1979 and 1990 it was sustained in power largely by the Vietnamese army and the threat of a potential intervention by the Soviet Union.

Figure 2.2: Duration of Dominant-Party Regimes



is the significant differences in the longevity of the regimes that ended and those that continued as of 2010. Despite including the four longest-lived dominant-party regimes,¹⁵ the median duration of the group of regimes that ended is 16.5 years lower than the median longevity of the regimes that continue in power (23 vs. 39.5 years).¹⁶

2.1.2 Economic Performance

The economic performance of a dominant-party regime, the main explanatory variable considered in this chapter, can be conceptualized and operationalized in different ways. Here I propose three alternatives. Each operationalization aims to capture a specific mechanism through which the economy could affect the survival

¹⁵These regimes are Mexico's PRI (71 years), Mongolia's MPP (72 years), the Soviet Union's CPSU (74 years) and South Africa's NP (84 years).

¹⁶The mean duration of each group of regimes is 27.1 and 38.2 years, respectively. In addition, the difference in the median duration of these two groups of regimes remains the same (13.5 years) if we exclude the foreign-imposed regimes.

chances of a DPR. The first and simplest option, which assumes that survival chances of this type of autocracy are affected by the short-term performance of the economy, is the change in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita from one year to the next, measured in real terms. I call this variable *Short-Term Growth*.

However, it can be reasonably argued that the probability of survival of a DPR is not affected by the immediate performance of its economy, but by the results delivered by the regime over a relatively longer period of time. Political elites and citizens might be able to recognize and “forgive” a temporary economic downturn, especially if it is preceded by a sustained period of growth. But patience might run out, and the political and social instability increase, if the poor economic results prolong and accumulate for several years (e.g., Magaloni, 2006). In order to capture this alternative causal mechanism I constructed a variable called *Five-Year Moving Average*. For each country-year, this variable reports the mean value of *Short-Term Growth* for the observation year and the four previous years.¹⁷ I also constructed and analyzed a three-, a four- and a seven-year moving average, but I decided to include the *Five-Year Moving Average* because it is the alternative with the largest effect in the models presented below.¹⁸

A third way to conceptualize the relationship between the economic performance of a DPR and its chances of prevailing in power could be to argue that when political elites and/or the population evaluate the economic performance of the regime, they compare the current situation with the average economic results experienced in the previous years. Thus, the likelihood of survival of a dominant-party regime might decrease as a result of sudden relative drops in the country’s economic performance, either because the economy is experiencing a severe crisis

¹⁷For example, for the country-year observation of Singapore in 1976 the *Five-Year Moving Average* reports the mean of *Short-Term Growth* of this country for 1976, 1975, 1974, 1973 and 1972, which in turn, is equivalent to calculating the average of the yearly change in real GDP per capita between 1975-1976, 1975-1974, 1974-1973, 1973-1972 and 1972-1971.

¹⁸The results not included in the paper are available upon request.

or because it is growing at a significantly slower (but still positive) rate than before. This could explain why some dominant-party regimes ended even when they were merely experiencing an economic slowdown.¹⁹ To operationalize this third alternative I constructed a variable called *Deviation From Seven-Year Moving Average*, or *Deviation* for shorthand. This variable measures the deviation of the value of *Short-Term Growth* of every observation year from the corresponding value of a Seven-Year moving average of *Short-Term Growth* previously constructed.²⁰

The measurements of economic performance just described were constructed using data on real GDP per capita, base 2005, included in the Penn World Table Version 7.0, hereafter PWT 7.0 (Heston, Summers and Aten, 2011).²¹ Before analyzing these variables it is worth mentioning that the three of them miss a significant number of observations for two different reasons. The first is intrinsic to the database used. The PWT 7.0 data covers six years less than the GWF database (1950-2009 vs. 1946-2010, respectively).²² More importantly, PWT 7.0 misses data for several country-year for specific regimes²³ and it does not include any observation for seven regimes: Czechoslovakia (1948-89), the German Democratic Republic (1949-90), North Korea (1948-), Serbia (1991-2000), South Yemen (1967-90), the USSR (1917-91) and Yugoslavia (1945-90).

¹⁹Cameroon (1960-83) and Senegal (1960-00) are two examples of this. During the last year of these regimes the GDP per capita grew 2.3% and 1.4%, respectively. Although positive, these figures were 4.5% and 2.4% lower than the average growth experienced in the previous seven years.

²⁰For instance, for the country-year observation of Singapore in 1994, *Deviation* reports the difference between the value of *Short-Term Growth* for that year, with respect to the mean of *Short-Term Growth* for years 1994, 1993, 1992, 1991, 1990, 1989 and 1988. This Seven-Year moving average was constructed following the logic described in footnote 18 for the case of the *Five-Year Moving Average*.

²¹In particular, I used the variable called “PPP Converted GDP Per Capita (Chain Series), at 2005 constant prices”, with codename “rgdpch”, as the measurement of real GDP per capita. In all the models presented below the three measurements of economic performance are lagged one year to reduce problems of endogeneity or reverse causation.

²²Consequently, 2009 is the last year considered in the rest of this analysis.

²³The problem is particularly relevant for some former or still existing communist regimes, for which the real GDP per capita data is only available after 1960 (Romania) or 1970 (Albania, Cuba, Hungary, Mongolia and Vietnam). Similarly, the economic data for Liberia’s regime (1944-80) starts in 1970.

The second reason why the three measurements of economic performance have missing data is due to the way in which they are constructed. Given that these variables measure changes or averages over certain periods of time, and that the PWT 7.0 data starts five years later than the GWF data, the observations of *Short-Term Growth*, *Five-Year Moving Average* and *Deviation From Seven-Year Moving Average* start, respectively, one, five and seven years later than the first observation of real GDP per capita. This problem increases the number of missing observations for those DPRs for which the available economic data starts later than the first year of the regime. In a couple of cases, it even implies entire regimes are excluded from the analysis.²⁴ Unfortunately, this second problem of missing data cannot be mitigated while using the PWT 7.0 database.

While most of the statistical analysis presented below uses the PWT 7.0 data, I deal with the potential problems that the missing observations could create in two ways. On the one hand, I use *Amelia* (Honaker, King and Blackwell, 2010) software in R to impute part of the missing values of PWT 7.0.²⁵ This procedure is useful to include imputed values of real GDP per capita for part of the missing years that correspond to Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Liberia, the USSR and Yugoslavia. Still, the regimes of North Korea, Serbia and South Yemen are not included in the rest of this analysis for lack of economic data. On the other hand, I recalculated some of the models presented below using the economic data from Angus Maddison's database (2011) as a robustness check. This alternative source

²⁴The regimes of Colombia (1949-53) and Paraguay (1948-54) are excluded from the analysis if *Five-Year Moving Average* or *Deviation From Seven-Year Moving Average* are used.

²⁵In order to impute the missing data I first merged the GWF database with PWT 7.0 and a previous version of this last, PWT 5.6, which includes data on real GDP per capita (base 1985) for Czechoslovakia (1960-92), East Germany (1970-88), the USSR (1960-89) and Yugoslavia (1960-90). Next, I erased all the country-year that correspond to North Korea, Serbia and South Yemen because none of the PWT databases contains economic data for them. Then I ran ten imputations of the missing data and averaged the results. After this, I erased the imputed values of those country-year that precede the first year for which any of the two versions of the PWT database included data. For example, given that the first entry of real GDP per capita for Mongolia in either PWT 5.6 or PWT 7.0 is 1970, the imputed values for the previous years are deleted. The diagnostic plots of these imputations are available upon request.

of economic data covers the period 1950-2008, contains information on 72 of the 76 regimes included in this chapter,²⁶ and has a significantly lower number of missing observations. I recalculated all the models presented in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 using the imputed data of PWR 7.0 and Maddison's data. However, due to space constraints I only present the results of four of them (see Table 2.3).

I divide the exploratory analysis of these three economic variables in two parts. First, I focus on the economic performance of the sub-universe of cases that *ended*. After that, I compare the results of the regimes that ended with those that remained in power by 2009. Figure 2.3 presents three sets of boxplots, one for each variable, describing the evolution of the economic performance of the regimes that ended as they approached their final year in power.²⁷ The y-axis represents the percentage change of the corresponding economic variable and the x-axis describes the number years before the regime's end. Each boxplot represents the distribution of the economic variable for all the regimes that lasted X number of years before the transition. For instance, the boxplot of year -5 in panel (a) shows the distribution of *Short-Term Growth* for all the regimes that lasted at least five years in power.

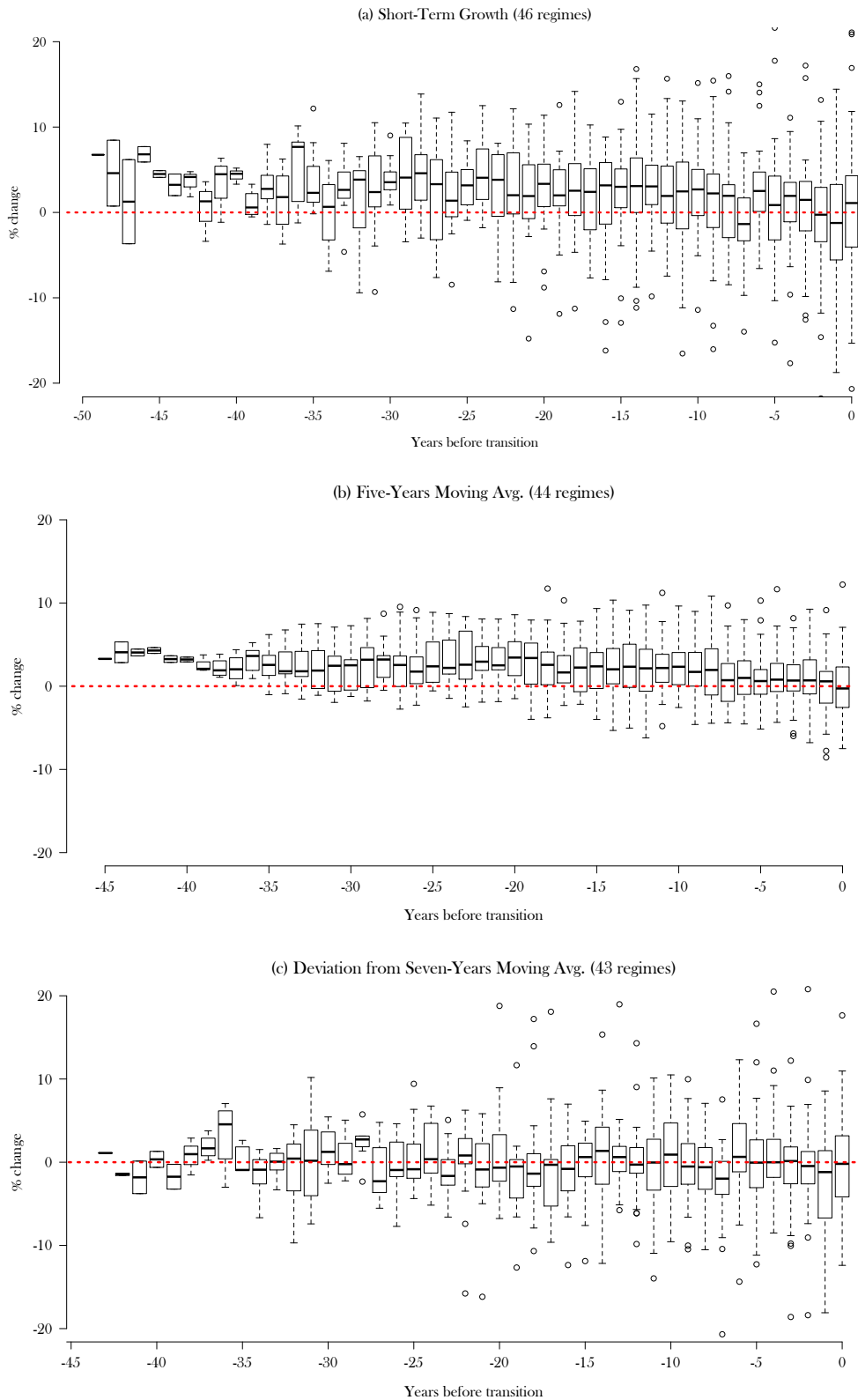
Panel (a) shows the yearly distribution of *Short-Term Growth* for 46 of the regimes that ended.²⁸ The first thing to notice is that the median economic growth across countries is positive throughout most of the 50 years analyzed. While the median growth for this group of regimes is 2% during the whole period (1.9% if the foreign imposed regimes are not considered), the median economic growth is

²⁶The four dominant-party regimes for which Maddison's database does not include data are Eritrea, Ethiopia, East Germany and Yemen.

²⁷For presentation purposes, the three plots were set to show the interval (-20,20) of the respective economic variable. This causes the omission of certain atypical observations in panels (a) and (c). The plots without restrictions are available upon request.

²⁸Given the economic data limitations explained before, each set of boxplots includes a different number of regimes. While panel (a) includes data for up to 46 regimes, panels (b) and (c) include observations for up to 44 and 43 regimes, respectively. Also, it is important to keep in mind that as time approaches zero the number of regimes and observations rises. This explains, in part, the increasing variation of the data in the last years of the regimes that ended.

Figure 2.3: Three Measurements of Economic Performance of the Dominant-Party Regimes that Ended (2005 prices)



negative in only three years: -1.2% in year -1, -0.3% in year -2 and -1.4%. Additionally, the median of *Short-Term Growth* declined from 1.9% in year -4 to -1.2% in year -1 (the year before the transition), but even in this last year 46% of the DPRs (21 out of 46) had a positive economic growth, and 33% of the cases (15 out of 46) grew 2% or more.²⁹

The boxplots presented in panel (b) illustrate the yearly distribution of *Five-Year Moving Average* for the years preceding regime breakdowns over a period of 45 years. As with *Short-Term Growth*, the median value of this second variable is positive through most of the period analyzed and it has a value of 1.7% for the whole 45 years. The difference, though, is that in the case of the *Five-Year Moving Average* the median experienced an almost monotonic decline in the last fifteen years. It fluctuated between 1.7% and 2.3% from year -15 to year -8, dropped to the range of 0.6-1.4% between years -7 and -1, and ended in -0.3% in year 0. Despite this decline, the year before to the transition (year -1) 52% of the DPRs of the regimes considered in this plot (21 out of 44) had a positive *Five-Year Moving Average*, and 43% of them (19 out 44) had an average of 1% or higher in this same year.

Finally, panel (c) presents the yearly distribution of *Deviation From Seven-Year Moving Average*. In contrast to the previous two measurements of economic performance, the median value of this third variable is negative for the whole period (-0.1%). Moreover, the median of this variable is negative in 25 of the 43 years considered, including year 0 with a value of -0.2%, but also in years -41 (-1.8%), -27 (-2.3%) or -7 (-1.9%), to mention a few examples. Thus, if *Deviation* is used as a metric of economic performance, panel (c) indicates that many of the dominant-party regimes that eventually ended were able to survive various years with significantly worst economic performance than year 0.

²⁹In year 0 the median increased to 1.1% (1.7% if foreign imposed regimes are excluded), and 54% of the DPRs (25 out 46) that ended had positive economic growth during the year of their transition. However, this can be explained for events that happened *after* the transition.

Along with studying the chronologic evolution of the economic performance of the sub-universe of regimes that ended, it is also useful to compare how the economy of this group of cases did during the year before the transition with respect to, first, the previous years of this same group of regimes, and, second, the regimes that continued as of 2009. Figure 2.4 illustrates this comparison through three sets of boxplots, one for each of the measurements of economic performance.³⁰ In each panel the yearly economic observations are grouped in the three categories listed in the x-axis. The first two boxplots from left to right include the observations of the regimes that ended. The difference is that while the left boxplot only contains the observations of the year before the transition (i.e., year -1), the middle boxplot includes all the previous observations of the ended regimes (i.e., all years before year -1). The right boxplot contains all the country-year observations of the DPRs that remained in power as of 2009.³¹

The comparison of the panels included in Figure 2.4 reveals at least three important elements. First, regardless of the measurement of economic performance used, the group of last-year observations (left boxplot) has the lowest median and the regimes that continued in power (right boxplot) have the highest median.³² While the median for the left boxplots in panels (a), (b) and (c) are -1.2%, 0.6% and -1.2%, respectively,³³ the median for the right boxplots are 3.6%, 3.1% and 0.4%, correspondingly.

Second, despite these differences, a significant portion of the distribution of

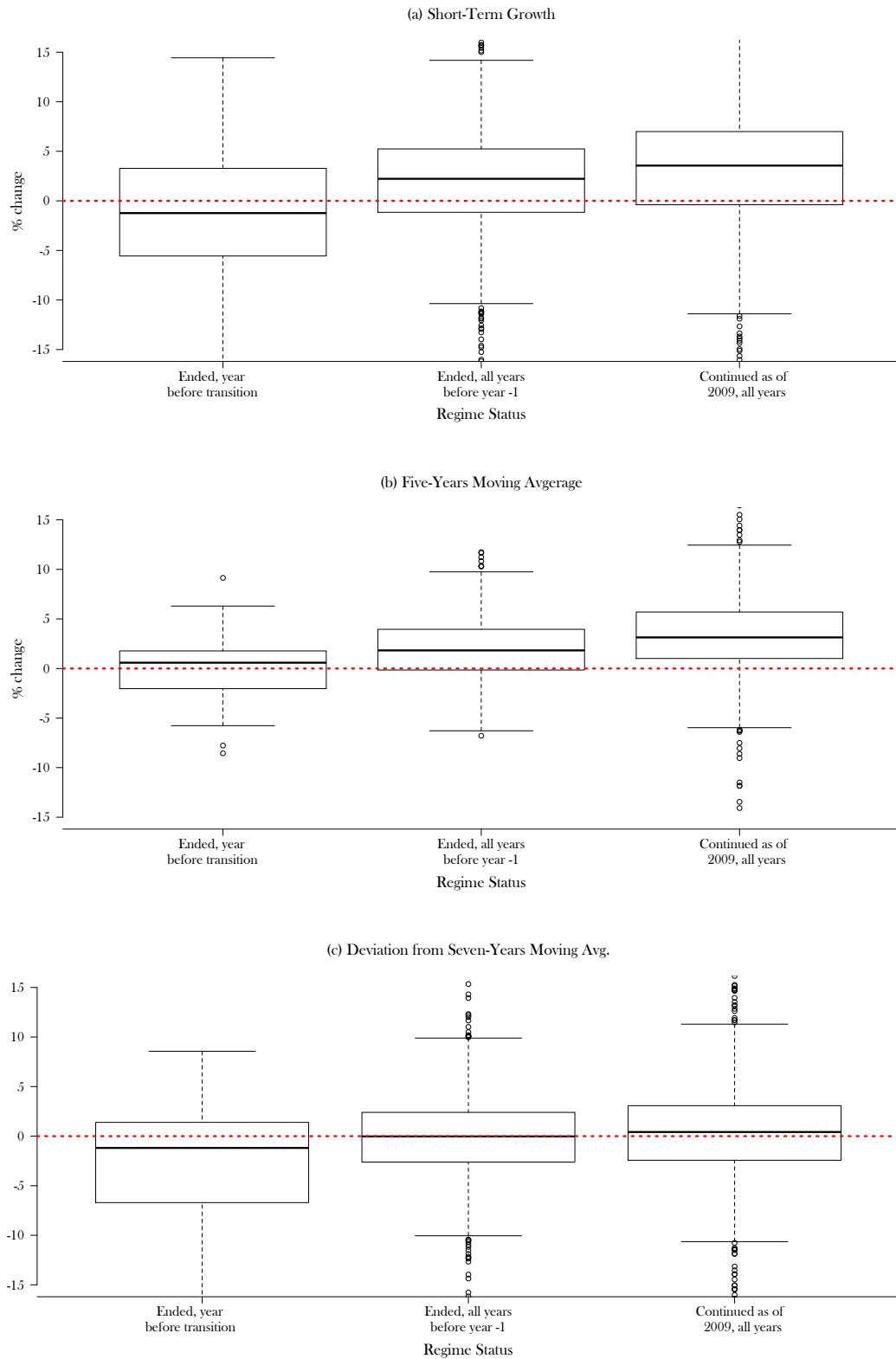
³⁰For presentation purposes, the three plots were set to show the interval (-15,15) of the corresponding economic variable. This causes the omission of certain atypical observations in the three panels. The plots without restrictions are available from the author.

³¹This last group includes the observations of China, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam. These four cases are particular because by 2009 they have remained in power between 45 and 61 years (the median duration of the regimes that continue is 38.50 years), and they have been four of the fastest growing economies in the world during the last decades. I account for this and other regional-specific factors using regional fixed-effects estimators in the models.

³²It is important to keep in mind that several of the DPRs that remain in power today (e.g., China, Malaysia, Singapore or Vietnam) have not always been as economically successful as in the last three decades.

³³The medians are -1.2%, 0.2% and -1.2%, respectively, if the foreign imposed regimes are not considered.

Figure 2.4: Comparison of the Three Measurements of Economic Performance Across Different Groups of Observations



the three groups of observations concentrate in relatively similar ranges of values. This is more evident for *Short-Term Growth* and *Deviation*, where the boxes of the three groups of observations fluctuate around the same values. But even in the case of the *Five-Year Moving Average*, the range of values of the observations of the regimes that endure is wider than –and therefore contains– the range of values for the observations from the year before the transition. In addition, panel (b) shows that 36% of the highest observations of the years before the transition lie in the same range as the observations contained between the first and third quartiles (25% to 75%) of the regimes that continue.

Third, the plots confirm that the economic performance of the regimes that ended was not always bad the year before the transition. Actually, in some cases the economy was doing significantly better when the regime ended than in previous years. Mexico is a good example of this. In 1999, the year before the PRI lost power, the economy grew 2.6%, the mean economic growth during the five previous years was 1.2%, and the economic performance of that particular year was 1.3% larger than the average of the previous seven years. These are significantly better economic results than the ones obtained by this country in 1995 (-9.2%, -0.3% and -9.8%, respectively) or 1986 (-6.3%, -3.3% and -5.8%, correspondingly). In some other cases the last-year economic performance of the regimes that ended was significantly better than the results obtained –during one or more years– by many of the regimes that remained in power in 2009. For instance, the *Five-Year Moving Average* of Iraq in 1978 (9.1%), Senegal in 1999 (2.5%), Sri Lanka in 1993 (3.4%) or Taiwan in 1999 (4.9%) –the year before these regimes ended– was significantly higher than the results obtained by Angola between 1978 and 1983 (from -2.1% to -4.4%),³⁴ Cuba during the period 1991-96 (from -2.6% to -8%), or

³⁴During these bad economic years Angola’s dominant party, the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola - Partido do Trabalho* (MPLA), was also facing the beginning of the civil war that would last until 2002. The MPLA is still in power.

Syria between 1986 and 1990 (from -1% to -3.7%).

2.2 Models

I test the relationship between the economic performance of a dominant-party regime and its chances of survival with two types of multivariate analysis in order to check if the results are dependent on the method used. The first is Weibull regression. This is a parametric survival model that is useful to analyze how one or more covariates might affect the time it takes for an event to happen—in this case the end of dominant-party regime—when the hazard is not constant over time, as is true here. All Weibull models report hazard ratios.

In addition, given that the status of a dominant-party regime can be modeled as a dichotomous variable (i.e., the regime ended or continues in power) the second type of model I consider is Logit regression. In particular, I use the “rare events Logit” estimator proposed by King and Zeng (2001) because, as these authors have shown, basic Logit models can potentially underestimate the probability of rare events. This is precisely the nature of dominant-party regime’s failures: in only 52 of the 2,262 country-year originally analyzed (2.3% of the total) a dominant party ended.³⁵ Also, to account for problems of temporal dependence and the potential underestimation of the standard errors, I follow the solution proposed by Beck, Katz and Tucker (1998), adding cubic splines to each Logit model, as well as variable that controls for the number of years since the end of the previous dominant-party regime (if any) in the same country.³⁶ The standard errors are

³⁵As a result of the lack of economic data for several DPRs, the models presented below include an even smaller number of country-year in which a regime ended.

³⁶As can be seen in the Appendix, 6 of the 70 countries included in this analysis have had two different regimes. These countries are Afghanistan (1978-92, 1996-01), Cambodia (1975-79, 1979-), Congo-Brazzaville (1963-68, 1968-91), Honduras (1933-56, 1963-71), Paraguay (1948-54, 1954-93) and Zambia (1967-91, 1996-). Given the proximity between the end of one regime a the beginning of the next in most of the cases, this fact could affect the survival chances of the second regime.

clustered by country-regime.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 present nine different specifications of the Weibull and Logit models, respectively. The main explanatory variable in each case is one of the three versions of economic performance previously described, which are lagged one year to reduce problems of endogeneity.³⁷ In both tables, models 1 through 3 only include *Short-Term Growth*, *Five-Year Moving Average* or *Deviation From Seven-Year Moving Average*, in that order. These “core models” offer the first picture of the effect of economic performance on the likelihood of survival of a DPR without considering any other explanatory factor.

Models 4 to 9 incorporate the following five control variables. First, real *GDP per capita* is included to account for the effect that a country’s level of economic development might have on the survival chances of a dominant-party regime.³⁸ Second, given that some DPRs are important oil and/or gas producing countries (e.g., Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Egypt, Iraq, Mexico, Turkmenistan and the USSR), the revenues obtained from these commodities could explain both, their economic performance *and* the survival chances of the authoritarian regime. To control for this potential confounding factor I include a variable called *Oil Income per capita*, which measures the annual value, in real terms, of a country’s oil and natural gas production, divided by its population.³⁹ I use the natural log of *GDP per capita* and *Oil Income per capita* to mitigate their non-normal distributions⁴⁰ and I lag the second variable by one year.

Third, *Foreign Imposed* is a dummy variable with value of 1 if the dominant-

³⁷Considering that the regime’s end might occur at the beginning or end of a calendar year, the value of each of these economic variables for that year might reflect what happened after the transition instead of before.

³⁸This is measured through the variable called “PPP Converted GDP Per Capita (Chain Series), at 2005 constant prices”, from the PWT 7.0 database.

³⁹The source of this variable is Ross (2011). I use the version that is in 2009 dollars, called “oil_gas_valuePOP_2009.” For a discussion of the advantages of this measurement of resource wealth over other alternatives, see Ross (2010).

⁴⁰I use the log plus one in the case of *Oil Income per capita* because many country-year observations have a value of 0.

party regime remained in place as a result of direct foreign occupation or the credible threat of a military intervention, and 0 otherwise.⁴¹ Fourth, according to GWF's coding rules there are four subtypes of dominant-party regimes: party, party-personal, party-military and party-military-personal. Considering that these differences might affect the likelihood of survival of a dominant-party regime in a similar way as the longevity of a dictatorship is influenced by its type (i.e., party, military, personal) (Geddes, 2004), I include a dummy variable for each subtype of dominant-party regime. Finally, in order to control for region-specific factors (i.e., history, culture) that might affect the chances of survival of a regime but cannot be directly measured, I use a dummy variable for each region as quasi-fixed effects estimator in all models.⁴²

The hazard ratios reported in Table 2.1 have an intuitive interpretation. If the ratio of a predictor is between zero and one it indicates that the variable reduces the likelihood of the regime's end. Ratios above one mean that the variable in question increases the chances of a regime's failure. For the Logit models, Table 2.2 reports the Log (Odds) of each variable. Positive coefficients indicate that the predictor increases the probability of a regime's breakdown, and negative coefficients mean that a variable reduces the chances of this outcome.

The first significant result revealed by these tables is that as *Short-Term Growth*, *Five-Year Moving Average* and *Deviation From Seven-Year Moving Average* increase, the likelihood that a regime ends decreases. These results are consistent across all model specifications (the hazard ratios of these three variables are smaller than one and their Log (Odds) negative) and statistically significant at 0.1% or better.

In the case of the control variables, the logs of *GDP per capita* and *Oil Income*

⁴¹See footnote 14 for the list of dominant-party regimes classified as foreign imposed. In all models Cambodia (1979-) is classified as foreign imposed between 1979 and 1991.

⁴²Country fixed-effects estimators cannot be used to analyze this data because most countries only had one dominant-party regime, so the country-dummy and the regime covary 100%.

Table 2.1: Weibull Proportional Hazard Ratios

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<i>Short-Term Growth</i>	0.909*** (-0.014)			0.911*** (-0.015)			0.920*** (-0.017)		
<i>Five-Year Moving Avg.</i>		0.844*** (-0.036)			0.855*** (-0.035)			0.861** (-0.041)	
<i>Deviation</i>			0.924*** (-0.02)			0.925*** (-0.02)			0.932*** (0.020)
<i>GDP per capita (Log)</i>				0.933 (-0.188)	1.008 (-0.202)	0.829 (-0.165)	0.749 (-0.181)	0.877 (-0.206)	0.656 (0.155)
<i>Oil Income per capita (Log)</i>				0.94 (-0.066)	0.93 (-0.068)	0.928 (-0.065)	0.925 (-0.074)	0.882 (-0.077)	0.904 (0.068)
<i>Foreign imposed</i>				2.151** (-0.541)	2.084* (-0.652)	2.573** (-0.769)	1.348 (-0.388)	0.93 (-0.319)	1.347 (0.489)
Regime type:									
Pure Party							0.661 (-0.201)	0.634 (-0.223)	0.561 (0.185)
Party-Military							1.927 (-0.833)	1.999 (-0.999)	1.198 (0.555)
Party-Military-Personalist							0.053* (-0.063)	0.054 (-0.083)	0.035** (0.045)
Region:									
Central Asia							0.105 (-0.121)	0.102 (-0.151)	0.076* (0.087)
East Asia							0.034* (-0.048)	0.027* (-0.047)	0.017** (0.024)
C & E Europe							0.142 (-0.145)	0.15 (-0.211)	0.115* (0.123)
North Africa							0.035** (-0.038)	0.026** (-0.037)	0.031** (0.036)
Sub-Saharan Africa							0.053** (-0.059)	0.035* (-0.052)	0.034** (0.038)
South America							0.908 (-0.813)	0.33 (-0.366)	0.622 (0.466)
Central America							0.063* (-0.071)	0.035* (-0.052)	0.053** (0.060)
Constant	0.012*** (-0.007)	0.015*** (-0.01)	0.018*** (-0.013)	0.015*** (-0.018)	0.013*** (-0.016)	0.039** (-0.046)	0.713 (-1.483)	0.731 (-1.666)	4.552 (9.772)
P	1.241	1.242	1.113	1.336*	1.29	1.308	1.572***	1.431**	1.508**
Log-Likelihood	-63.618	-58.111	-60.131	-59.307	-56.811	-57.063	-49.321	-47.497	-45.969
Observations	1,623	1,492	1,411	1,586	1,474	1,402	1,586	1,474	1,402
Regimes	69	67	66	67	66	66	67	66	66

Standard errors clustered by country-regime in parentheses. *** Significant at less than 0.1%; ** significant at 1%; * significant at 5%;
. significant at 10%

Table 2.2: Rare Events Logit Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<i>Short-Term Growth</i>	-0.103*** (-0.02)			-0.099*** (-0.021)			-0.091*** (-0.023)		
<i>Five-Year Moving Avg.</i>		-0.186*** (-0.048)			-0.168*** (-0.046)			-0.159** (-0.053)	
<i>Deviation</i>			-0.082*** (-0.025)			-0.081** (-0.025)			-0.075** (0.025)
<i>GDP per capita (Log)</i>				-0.126 (-0.224)	-0.069 (-0.218)	-0.238 (-0.218)	-0.337 (-0.279)	-0.188 (-0.267)	-0.463 (0.265)
<i>Oil Income per capita (Log)</i>				-0.049 (-0.075)	-0.057 (-0.078)	-0.058 (-0.077)	-0.063 (-0.088)	-0.102 (-0.094)	-0.076 (0.084)
<i>Foreign imposed</i>				0.808** (-0.299)	0.736 (-0.391)	0.954* (-0.373)	0.299 (-0.33)	-0.02 (-0.367)	0.325 (0.368)
Regime type:									
Pure Party							-0.408 (-0.341)	-0.453 (-0.378)	-0.605 (0.378)
Party-Military							0.787 (-0.478)	0.834 (-0.54)	0.265 (0.505)
Party-Military-Personalist							-2.653* (-1.306)	-2.675 (-1.7)	-3.143* (1.466)
Region:									
Central Asia							-2.264 (-1.257)	-2.336 (-1.636)	-2.590* (1.306)
East Asia							-3.240* (-1.541)	-3.431 (-1.89)	-3.944* (1.609)
C & E Europe							-1.963 (-1.155)	-1.969 (-1.572)	-2.234 (1.274)
North Africa							-2.961* (-1.175)	-3.257* (-1.512)	-3.094* (1.349)
Sub-Saharan Africa							-2.942* (-1.208)	-3.356* (-1.641)	-3.364** (1.284)
South America							-0.095 (-0.993)	-0.968 (-1.246)	-0.233 (0.889)
Central America							-2.686* (-1.22)	-3.267* (-1.631)	-2.869* (1.304)
Constant	-3.871*** (-0.719)	-3.396*** (-0.776)	-3.056*** (-0.762)	-3.061 (-1.679)	-2.996 (-1.754)	-1.559 (-1.592)	1.083 (-2.583)	1.257 (-2.697)	3.418 (2.529)
Observations	1,623	1,492	1,411	1,586	1,474	1,402	1,586	1,474	1,402
Regimes	69	67	66	67	66	66	67	66	66

Standard errors clustered by country-regime in parentheses. *** Significant at less than 0.1%; ** significant at 1%; * significant at 5%; . significant at 10%.

Each model includes a constant, a variable measuring years since the end of the previous dominant-party regime (if any) in the same country, and three cubic splines to correct for temporal dependence. These coefficients are not reported due to space constraints.

capita show similar results across models. Both variables reduce the chances of a regime's breakdown but none of them reaches conventional levels of statistical significance.⁴³ The results of *GDP per capita* are particularly interesting because they differ with the ones obtained in previous studies that analyze –among other things– how this variable affect the survival chances of dominant-party regimes vis-à-vis military and personalist dictatorships (e.g., Geddes, 2004). The magnitude of the effect of *GDP per capita* is substantially smaller when the universe of dominant-party regimes is studied separately, and this predictor is not statistically significant at 5%.

The type of dominant-party regime seems to be a relevant predictor in some cases. The category left out is *Party-Personalist*, the middle type in terms of duration. Thus, the hazard ratios and Log(Odds) of the other regime types should be interpreted relatively to *Party-Personalist*'s results. The coefficients of Models 7, 8 and 9 of both tables indicate that while *Pure Party* and *Party-Military-Personalist* are more likely to survive than *Party-Personalist* regimes, *Party-Military* has a higher chance of breakdown than the left out category in these three models. Still, only the results of *Party-Military-Personalist* are statistical significant at 5% or better across in Models 7 and 9 in both tables.⁴⁴

With respect to the geographical regions, where the left out category is the *Middle East*, all regional variables increase the likelihood of survival of a dominant-party regime. The results for *East Asia*, *North Africa*, *Sub-Saharan Africa* and *Central America* are statistically significant at 5% or better in the Models 7-9. Finally, although *Foreign imposed* has the opposite sign from the one expected (i.e., this type of regimes are more likely to end, not less) and it is statistically significant in some models, once *Regime type* and *Region* are included as controls this variable loses statistical significance.

⁴³Only *GDP per capita* is statistical significant at 10% in Model 9 of both tables.

⁴⁴The exceptions are the hazard ratio of *Pure Party* in Model 9, Table 2.1, and *Party-Military* in Model 7, Table 2.2. In both cases the variables are statistical significant at 10%.

Considering the potential bias that the missing observations could produce in these results, I recalculated Models 7 and 8 using, first, imputed data that fills part of the missing observations in PWT 7.0,⁴⁵ and, second, the data on GDP per capita included in Angus Maddison’s database (2011).⁴⁶ Table 2.3 compares the coefficients of these models with the ones presented in Tables 2.1 and 2.2. As can be seen, the sign of all coefficients remains the same. However, while the statistical significance of *Short-Term Growth* and *Five-Year Moving Average* is equal or better than before when using the imputed data, the coefficients of *Short-Term Growth* are not longer statistical significant at 10% when Maddison’s data is used. Moreover, whereas the magnitude of the effect of these two economic variables does not change much if the imputed data is used, it is always smaller when the calculations are made with Maddison’s data.

So far the results indicate that the economic performance of a dominant-party regime has a positive effect on its survival chances. That is, as *Short-Term Growth*, *Five-Year Moving Average* and *Deviation From Seven-Year Moving Average* increase, the probability that a regime ends decreases, and the opposite holds as well. The next step is to analyze how substantive is this effect. Given that *Five-Year Moving Average* has the largest effect of the three measurements of economic performance in all model specifications, I focus the second part of my interpretation on the results of this variable. In particular, I use the coefficients of Model 8 in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 for this task.

The magnitude of the results of the Weibull model can be interpreted by either

⁴⁵In total, 206 country-year observations of *GDP per capita* were imputed using *Amelia*. Of these, only 121 were finally considered for the analysis (see the criteria in footnote 25). Furthermore, although part of the missing observations of East Germany were imputed, this regime was finally dropped from the analysis due to the lack of oil income data. Note as well that for the country-year observations that have imputed data on *GDP per capita*, the values of *Short-Term Growth*, *Five-Year Moving Average* and *Deviation From Seven-Year Moving Average* –all variables that measure rate of change– were calculated using the original data from PWT 5.6, not the imputed data.

⁴⁶Although I recalculated all models using these alternative economic databases, due to space constraints I only present the results of Models 7 and 8. The rest are available on request.

Table 2.3: Comparison of Models 7 and 8 Using Different Data

Data used	Weibull Models				Logit Models				
	Model 7 Imputed	Maddison	PWT 7.0	Model 8 Imputed	Model 7 Imputed	Maddison	PWT 7.0	Model 8 Imputed	Maddison
<i>Short-Term Growth</i>	0.920*** (-0.017)	0.956 (-0.028)	0.861** (-0.041)	0.856*** (-0.04)	-0.091*** (-0.023)	-0.044 (-0.032)	-0.159** (-0.053)	-0.165** (-0.053)	-0.132** (-0.049)
<i>Five-Year Moving Avg.</i>									
<i>GDP per capita (Log)</i>	0.749 (-0.181)	0.642 (-0.21)	0.877 (-0.206)	0.884 (-0.215)	-0.337 (-0.279)	-0.567 (-0.404)	-0.188 (-0.267)	-0.241 (-0.294)	-0.438 (-0.402)
<i>Oil Income per capita (Log)</i>	0.925 (-0.074)	0.954 (-0.077)	0.882 (-0.077)	0.820* (-0.081)	-0.063 (-0.088)	-0.022 (-0.084)	-0.102 (-0.094)	-0.176 (-0.108)	-0.042 (-0.087)
<i>Foreign imposed</i>	1.348 (-0.388)	1.406 (-0.444)	0.93 (-0.319)	1.035 (-0.369)	0.3 (-0.33)	0.603 (-0.425)	-0.02 (-0.367)	0.147 (-0.393)	0.373 (-0.414)
Regime type:									
Pure Party	0.661 (-0.201)	0.727 (-0.272)	-0.634 (-0.223)	0.441* (-0.176)	-0.408 (-0.341)	-0.394 (-0.404)	-0.453 (-0.39)	-0.904* (-0.422)	-0.223 (-0.421)
Party-Military	1.927 (-0.833)	2.005 (-0.915)	1.999 (-0.999)	1.592 (-0.835)	0.787 (-0.478)	0.764 (-0.495)	0.834 (-0.54)	0.562 (-0.566)	1.013* (-0.511)
Party-Military-Personalist	0.053* (-0.063)	0.077* (-0.094)	0.054 (-0.083)	0.010*** (-0.011)	-2.653* (-1.306)	-2.011 (-1.236)	-2.675 (-1.7)	-4.218*** (-1.260)	-1.803 (-1.288)
Region:									
Central Asia	0.105 (-0.121)	0.097 (-0.121)	0.102 (-0.151)	0.033*** (-0.027)	-2.264 (-1.257)	-2.483 (-1.376)	-2.336 (-1.636)	-3.603*** (-0.966)	-2.287 (-1.374)
East Asia	0.034* (-0.048)	0.020*** (-0.029)	0.027* (-0.047)	0.007*** (-0.007)	-3.240* (-1.541)	-3.624* (-1.482)	-3.431 (-1.89)	-4.735*** (-1.067)	-3.646* (-1.618)
C & E Europe	0.142 (-0.145)	0.081* (-0.079)	0.15 (-0.211)	0.046*** (-0.032)	-1.963 (-1.155)	-2.356* (-1.001)	-1.969 (-1.572)	-3.206*** (-0.815)	-2.128* (-1.053)
North Africa	0.035** (-0.038)	0.032** (-0.033)	0.026** (-0.037)	0.013*** (-0.012)	-2.961* (-1.175)	-2.845** (-1.058)	-3.257* (-1.512)	-3.937*** (-1.004)	-2.853** (-1.067)
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.025*** (-0.059)	0.066* (-0.071)	0.035* (-0.052)	0.012*** (-0.009)	-2.942* (-1.208)	-2.544* (-1.108)	-3.356* (-1.641)	-4.453*** (-0.918)	-2.637* (-1.185)
South America	0.908 (-0.813)	0.851 (-0.742)	0.33 (-0.366)	0.196* (-0.163)	-0.095 (-0.993)	-0.106 (-0.892)	-0.968 (-1.246)	-1.520 (-1.101)	-0.365 (-0.967)
Central America	0.063* (-0.071)	0.056* (-0.063)	0.035* (-0.052)	0.011*** (-0.010)	-2.686* (-1.22)	-2.595* (-1.103)	-3.267* (-1.631)	-4.426*** (-0.992)	-2.676* (-1.166)
Constant	0.713 (-1.483)	1.4 (-3.479)	0.731 (-1.666)	1.688 (-3.093)	1.083 (-2.583)	2.632 (-3.351)	1.257 (-2.697)	2.931 (-2.438)	1.762 (-3.291)
p	1.572***	1.650***	1.431**	1.581***	-	-	-	-	-
Log-Likelihood	-49.321	-61.98	-47.497	-43.237	-	-	-	-	-
Observations	1,586	1,839	1,474	1,546	1,586	1,839	1,474	1,546	1,804
Regimes	67	69	66	69	67	69	66	69	69

Standard errors clustered by country-regime in parentheses. *** Significant at less than 0.1%; ** significant at 1%; * significant at 5%. Each model includes a constant not shown. Also, all Logit models include a variable measuring years since the end of the previous dominant-party regime (if any) in the same country, and three cubic splines to correct for temporal dependence. These coefficients are not reported due to space constraints.

analyzing the hazard ratio for *Five-Year Moving Average* reported in Table 2.1,⁴⁷ or, alternatively, the coefficient of this variable in the accelerated failure time (AFT) model that corresponds to the specification of Model 8 (not shown).⁴⁸ However, it is usually easier and more intuitive to analyze this type of result through a graphical representation. Figure 2.5 shows two graphs, each with three hazard functions derived from Model 8 (Table 2.1) for particular values of *Five-Year Moving Average*. Every curve describes the probability that a dominant-party regime ends in year t , given that it has survived up to that year. Both sets of curves allow us to compare the probability of breakdown of three hypothetical regimes that ruled for the same period but experienced significantly different economic performances in the five previous years, or, alternatively, the hazard rate of the same dominant-party regime under different economic scenarios.

Panel (a) illustrates how the hazard rate of a dominant-party regime changes as the value of its *Five-Year Moving Average* increases (black solid line) or decreases (red dashed line) one unit with respect to 2.5% (gray dotted line), the mean value of this multi-annual measurement of economic performance.⁴⁹ If we assume that the three regimes had been in power for 24 years (this is the median duration of the 76 regime originally considered),⁵⁰ then the regime with a 1.5% *Five-Year*

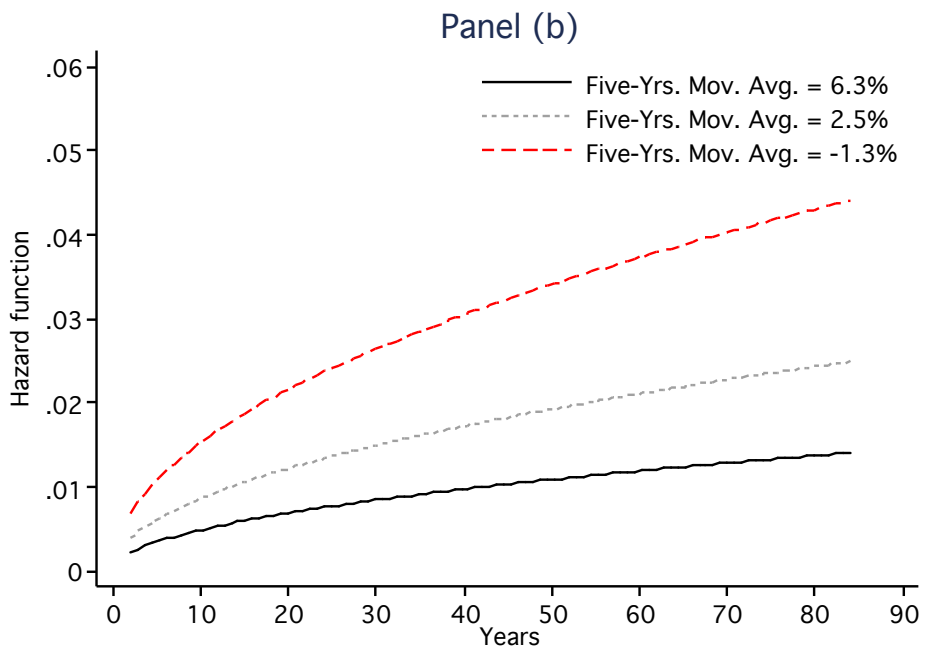
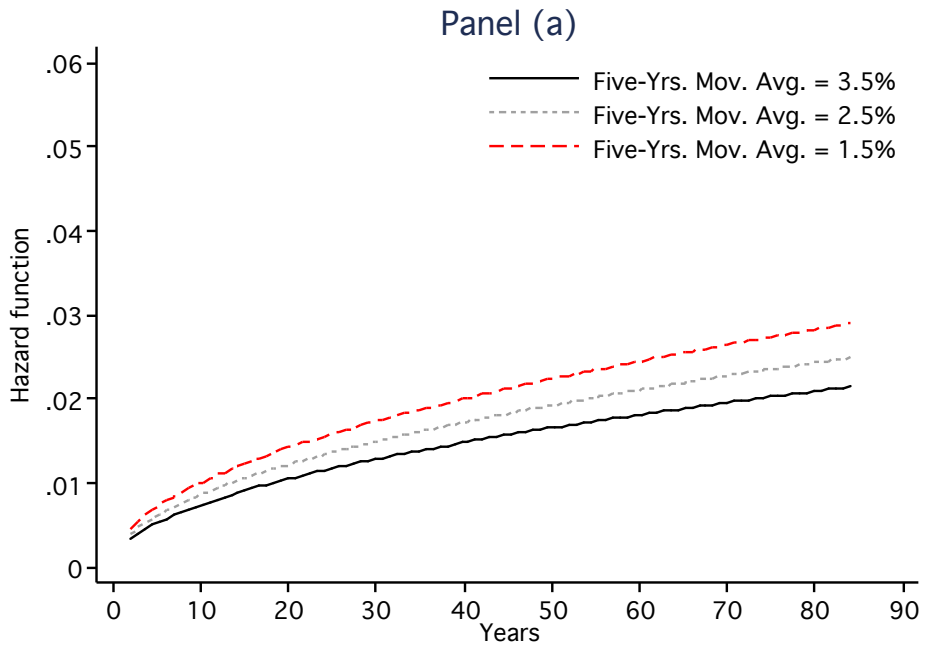
⁴⁷Table 2.1 indicates that the hazard ratio of *Five-Year Moving Average* in Model 8 is 0.861. Thus, if all the other variables are held constant, a 1% (i.e., one unit) increase in *Five-Year Moving Average* reduces a DPR's baseline hazard of failure by 14% at any particular point in time. That is, $(1 - 0.861) * 100 = 13.9\%$.

⁴⁸Accelerated failure time (AFT) models are used to analyze how a set of covariates affect the *survival time* –instead of the *hazard rate*– of a subject. The complete results of this model are not included due to space constraints (they are available upon request), but the coefficients of the AFT version of Model 8 have the same sign and statistical significance than the hazard ratio's version. According to these results, the survival time of a dominant-party regime with a *Five-Year Moving Average* of 1% is 10% larger than the survival time of a regime with an economic growth of 0% during the five previous years. This effect holds for any point in time in which both regimes are compared.

⁴⁹In both graphs the rest of the variables are held at their mean, except *Foreign Imposed* which is set at 0 (i.e., “no”) and *Region* which is set at Central America (the “median” region in terms of country-year observations). The results are similar if *Region* is set at other options or its mean.

⁵⁰This average excludes foreign imposed regimes.

Figure 2.5: Hazard Rate Functions Based on Model 8, Table 1



Moving Average (red dashed line) has a probability of ending of 1.56%, which is 0.23% and 0.45% larger than the chances of breakdown of the regimes with a 2.5% (gray dotted line) and 3.5% (black solid line) multi-annual economic growth, respectively. Put it differently, if the *Five-Year Moving Average* of a regime that has been in power for almost a quarter of a century decreases from 2.5% to 1.5%, its probability of ending will increase 17% in relative terms (from 1.33% to 1.56%). The magnitude of this effect seems small if we consider the baseline probability (1.33%) and the fact that a 1% increase or decrease in *Five-Year Moving Average* represents a significant change in a country's economic performance over a period of a lustrum. To illustrate this point it is useful to consider that only in 45% of the country-year observations the absolute difference between the value of *Five-Year Moving Average* for that calendar year and the previous year was bigger than 1%, and that in only 30% of the observations the yearly absolute difference was larger than 1.5%.

Panel (b) offers a complimentary perspective on these results, comparing the probability of breakdown of a dominant-party regime when its economic performance is significantly better or worse than the mean of *Five-Year Moving Average*. While the gray dotted line represents the hazard rate of a dominant-party regime with a *Five-Year Moving Average* of 2.5% (i.e., the mean value), the red dashed line and the black solid line show the hazard rates of two other hypothetical dominant parties for which the value of the multi-annual economic average is one standard deviation below (-1.3%) and above (6.3%) the mean, respectively.

Assuming again that the three hypothetical regimes have been in power for 24 years, the dominant party with the lowest *Five-Year Moving Average* (-1.3%) has 2.37% chances of ending. From the previous discussion we know that a dominant party with a *Five-Year Moving Average* of 2.5% has 1.34% chances of ending. This implies, then, that even when the five-year economic performance of a dominant-party regime is almost 300% lower than the mean (-1.3% contraction of the econ-

omy vs. 2.5% expansion), its probability of ending will only be 76% larger. In addition, the fact that a dominant-party regime with a *Five-Year Moving Average* of -1.3% has a probability of breakdown of less than 2.5% is illustrative by itself. It indicates that despite experiencing a terrible economic situation for five years (only 12% of the country-year observations have a value of *Five-Year Moving Average* lower than -1.3%), the likelihood that a regime ends is significantly small.

The Logit models further confirm this. As with the analysis of Weibull results, Logit coefficients are usually easier to understand by looking at their graphical representation. Using the coefficients of Model 8 (Table 2.2), Figure 2.6 shows the effect of different values of *Five-Year Moving Average* on the likelihood of a dominant-party regime's end, while holding the other variables constant.⁵¹ The black solid line represents the predicted probability of a regime's failure, and the red dashed lines show the upper- and lower-bound of the 95% confidence interval.⁵²

Consistent with the results of Table 2.2, Figure 2.6 shows that the survival of a dominant-party regime is not seriously threatened by positive economic growth. As a DPR's economic performance over a five-year period improves, the probability of a regime's end converges to 0. What is more significant for the purposes of this study, though, is that even the regimes that experienced a sustained period of very bad economic performance are very likely to stay in power. According to this figure, if a dominant-party regime has a *Five-Year Moving Average* of -3% –a terrible economic situation registered in less than 6% of the country-year observations– the probability that it will end is only 2.6%.

A complementary way to interpret this figure is to analyze how a dominant party's likelihood of breakdown changes as its economic performance deteriorates.

⁵¹The rest of the variables –including the duration in time– are held at their mean, except *Foreign Imposed* which is set at 0 (i.e., “no”) and *Region* is set at Central America.

⁵²The graph is limited to the interval (-9%, 9%) of *Five-Year Moving Average* because 95% of the observations of this variable lie in that range.

Figure 2.6: Predicted Effect of *Five-Year Moving Average* on the Probability of End of a Dominant-Party Regime

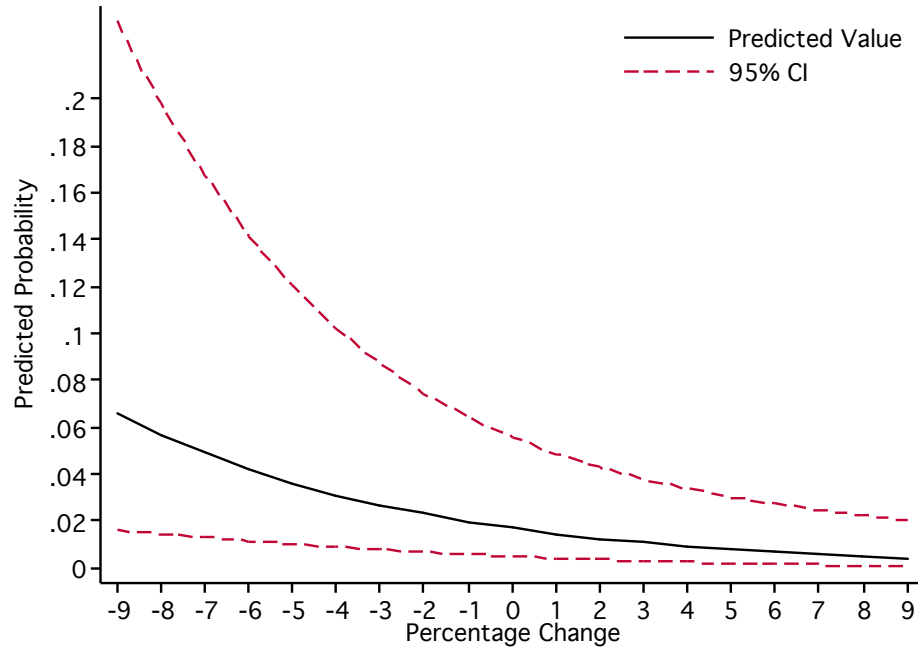


Figure 2.6 shows that while a regime with a *Five-Year Moving Average* of 2.5% (i.e., the mean value of this variable) has 1.13% chances of ending, this probability raises to 1.35% as the average economic performance of the regime declines to 1.5%. This represents a 0.22% and 19.5% increase in absolute and relative terms, which, again, seem small considering the baseline probability (1.13%) and what a 1% reduction in *Five-Year Moving Average* implies.⁵³

2.3 Final remarks

Does poor economic performance explain the end of authoritarian dominant-party regimes? Over the last decades, several authors have proposed that the answer is

⁵³The probability of a regime's breakdown when its *Five-Year Moving Average* is -1.3% (one standard deviation below the mean) is 2%. As with the Weibull results, this implies that if the economic performance of the regime declines by around 300% (-1.3% vs. 2.5%), its chances of ending raise by 77%.

yes. Although the causal mechanism suggested varies, these scholars argue that bad economic performance, either in the short- or mid-term, significantly increases the likelihood that a dominant-party regime will end. While most of these authors have used evidence from one case or a small number of regimes to support their arguments, the few large-n statistical analysis that have addressed this question provide inconclusive answers.

In contrast to these studies, the evidence of more than 65 dominant-party regimes analyzed in this chapter strongly suggest that economic performance is not a good predictor of the demise of these kinds of autocracies. Using three different operationalizations of a regime's economic performance and two economic databases, the results shown above consistently indicate that dominant-party regimes have very good chances to survive short- and relatively long periods of poor economic results, as well as abrupt economic drops with respect to previous years. Hence, while it is true that the chances that a dominant-party regime collapses increase as the economy deteriorates (Geddes, 2004, 25), the evidence shows that even those regimes experiencing a disastrous economic situation for over five years (e.g., a mean GPD growth of -3%) have a more than 95% chance of surviving.

One of the main empirical contributions made by this chapter is to illustrate that while dominant-party regimes might be less likely to survive economic crises than other types of autocracies, as previous studies have suggested, the probability that they end as a result of this factor is very small. The findings in this chapter also suggest that instead of trying to identify the "silver bullet" that explains the fate of all cases, it might be more useful to start by considering that dominant parties use different types of mechanisms and resources to keep the cohesion of their elite. This, in turn, might imply that their survival is vulnerable to distinct causes. In the next three chapters I explain how the PRI managed to stay in power for more than seven decades, as well as why the 1996 electoral reform triggered

the demise of the dominant-party regime led by this party.

2.4 Appendix

List of cases

No.	Country	Beginning	End	Duration as of 2010 (years)	Status as of 2010
1	Afghanistan 1	1978	1992	14	Ended
2	Afghanistan 2	1996	2001	5	Ended
3	Albania	1944	1991	47	Ended
4	Algeria	1962	1992	30	Ended
5	Angola	1975	-	35	Continued
6	Bangladesh	1971	1975	4	Ended
7	Bolivia	1952	1964	12	Ended
8	Botswana	1966	-	44	Continued
9	Bulgaria	1944	1990	46	Ended
10	Burundi	1966	1987	21	Ended
11	Cambodia 1	1975	1979	4	Ended
12	Cambodia 2	1979	-	31	Continued
13	Cameroon	1960	1983	23	Ended
14	Chad	1960	1975	15	Ended
15	China	1949	-	61	Continued
16	Colombia	1949	1953	4	Ended
17	Congo-Brazzaville 1	1963	1968	5	Ended
18	Congo-Brazzaville 2	1968	1991	23	Ended
19	Cuba	1959	-	51	Continued
20	Czechoslovakia	1948	1989	41	Ended
21	Egypt	1952	-	58	Continued
22	El Salvador	1948	1982	34	Ended
23	Eritrea	1993	-	17	Continued
24	Ethiopia	1991	-	19	Continued
25	Gabon	1960	-	50	Continued
26	Gambia	1965	1994	29	Ended
27	German Dem. Rep.	1949	1990	41	Ended
28	Ghana	1960	1966	6	Ended
29	Guinea	1958	1984	26	Ended
30	Guinea Bissau	1974	1980	6	Ended
31	Honduras 1	1933	1956	23	Ended
32	Honduras 2	1963	1971	8	Ended
33	Hungary	1947	1990	43	Ended
34	Indonesia	1966	1999	33	Ended
35	Iraq	1968	1979	11	Ended
36	Ivory Coast	1960	1999	39	Ended

List of cases (*conclusion*)

No.	Country	Beginning	End	Duration as of 2010 (years)	Status as of 2010
37	Kenya	1963	2002	39	Ended
38	Korea North	1948	-	62	Continued
39	Laos	1975	-	35	Continued
40	Lesotho	1970	1986	16	Ended
41	Liberia	1944	1980	36	Ended
42	Madagascar	1960	1972	12	Ended
43	Malaysia	1957	-	53	Continued
44	Mali	1960	1968	8	Ended
45	Mexico	1929	2000	71	Ended
46	Mongolia	1921	1993	72	Ended
47	Mozambique	1975	-	35	Continued
48	Namibia	1990	-	20	Continued
49	Nicaragua	1979	1990	11	Ended
50	Niger	1960	1974	14	Ended
51	Paraguay 1	1948	1954	6	Ended
52	Paraguay 2	1954	1993	39	Ended
53	Poland	1944	1989	45	Ended
54	Romania	1945	1989	44	Ended
55	Rwanda 1	1962	1973	11	Ended
56	Rwanda 2	1994	-	16	Continued
57	Senegal	1960	2000	40	Ended
58	Serbia	1991	2000	9	Ended
59	Sierra Leone	1968	1992	24	Ended
60	Singapore	1965	-	45	Continued
61	South Africa	1910	1994	84	Ended
62	South Yemen	1967	1990	23	Ended
63	Soviet Union	1917	1991	74	Ended
64	Sri Lanka	1978	1994	16	Ended
65	Syria	1963	-	47	Continued
66	Taiwan	1949	2000	51	Ended
67	Tanzania	1964	-	46	Continued
68	Tunisia	1956	-	54	Continued
69	Turkey	1957	1960	3	Ended
70	Turkmenistan	1991	-	19	Continued
71	Uzbekistan	1991	-	19	Continued
72	Vietnam	1954	-	56	Continued
73	Yugoslavia	1945	1990	45	Ended
74	Zambia 1	1967	1991	24	Ended
75	Zambia 2	1996	-	14	Continued
76	Zimbabwe	1980	-	30	Continued

CHAPTER 3

Clientele Migration Theory. Explaining the Demise of the PRI's Dominant-Party Regime

In this chapter I propose a theory that explains why the PRI's dominant-party regime was able to survive repeated economic and political crises, as well as what caused its eventual demise. While I started developing this explanation considering the Mexican case, my theory extended and complemented after studying the experiences of many other dominant-party regimes that ended or remain in power. Hence, while the main goal of my argument is to explain the demise of the PRI, it also aims to be generalizable to other cases.

Building on the literature on authoritarian elites and clientelistic machines, my Clientele Migration Theory proposes that the survival of a dominant-party regime largely depends on the unity of its factions. These factions will have incentives to stay in the dominant party as long as this organization provides their leaders an expected utility that is *relatively* higher than what any other party can offer them. The cohesion of a dominant party's factions might be affected by different types of defections, but the regime's survival will only be seriously threatened when many mid- and high-ranked leaders decide to leave the party along with their clienteles and resources. It is only then that the dominant party suffers the massive migration of human and material resources to other political parties (or movements), endangering its future. Consequently, in order to explain the demise of a dominant-party regime we need to understand what factor(s) triggered the massive defections of mid- and high-ranked factions, as well as why this led to the

end of the regime. I start the chapter by discussing three of the most influential works that offer an explanation for the demise of Mexico's PRI. In the second part of the chapter I present my theory.

3.1 Alternative Explanations

A large portion of the work of the first generation of scholars that analyzed Mexico's democratization (e.g., Buendía, 1996, 2004; Domínguez and McCann, 1996; Magaloni, 1999; Moreno and Yanner, 1995; Moreno, 2003; Poiré, 1999) shared a common methodological approach: the study of voters' preferences and perceptions through the lenses of rational choice voting models, first developed in the field of American politics (Downs, 1957; Fiorina, 1981). As a result, during this initial wave of studies the debate mainly focused on trying to assess the relative importance of individuals' retrospective and prospective economic and political evaluations, party attachments and specific political factors to explain the electoral performance of the three main political parties: PRI, *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN) and *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD). Despite some significant contributions to understand the characteristics of the "Mexican voter," these studies not only present contradictory findings about the relevance of most explanatory factors. And, more importantly, as Magaloni (1999: 203; 2008: 193-195) and Greene (2008, 19-21) have pointed out, they fail to explain why the PRI was able to obtain significant victories in the 1988, 1991 and 1994 federal elections despite Mexico's disastrous (1988) or middling (1991 and 1994) economic performance in the previous years, while the significant economic growth of 1996-1997 and 1999-2000 did not help this party to retain its dominant position in the 1997 and 2000 federal elections.

In a way, Magaloni's book *Voting for Autocracy* (2006) can be understood as an effort to solve these problems. Building on the idea that the survival of a

dominant-party regime is a function on the unity of its elite (Van de Walle, 1994; Geddes, 1999), Magaloni (2006) argues that the PRI's capacity to deter intra-elite defections –and, thus, remain in power– largely depended on having an extensive base of electoral support.¹ According to this author, “The pillar of a hegemonic-party regime is its monopoly of mass support” because “elites possess strong incentives to remain united as long as the population supports the ruling party. If electoral support begins to wither, so do incentives to remain united within the ruling party” (2006, 14-15). The PRI's level of electoral support, in turn, was a function of the country's long-term economic performance, the distribution of government transfers to voters and the use of electoral fraud and force (2006, 20, 55-72). Consequently, she argues that even when the electoral reforms of the *first* half of the 1990s² and the increasing coordination of the opposition³ contributed to the end of the PRI's regime, the main cause of Mexico's democratization was the massive detachment of voters from the ruling party as a result of the 1994 peso crisis and the weakening of the PRI's “punishment regime”⁴ at the end of the 1980s.

Following a Bayesian logic, Magaloni proposes that voters forgave the PRI for the 1982 debt crisis because they could still rationally believe that this party

¹Magaloni mentions two other factors: the amount of spoils and government jobs distributed by the PRI to the political elite, and the ruling party's capacity to manipulate the electoral rules and commit electoral fraud (2006, 18).

²For Magaloni the 1994 reform was “The most fundamental institutional reform in the construction of democracy in Mexico” because it granted “true independence to the IFE [*Instituto Federal Electoral*, Mexico's electoral commission]”, and this, in turn, “offered a way to minimize ex ante violations of the electoral laws by removing the PRI's *institutional capacity* to commit electoral fraud” (2006, 243, original emphasis; see also 38).

³This author suggests that while in 1994 the PAN and PRD leaders were able to finally form a joint front to prevent the PRI from committing further electoral fraud with the creation of an autonomous electoral commission, in the 2000 presidential election opposition voters were able to coordinate and massively support a single candidate: Vicente Fox (2006, 24-27, 73).

⁴According to Magaloni, the PRI used this regime to exclude opposition voters and politicians from the party's spoils system. The poorer the median voter and the stronger the capacity of the hegemonic party to monitor the behavior of voters and target economic transfers, the more effective the “punishment regime” will be. She argues that this regime was particularly relevant to create “a poverty trap for peasants, who remained the most loyal base of support for the autocratic regime up until it was defeated in 2000” (2006, 20, 80).

would be more capable than the opposition in handling the national economy, in particular because the regime's economic history had been consistently good until then (2006, 64). In contrast, the 1994 peso crisis meant falling below a "threshold of acceptability" after which voters no longer trusted the PRI's competence. As a consequence, this last economic crisis confirmed the systematic deterioration of the economy and led voters to "embrace political change regardless of the risks" (2006, 80). It was only after this moment that voters became "vindictive" and detached from the PRI, reducing the party's popular support and, consequently, increasing its vulnerability to internal splits (2006, 54, 79).

Magaloni's argument is innovative and appealing, but the evidence challenges four important aspects of it. First, the results presented in Chapter 4 indicate that, contrary to her theory, the probability that a high-ranked *Priísta* defected the party was higher where the PRI still had a *large* base of electoral support, not where it was weaker. Put differently, the evidence suggest that the PRI did not require oversized electoral majorities to maintain the unity of its factions. Instead, what this party needed was an institutional framework that allowed it to be, at the margin, the most competitive option (the "safer bet") for the average high-ranked *Priísta*. I come back to this point in the next section of this chapter.

Second, Magaloni's description of the Mexican economy during the 1980s and 1990s fails to mention that besides the 1982 and 1994 crises, Mexico also experienced a profound economic breakdown in 1985 and 1986 (e.g., the GDP per capita dropped -5.9%).⁵ If we include this crisis in the analysis, the question then is why the 1994 crisis was the one that triggered the supposedly massive detachment of

⁵Even though Figure 2.1 of her book (2006, 83) illustrates that the 1985-1986 crisis reduced Mexico's economic growth rate almost as much as the 1982 crisis (it dropped about -4% in 1986), Magaloni describes these two separate crises as part of the same one (see p. 83). This depiction seems inappropriate because the 1982-1983 and 1985-1986 crises were the result of separated causes (Garrido and Quintana 1986, Lustig 1998, and Moreno-Brid and Ros 2009). In addition, in technical terms a recession is generally defined as the situation in which a country registers negative economic growth for at least two consecutive quarters. According to her own data (Figure 2.1), Mexico's economy grew more than 2% in 1984 and 1985.

voters from the PRI and not the one of 1985-1986, especially given that this last crisis took place only a few years after the 1982-1983 one and a little before the 1988 presidential election.⁶

Third, although Magaloni does not explicitly describe the causal mechanism that connects the 1994 peso crisis with the final detachment from the PRI of many of the voters that were trapped in this party's punishment regime,⁷ the logic seems to be that "In order for a voter [who is part of a clientelistic network] to defect to the opposition, the utility differential attributable to economic performance and ideological proximity must *outweigh the expected punishment of forgone financial resources* [provided by the dominant party]" (2006, 69, original emphasis). However, given that between 1994 and 1996 the share of Mexicans below the poverty line went from 21.1 to 37.1 percent according to official figures (Székely, 2005),⁸ it is plausible to argue that the 1994 crisis increased the dependence of a larger share of the population on the benefits distributed by the PRI through its clientelistic machine. Hence, it could be argued that this economic downturn made it more, not less, difficult for this group of voters to detach from what Magaloni calls the PRI's punishment regime (see footnote 4).

Fourth, if voters massively detached from the PRI in 1994 as a reaction against the poor results delivered by this party, how can we explain that the only two parties created after this year that have been able to obtain enough votes to maintain their national register (i.e., *Convergencia por la Democracia* –later *Movimiento Ciudadano*– and *Nueva Alianza*) were founded by controversial former PRI leaders

⁶Actually, many Mexican scholars have argued that the PRI start losing the support of large sectors of voters right after the 1982 crisis (e.g., Loaeza, 1999; Peschard, 1987), and that this partially explains the official party's bad performance in the 1988 presidential election. I agree with these scholars.

⁷Magaloni argues, for example, that "the PRI's electoral support collapsed after the 1994 peso crisis, when voters began to defect to the opposition in one local election after another" (2006, 54), and that "The 1994 peso crisis paved the way for the PRI's ultimate demise because it completely destroyed the party's reliability" (2006, 154).

⁸The figures refer to the share of the population that did not have enough resources to have "a minimally acceptable diet." The increase is equally large using the other two official measurements. See Székely (2005) for details.

who left the party along with the clientelistic machine under their control? Likewise, if by the mid-1990s Mexican voters were so disgruntled with the long-time ruling party, how can we explain that, as I show in Chapter 4, opposition parties improved their electoral results when they nominated a former PRI member as candidate for an elected position?⁹

Also in line with Van de Walle and Geddes's conception of the survival of dominant-party regimes, Joy Langston (2006) proposes that the breakdown of the PRI's internal unity –and the regime's eventual demise– was caused by the electoral reforms implemented in Mexico during the last quarter of the twentieth century. These reforms, Langston argues, changed “the calculus of discipline for an *individual* politician [within the PRI] even if he or she does not enjoy the support of a camarilla or group”, allowing a dissatisfied *Priústa* to “compete under an opposition party banner and hope to win the elected post, especially for local executive races such as the gubernatorial and mayoral contests” (Langston, 2006, 60,71, emphasis added).

Langston's theory is suggestive and insightful, but it is not clear which of the six electoral reforms implemented in Mexico between 1977 and 1996 she is referring to. While it is plausible that a reform improves the competitiveness of an electoral system and this, in turn, might erode the unity of the dominant party, not all electoral reforms –even the ones that imply a certain degree of liberalization– necessarily produce this result. This is precisely what happened in Mexico before 1996.¹⁰ The problem, then, is that by not stating which electoral

⁹As I explain in more detail in the second part of this chapter, both phenomena are explained by the fact when high-ranked members of the PRI left the party in order to join or create an opposition party, they migrated with the clientelistic machine under their control. This not only allowed them to boost the vote share of the parties to which they migrated “despite” of their PRI past, but in some case it even allowed them to obtain and maintain the national register of new parties.

¹⁰Molinar (1991), Weldon (2001) and Brinegar, Morgenstern and Nielson (2006), among others, argue that most of the electoral reforms approved in Mexico since the 1960s were designed to open up the system enough to satisfy part of the opposition and the population's demands (e.g., reduce electoral fraud and increase representativeness), but not so much as to risk the PRI's resource advantage and control over the political regime. Similarly, many Sub-Saharan

reform(s) transformed the incentives of the PRI members and why this happened, Langston's causal mechanism loses explanatory power and it is difficult to test empirically.

In the following chapter I propose that despite the improvements introduced to Mexico's electoral system by the five reforms approved between 1977 and 1994, the internal unity of the PRI only started to be systematically eroded after the approval of the 1996 electoral reform. This allows me to derive observable implications that I test in Chapter 4. In addition, I propose a causal mechanism that substantially departs from Langston's explanation for why the defections suffered by the PRI were so costly for the ruling party.¹¹ I argue that most of these splits not only implied the migration of a single individual from the PRI to other parties, as this author proposes, but also, and most importantly, the clientelistic machine under his or her control. While this reduced the ruling party's capacity to mobilize voters, it improved the opposition's clientelistic machines and electoral results.

Kenneth Greene (2008; 2010) offers a third influential explanation of the PRI's fall. According to this author, the resilience of the PRI regime—like any dominant-party regime—is mainly explained by the enormous resource advantages that this party enjoyed over the opposition.¹² This resource advantage was obtained through several illicit mechanisms, but one of them seems to be particularly rele-

African dominant-party regimes were able to remain in power despite the political reforms that liberalized their regimes in the early 1990s. See Van de Walle (2007).

¹¹Langston argues that as a consequence of the defections of *individual* members experienced by the PRI in the late-1980s and 1990s, the dominant party started to suffer electoral defeats in several gubernatorial races to former PRI members. According to this author, the fact that state and municipal executive races are more candidate-centered gave the former PRI members that competed as opposition candidates “more opportunity to win elected post from outside the PRI” (2006, 71). Even when this might be true, a party must still persuade, coordinate and mobilize more voters than its competitors in order to win these elections (Cox, 2008). Hence, if the defections experienced by the PRI only involved *individual* members, as Langston claims, it is difficult to understand how the exit of a single cadre could have significantly reduced the PRI's capacity to perform the three tasks just mentioned, while drastically increasing the capacities of an opposition party at the same time. This becomes even more puzzling if we consider that in many of these states the opposition was almost non-existent (e.g., Tlaxcala, Zacatecas).

¹²Greene proposes a second but less relevant factor: the ability of the regime to raise the costs of supporting the opposition (2008; 2010).

vant for Greene's theory: the diversion of funds from the budgets of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to the PRI's coffer.¹³ Hence, from Greene's perspective the end of the PRI's regime was mainly caused by the drastic reduction of this party's resource edge due to the privatizations and budget cuts that followed the economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁴ Privatization, Greene argues, "weakens dominant parties because it limits their access to public funds, and without these funds, well-greased patronage networks run dry, the machine of dominance seizes up, and the increasingly fair market for votes allows opposition to expand" (2008, 33-34).

Few scholars would challenge that part of the reasons why dominant-party regimes manage to rule for long periods of time has to do with their clear superiority of resources. However, the evidence indicates that even after the liberalization of the economy had drastically reduced the number of SOEs and shrunk the size of the public sector in Mexico, by the mid-1990s the PRI still enjoyed an enormous resource advantage over all other parties. According to the reports published by IFE, Mexico's electoral commission, the PRI spent 71.4%, 77.3% and 81.2% of the total campaign resources used by *all* parties in the presidential, senatorial and federal deputy races of 1994, respectively (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000, 371-372). Importantly, these figures are likely to be an underestimation because they do not include the public resources that could still be illegally diverted to favor the official party.

Furthermore, while Greene correctly points out that the number of SOEs went

¹³Greene mentions other mechanisms (2010, 5-6), but the empirical analysis and conclusions of his 2008 book and 2010 article are almost exclusively based on the advantages that the SOEs' resources provide.

¹⁴In order to explain why the PRI was able to remain in power for almost ten years after the harshest parts of the economic liberalization took place, Greene argues that the historic nature of the PAN and PRD as niche political organizations made it difficult for them to quickly transform into catch-all parties able to compete for the median voter. This depiction of the PAN is in sharp contrast to the historical description provided by Soledad Loaeza (1999, 329-336), one of Mexico's specialists on this party. It also seems inappropriate for the PRD, a party that was founded by former PRI members along with different left organizations.

from 1,155 in 1982 to 280 in 1990 and 202 in 2000, the fact is that during the first 40 years of PRI rule the number of SOEs was significantly smaller. While in 1970 there were 272 SOEs, by 1975 this figure increased to 504 (roughly the same number as in 1989), and it was not until the period 1976-1982 that this number jumped to 1,155. In addition, a significant proportion of this increase in the number of SOEs is explained by the state's decision to take over companies in financial distress and, more importantly, by the nationalization of the bank system in 1982 (Chong and López de Silanes 2005, 351-353; Lustig 1998, 104-105; MacLeod 2004, 41, 46; Salinas 1990, 1994; Zedillo 1995*b*, 1997). In general terms, these nationalizations transferred existing workers in the private sector into state employees rather than allowing the PRI to hire more of its own supporters.

Likewise, while the number of federal government employees in 2000 (978,267) was roughly half of the figure at the end of the 1980s (1,950,247),¹⁵ this number did not experience a monotonic decline during the period. From 1988 to 1992 it actually increased from 1,950,247 to 2,065,859, and it was not until 1993 that this number dropped to 1,028,105.¹⁶ Even more importantly, this sharp decrease is explained by the transfer of public school teachers from the federal government to the state governments—largely controlled by the PRI until the end of the 1990s—as part of the Educational Reform of 1993 (Trejo, 1995). Actually, the decline in the number federal employees between 1992 and 1993 (from 2,065,859 to 1,028,105), had almost the same magnitude as the increase in the number of state employees

¹⁵This last figure refers to the number of federal employees in 1988. From 1988 to 2004 the source of all the employment figures is INEGI, Mexico's Census Bureau, (INEGI, 2000, 2005).

¹⁶It is important to mention that according to the official figures provided by INEGI, the total number of federal employees was never as high as the figures reported by Greene (more than 3 million) for the period 1983-1991. Part of the reason for this discrepancy might have to do with the fact that Greene used two different sources (Salinas 1994 and CLAD) that seem to be reporting different categories of public employees as "federal government employees." The broadest category used by the INEGI to classify public employees is "Public Sector", which includes "General Government" and "Public Enterprises." "General Government", in turn, is subdivided in "Central Government" and "Local Government." "Federal Government" is only one of the three categories that form part of "Central Government" (INEGI, 2000, 2005, 2010).

in this period (from 817,718 to 1,873,278).¹⁷

In sum, it is unquestionable that the recurrent economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s affected the perceptions that many Mexicans had about the PRI's capacity to govern, as well as the amount of available resources this party had to outperform the opposition forces. Simultaneously, on the political front, the five electoral reforms approved between 1977 and 1994 reduced the PRI's capacity to commit electoral fraud and increased the opposition representativeness at all levels of government. The combination of these and other factors progressively reduced the PRI's electoral performance. Still, what is remarkable is that even after absorbing the negative effects of these economic and political transformations, by the mid-1995 the PRI remained as Mexico's dominant party. Although this party was not longer at its political peak, by the end of 1995 the PRI still controlled the presidency, 60% or more of the seats in both houses of the national congress, governed almost 90% of the states and held more than 50% of the seats in 94% of the state legislatures.¹⁸ Why was the PRI able to remain in power for almost twenty years after the 1982 crisis? And why did the PRI's electoral performance rapidly declined in the second half of the 1990s, leading to its defeat in the 2000 presidential election? What triggered this process? In the reminder of this chapter I propose the general theoretical framework needed to answer these questions in Chapter 4.

¹⁷Though Greene partially recognizes this when he mentions that "an *important* portion of the decrease came from transferring public teachers to state government", he further argues that "since the PRI had begun to lose control of state houses and legislatures, these employees were decreasingly available either as patronage appointments or as PRI supporters and financiers" (2008, 104, emphasis added). However, this seems questionable considering that by 1996 the PRI governed 28 of the 32 states and that even by 2000 this party still controlled almost two thirds (19) of all states.

¹⁸The data on the composition of both houses of the federal congress was obtained from IFE (www.ife.org.mx). The number of states governed by the PRI and opposition parties was calculated using the data from Banamex (2001) and states electoral commissions. The share of seats controlled by the PRI in the state legislatures was calculated using the figures on Annex 1 of Lujambio (2000).

3.2 Clientele Migration Theory

My theory builds on the insight that the likelihood and mode of breakdown of each type of dictatorship depends on the characteristics of its intra-elite factionalism and competition (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994; Geddes, 2004), and that the survival of an authoritarian dominant-party regime, in particular, is largely a function of the unity of its elite (Van de Walle, 1994; Geddes, 2004). By an authoritarian dominant-party regime I mean one in which “one party dominates access to political office and controls policy, though other parties may sometimes legally compete”, and the party has enough institutional autonomy to constrain the dictator’s discretion over policy and personnel choices (Geddes, 2004, 3).

3.2.1 The Clientelistic Nature of Dominant Parties

Although the degree of centralization and institutionalization of a dominant party’s clientelistic machine greatly varies across cases,¹⁹ it is remarkable that most dominant parties base their power on these type of political networks (e.g., Baum, 1994; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994; Tremewan, 1994; Rigger, 1999; Tam, 2005; Magaloni, 2006; Greene, 2008).²⁰ The basic building block of these clientelistic structures are political factions. These factions compete for nominations, appointments and perks, but they cooperate most of the time for the benefit of the whole party. Each faction is composed of a subgroup of politicians that share common goals and act together in order to advance their agenda and win positions within the party and the political regime. In many cases factions’ membership, ideology and policy preferences are fluid, constantly adapting to the changing circum-

¹⁹For example, while most communist parties have an extensive clientelistic network that is highly centralized and in many cases influences almost every aspect of a citizen’s life, the clientelistic structures of many dominant parties in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to be loose and decentralized (Van de Walle, 2007). Also, dominant-party regimes tend to have clientelistic machines regardless of their ideology or level of economic development (e.g., Cuba, Singapore).

²⁰For studies on the clientelistic nature of the PRI’s regime see, for example, Padgett (1955), Smith (1979), Bernstein (1993), Knight (2005).

stances. Every faction controls different types and amounts of human, material, organizational and financial resources.

Importantly, even when the size and relevance of each faction within the party's clientelistic machine varies, they all tend to work in the same way: the faction leader (i.e., the patron) provides the faction members (i.e., the clients) different types of benefits and services under his control in exchange for some form of political and economic support.²¹ Every faction leader is responsible to its superior (i.e., patron) for the behavior and the results provided by the faction(s) under his or her control. At the top of the clientelistic structure is the main leader or patron of the party.²²

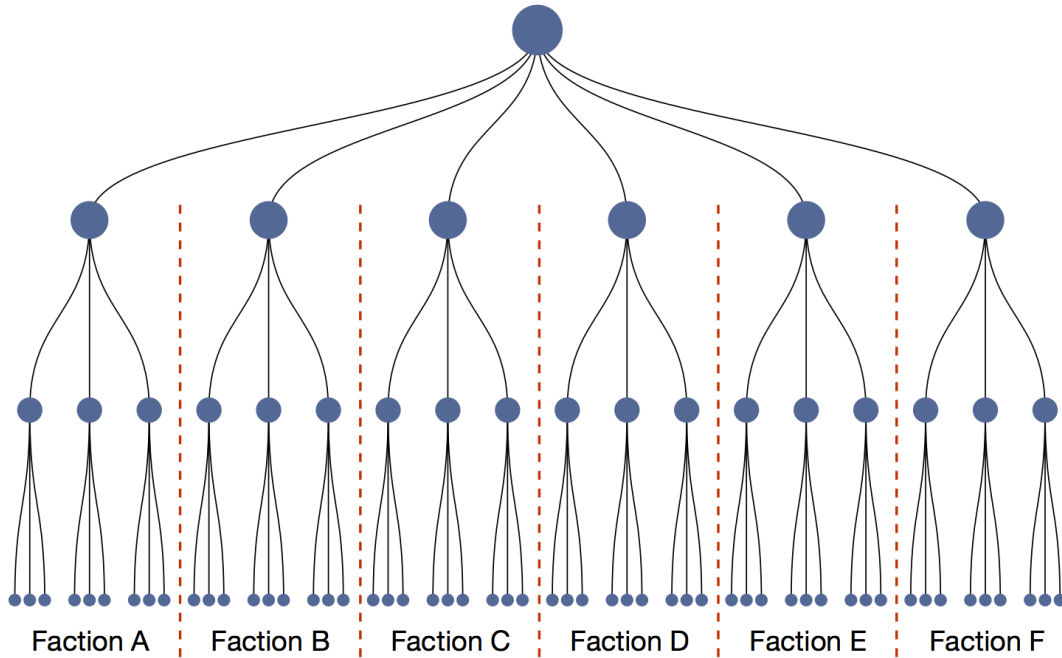
Figure 3.1 presents the diagram of a dominant party's hypothetical clientelistic machine with six factions.²³ Each circle corresponds to a politician and the branches represent the relationship between him and the politicians that are below and above him in the structure. Three clarifications are in order. First, clientelistic machines usually have several levels. Thus, the categories of "patron" and "client" must be understood in relative, not absolute terms. The same individual can be classified as one or the other, depending on his or her position in a particular dyad (Muno, 2010; Scott, 1972). Second, each faction might be composed of smaller factions of lower order. In this example the six main factions are each formed by three factions of lower order. Third, thanks to their virtual monopolistic control over the state resources, dominant parties tend to have the largest

²¹As in other clientelistic structures, the relationship between a faction leader and its members is defined by at least three characteristics. Given the unequal levels of wealth, power and information between the leader and members of a faction, their relationship is *asymmetric*, always favoring the leader. In addition, the relationship is *reciprocal*, meaning that it is based on the mutual exchange of resources valued by each actor in the dyad. Finally, the interaction between the faction's leader and its members is *contingent*. That is, the leader provides benefits and services only to those members who have already delivered or who promised to deliver him some type of political support. See Scott (1972), Landé (1983) and Muno (2010).

²²For a detailed historical description of the characteristics, transformation and internal organization of the factions within the PRI, see Smith (1979) and Camp (1995, 2002).

²³Clientelistic structures are significantly more complex in the real world, including many more factions and levels within the network. I use this simplified diagram for ease of exposition.

Figure 3.1: A Dominant Party's Hypothetical Clientelistic Structure



and densest clientelistic machine of the regime, which gives them an unparalleled advantage over opposition parties.

Among the several important political tasks that clientelistic machines perform for the dominant party they support, two are particularly relevant for those regimes where elections –although unfair and unfree– are held regularly and some kind of opposition is allowed to compete (e.g., Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore).²⁴ First, given that political parties need to simultaneously *persuade*, *coordinate* and *mobilize* voters in order to win elections (Cox, 2008, 342), one of the key advantages that a clientelistic machine provides to a dominant party vis-à-vis other parties in electoral times is the unparalleled capacity to mobilize voters through its extensive networks. The votes provided by the clientelistic machine might not be enough by themselves to assure the electoral triumph of the dominant party, but they do represent a considerable advantage for the ruling party over the op-

²⁴In the Mexican case, clientelistic machines are also fundamental to defend the party interests at each stage of an election (e.g., polling stations, district councils, state councils and the national council).

position. This point is particularly important to understand the pace of Mexico’s democratization. Most of the existing explanations implicitly assume that the two central challenges for the PAN and the PRD in their efforts to defeat the PRI were to *persuade* enough voters about their policies and *coordinate* them to vote for only one of the opposition parties (e.g., Magaloni, 2006; Greene, 2008). I explicitly propose that one of the main advantages that the unity of the PRI’s factions provided to its leaders –one that proved particularly valuable when the electoral competition increased in the middle of the 1980s– was the significant edge that the ruling party had to mobilize voters through its extensive clientelistic networks.²⁵

Second, clientelistic machines might improve the dominant parties’ ability to monitor and influence how people vote. Susan Stokes (2005) argues that the capacity of a political party to know or make good inferences about what individual voters have done in the voting booth, and reward or punish them conditional on these actions, depends on the type of voting technology used and the characteristics of the party’s organization.²⁶ In particular, those parties with a bottom-heavy and decentralized organization with an army of grassroots militants (i.e., a clientelistic network) will be significantly more efficient in monitoring and affecting the behavior of voters in their favor.

3.2.2 The Importance of the Factions’ Unity

Following Horiuchi and Tay (2004), I assume that the central goal of each faction leader in a dominant party is to maximize its *own* payoff –and not necessarily

²⁵I borrow Cox’s definition of voters mobilization “as an attempt to affect whether or not citizens participate in the election” (Cox, 2008, 342).

²⁶I contend that the distinction between the two main determinants of a party’s capacity to monitor voters’ behavior is relevant in the context of Mexico’s democratization. While the five electoral reforms instituted between 1977 and 1994 reduced PRI’s capacity to monitor voters through improving the security and reliability of the existing voting technology, they left the organizational structure of this party largely intact. In contrast, the 1996 reform did not introduce any significant changes to the voting technology, but it transformed the structure of incentives of many PRI leaders, eroding the unity among the party factions and reducing the party’s organizational capacities. I discuss the reasons in the next chapter.

the party's— in the political regime (i.e., to increase the size of *their* share of the political pie). A faction leader can accomplish this at least in two different ways: i) by maximizing the payoff of the dominant party (i.e., increasing the slice of the political pie that the party receives); and/or ii) by maximizing the payoff of the faction within the dominant party (i.e., increasing the faction's share of the party's slice) or in another party (i.e., joining or creating another party). Hence, in contrast to previous theories that have modeled the interactions within a dominant party (e.g., Geddes, 2004), I propose that the interests of the party's faction leaders do not necessarily converge.

Each faction leader contributes part of the resources under his or her control to either build and mobilize popular support in favor of the authoritarian regime (Geddes, 2008; Magaloni, 2006), deter the organization and expression of opposition against the government, as well as to increase the party's capacity to win elections, if there are any. In return, the party offers each faction leader some type of benefits, with some probability of fulfilling this promise in the future. Together, the benefits, the probability of receiving them, and the costs (i.e., the resources contributed) determine the expected utility (or payoff) that the party can provide to each faction leader. This can be formalized as:

$$EU_{Leader\,faction_k}(Party_j) = P_j B_j - C_j \quad (3.1)$$

where B_j stands for the benefits associated with being a member of Party j , P_j refers to the probability of receiving these benefits, and C_j the costs of supporting Party j .²⁷

To prevent the massive defection of its factions, a dominant party must pro-

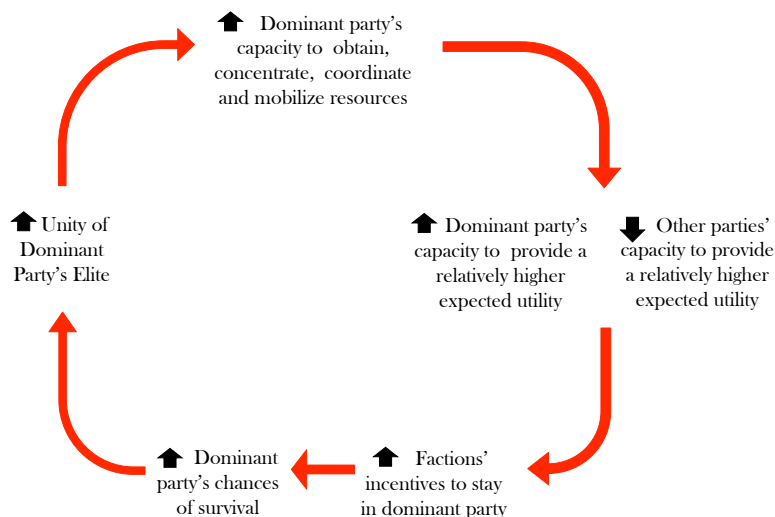
²⁷This conception of the expected utility of a party's faction is largely an adaptation of Aldrich and Bianco's model of "Party Affiliation" (1992), which is also the point of departure of Magaloni (2006) and Greene's (2008) models. The assumptions made here to simplify this equation are the same as the ones proposed by Aldrich and Bianco, and includes the fact that the probability that a faction that belongs to party j will receive some kind of benefits from party i is equal to zero.

vide their faction leaders an expected utility that is *relatively* higher than what any opposition organization offers them. This, in turn, largely depends on the dominant party's capacity to obtain, concentrate, coordinate and mobilize different types of financial, human, material, political and repressive resources. In order to perform these tasks, dominant-party regimes usually construct and use clientelistic networks through which the patron provides different kinds of benefits and services under his control in exchange for some form of political or economic support. The amount and type of benefits or services that a patron can provide to his clients depends on his access to public resources, as well as the personal wealth he might have accumulated during his political career (I come back to this point below).

Consequently, all else equal, the stronger the cohesion of the dominant party's factions within the clientelistic structure, the higher the capacity of the party to perform these tasks, the larger the expected utility that the party can –although not necessarily will– allocate to its factions, the lower the expected payoff that other parties can offer, the more likely it is that the factions will prefer to stay in the party, increasing the regime's chances of prevailing. This is why, as several authors have previously argued (Van de Walle, 1994; Geddes, 2004),²⁸ the unity of a dominant party's elite is a key component of the self-reinforcing mechanism –the “virtuous cycle of dominance” in T.J. Pempel's words (1990)– that makes the survival of this type of regime such a resilient equilibrium. Figure 3.2 illustrates this causal relationship.

²⁸According to Van de Walle, “the real threat to these regimes is the elite crisis rather than the popular opposition, because the latter lacks organization and resources. Regime transitions are most likely where elite cohesion breaks down and disaffected members of the political class seek to manipulate popular discontent to destabilize the regime” (1994, 131).

Figure 3.2: Self-Reinforcing Survival Mechanism of Dominant-Party Regimes



3.2.3 The “Safer Bet”

Dominant parties use a wide variety of mechanisms to maintain the cooperation of their factions and, consequently, to reinforce their chances of staying in power. These mechanisms include, among others, having an unparalleled clientelistic machine; the use of public funds to finance the official party or distribute welfare benefits and programs to sustain a clientelistic structure; the allocation of public jobs and contracts on a partisan basis; manipulating the rules used to determine the district boundaries and the electoral formula; banning opposition parties, candidates or elections; disfranchising social groups that support opposition parties; or, more fundamentally, through repression.

Each of these tools is used to affect one or more of the three components that determine the expected utility that the dominant party and other political organizations can offer (B , P and C in equation 3.1 above). For instance, the probability that a faction receives the benefits promised by the ruling party or the opposition depends on the number of parties allowed to compete.²⁹ If the dominant party is

²⁹This is only one of the many factors that affect P . Others include, for instance, the level of campaign funds and access to the mass media.

the only one allowed to exist, as in many communist and Sub-Saharan regimes for decades, then the probability of receiving the benefits promised by an “opposition” party is close to zero. Similarly, the amount of benefits that a party can provide to its factions largely depends on its access to public jobs, elected positions and state resources. By retaining an almost absolute control over the sources of these benefits, dominant parties usually enjoy significant resource advantages over the rest of the political forces. Finally, a dominant party can increase the costs that its factions would have to pay for joining an opposition organization through a wide variety of repressive means, including harassment, imprisonment and physical violence (Baum, 1994; Geddes, 2004; Greene, 2008; Key, 1950; Magaloni, 2006; Mickey, 2005, 2008; Molinar, 1991; Tam, 2005).

What is remarkable, though, is that no matter what particular combination of mechanisms is used by a dominant-party regime, all have the same fundamental goal: to create a situation in which most faction leaders perceive the ruling party as the “safer bet” because it provides him or her an expected utility that is *relatively* higher than what any other political organization could offer.³⁰ As long as this happens, no faction will have incentives to defect from the ruling coalition and the regime has higher chances of remaining in power.

Importantly, a dominant party might be able to become the “safer bet” and maintain its factions united by either increasing the expected utility it provides to them, reducing the expected payoff that other political organizations could offer, or both. This implies that a dominant party might be able to keep the cohesion of its ranks –and stay in power– even after providing a low absolute expected utility to one or more of its factions, as long as it is also able to use the mechanisms mentioned above to reduce the expected payoff offered by other

³⁰This means that in order to maintain the unity among its ranks a party must offer each of its factions the highest expected utility they could get –in relative terms– in the political regime, but it does not necessarily imply that the expected utility received by each faction will be large in absolute terms, or that all factions will receive the same expected utility.

political organizations.³¹

3.2.4 The Type and Number of Defections Matters

Although the survival of a dominant-party regime largely depends on the unity of its factions, I disagree with the theories that treat dominant party defections in a generic way, assuming, implicitly, that any internal split entails similarly negative consequences for the future of the regime (e.g., Van de Walle, 1994; Geddes, 2004). From my perspective, not all defections are caused by the same factors nor represent the same kind of threat for the survival of a dominant-party regime, and these differences are very important to understand and explain the demise of a dominant-party regime.

Giving the clientelistic nature of dominant parties, the damage that a factional defection can cause to them is directly related to the amount of voters and resources that would migrate to other political parties or organizations as a result of the split. This is determined by at least two factors. The first is the *hierarchy* of the defecting faction leader. The higher his position within the clientelistic pyramid, the larger the amount of resources, sub-factions and voters that will be under his control, and, consequently, the bigger the potential loss that his departure would represent for the dominant party. The second factor is the *number* of factions that leave the party. The larger their number, the bigger the amount of voters and resources that will migrate from the dominant party to other political organizations.³²

³¹A dominant party can also maintain the loyalty of factions that receive very little today by promising more in the future. As long as the dominant party is the only one likely to win, those who fail to get the nomination this time (and thus can expect little in the short run) will be better off remaining loyal so that they have a chance of getting a nomination and higher pay-off in the future. A potential future nomination by the winning party is worth more than a current nomination by a losing party. Once the probability that the dominant party will win falls, the time horizon of faction leaders shortens and they may not be willing to wait indefinitely for nominations.

³²Faction leaders are unlikely to maintain access to state resources after defecting the dominant party. Thus, in order to make a credible promise to their clientele that they will continue

Figure 3.3: Threat Posed to a Dominant-Party Regime’s Survival by Type of Factional Defection

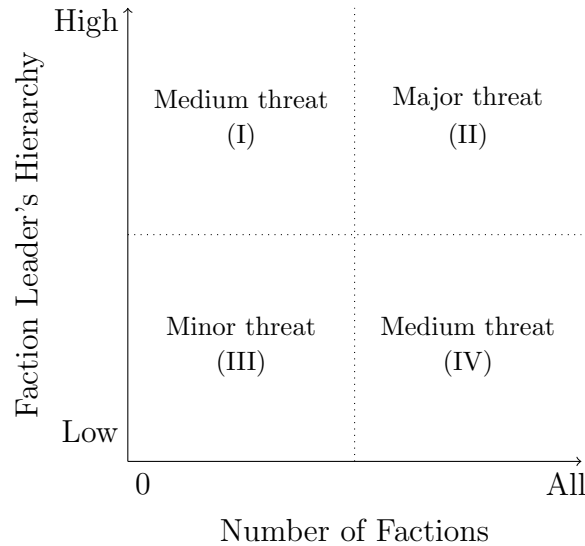


Figure 3.3 offers a graphic representation of the magnitude of the threat that a factional defection would pose to the survival chances of a dominant-party regime, depending on the hierarchy of the leaders of the factions that split (y-axis) and the number of factions involved (x-axis). The least threatening situation for a dominant-party regime –asides from not suffering a split at all– is when a small number of factions headed by low-ranked leaders leave the party (quadrant III). While the situation might turn more complicated as the number of lower order factions that defect increases (quadrant IV), this scenario would still only represent a low/medium threat for the survival of the regime. The leaders of each of these low-ranked factions control relatively few resources and a small group of voters, and they are likely to be geographically disperse and uncoordinated. Thus, while these defections might affect the electoral performance of the dominant party in local races (e.g., state deputies, mayors), if they take place at all, they are unlikely to have consequences at the state or national level.

receiving benefits and services even after leaving the dominant party, faction leaders must have access to alternative sources of resources. These could be, among others, their personal wealth, as well as the resources of the opposition party to which they migrate.

Remarkably, the experiences of the PRI (see page 69 below), Malaysia's United Malays National Organization (UMNO)³³ and other cases illustrate that dominant parties have good chances of surviving defections led by mid- or even high-ranked party leaders if these splits only involve a few factions and their resources (quadrant I). These types of splits are generally motivated by a change in the structure of incentives of a small number of faction leaders after being marginalized –many times purposefully– within the dominant party, and they are unlikely to put at risk the ruling party's clientelistic advantage.

In contrast, what poses a much more serious threat for the survival of a dominant-party regime is when many mid- and high-ranked leaders decide to defect from the dominant party, taking with them the resources and the parts of the clientelistic machine under their control (quadrant II). These massive high-ranked factional defections can be caused by structural transformations that change the incentives of many faction leaders within the party. These defections cause a systematic and severe damage to the dominant party's clientelistic machine because they considerably reduce the ruling party's capacities to mobilize and monitor voters, while improving these same capacities for the opposition parties that adopt these factions.

Hence, in order to explain the demise of a dominant-party regime we need to understand what factor(s) triggered the massive defections of high-ranked factions, as well as why this led to the end of the regime. These elements are strongly related to the particular mechanisms used by the dominant party to remain as the regime's safer bet. They might include domestic factors or international shocks.

³³UMNO, the largest and most powerful party of the coalition that has governed Malaysia since 1955, has experienced several defections through its history. These include the case of its founder, Datuk Onn Jaafar in 1951, Abdul Aziz bin Ishak in 1963, or the split of Team B in 1987-1988, a faction led by well-known UMNO members (e.g., Tengku Razaleigh, Datu Harun Idris) that left the party after losing the internal election for the leadership of the party and being harshly marginalized thereafter. Although all these defections reduced in different degrees the amount of resources that UMNO could obtain, concentrate, coordinate and mobilize, UMNO still remains as Malaysia's dominant party (see Singh (1991) for details).

For instance, in the the following chapter I argue that the PRI's demise was largely triggered by the approval of the 1996 electoral reform; a reform proposed and approved by the PRI. However, if the mechanisms and resources used by a dominant party to maintain the unity of its factions relies on the economic, military or political support provided by a foreign regime or institution (e.g., the communist regimes in East and Central Europe), the structure of incentives of the member of these parties –and, consequently, the cohesion of the elite– might be upset by an event that suddenly interrupts the flow of the crucial resources that the regime requires.

3.3 Summary

The theory proposed in this chapter is based on the idea that the survival of a dominant-party regime largely depends on the unity of its factions (Van de Walle, 1994; Geddes, 2004). I argue that the leaders of these factions will have incentives to stay in the dominant party as long as this organization provides them an expected utility that is *relatively* higher than what any other party could offer them. In contrast to previous authors, though, my theory emphasizes that not all factional split entails similarly negative consequences for the future of the regime. The reason is that not all defections are caused by the same factors nor imply the migration of the same amount of human and material resources from the dominant party to the opposition. Hence, I propose that a dominant-party regime's survival will only be seriously threatened when many mid- and high-ranked leaders decide to leave the party along with their faction and resources. Consequently, in order to explain the demise of a dominant-party regime we need to understand what factor(s) triggered the massive defections of mid- and high-ranked factions, as well as why this led to the end of the regime. In Chapters 4 and 5 I address both questions for the PRI's case.

CHAPTER 4

How the 1996 Reform Triggered the End of the PRI's Dominance

In this chapter I use the theoretical framework described in the previous chapter to examine the demise of one of the longest-lived dominant-party regimes: Mexico's *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI). In the first part of the chapter I explain why while the PRI was able to survive the periodic defections led by one or few leaders during its first 65 years of existence (e.g., Almazán, Henríquez), the rapid increase of defections caused by the 1996 electoral reform posed a major threat for the regime's future. In the second part of the chapter I empirically test the effect of the 1996 electoral reform on the frequency of defections, as well as the effect of the defections of mid- and high-ranked PRI members on the electoral performance of the dominant party and the opposition. For this purpose, I constructed two original datasets on the factional defections suffered by the PRI between 1986 and 2006. The evidence supports the idea that the 1996 reform significantly increased the frequency of defections from the PRI. The data also indicates that these splits had a significant negative impact on this PRI's electoral performance, as well as a substantial electoral boost for the opposition parties.

4.1 The demise of the PRI

For almost sixty years after its foundation in 1929, the PRI was able to prevent the massive defection of its factions by providing them the highest expected utility –in

absolute and relative terms— of Mexico’s political regime. Several factors explain why the PRI was able to become the safer bet shortly after its foundations, as well as why it was able to maintain this condition for more than six decades. On the one hand, the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR), the PRI’s predecessor, was the result of the fusion of the most important political parties at the national and state level of the time (Aguilar Camín and Meyer, 1989; Garrido, 1988; González Compeán and Lomelín, 2000). As a result, from the beginning the PRI enjoyed the support of the largest clientelistic machine in Mexico’s political regime. This gave the ruling party a significant edge over any other political organization to persuade, coordinate and mobilize voters during elections. Consequently, the PRI’s clientelistic advantage quickly allowed the party to virtually monopolize access to all elected offices as well as public jobs, to diverge public resources to finance the activities of the party and to allocate preferential contracts to its members (Greene, 2008; Magaloni, 2006). This, in turn, provided the PRI an unparalleled source of material and financial resources to keep nourishing its clientelistic machine, closing the self-reinforcing mechanism described in Figure 3.2 on page 60.

In addition, shortly after the PRI’s creation the head of the federal executive became the most powerful figure in Mexico’s political regime.¹ Although this power was strictly constrained to a six-year term, its magnitude allowed the president to decisively influence, one way or the other, the political career of virtually any other politician in the country. This strengthened the internal discipline within the PRI (Carpizo, 1978; Weldon, 1997), which, in turn, reinforced the line of authority within the party’s clientelistic machine.

Along with the centralization of power in the hands of the president, from

¹Starting in the mid-1930s Mexico’s president progressively acquired numerous formal and informal mechanisms to convince and pressure the members of the PRI to endorse his decisions, as well as to punish those who deviated from his instructions. I discuss some of these mechanisms in Chapter 5. For more details see Carpizo (1978) and Weldon (1997).

an early stage the PRI leaders showed their disposition to repress those factions that decided to defect and challenge the party either militarily (e.g., the revolt led by Aarón Sáenz in 1929)² or electorally (e.g., the defections of Almazán in 1940, Padilla in 1946 and Henríquez in 1952).³ In response to these splits, the PRI repeatedly reformed the electoral law in the 1940s and 1950s in order to: i) centralize the organization of all federal elections in a commission completely dependent on the federal government; ii) make it significantly more difficult to create new opposition parties; and, iii) forbid independent candidacies (Molinar, 1991). Remarkably, even when the electoral system became increasingly uneven and restricted, elections took place without interruption at all levels of government. This allowed the regime to constantly rotate the public officials, including the president every six years. Finally, for many years all the factors mentioned above were reinforced by the good performance of the Mexican economy and the fiscal resources derived from the expansion of the national oil industry at the beginning of the 1970s.

The situation became substantially more complicated for the PRI at the beginning of the 1980s. While the repeated economic crises and the progressive liberalization of the economy decreased the benefits that the dominant party could provide to its factions, these same factors raised the level of dissatisfaction that many sectors of the population had with different aspects of the PRI's long-lived regime (González Compeán and Lomelín, 2000; Greene, 2008; Loaeza, 1999; Magaloni, 2006; Teichman, 1995). In addition, the five electoral reforms implemented between 1977 and 1994 reduced the regime's capacity to commit fraud, increased the proportionality of the political system, incorporated historically marginalized

²According to Aguilar Camín and Meyer (1989), this revolt extended to ten states across the country and was supported by at least thirty thousand members of the military. The PRI's response to these kind of challenges was extremely violent, particularly during the 1930s, including the execution of many of the members that supported them.

³Before each of the three Mexican presidential elections of 1940, 1946 and 1952, the factions headed by these high-ranked members of the PRI defected from the party and created their own after their respective leaders were not nominated as presidential candidates (Molinar, 1991).

political organizations and improved the electoral commission's autonomy.⁴

As a result of these and other factors,⁵ the official party started to experience growing levels of tension and conflicts among its ranks about the distribution of these increasingly scarce resources. What is remarkable, though, is that even in the midst of this difficult and unprecedented situation, the evidence presented in the second part of this chapter indicates that even by the mid-1990s the PRI was still able to prevail as the safer bet for most of its factions and, consequently, to prevent their defection *en masse*. The losers of an internal nomination process or any other decisions that involved the allocation of scarce resources might have been, of course, discontent. Many of them might have even threatened to leave the ruling party. But for the large majority of the mid- and high-ranked faction leaders it was still a better strategy to remain in the PRI rather than to try to compete under an opposition party label.⁶

This is explained by at least three factors. First, while it is unquestionable that the successive economic crises progressively reduced the amount of resources (and expected utility) that the PRI could provide to its clientelistic machine, these shocks also decreased the level of resources that opposition parties could

⁴For a detailed description of these reforms see Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg (2000) and Molinar and Weldon (2001).

⁵There were at least two other important sources of tension within the PRI between 1988 and 1994. One is the political concessions made by the federal government to opposition parties (known as *concertaciones*) in order to solve different post-election conflicts. These concessions included, among other things, forcing PRI candidates that had just been elected governors or mayors to either not to take office or to resign shortly thereafter (Eisenstadt, 2004). The second is the creation of the *Programa Nacional de Solidaridad* (PRONASOL) in December 1988, which was perceived by many *Priístas* as a threat to the party because it implied building a parallel territorial structure through which the federal government could articulate its social policy and mobilize political support (i.e., create a new clientelistic machine) without the participation of the traditional sectors or the PRI (González Compeán and Lomelín 2000, 608, 651; Teichman 1995, 176-83).

⁶For an illustrative description of the conflicts and defection threats generated by the nomination of the PRI's senatorial candidates in 1994, see Chávez (May 14, 1994). After the PRI's nomination process was over, at least three opposition parties –the PARM, PFCRN and PEM– offered the *Priístas* that had not been nominated as senator candidates to quit the PRI and become candidates for their parties. Few, if any, members of the PRI accepted the offer (Martínez and Maldonado, May 12, 1994).

obtain from private donors (a very important source of resources until the mid-1990s). As a result, even after absorbing the negative consequences of this period of economic instability the PRI was still able to provide its factions an expected utility that although lower than before in *absolute* terms, it was still *relatively* larger than what other political parties could offer them. For instance, while the number of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) declined between 1982 and 1995 (Greene, 2008), the PRI still controlled the hiring process in the remaining public companies, including *Petróleos Mexicanos*, the largest and richest one. Likewise, while the size of the bureaucracy contracted as a result of the liberalization of the economy (see page 53), by the mid-1990 the PRI maintained its control over most of the remaining federal and state bureaucrats. The opposition, in contrast, had no control over SOEs and only controlled patronage jobs in the states and municipalities they governed, which by 1995 amounted to 12.5% and 22% of the total, respectively (Lujambio 2000; Grindle 2007).

Second, while the bad economic performance reduced the *benefits* that both the PRI and the opposition parties could offer, the long-lasting ruling party was still able to maintain a tight control over some of the most important mechanisms that affected the *probability* (e.g., an unparalleled clientelistic machine) and *costs* (e.g., access to the media, repression) that determined the expected utility offered by any political organization to the factions.

Third, the gradual liberalization of the political regime that started in the late 1970s seems to have been carefully designed to maintain the relative advantage of the expected utility that the PRI could provide to its factions vis-à-vis other parties.⁷ Hence, even when the political reforms adopted before 1996 improved several aspects of Mexico's electoral system, by the mid-1990s the electoral market was still markedly uneven in favor of the PRI.⁸ To illustrate the magnitude of this

⁷This strategy is not exclusive of the PRI. See Geddes (2004, 11).

⁸From a similar perspective, Brinegar, Morgenstern and Nielson argue that the reforms enacted before 1996 "had reduced electoral fraud and increased representation for the opposition,

unbalance, the PRI spent between 70% and 80% of the total campaign resources used by *all* parties in the presidential, senatorial and federal deputy races of 1994, respectively (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000, 371-372).⁹ Even by 1996 the public funds legally allocated to the PRI at the federal level were larger than the amount of public resources given to the two largest opposition parties combined (45% vs. 41.2%). This enormous resource advantage allowed the PRI to minimize the likelihood of a *massive* defection of factions and to keep control over most of the branches of its clientelistic machine.

Although the PRI was not completely immune to internal splits during this period, most of the defections that took place between the early 1980s and 1995 were sporadic, uncoordinated, geographically disperse and in general they only involved lower order factions (i.e., at the municipal level or below).¹⁰ One important exception is the defection led by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, whom along other members of the so-called *Corriente Democrática* (CD) were expelled or quit the PRI between October 1987 and July 1988. Despite its profound historical relevance,¹¹ it is important to highlight that this split was not motivated by a generalized change in the structure of incentives of most PRI faction leaders, as would happen after the reform of 1996, but by circumstances that only affected the interests of the CD's leaders.

These circumstances included the harassment that Cárdenas's faction suffered in Michoacán after he finished his period as governor of the state in 1986 (Anaya,

but they allowed the PRI to safely remain in power because of its grip on the media [and] its massively disproportionate share of campaign expenditures" (2006, 77).

⁹As was mentioned before, these figures are likely to be an underestimation because they do not include the public resources that could still be illegally diverted to favor the official party.

¹⁰There is record of these type of defections as early as 1983. That year David Ojeda Ochoa and his faction left the PRI after he was denied the candidacy as mayor of Ensenada, Baja California. Ojeda won that year's election as a candidate of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST), and re-joined the PRI before finishing his term as mayor (Alvarado, November 20, 2011).

¹¹For instance, the exit of the CD helped to unify most left parties –historically divided– into one political force: the PRD. Furthermore, Cardenás campaign posed the most serious electoral threat for the PRI in a presidential race in decades. Additionally, in 1988 the PRI lost the two-thirds majority in the Chamber of Deputies for the first time since its foundation.

2008), Cárdenas's marginalization during the PRI's presidential "primaries" in 1987, ideological differences with the *technocrats*, as well as the CD members' fear of being ostracized within the party by the leadership (Bruhn, 1997; Garrido, 1993; Teichman, 1995).¹² Consequently, at the beginning the CD's defection only implied the migration of a relative small number of mid- and high-ranked factions from a limited number of states (see Figure 4.1). And while Cárdenas was able to obtain the formal or informal support of some mid- and high-ranked PRI faction leaders during the campaign (e.g., part of PEMEX's workers union), the PRI did not suffer a massive defection of these types of factions during this period. According to Luis Javier Garrido, a scholar that studied this defection in detail, "The dissidents [i.e., Cárdenas's group] did not take with them corporate groups [from the PRI] nor important sectors of the ruling bureaucracy" (1993, 179, 183). Varela (1993, 219) suggests something similar.¹³

Equally important, many of the factional splits that the PRI experienced during this period were not permanent. While several of the faction leaders that had informally supported Cárdenas realigned with the PRI after the election,¹⁴ others

¹²The hypothesis that the CD's exit was motivated by factors that only affected the interests of the leaders of a *small* number of PRI factions is supported by two other facts. First, as Cárdenas himself describes, many of the *Priístas* that first formed part of the CD (including, among others, Rodolfo González Guevara, Carlos Tello, Gonzálo Martínez Corbala and Silvia Hernández) eventually stepped aside from it –and stayed in the PRI– when it became evident that this faction would inevitably have a costly confrontation with the PRI's leaders (Suárez, 2003, 119-127). Second, as Molinar and Weldon pointed out (1990, 243), the political context that prevailed immediately after the 1988 presidential elections offered an excellent opportunity to extend the PRI's fracture initiated at the end of 1987. At that time the Chamber of Deputies, also elected in 1988, was responsible for qualifying the validity of that year's controversial presidential election. However, for the first time in its history the PRI had won less than 60% of the seats (260 out of 500) of the Lower House. This situation increased the chances of creating an opposition coalition that could deny the victory to Carlos Salinas de Gortari with the support of some PRI defectors. Remarkably, despite the calls of the *Frente Democrático Nacional* (FDN) leaders –the coalition of parties that supported Cárdenas's presidential candidacy– to the "patriot *Priístas*" to leave the PRI and join the FDN, all the 260 PRI deputies ratified Salinas triumph.

¹³Bruhn (1997) and Varela (1993) propose that Cárdenas's high electoral support in 1988 is explained by his ability to capitalize the social discontent with the bad economic situation, his capacity to attract the support of social organizations that had traditionally not participated in electoral politics, as well as the coordination of most left-wing parties behind his candidacy.

¹⁴For example, Salvador Miranda Polanco and Hugo Cárdenas Avendaño defected from the PRI in 1988 and became federal deputy and mayor candidates for the FDN. A few months

were imprisoned and their factions were either disintegrated or brought back under the PRI's control.¹⁵ In addition, one of Salinas's priorities since the beginning of his term was to modernize and reconstruct the PRI's clientelistic machine with programs like PRONASOL (see footnote 5). These factors explain in part the PRI's electoral recovery in the federal deputy elections of 1991 (it won 58.7% of the votes, 10% more than in 1988) and the drastic decline of Cárdenas's coalition (from the 28.2 % obtained by the FDN in 1988 to 8.3% the PRD got in 1991).¹⁶ In sum, as Figure 4.1 illustrates, while the defection led by Cárdenas was the largest since the 1950s, by the end of 1988 it had been contained. And even more important, the PRI was able to prevent the exit of other high-ranked leaders for several years.

The 1996 electoral reform drastically transformed this situation by significantly leveling the conditions of electoral competition at the federal and state level. The reform included many significant institutional modifications. Here I focus on six of them.¹⁷ First, this reform established a new formula to distribute the public resources and the media spots given by the state to political parties, allocating 30% of the total in equal shares to all parties, and the remaining 70% in a proportional way according to the results obtained by each party in the previous federal deputy election.¹⁸ This new disposition had important and immediate consequences. While in the 1994 presidential election the PRI received 3.4 and 4.8 times more public resources than the PAN and the PRD, respectively, by the

later, once it became clear that Salinas would be the next president, both quitted the FDN and returned to the PRI (Reyes September 2, 1988; Betancourt November 14, 1988.)

¹⁵One example of this is the case of Joaquín Hernández Galicia, *La Quina*, then leader of PEMEX's workers union. After several confrontations with Salinas, *La Quina* instructed a large part of the members of PEMEX's union to vote in favor of Cárdenas. In response, a few months after taking power, Salinas's government imprisoned *La Quina*, appointed a new and loyal union leader and started a drastic reduction of the number of PEMEX workers (Roxborough 1998, 283; Murillo 2001, 283; Teichman 1995, 175). This union is still a close ally of the PRI today.

¹⁶The left's electoral decline is also explained by the disintegration of the coalition of parties that supported Cárdenas candidacy, right after the 1988 election.

¹⁷In the next chapter I analyze in detail the bargaining process of the reform.

¹⁸Before the reform only 10% of the public funds legally allocated to political parties were distributed in equal terms. There was no regulation about media spots.

mid-term election of 1997 this difference had reduced to 1.6 and 2.3. By the 2000 presidential election the PAN and the PRI received the same amount of public resources (around 30% of the total), and the PRD –along with its allies– was the frontrunner with 34% of the total (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000, 47).

Second, the 1996 electoral reform gave an unprecedented dominant role to public financing in all electoral campaigns. It established that the share of public resources used by political parties to finance their campaigns should always be larger than the share of private resources. In addition, it significantly enlarged the amount of public resources allocated to political parties.¹⁹ The increase was so substantial that the public resources allocated to political parties for the federal deputies election of 1997 was 640% larger than the amount of public funds given to all parties for the federal deputies, senatorial and presidential elections of 1994, combined (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000, 46, 426).²⁰ Therefore, the 1996 reform significantly increased both the total amount of public resources legally allocated to electoral campaigns, as well as the share of resources received by each opposition party, creating much fairer conditions of electoral competition. In addition, these provisions of the reform greatly reduced the importance of the control of state resources in elections for the first time in Mexican history.

Third, the reform extended and reinforced the autonomy of the *Instituto Federal Electoral* (IFE),²¹ Mexico's electoral commission. The reform established that

¹⁹As I discuss in the next chapter, this was one of the most controversial aspects of the reform.

²⁰One of the mechanisms that allowed Mexico's president to keep a close control over the PRI was that most of the resources received by the party depended on the discretionary power of the executive. The 1996 reform ended this by institutionalizing and making transparent the source of the resources received by the PRI. According to Oscar Levín Coppel, this was one of the crucial reasons why the PRI agreed to support the 1996 reform (Albarrán, November 17, 1996b).

²¹The 1994 electoral reform increased the legal and political independence of the IFE by granting its formal autonomous status in the constitution, while transforming the way in which its General Council, the highest decision-making body, was integrated. Although the Secretary of Interior remained as the head of the institution, now six of the seven members of the General Council with the right to vote were non-partisans citizens elected by a qualified majority of the Chamber of Deputies. This reform also established that while parties should have equal representation at the General Council, all of them lost the right to vote within this body (Becerra,

the head of this institution, the Counsellor President, would no longer be the Secretary of Interior,²² but a non-partisan citizen elected –along with the other eight non-partisan counselors– by a two-thirds majority of the Chamber of Deputies. This ended the historical control that Mexico’s president had over the organization and execution of federal elections.

Fourth, the reform significantly improved the electoral judicial system. It created and defined the federal electoral court, the *Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación* (TEPJF),²³ as the highest tribunal in electoral matters, enlarged its jurisdiction²⁴ and incorporated this institution into the judiciary branch. In addition, the reform set the bases of a judicial procedure to guarantee the constitutionality and legality of all decisions made by electoral authorities, as well as the citizens’ rights to vote. The reform also established that all the decisions adopted by the states’ electoral courts could be revised and reverted, if necessary, by the TEPJF.²⁵

Fifth, one of the most relevant but least noticed aspects of this electoral reform is the modification of section IV of article 116 of Mexico’s Federal Constitution in order to require *all* 32 states to modify their constitutions and local electoral laws to replicate the federal electoral system.²⁶ This implied, among other things, that all states should have an autonomous electoral commissions with certain minimum

Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000).

²²In Mexico and many other developing countries, the Secretary or Minister of Interior was in charge of the police, internal security, the organization of elections, making sure the incumbent party’s election campaigns were successful.

²³The constitutional reform also established that the TEJPF’s magistrates should be appointed by the Senate from proposals made by the Supreme Court.

²⁴For example, for the first time since 1917 it would be the Electoral Court, not the Chamber of Deputies, who would sanction the validity and the result of presidential elections.

²⁵This last point was a particularly important one for opposition parties because state electoral courts had traditionally been controlled by governors, making them unreliable and ineffective. See Eisenstadt (2004) for a detailed explanation.

²⁶Given the numerous conflicts that characterized the state elections of the first half of the 1990s (Eisenstadt, 2004), this was one of the central goals for the opposition parties since the negotiations of this reform started (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000, 391). This was also one of the seven points included in the *Acuerdo Político Nacional* signed on January 17, 1995 (Labastida and López, 2004, 790). See page 114.

characteristics, create detailed legal procedures to allow parties to challenge the electoral results, and replicate the scheme used at the federal level to distribute public resources and media spots among political parties (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000, 452-453).²⁷ The reform thus reduced the ability of PRI officials in poorer parts of the country to ignore the new laws, as they had done in the past.

Finally, the 1996 electoral reform also generated a profound transformation of Mexico City's political system, establishing the popular election of the city's mayor and the head of each of the city's 16 sub-territorial units (*delegaciones*, in Spanish) for the first time in more than 70 years.²⁸

Thus, by significantly leveling the conditions of electoral competition at the federal and state level, the 1996 reform drastically reduced the expected utility that the PRI could provide to its factions leaders, and simultaneously increased the expected utility that the opposition parties could offer to them.²⁹ For instance, by drastically raising the level of public funds allocated to political parties and distributing them more equally, the reform raised the *probability* that opposition parties could win an election. And while the increase of public resources might have also benefited the PRI, the magnitude of the effect was significantly larger for the opposition than for the dominant party. The reason is that for the opposition this modification represented a substantial net increase in financial resources, but for the PRI it mostly implied regularizing the funds the party had illegally received

²⁷While some states started to improve the autonomy of their electoral commissions before the 1996 reform (Aparicio and Ley, 2008), most of them had not considered the other issues that this reform forced them to incorporate in their local laws.

²⁸In 1928 President Alvaro Obregón replaced Mexico City's municipality system by a regency system, whose head (i.e., the *regente*) was directly appointed by –and politically responsible to– the president. The regent, in turn, appointed all the officials of the local administration (Ziccardi, 1996, 100). Mexico City's mayor was elected again for the first time in 1997 and the heads of the 16 territorial sub-units in 2000.

²⁹As mentioned in Chapter 3, the expected utility that these political parties could offer to a faction leader can be expressed as $EU_{Leader\,faction_k}(Party_j) = P_j B_j - C_j$, where B_j stands for the benefits associated with being a member of Party j , P_j refers to the probability of receiving these benefits, and C_j the costs of supporting Party j .

from the government through most of its history.

Interestingly, this important boost of public resources also had a contingent and very positive consequence for the opposition. It enlarged the level of *benefits* they could provide to their members and, importantly, potential PRI defectors.³⁰ Given the unprecedented amount of public resources that opposition parties had as a result of the reform, they could now offer to finance –at least in the short-term– the clientelistic machine of a PRI faction leader in case he or she decided to defect from the dominant party.³¹ This, in turn, allowed many disgruntled PRI faction leaders to make credible promises of future benefits to their clienteles, facilitating their potential defection from the still ruling party.

In addition, by establishing the distribution of free spots among parties, the reform guaranteed for the first time that opposition parties would have access to the mass media. This significantly reduced one of the main *costs* that had made it historically difficult for these parties to transmit their platforms and ideas to broad sectors of the population. Furthermore, the reforms on the IFE and the electoral judicial system increased the *probability* that opposition parties could win an election. While granting constitutional autonomy to the electoral commission, these reforms also reduced the capacity of the ruling party to commit fraud or modify electoral results *a posteriori*.

And the reforms on Mexico City's political system not only drastically raised the *probability* that opposition parties could win an election in the country's capital (all local officials had been appointed since 1928), but they also reduced the *benefits* that the PRI could provide to its supporters nationwide. The reason is

³⁰These benefits were not necessarily contingent of winning office because the amount of public resources received by all parties for *ordinary activities* (i.e., non-electoral activities) was also raised substantially. Consequently, after the reform all parties had more resources to create jobs within the party structure.

³¹Ironically, during the last stage of the electoral reform's negotiation the PAN, PRD and PT strongly opposed the substantial increase in public funds proposed by Zedillo and the PRI. As I explain in Chapter 5, the confrontation around this point reached such magnitude that the reforms to the secondary laws were approved only with the vote in favor of the PRI's legislators.

that after losing control of the capital's government in 1997, the PRI lost a highly valuable source of economic, human and material resources, as well as a crucial mechanism to maintain the party's unity: the allocation of Mexico City's administration positions, contracts and resources to compensate those *Priistas* that might be discontent after losing an internal nomination process or a political dispute in other parts of the country.

In sum, before the reform, there was no good alternative for disappointed nomination seekers because running on an opposition ticket was unlikely to result in success and would prevent a future return to the PRI's benefit stream. The approval of the reform transformed the structure of incentives of many PRI faction leaders at the federal and state level. It opened up the possibility of continuing their political careers in a different party with reasonably high probabilities of winning in the event that they did not receive the policies, nominations, resources or jobs they requested from the dominant party.

The effects of this substantive change were felt immediately. As I describe in the following section, a few weeks after the reform was approved the PRI started to experience the massive defection of mid- and high-ranked *Priistas* and the factions under their control. In most cases the splits were triggered by the nomination of PRI candidates to run in gubernatorial, mayoral and legislative elections because the succession of power –until 2014, reelection for any elected office was forbidden in Mexico– forced many PRI faction leaders who were not nominated as candidates –or who knew they had little chance of being nominated– to decide whether they preferred to stay in the party or try their luck as opposition candidates.

These fractures alone represented a significant blow to the PRI's electoral performance. While the PRI started to lose experienced cadres along with its huge advantage to mobilize voters, opposition parties gained professional politicians and enhanced their organizational and clientelistic machines. The consequences were significantly more serious, however, if an opposition party was able to win the

gubernatorial election. By controlling the state government the opposition gained the power to cut off one of the principal sources of resources used by the PRI to sustain its local clientelistic structures, as well as the possibility of using these same resources to create their own clientelistic machines and to even co-opt groups that were former PRI members. These victories also increased the incentives for other mid- and high-ranked PRI members to defect and try their luck in other parties. In a short period of time the negative consequences of the massive defections triggered by the 1996 reform accumulated and eventually affected the electoral performance of the PRI at the national level. The culmination of this process was the historical defeat of this party in the 2000 presidential election.

At this point, readers might be concerned about a potential problem of endogeneity in my explanation. That is, it could be argued that if the electoral reform was presented and ratified by those *Priistas* who wanted to leave the party in the first place, then the direction of the causal mechanism I presented above should be the opposite. In the next chapter I address these concerns in detail. For now it is enough to mention that several pieces of evidence indicate that this was not the case. For instance, the reform was proposed by President Zedillo as an effort to reduce the political instability generated by the recurrent post-electoral conflicts that characterized Mexico's local elections between 1988 and 1994, not to satisfy the demands of particular PRI factions (Zedillo's Chief of Staff, 2011, interview). Also, the most important parts of the reform (e.g., the modifications to the electoral law) were negotiated by the parties and the government at the Secretary of Interior, drastically reducing the capacity of PRI's legislators to shape the bill to their advantage. Once an agreement was reached, the PRI legislative groups were instructed how to vote.³² Finally, none of the high-ranked government officials or PRI leaders directly involved in the negotiation of the reform –and who could

³²For example, the final list of nominees for the General Council of the IFE was negotiated at the office of Secretary of Interior and sent to all legislative groups in the Chamber of Deputies –including the PRI– ten minutes before the deadline (Pérez et al., October 31, 1996). See also Irizar (November 3, 1996) and (November 5, 1996).

have tailored it to build their exit into an opposition party— defected from the PRI during the eight years after its approval.³³ And many of the politicians that defected from the PRI after 1996 did so only after first trying and failing to obtain a candidacy from this party or a position within a PRI government.

4.2 Empirical analysis

The argument presented in the previous section has at least two observable implications. First, the frequency of factional defections —especially of mid- and high-ranked factions— should be low *before* the 1996 reform was implemented, and it should significantly increase *after* its approval. And, second, we should observe a strong correlation between the occurrence of high-ranked factional defections and the PRI’s electoral decline, on the one hand, and the electoral rise of the opposition party that received the defecting factions, on the other. In the remainder of this chapter I empirically test these implications.

4.2.1 The effect of the 1996 electoral reform on the PRI’s unity

In order to test the magnitude of the effect of the 1996 electoral reform on the PRI’s unity I constructed two new databases. Each of them offers a different and complementary way to measure the magnitude of the defections suffered by the PRI between the mid-1980s and up to the mid-2000s. The first of these databases is called *Defections from the PRI, 1986-2000*. It includes all the defections reported by different Mexican periodicals during the 15 years mentioned in the title. In order to mitigate potential coverage biases, I reviewed four national newspapers (*El Universal*, *Reforma*, *El Norte* and *La Jornada*) and a political magazine (*Proceso*) to construct the database. I used both printed editions (*El*

³³The list includes, among others, Esteban Moctezuma, Emilio Chuayffet, Arturo Núñez, María de los Angeles Moreno, Santiago Oñate, Fernando Ortiz Arana and Humberto Roque Villanueva.

Universal, 15 years) and electronic editions (all other sources).

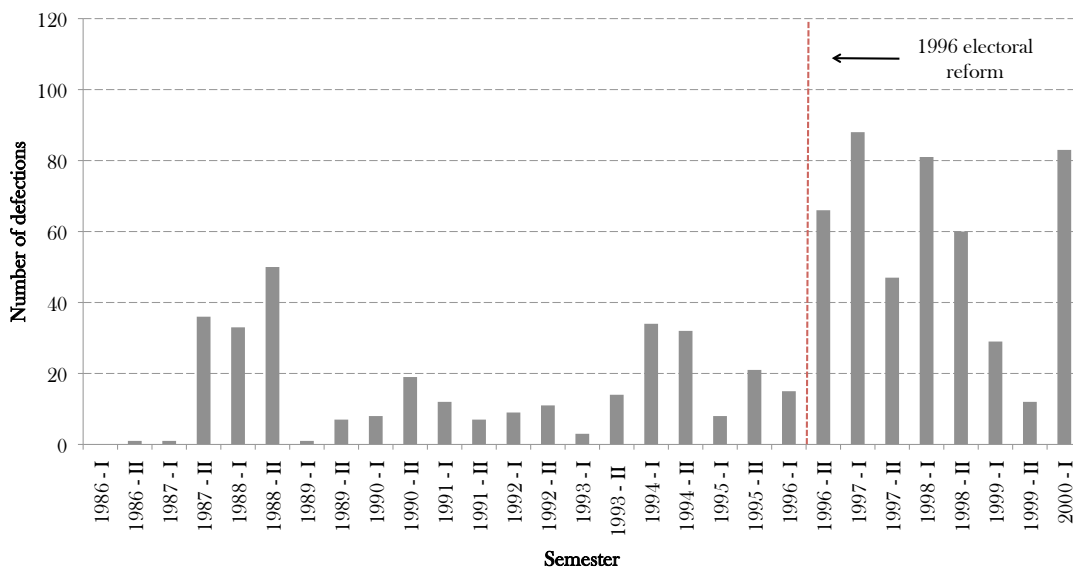
Identifying the defection of a PRI member is not always straightforward. The task might be obscured by the fact that many PRI defectors had incentives to falsely claim that hundreds or thousands of *Priístas* left the party with them in order to magnify their power and the negative implications of their exit. Likewise, opposition leaders had incentives to declare that many *Priístas* had defected from the dominant party and joined their ranks in order to create the perception that the PRI was “falling apart”. Considering these and other factors that could artificially inflate the number of defections recorded, I adopted a conservative approach. I coded as an *individual* defection only those cases that met two conditions: i) a PRI member made public his decision to resign from the *party*, and ii) I could record the name of the defector. For a discussion on the coding rules see Appendix B of this chapter.

The results of this first database support the argument proposed in the previous pages. As Figure 4.1 illustrates, the PRI suffered 788 defections between January 1st, 1986 and June 30th, 2000, 40.9% (322) of which took place before the 1996 reform was approved and 59.1% (466) after.³⁴ The temporal correlation of the reform and the drastic increase of PRI defections becomes even more evident if we consider that the PRI experienced more defections during the two and a half years that followed the approval of the reform (Sep 1996 - Dec 1998) than in the previous ten and a half years (Jan 1986 - Aug 1996): 342 vs. 322, respectively. Likewise, while the PRI suffered more than 40 defections in only one of 21 semesters before the reform was approved (second semester of 1988), after the reform the PRI suffered 40 or more splits in six out of eight semesters.

Figure 4.1 also shows that between 1986 and the first semester of 1996 the number of splits followed a cyclical pattern. Their frequency increased as the federal elections of July 1988, August 1991 and August 1994 approached, and

³⁴Figures updated on February 15th, 2014.

Figure 4.1: Defections of PRI members, 1986-2000



significantly decreased after that. The exit of Cárdenas and his followers involved the highest number of defections of the three cycles (69 if we consider the two semesters before the 1988 election, 119 if we include the second semester of this year), and it represented the largest split from the PRI since, at least, 1952. However, put in comparative terms, the PRI suffered more defections –in some cases even twice as many– in six of the eight semesters after the 1996 reform was implemented than in any of the two semesters before the 1988 presidential election. While the PRI kept suffering defections in the second half of 1988,³⁵ the number dropped in the first semester of 1989 and remained low during the following nine semesters. This sharp decline of defections is particularly relevant given that starting in May 1989 unsatisfied *Priístas* had a new political option where to migrate: the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD).

The increase of defections in the first semester of 1994 (34 in total) is largely explained by disgruntled PRI members who decided to leave the party after not being nominated as candidates for federal or local races. And most of the splits

³⁵More than 50% of the splits registered in the second semester of 1988 took place in Tabasco and Nuevo León. Both states had state elections during that period.

registered in the second half of this year (32) took place in one state, Veracruz, as a result of the process to select mayoral candidates. It is interesting to note that even though 1994 was marked by successive political crises (e.g., the emergence of the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN) on January 1st; the murder of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI's presidential candidate, on March 23rd; the assassination of José Francisco Ruíz Massieu, Zedillo's right hand, on September 28th), the number of defections that the PRI suffered in this *year* (66) is equal or less than the levels registered in several *semesters* after the reform was approved (1996-II: 66; 1997-I: 88; 1998-I: 81; 2000-I: 83).

Moreover, although in December 1994 the Mexican economy was shocked by the worst crisis since the Great Depression, and the third major crises since 1982, the number of defections suffered by the PRI in the first semester of 1995 was small, only 8, and remained at a relatively low level until the summer of 1996. All these elements suggest that even by the mid-1990s, and despite the accumulation of several political and economic problems in a short period of time, the PRI still had enough mechanisms to prevent the massive defection of its members and maintain internal party discipline.³⁶

The number of defections drastically increased immediately after the 1996 electoral reform was approved. Over 80% of the 66 splits registered in the second semester of this year took place within the month and a half after the last component of the reform was voted on November 14th.³⁷ Most of the *Priístas* that left the party during this semester did so following one of two leaders. The first is

³⁶There is additional evidence that supports this idea. In the middle of the harsh economic circumstances of this semester, President Zedillo sent a bill to Congress in order to increase the value-added tax (VAT) from 10 to 15%. While this proposal triggered an intense ideological and political debate within the PRI, the bill was approved on March 15th with the virtual unanimous support of the PRI's legislators. All opposition parties voted against it. It is interesting to note that while Alejandro Rojas Díaz Durán and Layda Sansores were the only two PRI legislators that voted against the tax increase (in the lower and upper house, respectively) arguing ideological differences, they defected from the PRI only *after* the 1996 reform was approved (both in the second semester of 1996).

³⁷As I explain in the next chapter, the reform had a constitutional and a legal component. The first was approved on August 1st and the second on November 14th, 1996.

Dante Delgado, who organized a massive split of *Priístas* in order to create a new political party –what eventually became *Convergencia Democrática*. The second is Layda Sansores, senator of the PRI until her resignation,³⁸ who led a massive defection of PRI members in late-1996 after she was not nominated as the party’s gubernatorial candidate for the race that would take place on July 1997.³⁹

The splits led by Delgado and Sansores marked the beginning of an unprecedented wave of factional defections from the PRI. Partly because the frequency of defections from the PRI reached historic levels and remained high during most of the period until the 2000 presidential election, but also because many of these splits followed a new pattern. These splits tended to be promoted and organized by local high-ranked PRI members that decided to leave the party after not being nominated as gubernatorial candidates. Thus, unlike previous years, where most of the individual defections experienced by the PRI were geographically scattered and uncoordinated,⁴⁰ starting on November 1996 a large share of the defections concentrated in those states with gubernatorial and/or mayoral races.

For example, 48.1% of the defections registered in the first semester of 1998 (38 out of 79) took place in Zacatecas, where Ricardo Monreal left the PRI and became the PRD’s gubernatorial candidate.⁴¹ Likewise, 37.9% of the splits in the second half of 1996 (25 out of 66) were concentrated in Campeche, where –as mentioned before– Layda Sansores left the PRI. And 55.2% and 27.6% of the defections registered in the first semester of 1999 (29) happened in Guerrero and Chiapas, respectively, where Miguel Osorio Marbán and Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía quit the PRI after not being nominated as PRI gubernatorial candidates, or not even

³⁸Layda’s father, Carlos Sansores was a former governor and local caudillo in Campeche.

³⁹After leaving the PRI, Sansores became the PRD’s gubernatorial candidate.

⁴⁰The factional defection led by Cárdenas is an exception: around 60% of the *Priístas* that left the party with him came from either Michoacán, Mexico City or Estado de México, three of the five states won by Cárdenas according to the official results.

⁴¹The defection led by Monreal became so significant that posterior splits from the PRI were referred as *monrealazos*.

tried to participate in the selection process due to allegations of unfairness.⁴²

So far the evidence supports the idea that the number of defections from the PRI significantly raised after the 1996 reform was approved. But in order to perform a more controlled analysis of the effect of the 1996 reform on the probability that a mid- or high-ranked *Priísta* (those located in quadrants I and II in Figure 3.3) defected from the dominant party, I constructed a second database called *Defections of gubernatorial contenders from the PRI, 1987-2006*. In this case I operationalize the unity of the PRI's factions through a dummy variable called *PRI's Defection*. For each of the 112 gubernatorial elections held between 1987 and 2006 I coded whether one or more *Priístas* described by newspapers, articles or books as potential contenders for the nomination for governor (in what follows I will refer to them as "PRI's contenders" for simplicity) decided to leave the PRI shortly before, during or soon after the gubernatorial candidate's selection process took place, as a response to either the procedure used or the final result of the process.⁴³ If one or more contenders did leave the PRI, the dummy variable is assigned a value of 1 and 0 otherwise (see Appendix B for details).

This operationalization of the PRI's unity has a significant advantage. It measures the frequency of defections across time of mid- and high-ranked *Priístas* exposed to a political situation (i.e., the gubernatorial nomination) in which they are forced to evaluate their alternatives, and these alternatives are greatly in-

⁴²Osorio Marbán left the PRI on November 11th, 1998. Salazar left the PRI on May 5th, 1999, more than a year before the gubernatorial election, claiming that the process to select the PRI's gubernatorial candidate would be biased against him as result of his confrontation with Roberto Albores Guillén, then Chiapas's governor.

⁴³The rule followed was to code as "defectors" only those contenders that left the party after publicly complaining about the "undemocratic" mechanism chosen to select the governor candidate (a common argument between those contender that left the PRI before the nomination process started) or the result of the nomination process. As it is explained with greater detail in Appendix B, there are two exceptions to this. In Oaxaca in 1992 and Chiapas in 1994 a *Priísta* quit the party to become opposition governor candidate without making a public statement. However, these cases were coded as "defections" because given the relatively high rank of the *Priístas* involved, they illustrate a fracture within the PRI's unity. In any case, this coding decision generates a bias against my argument because it increases the number of defections of PRI contenders *before* the 1996 reform.

fluenced by the existing institutional constraints. Thus, *PRI's Defection* offers a good estimate of how changes in the institutional framework affected the strategic decisions of the PRI's leadership over time.

The results of the analysis of this second database are consistent with the evidence presented above. In 33.9% of these nomination competitions (38 out of 112) one or more of the PRI's contenders left the party shortly before, during or after the PRI's governor candidate's selection process took place.⁴⁴ Table 4.1 presents the name and political background of these mid- and high-ranked defectors.

If we analyze the percentage of defections before and after the electoral reform of 1996, we observe that while from 1987 to 1995 (there were no governor elections in 1996) the share of states in which one or more PRI contenders left the party was 12.8% (6 out of 47 elections), this percentage increased to 49.2% (32 out of 65 elections) in the period 1997-2006. A reasonable concern could be that the significant jump in the percentage of defections in this second period is driven by the PRI's defeat in the 2000 presidential election, rather than the 1996 reform. However, the share of gubernatorial elections in which one or more PRI contenders left the party between 1997 and 2000 is equally high: 46.6% (14 out of 30 elections).⁴⁵

Figure 4.2 offers a picture of the evolution of the PRI's defections over time. While the height of each bar represents the total number of gubernatorial elections held each year, the black area illustrates in how many of these elections one or more PRI contenders left the party. The grey area describes the number of elections in which no contender split. This figure shows that the PRI experienced a significant increase in the number of defections after 1996. Before this electoral reform the

⁴⁴In 79% of the occasions when the PRI suffered a defection only one contender left the party (30 out of 38). In 15.8% of the cases two contenders left the dominant party and in the remaining 5.2% of the cases three contenders split.

⁴⁵An alternative way to dimension these figures is to consider the fact that 84.2% (32 out of 38) of the state elections in which one or more PRI contenders left the party between 1987 and 2006 took place after 1996. And if I limit the analysis only to the period 1987-2000, 70% (14 out of 20) of the splits occurred between 1996 and 2000.

Table 4.1: Gubernatorial contenders that defected from the PRI

No.	State	Year of election	Name of defector(s)	Background as Priísta
1	Tabasco	1988	Andrés Manuel López Obrador	President of the PRI's state branch (1983); Director of Promotion at the <i>Procuraduría Federal del Consumidor</i> until his resignation.
2	Campeche	1991	Marcos Curmina Buenfil	Mayor of Champotón, Campeche (1980-82)
3	San Luis Potosí	1991	Angel Rubio Huerta	Federal deputy (1973-76)
4	Oaxaca	1992	Raúl Castellanos Hernández	Oaxaca's Deputy Secretary of Interior until his resignation; Held several middle-level positions at the PRI's National Executive Committee
5	Baja California Sur	1993	Crisóforo Salido Almada	Pre-candidate for mayor of Comondú, Baja California Sur (1983)
6	Chiapas	1994	Iván Camacho Zenteno	President of the municipal branch of the PRI in Tapachula, Chiapas. Worked at the federal Secretary of Interior, Conacyt, INAH. He was the director of the ISSTECH (the state welfare institute) until his resignation on April 30, 1994 .
7	Campeche	1997	Layda Sansores San Román	Senator until her resignation (elected for period 1994-00); Federal deputy 1991-94; Daughter of Carlos Sansores, former governor of Campeche (1967-73) and president of the PRI's national branch (1976-79)
8	Colima	1997	Carlos Vázquez Oldenbourg	Mayor of Colima, Colima (1983-85); State minister of Urban Planning during the administration of Elias Zamora Verduco (1985-91); Gubernatorial pre-candidate in 1991; Advisor of governor Carlos de la Madrid Virgen until his resignation.
9	Nuevo León	1997	Luis Eugenio Todd Pérez	Federal deputy 1982-85; Secretary of Education of Nuevo Leon 1985-88; Deputy Secretary of Education under Salinas's administration (1988-92); Mexico's Ambassador at UNESCO (1992-95)
10	Querétaro	1997	José Ortiz Arana	Federal deputy 1973-76; President of the PRI's state branch; Held some high-level positions at the Secretary of Interior in the early 1980s; Representative of the PRI's national branch in Baja California (1988) and Guanajuato (1995)
11	Durango	1998	Máximo Gámiz Parral	State deputy and president of the state Congress (1971-74); Mayor of Durango (1974-77); Private secretary of Mexico City's mayor, Manuel Camacho Solís (1988-90)
12	Tamaulipas	1998	Antonio Martínez Torres	Federal deputy (1994-97); President of the PRI's state branch; State secretary of Interior and Education; Representative of the PRI's national branch in Campeche (1997); Representative of Banobras in Tamaulipas until his resignation

Table 4.1: Gubernatorial contenders that defected from the PRI (*Cont.*)

No.	State	Year of election	Name of defector(s)	Background as Priista
13	Tlaxcala	1998	Alfonso Sánchez Anaya	Federal deputy (1994-97); State Minister of Finance (1991-94); President of the PRI's state branch during the administration of Beatriz Paredes (1988)
14	Zacatecas	1998	Ricardo Monreal Ávila	Federal deputy (1988-91, 1997-00) and leader of the PRI's legislative group in the Chamber of Deputies until his resignation; Senator (1991-97); Secretary of political action of the PRI's national branch (1997); President of the PRI's state branch (1991-92); State leader of CNC
15	Baja California Sur	1999	Leonel Cota Montaña	Mayor of La Paz, Baja California Sur (1996-98); Federal deputy (1994-96)
16	Coahuila	1999	Atanasio González Martínez	Justice of the Supreme Court (1977-94)
17	Guerrero	1999	1. Miguel Osorio Marbán 2. Jaime Castrejón Díez	Federal deputy (1964-67, 1985-88); Deputy Secretary of Land Reform (1976-78); President of the PRI's state branch in Nayarit (1964) Federal deputy (1988-91); Major of Taxco, Guerrero (1966-68); Dean of the <i>Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero</i> (1970-72); General Director of <i>Coordinación Educativa</i> at Secretary of Education (1971-76)
18	Quintana Roo	1999	Jorge Polanco Zapata	Senator until his resignation (elected for period 1994-00); State Secretary of Social Development under Mario Villanueva's administration (1999)
19	Chiapas	2000	1. Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía 2. Homero Díaz Córdova	Senator until his resignation (elected for period 1994-00); State Minister of Interior (Jan-Jun 1994) Chief of advisors of Chiapas's governor (1988); Federal deputy (1985-88); Delegate in Tlahuac, México City (1982-85)
20	Tabasco	2000	Jose Antonio de la Vega Asmitia	Close advisor of Arturo Nuñez Jiménez at the Secretary of Interior and IFE
21	Baja California	2001	1. Amador Rodríguez Lozano 2. Milton Castellanos Gout 3. Héctor Gallego García	Federal deputy until his resignation (1991-94, elected for period 2000-03); Senator (1994-00) State deputy (1986-89); Mayor of Mexicali, Baja California (1989-92); Son of Milton Castellanos Everardo, former governor of Baja California (1971-77) General secretary of the PRI's state branch; Dean of the <i>Universidad Autónoma de Baja California</i> (1983-87)

Table 4.1: Gubernatorial contenders that defected from the PRI (*Cont.*)

No.	State	Year of election	Name of defector(s)	Background as Priísta
22	Michoacán	2001	Sergio Magaña Martínez	Alternate state deputy (1992-93); Major of Morelia, Michoacán (1993-94); Senator (1994-00)
23	Colima	2003	1. Socorro Díaz Palacios 2. Jesús Orozco Alfaro	General director of <i>ISSSTE</i> (1998-00); General director of <i>LICONSA</i> (1995-97); General secretary of the PRI's national branch (1997-98); Federal deputy (1988-91); Senator (1982-88) Federal deputy until his resignation (elected for period 2000-03); Senator (1994-00); Mayor of Colima, Colima (1992-94)
24	San Luis Potosí	2003	1. Juan Ramiro Robledo 2. Elias Dip Ramé	Senator (1994-00); Federal deputy (1982-85, 1991-94); President of the PRI's state branch (1990); State Secretary of Interior (1988-91) Federal deputy until his resignation (elected for period 2000-03); State Secretary of Transportation and Communications (1985-87)
25	Sonora	2003	Javier Gándara Magaña	Local businessman
26	Aguascalientes	2004	Armando López Campa	General director of Religious Matters at the Secretary of Interior (1996-98); Alternate Senator (1991-97); Three times state deputy
27	Sinaloa	2004	1. Heriberto Félix Guerra 2. Jose Ángel Pescador 3. Mario Niebla Álvarez	State secretary of Economic Development until his resignation (1999-04) Secretary of Education (1994); Federal deputy (1982-85); Mayor of Mazatlán, Sinaloa (1987-89) Federal deputy (1985-88); General secretary of the PRI's state branch (1983-84); State deputy (1980-83)
28	Tamaulipas	2004	Álvaro Garza Cantú	Federal deputy (1997-00); Mayor of Reynosa, Tamaulipas (1993-95)
29	Tlaxcala	2004	Héctor Ortiz Ortiz	Mayor of Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala (2002-05); Federal deputy (1991-94, 2000-02); State Secretary of Education (1990-91); State General Attorney (1989-90); President of the PRI's state branch (1989)
30	Veracruz	2004	1. Miguel Ángel Yunes 2. Tomás Ruiz González	Federal deputy until his resignation (1991-94, elected for period 2003-06); State deputy (1980-83); Two times president of the PRI's state branch. Federal deputy until his resignation (elected for period 2003-06); Federal tax attorney at the Secretariat of the Treasury (1995); Deputy Secretary of Revenues (1996-00).

Table 4.1: Gubernatorial contenders that defected from the PRI (*Conclusion*)

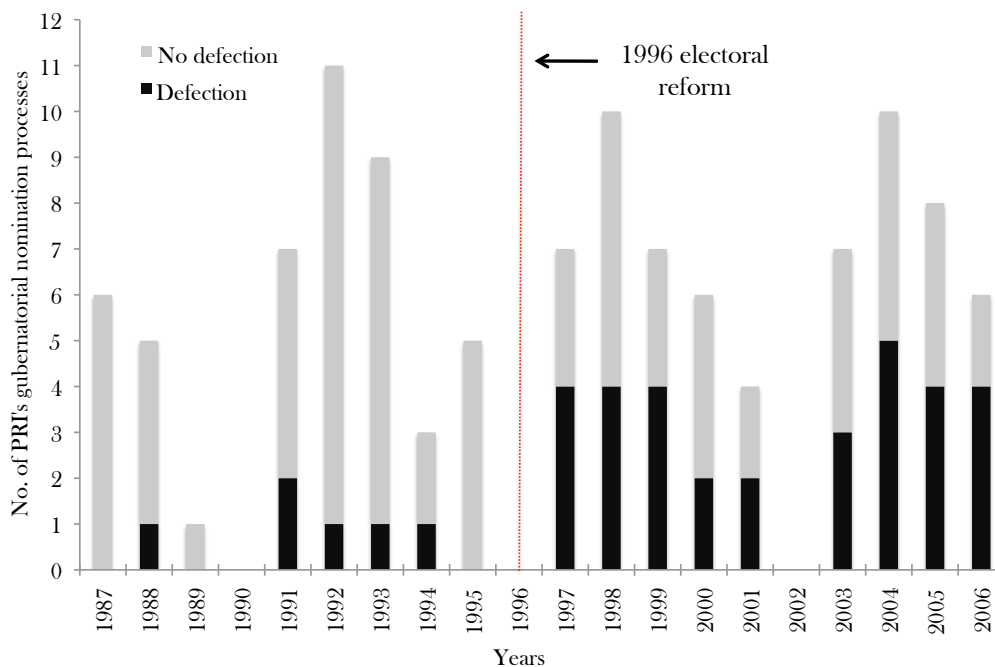
No.	State	Year of election	Name of defector(s)	Background as Priísta
31	Guerrero	2005	Carlos Sánchez Barrios	State deputy (2002-05); State Secretary of Social Development (2000-02); State Secretary of Programming and Budget (1999-00); Mayor of Eduardo Neri (1996-99)
32	México	2005	Isidro Pastor Medrano	President of the PRI's state branch (2002-04); State deputy (2000-03)
33	Nayarit	2005	Miguel Ángel Navarro Quintero	Senator until his resignation (elected for period 2000-06); Federal deputy (1997-00); State Secretary of Health (1996-97)
34	Quintana Roo	2005	Addy Joaquín Coldwell	Senator until her resignation (elected for period 2000-06); Federal deputy (1997-00); President of the DIF's branch in Benito Juárez, Quintana Roo (1993-96)
35	Chiapas	2006	Juan Sabines Guerrero	Mayor of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas (2004-06); State deputy (2001-03)
36	Jalisco	2006	1. Enrique Ibarra Pedroza 2. Humberto Álvarez González	State deputy (1983-85, 1992-94, 2001-04); Leader of the PRI at the state congress (2001-04); Federal deputy (1988-91, 1997-00); State Deputy Secretary of Interior (1985-88) Federal deputy (1961-64, 1967-70, 1982-85); Treasurer of the CTM (1978-80)
37	Morelos	2006	Juan Salgado Brito	Federal deputy (1982-85, 1994-97); Gubernatorial candidate (2000)
38	Tabasco	2006	Óscar Cantón Zetina	Senator until his resignation (1988-94, elected for period 2000-06); Federal deputy (1982-85, 1994-97)

PRI never suffered a defection in more than two states in a single year, and in three years (1987, 1989 and 1995) the party suffered no defections at all. However, from 1997 on the PRI experienced a defection in at least two of the states that held elections every year, and in five of the nine years between 1997 and 2006 the PRI suffered a defection in four or more of the states that had a governor election.

An alternative way to analyze the increase in defections after 1996 is by noting that while between 1987 and 1995 the grey area of each bar (i.e., the elections without defections) is significantly larger than the black area (i.e., the elections with defections), after 1996 both areas are very similar.⁴⁶ Again, it is relevant to

⁴⁶If these numbers are expressed in percentage terms (i.e., the ratio between the black and grey areas of each bar), the pattern is very similar. While the share of states in which one or more of the PRI's contenders left the party was never bigger than 33% before the electoral

Figure 4.2: Defections of PRI's Gubernatorial Contenders, 1987-2006



notice that the number of defections of PRI's gubernatorial contenders after the 1996 electoral reform does not seem to change much before and after the 2000 presidential election. This reinforces the idea that even when the PRI's defeat might have accelerated the process, the erosion of the party's unity was triggered by the 1996 reform. It is also relevant to highlight that the PRI only suffered one defection in each of the turbulent periods of 1987-1989 and 1994-1995.

In sum, the evidence of this second database also indicates that the number of gubernatorial elections in which one or more PRI high-ranked members defected from the party substantially increased after the 1996 electoral reform. However, it still needs to be demonstrated that this sudden rise in defections was produced by this political reform, rather than being the result of the strategic response adopted by many *Priistas* after realizing that the electoral performance of their

reform of 1996, and in 1987, 1989 and 1995 it was 0%, from 1997 onwards this percentage was always larger than 33% and in five of the nine years between 1997 and 2006 this percentage was 50% or higher. I present the raw numbers because these percentages are very sensitive to the rather small number of elections held in many years (e.g., three in 1994 or four 2001).

party had decreased in the previous elections (Greene 2008; Langston and Díaz-Cayeros 2003; Magaloni 2006), and/or that the declining economic performance would negatively affect the vote for the PRI.

I test the explanatory power of these three arguments using different logit models with *PRI's Defection* as the dependent variable. In particular, I use the “rare events logit” estimator proposed by King and Zeng (2001) in order to correct for the potential bias that the relative small sample used could have on the coefficients.⁴⁷ Tables 4.2 and 4.3 present the same six model specifications. While the models included in Table 4.2 consider all the state year observations available, the models in Table 4.3 were calculated using only the state year observations up to 2000. Thus, the models included in this last table allow me to test the effect of the 1996 electoral reform before the PRI stepped down from the presidency.

I operationalize the main explanatory variable, the 1996 electoral reform, in three ways. First, I use a variable called *PRI's Share Public Funds*, which measures the share of total public resources legally allocated by IFE, Mexico's electoral commission, to the PRI every year between 1991 and 2006.⁴⁸ Second, *PRI's Margin Public Funds* measures the difference between the percentage of public funds received by the PRI and the second party with more public funds (always the PAN) between 1991 and 2006.⁴⁹ Finally, I use *1996 electoral reform*, a dummy variable that assigns a 1 to all the observations that occurred after 1996 and 0 otherwise. Thus, while the first two operationalizations measure in a different way one of the key elements modified by the 1996 reform (i.e., the allocation of public resources among political parties),⁵⁰ the third option aims to capture other

⁴⁷The results are similar if the normal logit estimator is used. These models are available upon request.

⁴⁸The data is only available from 1991 on because IFE was created in 1990.

⁴⁹Neither *PRI's Share Public Funds* nor *PRI's Margin Public Funds* are lagged one year because, first, the formula used to assign these resources was known by all party members before the beginning of each year, and, second, the electoral commission allocated these resources during the first two weeks of January of the corresponding year.

⁵⁰While the PRI received 49.4% of public funds legally allocated in 1994, by 1997 –only a few months after the 1996 reform was approved– this figure was 42.3% and in 2000 it was 30%.

important components of the reform that are not considered by the previous alternatives.

In order to account for alternative explanations, I include the following control variables in the models. *Economic Growth* measures the yearly change of Mexico's Gross Domestic Product per capita in constant prices. This variable is lagged one year to reduce problems of endogeneity or reverse causation.⁵¹ *PRI's Previous Electoral Results* measures the share of votes obtained by this party in each state in the federal deputy election(s) held immediately before the corresponding gubernatorial election.⁵² *Marginalization* is included as a control variable for the level of socioeconomic development in each state. This variable is measured using the Marginalization index constructed by Mexico's National Population Council (CONAPO) every five years. This index measures the intensity of the socioeconomic deprivation in each state combining nine variables related to four structural dimensions: education, housing, monetary earnings and population distribution.⁵³ The values of this index go from -3 to 3, where higher values indicate greater

Similarly, while the PRI's margin of public funds over the PAN was 35% in 1994, it dropped to 17.3% in 1997 and by 2000 it was 7.5% (-3.9% if we consider the funds of the PVEM, the PAN's ally in that election).

⁵¹The results presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 remain the same if *Economic Growth* is not lagged, if it is lagged two or three years, or if instead of the yearly change we consider a four, five or six moving average change in GDP per capita. All these additional results are available upon request.

⁵²The results do not change if the PRI's *margin* of votes –instead of the *share*– is used to measure this party's previous electoral results (see the Appendix). I also analyzed the effect of the PRI's previous electoral results using the share and margin of votes won by this party in the senatorial, presidential, gubernatorial and state deputy elections held before the corresponding governor election. The coefficients of these alternative measurements have the same sign but smaller magnitude than the ones obtained using the federal deputy data. These results are available upon request.

⁵³The distribution of the nine variables included in the index is as follows. Education is measured with two variables: percentage of individuals over 15 years of age that are illiterate, and percentage that did not finish their primary education. The type and quality of the housing conditions is measured through five variables: percentage of inhabitants of private houses with no drainage service; percentage of inhabitants of private houses without drinking water; percentage of inhabitants of private houses without electricity; percentage of private houses that are overcrowded. The level of monetary earnings in each state is measured by the percentage of the working population earning less than two minimum wages. Finally, the population's distribution is measured by the percentage of the state population that lives in towns with less than 5,000 inhabitants.

Table 4.2: Rare Events Logit Models, Including Observations up to 2006

Dependent Variable: PRI's Defection						
	Model 1 (91-06)	Model 2 (91-06)	Model 3 (91-06)	Model 4 (91-06)	Model 5 (87-06)	Model 6 (87-06)
<i>PRI's Share Public Funds</i>	-0.144*** (0.051)	-0.127** (0.051)				
<i>PRI's Margin Public Funds</i>			-0.106*** (0.034)	-0.096*** (0.035)		
<i>1996 Electoral Reform</i>					2.619*** (0.828)	2.420*** (0.809)
<i>Economic Growth (lagged)</i>	0.015 (0.103)	-0.003 (0.102)	0.016 (0.104)	-0.001 (0.103)	0.022 (0.081)	0.012 (0.080)
<i>PRI's Past Electoral Results</i>	4.866 (3.119)	3.328 (3.284)	6.080* (3.294)	4.739 (3.461)	3.697 (2.630)	2.414 (2.708)
<i>Marginalization</i>	0.211 (0.232)	0.074 (0.293)	0.203 (0.234)	0.046 (0.298)	0.263 (0.229)	0.088 (0.286)
<i>Lagged PRI's Defection</i>	-0.087 (0.556)	-0.300 (0.563)	-0.140 (0.564)	-0.341 (0.572)	-0.036 (0.553)	-0.285 (0.568)
<i>Constant</i>	2.317** (1.135)	3.068** (1.299)	-2.208 (1.393)	-1.027 (1.617)	-4.353** (1.866)	-2.864 (1.995)
<i>Region Fixed Effects</i>	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	100	100	100	100	112	112
Log likelihood	-58.220	-57.055	-56.904	-55.848	-60.118	-58.492
AIC	128.440	132.110	125.809	129.697	132.236	134.984

Standard errors in parentheses.
 ***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Table 4.3: Rare Events Logit Models, Including Observations up to 2000

Dependent Variable: PRI's Defection						
	Model 1 (91-00)	Model 2 (91-00)	Model 3 (91-00)	Model 4 (91-00)	Model 5 (87-00)	Model 6 (87-00)
<i>PRI's Share Public Funds</i>	-0.174** (0.076)	-0.152** (0.075)				
<i>PRI's Margin Public Funds</i>			-0.168** (0.065)	-0.151** (0.063)		
<i>1996 Electoral Reform</i>					3.129*** (1.175)	2.752** (1.122)
<i>Economic Growth (lagged)</i>	0.129 (0.230)	0.131 (0.242)	-0.072 (0.257)	-0.046 (0.265)	0.161 (0.148)	0.179 (0.162)
<i>PRI's Past Electoral Results</i>	9.299** (4.643)	7.364 (4.819)	12.679** (5.505)	10.654* (5.555)	9.792** (4.736)	7.719 (4.708)
<i>Marginalization</i>	0.182 (0.310)	0.016 (0.381)	0.139 (0.316)	-0.007 (0.390)	0.181 (0.301)	-0.101 (0.382)
<i>Lagged PRI's Defection</i>	0.432 (0.936)	0.106 (0.921)	0.212 (0.964)	-0.111 (0.956)	0.281 (0.976)	-0.083 (0.997)
<i>Constant</i>	0.498 (2.403)	1.439 (2.585)	-4.411* (2.458)	-3.024 (2.692)	-8.711** (3.482)	-6.368* (3.507)
<i>Region Fixed Effects</i>	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	65	65	65	65	77	77
Log likelihood	-32.275	-30.569	-30.627	-29.041	-32.859	-30.381
AIC	76.550	79.139	73.254	76.082	77.717	78.762

Standard errors in parentheses.
 ***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

poverty in the state.⁵⁴

Given that in some states the PRI suffered defections in two or more consecutive gubernatorial elections, and previous defections might increase the chances of future defections, I also include a lagged version of *PRI's Defection* (i.e., the dependent variable) to control for this potential temporal correlation. Finally, in order to control for region-specific factors (i.e., history, culture) that might affect the likelihood of a defection from the PRI but cannot be directly measured, in Models 2, 4 and 6 of each table I use a dummy variable for each region⁵⁵ as a quasi-fixed effects estimator.⁵⁶

The results in both tables consistently show that the three alternative measurements of the 1996 electoral reform have a substantive effect and are statistically significant at 5% or better. The negative sign of *PRI's Share Public Funds* (columns 1 and 2) and *PRI's Margin Public Funds* (columns 3 and 4) indicates that the probability that a contender defects the PRI increases as the share and margin of public resources allocated to this party decreases. Likewise, the positive sign of *1996 Electoral Reform* suggests that the likelihood that a contender splits from the PRI increased after the reform was approved.

Using the results of Models 1 and 5 in Table 4.3, Figure 4.3 shows the predicted probability of a PRI contender defecting the party for different levels of *PRI's Share Public Funds* (left panel), as well as before and after the *1996 Electoral*

⁵⁴As a robustness check, in Appendix C I show the results using the *Log Imputed* Gross State Product per Capita. The results remain the same. I did not use this variable as the main measurement of each state's socioeconomic level because Mexico's Census Bureau (INEGI) only publishes data for this variable for the period 1993-2006. Thus, I had to replace the missing observations (i.e., 1987-1992) with imputed values generated using *Amelia* (Honaker, King and Blackwell, 2010), after averaging the values obtained in ten imputations. The diagnostic plots of this imputation are available upon request.

⁵⁵I classified the states in the following four regions: i) North: Baja California, Baja California Sur, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Durango, Nayarit, Nuevo León, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas; ii) Center: Distrito Federal, Hidalgo, México, Morelos, Puebla, Tlaxcala; iii) Bajío: Aguascalientes, Colima, Querétaro, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán; iv) South: Chiapas, Campeche, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Veracruz, Yucatán.

⁵⁶State fixed-effects estimators cannot be used to analyze this data because some states did not suffer a defection. As a result, the state-dummy and *PRI's Defection* would covary a 100%.

Reform was approved (right panel).⁵⁷ In the case of Model 1, the black solid line represents the predicted probability that a contender defected from the PRI, and the red dashed lines show the upper- and lower-bound of the 95% confidence interval. According to this graph, the predicted probability that a contender defected from the PRI in 1996, when the party was allocated 45% of all legal public resources, was 13.7%. In 1997, one year after the reform had been approved, the PRI got 42.3% of the public resources and the probability that a contender defected from the party increased to 22.3%. By 1999 the PRI received 32% of the public resources and the probability of a contender's defection raised to 67%. To put it differently, while the probability that a PRI contender defected from the party increased by 62.7% from 1996 to 1997, this probability was almost 400% higher in 1999 than in 1996.⁵⁸ The effect of the reform is equally large if I analyze it through *1996 Electoral Reform*. According to Model 5, the probability of defection of a PRI contender increased almost thirteen times (from 5% to 62%) after the reform was approved.

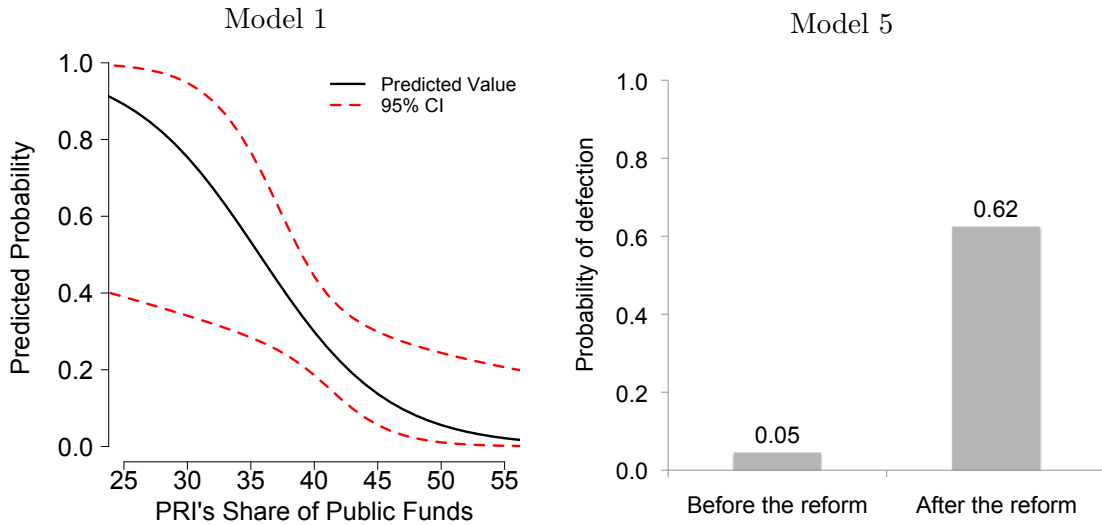
A second relevant result is that *PRI's Previous Electoral Results* has a positive sign in all the models. This indicates that the PRI was more likely to experience a defection in the states where it had done *well* in the previous election, not the states where it was losing support the fastest. This result challenges a common belief about Mexico's transition and one of the central parts of Magaloni's theory (see page 46).⁵⁹ Although this variable is not statistical significant in the models that consider the observations up to 2006 (Table 4.2), it gains statistical signifi-

⁵⁷The rest of the variables were hold at their mean values in these calculations.

⁵⁸The magnitud of the effect of *PRI's Margin Public Funds* is similar. While in 1996 the PRI's advantage on public resources was 20.4% and the probability of defection was 25.7%, by 1997 the PRI's resources margin was 17.3% and the likelihood of defection increased to 38.2%. In 1999 the PRI got 7.2% more resources than the second largest party, and the probability of defection rose to 78.1%

⁵⁹As mentioned before, very similar results are obtained if instead of federal deputy results the PRI's previous electoral results are measured through the share or margin of votes obtained by this party in senatorial, presidential, gubernatorial or state deputy elections. These results are available upon request.

Figure 4.3: Effect of the 1996 Electoral Reform on the Probability of a PRI Contender Leaving the Party



cance (at 5% or better) in five of the six models that only include the observations before the the PRI’s loss of the presidency (Table 4.3).

This counterintuitive finding might be explained by the fact that the PRI’s share of votes in the previous election is an indicator of how effective this party’s PRI’s clientelistic machines is in a specific state, and that many branches of this machine are controlled by one or more of the contenders for the gubernatorial nomination. Therefore, it could be that the more extended and effective is the clientelistic network controlled by a contender who was not nominated as gubernatorial candidate by the PRI, the more likely it is that he will leave the PRI to be the candidate for another party. Both because he would have more reasons to expect to be a viable candidate even without the PRI’s nomination, and because opposition parties would see him as a strong candidate.

Finally, the coefficients of *Marginalization* in both tables indicate that the higher the level of marginalization of a state’s population,⁶⁰ the more likely it will

⁶⁰It is important to remember that the values of this index go from -3 to 3, where higher values indicate greater poverty in the state.

be that a PRI contender will leave the party. One interpretation of this result might be that it is in the poorer states where politicians can more easily capitalize the grievances and demands of the population against the PRI. Another is that it is in these states where the perverse accountability of a clientelistic structure, to use Stokes's terms (2005), was more effective. Therefore, it is likely that it is in these states where clientele networks linking politicians to voters are strongest and thus where a Priísta might have a better chance of both taking his clientelistic network with him if he leaves the party and winning without the support of the PRI.⁶¹ In addition, the results of *Change in GDP per Capita (lagged)* suggest that the better the national economy performed in the previous year, the higher the chances of a PRI contender defecting the party. However, the coefficients of these two explanatory variables are statistically insignificant in all model specifications.

4.2.2 The electoral consequences of defections

As I mentioned above, the second observable implication derived from my explanation is that there should be a strong correlation between the occurrence of high-ranked factional defections and the PRI's electoral decline, on the one hand, and the electoral rise of the opposition party that received the defecting factions, on the other. In order to test this implication, I analyze how the defection of a PRI's gubernatorial contender –those included in the second database and enlisted in Figure 4.1– might have affected the electoral performance of the official party and the opposition parties in the corresponding governor races.

I focus on the 76 gubernatorial elections held in México between 1987 and 2000.⁶² I classify these elections into two groups. Those where the PRI experi-

⁶¹In any case, once the socioeconomic variables are interacted with *1996 electoral reform*, the effect just described greatly decreases after 1996 (graphs not shown).

⁶²The gubernatorial election of Chiapas in 2000 was held on took place after the PRI lost the presidential race on July 2nd of that year. However, I included it in the analysis because Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía left the PRI months before this last date. In contrast, I don't include the gubernatorial election of Tabasco in 2000 because Jose Antonio de la Vega quit the PRI on July

enced the defection of at least one gubernatorial contender *before* the corresponding race (19),⁶³ and those where the PRI remained united (57). For each of these sub-universes of elections, I calculated the average vote share change of the PRI, PAN and PRD between the gubernatorial elections held during this period. For example, I computed the absolute change of the PRI's share of votes in the gubernatorial elections of Jalisco in 1988 with respect to 1982, 1995 vs. 1988, as well as 2000 vs. 1995. I repeated this operation for all the states that had elections between 1987 and 2000, and then averaged the change. I repeated the procedure for the PAN and PRD.

The results of this exercise indicate that the PRI lost 89.7% more votes in those races where a contender defected right before the election than in the states where the party remained united (-23.7% vs. -12.3%, respectively). A similar pattern holds if I compare these two groups of states before the 1996 reform (-24.4% vs. -11%, respectively) and after the reform (-22.8% vs. -15.7%, respectively).⁶⁴ The evidence also indicates that between 1988 and 2000 the opposition parties won, on average, 182% more votes in the 19 gubernatorial elections where they received a PRI gubernatorial contender that had left the dominant party, than in the 117 elections where they did not (18.6% vs. 7.07%, respectively). The difference remains very similar (20.6% vs. 8%, respectively) if I only analyze the period 1997-2000.

To summarize, the results presented in this chapter support at least three conclusions. First, the number of defections from the PRI significantly increased after the 1996 electoral reform was approved. Second, and related, the reform raised

^{7th}, after competing and losing as a PRI federal deputy candidate in the federal elections of July 2nd.

⁶³I do not consider the defection of Jose Antonio de la Vega in Tabasco in 2000 for the reasons exposed in the previous footnote.

⁶⁴As mentioned before, the PRI suffered the defection of at least one gubernatorial contender in six of the 47 governor races held between 1987 and 1995 (there were no gubernatorial elections in 1996), and in 13 of the 29 elections that took place between 1997 and 2000.

the probability that a gubernatorial contender (usually mid- or high-ranked party members) left the party in the event that he or she was not nominated. This result holds even after controlling for socioeconomic levels, economic performance and, importantly, the PRI's electoral results in the previous state and federal elections. Third, the exit of these gubernatorial contenders had a large negative impact on the PRI's electoral performance, and they also boosted the opposition's electoral results. But if all these changes were triggered by 1996 electoral reform, then why did the PRI propose and approve it? I address this question in the following chapter.

4.3 Appendix A

Table 4.4: Data Sources

Name	Years	Source	Comments
National GDP per capita	1987-2006	Penn World Table 7.1	I used the variable called “PPP Converted GDP Per Capita (Chain Series), at 2005 constant prices”, with codename “rgdpch”, as the measurement of real GDP per capita.
State GDP per capita	1993-2006	INEGI	The missing values for 1987-1992 were replaced with imputed values generated using <i>Amelia</i> , after averaging the values obtained in ten imputations.
Exchange rate	1982-83, 1985-86, 1994-95	INEGI	In the three cases I considered the change from January of the first year to December of the second.
Inflation	1982-83, 1985-86, 1994-95	INEGI	
Real minimum wage	1982-88	Magaloni (2006, 109-121)	
Public Debt	1982, 1987	Molinar (1991, 205-210)	
Poverty level	1994-96	Székely (2005, 16)	
Federal deputies results	1985, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006	For 1985 and 1988 Banamex (2001). For all other years IFE (www.ife.org.mx)	
States governed by the PRI and opposition parties	1987-2006	Banamex (2001) and states electoral commissions	
Share of seats controlled by the PRI in the state legislatures	1985-2000	Lujambio (2000, Annex 1)	
Public funds allocated to political parties	1991-2006	IFE	The data for 1991-1996 was obtained through the information request No. UE-13-692 made to IFE. The data for 1997-2006 was obtained from IFE’s website.
Marginalization		CONAPO	Given that the CONAPO only published the <i>Marginalization</i> index for 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2005, for the rest of the years I assigned the values in the following way: 1990 for 1987, 1988, 1989, 1991 and 1992; 1995 for 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1997; 2000 for 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001; 2005 for 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. There were no governor elections in 1990, 1996 and 2002. In principle, this decision does not seem too risky given that, in general, the values of each state’s <i>Marginalization</i> vary little from one measurement to the following.

4.4 Appendix B

Defections from the PRI, 1986-2000

This database includes all of the individual defections from the PRI reported by four Mexican national newspapers (*El Universal*, *Reforma*, *El Norte* and *La Jornada*) and a political magazine (*Proceso*). With the help of an outstanding group of ten research assistants, I reviewed every day of the printed edition of *El Universal* between January 1, 1986 and December 31, 2000 (15 years in total).⁶⁵ In addition, I reviewed the online archives of *Reforma* (Jan 1994-Jul 2000), *El Norte* (Jan 1987-Dec 1993), *Proceso* (Jan 1987-Jul 2000) and *La Jornada* (Feb 1996-Dec 1993). Using the searching engine of the first three periodicals, and Google for the fourth, I searched the term “PRI” and the verb “*renuncia*” (resignation in Spanish), as well as the following conjugations of this verb: *renunció*, *renunciaron*, *renunciarán*, *renunciará*, *renunciar*, *renuncias*, *renuncian* and *renunciado*.

The coding of these periodicals followed the same predefined set of rules (available upon request). We coded as a defection only those events in which i) a PRI member explicitly made public his decision to leave the party; *and* ii) we could record his name.⁶⁶ Thus, the database *does not* code as a defection the following events:

- a) A PRI member resigned to an elected position or his job within the federal, state or municipal governments but remained as a member of the party;
- b) A PRI member resigned to his job within the party (e.g., president of a municipal branch, representative of the National Executive Committee) but

⁶⁵The revision of these newspapers took place at the *Hemeroteca Nacional* of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*. I am deeply thankful with the University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States (UC MEXUS) for the financial support of this endeavor.

⁶⁶The database also includes the date of the defection; the political background of the defector (if available); the state and municipality where the defector held a position within the PRI or the government; the party to which the defector migrated (if any); and the source of the information.

remained as a member of it;

- c) A PRI member openly supported an opposition candidate or party during a short period of time but remained as a member of the PRI;
- d) A PRI member defected from the party but re-affiliated it within a period of four weeks and no state or federal election took place in between (e.g., Graciano Bortoni Urteaga, Nuevo León, 1994);
- e) The alleged defection of a PRI member was *only* made public by a member of an opposition party; and,
- f) A defector from the PRI claimed that other members resigned the party along him, but neither he nor the source provide the names of the alleged defectors.

While cases a) and b) are self-explanatory, it is worth explaining the reasoning behind the exclusion of the reminding four. In the case of c) the instruction was not to code as a defection when a PRI member publicly endorsed an opposition party or campaign because this might be temporal decision and it is not clear if the PRI member is using the resources under his control to support the opposition. Likewise, we did not code as defections events like the one described in case d) because temporary splits are unlikely to affect the clientelistic capacities of the PRI in the long run. Also, case e) was not to code as defections because the leaders of the opposition parties had incentives to declare that many *Priístas* had defected from the dominant party and joined their ranks in order to create the perception that the PRI was “falling apart”. Finally, the events described in case f) are not coded as resignations because many PRI defectors had incentives to falsely claim that hundreds or thousands of *Priístas* left the party with them in order magnify their power and the negative implications of their exit.

Defections of gubernatorial contenders from the PRI, 1987-2006

This database operationalizes the unity of the PRI's factions through a dummy variable called *PRI's Defection*. In order to construct it, I analyzed whether one or more *Priístas* described by newspapers, articles or books⁶⁷ as potential contenders for the PRI's gubernatorial nomination in each of the 112 states that held governor elections between 1987 and 2006, decided to leave the PRI shortly before, during or soon after the gubernatorial candidate's selection process took place. If one or more contenders did leave the PRI, the dummy variable is assigned a value of 1 and 0 otherwise.

Two reasons motivated this operationalization of the PRI's unity. First, until the late 1990s most PRI governor candidates were selected through two highly discretionary and authoritarian mechanisms called "electoral conventions" and "candidacies of unity" (Langston and Díaz-Cayeros, 2003).⁶⁸ As a consequence, most of the *Priístas* that might have been interested in competing for the nomination were not allowed to formally register to participate, if there was a registration process at all. Due to the lack of a reliable official list of gubernatorial contenders for each case, I constructed it by including the names of all the *Priístas* mentioned by the press, articles and books as potential competitors in each state.⁶⁹ Second,

⁶⁷The sources used to construct this database are available upon request.

⁶⁸"Candidates of unity" was the name given to the candidates that, in theory, were supported by the four sectors of the party in each state branch. In practice, the nomination of most of these candidates was the result of the negotiations between the PRI's national leaders, and an imposition of the national executive committee on each state. This was the most common mechanism used to select gubernatorial candidates in the PRI until 1997, when the party started to use open primaries (Langston and Díaz-Cayeros, 2003).

⁶⁹In most occasions the contenders themselves made public their interest to compete for the PRI's gubernatorial candidacy. However, in some cases the names of one or more *Priísta* were mentioned by a newspaper editorial, article or book as potential contenders, even when these politicians might not have publicly declared their intention to compete for this candidacy. The universe of PRI contenders in each election includes the names of both types of politicians. This decision could imply at least two types of bias. First, the universe of contenders might include names of *Priístas* that were not actually interested in being nominated as governor candidates. This could artificially increase the universe of contenders, but it is unlikely that this would bias the measurement of the PRI's unity because I am only considering as defections those cases in which a contender quit the PRI as a response to the gubernatorial's candidate selection process.

given that all PRI members were aware of the unfair nature of the process used by the party to select its gubernatorial candidates, it is plausible to assume that many potential contenders might have decided to leave the PRI even before the selection process formally started because they were aware of their low chances of success. For this reason, this variable includes the defections that occurred *before* the gubernatorial candidate's selection started, as long as they were a response to either the procedure used or the final result of the process.

The rule followed was to code as “defectors” only those contenders that left the party after publicly complaining about the “undemocratic” mechanism chosen to select the governor candidate (a common argument between those contender that left the PRI before the nomination process started) or the result of the nomination process. As it is explained in greater detail in the coding rules (available upon request) there are two exceptions to this. In Oaxaca in 1992 and Chiapas in 1994 a *Priísta* quit the party to become opposition governor candidate without making a public statement. However, these cases were coded as “defections” because given the relatively high rank of the *Priístas* involved, they illustrate a fracture within the PRI's unity. In any case, this coding decision generates a bias against my argument because it increases the number of defections of PRI contenders *before* the 1996 reform. If these cases are dropped from the analysis, the percentage of states in which one or more PRI contenders left the party between 1987 and 1995 decreases from 13.6% to 9% (4 out of 44 elections, instead of six).

This, in turn, significantly limits the universe of defectors to those that were actually interested in the governor nomination. In addition, it is also possible that one of the actual contenders was not mentioned in the newspapers and, therefore, was not included in the database. If this is the case, and this *Priísta* happened to leave the PRI as a response to the gubernatorial candidate selection process, the measurement of the PRI's unity would be biased. However, this is also an improbable case because the defection of *Priístas* was –and still is– attractive material for the media, and therefore it is likely that it would have been reported in any of the sources consulted.

4.5 Appendix C

Table 4.5: Rare Events Logit Models Using the Margin of Votes Obtained by the PRI in the Previous Election for Federal Deputies, Including Observations up to 2006

Dependent Variable: PRI's Defection						
	Model 1 (91-06)	Model 2 (91-06)	Model 3 (91-06)	Model 4 (91-06)	Model 5 (87-06)	Model 6 (87-06)
<i>PRI's Share Public Funds</i>	-0.154*** (0.052)	-0.150*** (0.052)				
<i>PRI's Margin Public Funds</i>			-0.112*** (0.034)	-0.111*** (0.035)		
<i>1996 Electoral Reform</i>					2.702*** (0.845)	2.675*** (0.839)
<i>Economic Growth (lagged)</i>	0.003 (0.103)	-0.011 (0.101)	-0.001 (0.104)	-0.016 (0.103)	0.014 (0.080)	0.007 (0.079)
<i>PRI's Past Electoral Results</i>	3.142* (1.744)	2.832 (1.798)	3.778** (1.824)	3.579* (1.892)	2.259 (1.479)	1.959 (1.510)
<i>Marginalization</i>	0.162 (0.240)	0.008 (0.301)	0.152 (0.243)	-0.024 (0.306)	0.237 (0.233)	0.049 (0.290)
<i>Lagged PRI's Defection</i>	-0.094 (0.560)	-0.331 (0.568)	-0.157 (0.569)	-0.398 (0.580)	-0.031 (0.555)	-0.279 (0.566)
Constant	4.489*** (1.655)	5.034*** (1.743)	0.175 (0.479)	0.865 (0.742)	-3.019*** (0.914)	-2.251** (1.036)
<i>Region Fixed Effects</i>	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	100	101	100	101	112	112
Log likelihood	-57.782	-56.220	-56.427	-54.828	-59.935	-57.980
AIC	127.563	130.441	124.853	127.655	131.870	133.961

Standard errors in parentheses.

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Table 4.6: Rare Events Logit Models Using the Margin of Votes Obtained by the PRI in the Previous Election for Federal Deputies, Including Observations up to 2000

Dependent Variable: PRI's Defection						
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	(91-06)	(91-06)	(91-06)	(91-06)	(87-06)	(87-06)
<i>PRI's Share Public Funds</i>	-0.147** (0.071)	-0.138* (0.072)				
<i>PRI's Margin Public Funds</i>			-0.139** (0.059)	-0.136** (0.061)		
<i>1996 Electoral Reform</i>					2.723** (1.097)	2.599** (1.086)
<i>Economic Growth (lagged)</i>	0.093 (0.219)	0.093 (0.233)	-0.087 (0.245)	-0.079 (0.258)	0.113 (0.138)	0.144 (0.150)
<i>PRI's Past Electoral Results</i>	4.017* (2.389)	3.375 (2.428)	5.322* (2.697)	4.878* (2.807)	4.183* (2.344)	3.669 (2.356)
<i>Marginalization</i>	0.218 (0.309)	0.0003 (0.384)	0.194 (0.313)	-0.029 (0.395)	0.245 (0.300)	-0.094 (0.382)
<i>Lagged PRI's Defection</i>	0.350 (0.936)	-0.053 (0.925)	0.094 (0.971)	-0.347 (0.971)	0.179 (0.967)	-0.280 (0.983)
Constant	3.493 (2.770)	4.142 (2.829)	0.492 (1.445)	1.367 (1.615)	-4.157*** (1.467)	-2.912* (1.555)
<i>Region Fixed Effects</i>	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	65	66	65	66	77	77
Log likelihood	-33.036	-30.715	-31.758	-29.344	-33.883	-30.694
AIC	78.071	79.430	75.515	76.689	79.766	79.387

Standard errors in parentheses.

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Table 4.7: Rare Events Logit Models Using Imputed Gross State Product per Capita instead of Marginalization, Including Observations up to 2006

Dependent Variable: PRI's Defection						
	Model 1 (91-06)	Model 2 (91-06)	Model 3 (91-06)	Model 4 (91-06)	Model 5 (87-06)	Model 6 (87-06)
<i>PRI's Share Public Funds</i>	-0.147*** (0.051)	-0.124** (0.051)				
<i>PRI's Margin Public Funds</i>			-0.108*** (0.034)	-0.095*** (0.035)		
<i>1996 Electoral Reform</i>					2.705*** (0.827)	2.429*** (0.808)
<i>Economic Growth (lagged)</i>	0.011 (0.104)	-0.011 (0.103)	0.012 (0.105)	-0.008 (0.104)	0.016 (0.081)	0.001 (0.081)
<i>PRI's Past Electoral Results</i>	5.083 (3.092)	2.973 (3.335)	6.317* (3.263)	4.378 (3.490)	3.856 (2.594)	2.028 (2.732)
<i>Imputed Log GSP per Capita</i>	-0.424 (0.556)	-0.344 (0.579)	-0.438 (0.562)	-0.335 (0.586)	-0.701 (0.543)	-0.569 (0.576)
<i>Lagged PRI's Defection</i>	-0.001 (0.547)	-0.283 (0.564)	-0.052 (0.554)	-0.324 (0.573)	0.072 (0.539)	-0.263 (0.567)
Constant	3.373* (1.942)	4.044** (2.026)	-1.195 (2.196)	-0.014 (2.363)	-2.725 (2.471)	-1.240 (2.577)
<i>Region Fixed Effects</i>	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	100	101	100	101	112	113
Log likelihood	-58.332	-56.878	-56.960	-55.663	-59.919	-57.988
AIC	128.664	131.755	125.920	129.325	131.838	133.976

Standard errors in parentheses.
 ***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Table 4.8: Rare Events Logit Models Using Imputed Gross State Product per Capita instead of Marginalization, Including Observations up to 2000

Dependent Variable: PRI's Defection						
	Model 1 (91-06)	Model 2 (91-06)	Model 3 (91-06)	Model 4 (91-06)	Model 5 (87-06)	Model 6 (87-06)
<i>PRI's Share Public Funds</i>	-0.187** (0.076)	-0.156** (0.076)				
<i>PRI's Margin Public Funds</i>			-0.178*** (0.065)	-0.153** (0.064)		
<i>1996 Electoral Reform</i>					3.225*** (1.169)	2.727** (1.113)
<i>Economic Growth (lagged)</i>	0.121 (0.228)	0.132 (0.240)	-0.092 (0.255)	-0.049 (0.264)	0.164 (0.147)	0.169 (0.160)
<i>PRI's Past Electoral Results</i>	10.378** (4.603)	7.678 (4.833)	13.674** (5.418)	10.832* (5.533)	10.413** (4.658)	7.452 (4.635)
<i>Imputed Log GSP per Capita</i>	0.280 (0.753)	0.341 (0.764)	0.242 (0.757)	0.282 (0.778)	-0.174 (0.713)	0.062 (0.765)
<i>Lagged PRI's Defection</i>	0.584 (0.903)	0.084 (0.916)	0.321 (0.937)	-0.148 (0.957)	0.392 (0.935)	-0.145 (0.993)
Constant	-0.192 (3.042)	0.657 (3.172)	-5.298 (3.304)	-3.725 (3.391)	-8.689** (4.158)	-6.421 (4.130)
<i>Region Fixed Effects</i>	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	65	66	65	66	77	77
Log likelihood	-32.413	-30.482	-30.689	-28.972	-33.042	-30.415
AIC	76.827	78.963	73.378	75.944	78.084	78.829

Standard errors in parentheses.
 ***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

CHAPTER 5

Why Was the 1996 Electoral Reform Proposed and Approved?

The evidence presented in the previous chapter indicates that the approval of the 1996 electoral reform had a substantially negative impact on the factional unity and electoral performance of the PRI. Looking at these events *a posteriori*, at least two questions come to mind. Why did Ernesto Zedillo actively promote a new electoral reform since the first day of his presidency? Likewise, how can we explain the fact that the constitutional and legal modifications that comprised this reform were approved with the unanimous support of the PRI in both houses of the federal congress,¹ and later ratified –also unanimously– in the large majority of the 32 states’ assemblies (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000, 419).

In this last chapter I address both of these questions. First, I argue that the main reason Zedillo proposed a new electoral reform was to reduce the political instability generated by the recurrent post-election conflicts that characterized Mexico’s state and municipal elections from the late-1980s up to the mid-1990s. These conflicts increased the level of confrontation between the federal government with both the opposition parties as well as with important sectors of the PRI. Thus, the principal aim of Zedillo’s reform was to eradicate one of the main sources of political instability inherited from the previous administration. In particular, his goal was to modify the opposition parties’ incentives in such a way that they

¹One of the ironies of the 1996 reform is that while the PRI voted as a block in favor of it, the opposition voted against its legal component. I describe this in more detail below.

abandoned their extra-institutional tactics in favor of electoral competition and the institutional mechanisms to settle potential disputes.

To answer the second question, I propose that the PRI approved these changes partly because certain elements of the reform significantly benefited the interests of the party. For example, the reform increased the financial independence of the party from the federal executive (Brinegar, Morgenstern and Nielson, 2006), as well as the transparency of these resources.² It also reduced the president's capacity to intervene and modify the results of state and local elections, benefiting the interests of local PRI bosses. In addition, even when many of the changes proposed in the reform went against the interest of the PRI, the party's legislators approved them largely because even by 1996 the president was the most powerful political actor within Mexico's political system, capable of defining the political futures of most members in the official party. This predominance, derived from formal and informal sources, allowed Zedillo to mobilize his party to approve the central components of the reform.³

I support these arguments with qualitative and quantitative evidence obtained through primary and secondary sources. Specifically, I interviewed seven politicians directly involved in the negotiation of Mexico's 1996 electoral reform. These actors had either been part of President Ernesto Zedillo's close political team and cabinet, or were PRI legislators that played an important role during the bargaining of this reform at the Chamber of Deputies.⁴ In addition, I use a wide array of secondary sources to support the explanations proposed above.

The chapter is organized in four sections. I start by providing an overview of the bargaining process of the reform. This will serve as a guideline for the rest of

²For many years the PRI was criticized by the opposition and large sectors of the population for illegally receiving funds from the federal government.

³Below, I argue that many of the core aspects of the reform were a priority for Zedillo either because of his personal preferences, or because their approval was a prerequisite to obtain the support of the opposition.

⁴See the Appendix of this chapter for a list of the institutions at which these politicians worked and the positions they held during the negotiation of the reform.

the discussion. In the second section I explain why Zedillo proposed the reform and in the third section I explain why the PRI approved it. I finish the chapter with some concluding remarks.

5.1 An Overview of the Reform's Negotiation

On December 1st, 1994, Ernesto Zedillo became the thirteenth consecutive president of Mexico representing the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) since the party's founding in 1929.⁵ That same day, while outlining the plans for his administration during his inaugural speech, Zedillo announced the two political priorities of his government. The first was a profound transformation of the judicial branch that increased its institutional power and autonomy. The second was the construction of a new electoral system through what Zedillo called a *definitive reform*.⁶ While the judicial reform materialized within a month,⁷ the negotiations of the electoral reform extended for almost two years.

At least three elements explain why the approval of the electoral reform took so long. First, one of Zedillo's priorities was to construct an electoral reform that was supported by all political parties.⁸ By establishing the need for consensus as a pre-condition for any agreement, the government not only increased the veto

⁵This includes the presidents elected under the labels of the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR) and the *Partido de la Revolución Mexicana* (PRM), the two predecessors of the PRI. Zedillo would be the fourteenth president elected under the PRI's banner if Emilio Portes Gil is included.

⁶The "definitive" denotation referred to the fact that between 1977 and 1994 Mexico's electoral system had been reformed five times, three of them between 1989 and 1994.

⁷For a discussion and analysis of the motivations and consequences of this reform, see González Compeán and Bauer (2002), Fix-Fierro (2003), Finkel (2008) and Pozas Loyo and Ríos Figueroa (2011).

⁸Most of the five electoral reforms approved between 1977 and 1994 had excluded one or more opposition party from the negotiation. This had been one of the most recurrent arguments to challenge the legitimacy of these reforms and the resulting electoral system. In order to prevent a similar result, from the beginning of the negotiations Zedillo instructed his team that if a reform was approved, it should be the result of a broad consensus among all political parties (Zedillo's Chief of Staff, 2011; Under-Secretary of Interior, 2011; Zedillo's Political Advisor, 2011, interviews).

power of the parties involved, making it significantly more difficult to reach an agreement, it also empowered the opposition to include new topics to the agenda, many of which were difficult to implement within the PRI (e.g., the reform of Mexico City's political system).

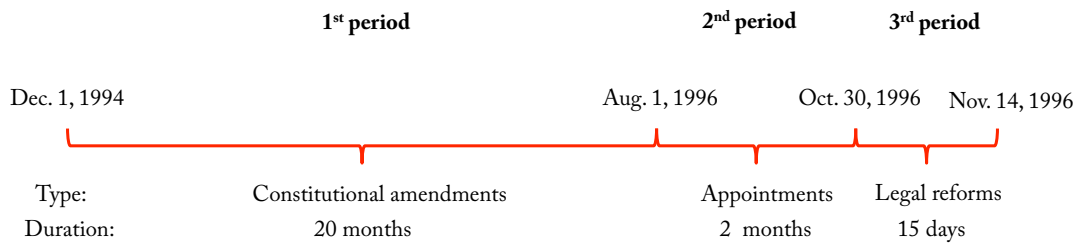
Second, even when Zedillo started to discuss the content of the electoral reform with the opposition weeks before taking power,⁹ the short-term priorities of his government were reshuffled by two significant events that occurred shortly after his inauguration. On December 19, the already tense political situation in the southern state of Chiapas worsened when the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN) decided to establish *de facto* regional and municipal parallel governments in approximately one-third of Chiapas municipalities. This was part of the EZLN's post-election protests against the PRI's victory in the gubernatorial election of August of that year (Trejo, 2012).¹⁰ The following day the Mexican economy was shocked by the sudden devaluation of the peso, marking the beginning of the country's worst economic downturn since the Great Depression: the Peso Crisis. As a result, during the first semester of 1995 Zedillo's government was forced to focus most of its resources and attention on these two significant problems.

The third important factor that conditioned the pace of the electoral reform's bargain were the recurrent post-election conflicts that emerged before and during the bargaining process. The PRD withdrew from the negotiations between April and September 1995 as part of its post-electoral strategy to dispute the PRI's victory in the gubernatorial elections of Tabasco of 1994. The PAN followed the same strategy, interrupting its participation in the negotiations –first, between

⁹Zedillo and his team held informal meetings with the opposition forces for these purposes on September and November of 1994. He also visited the lower and upper houses of Congress on December 6 and 7, respectively, to start discussing a potential electoral reform with the leaders of all parties (*Reforma* Sept. 18, Oct. 21 and Nov. 30).

¹⁰These actions took place nine days after Eduardo Robledo Rincón, the PRI's candidate, took power as governor of Chiapas.

Figure 5.1: Timeline of the Electoral Reform's Negotiation



June and October of 1995 and later from January to May of 1996– as part of its protests against the result of the gubernatorial elections of Yucatán in 1995 and the municipal elections in Huejotzingo, Puebla, in early 1996, respectively.

The three factors mentioned above highlight the contested and complicated political environment in which the electoral reform was negotiated over more than 22 months.¹¹ Figure 5.1 offers a timeline of this process. For descriptive purposes, I divide the negotiation into three parts.¹² The first and longest lasted 20 months. This period ended with the approval of the constitutional components of the electoral reform. The second period of negotiations lasted two months and its main result was the appointment of the electoral authorities.¹³ Finally, the changes to the secondary laws that composed the electoral reform were approved in the third period of negotiations, which lasted 15 days. While the constitutional amendments and the appointments of the first two periods were approved unanimously, the reforms to the secondary laws were only approved by the PRI's deputies and senators.

¹¹The following overview of the negotiation of the reform, as well as some of its most important components, largely draws from Andrade (1997), Castellanos (1998), Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg (2000) and Labastida and López (2004).

¹²As I explain below, most of the changes made to the constitution and secondary laws included in the electoral reform were bargained simultaneously. The timeline is mainly trying to emphasize that there were three important votes: one for the constitutional amendments, another for the appointment of the electoral authorities, and a third to approve the modifications to the secondary laws of the electoral reform.

¹³That is, the electoral commission's nine electoral counsellors and the electoral court's seven magistrates.

5.1.1 First period

The first concrete sign of progress materialized on January 17, 1995, when all the political parties and the president signed the *Acuerdo Político Nacional* and agreed to establish a roundtable to discuss a broad political reform, which would include the electoral reform.¹⁴ The roundtable started to work formally in March of that year but, as mentioned above, its activities were soon interrupted when the PRD and PAN withdrew from it. The impasse ended in the last days of October¹⁵ and one month later the four parties and the federal government had reached an agreement on the agenda and the procedure to negotiate the electoral reform.¹⁶ On December 4, ten parallel negotiation tables started to work simultaneously, soon reaching some significant agreements. However, on January 17, 1996, the PAN decided to pull out of the negotiations for the second time after the Electoral Court of Puebla reversed the party's victory in the municipality of Huejotzingo and gave it to the PRI. On this occasion, though, the federal government and the remaining three parties agreed to continue with the discussions without the PAN.

The results of the negotiation between the government and the PRI, PRD and PT were presented to the Chamber of Deputies on April 1996. These included 70 agreements which were translated in 107 specific proposals: 27 constitutional amendments and the reform of 80 articles of different secondary laws. Although the PAN first presented its own separate electoral reform bill on May 16 –after

¹⁴The initial agenda of what was known in Mexico as the *Reforma del Estado* (reform of the State) included four broad topics: i) electoral reform; ii) reform of the federal branches of government; iii) federalism; and, iv) civic participation and media (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000).

¹⁵By then, Zedillo had replaced his first Secretary of Interior, Esteban Moctezuma, with Emilio Chuayffet, who left the governorship of Estado de México to join Zedillo's cabinet.

¹⁶This specific agenda included most of the ten points previously agreed by the PAN and PRD in the document *Diez puntos fundamentales para la reforma electoral*, signed in August 1995 as a precondition to return to the negotiations (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000). In order to deal with the large number of topics, ten parallel negotiation tables were installed, each devoted to a particular issue area. An additional table was established to deal exclusively with the potential problems that might emerge in other political arenas and that could affect the negotiations (e.g., post-election conflicts).

the federal government forced the PRI's mayor of Huejotzingo to step down in order to be replaced by a member of the PAN— this party later re-joined the multilateral negotiations. This marked the beginning of the most intense period of negotiations. Finally, on July 24, Zedillo and the leaders of the four parties signed the *Acuerdos para la Reforma Electoral Federal y la Reforma Política del Distrito Federal* which proposed amending 16 constitutional articles. The project was unanimously approved in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate on July 31 and August 1, respectively, and it was later ratified by more than two-thirds of the state congresses. The constitutional reforms were promulgated on August 22.

5.1.2 Second period

Once the constitutional modifications were approved, the next step was to translate these changes into the *Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales* (COFIPE), Mexico's federal electoral law, and other legal ordinances. The top priority was to appoint the nine counsellors of the recently reformed General Council of the IFE before October 31, as well as the magistrates of the TEPJF before November 2.¹⁷ However, the negotiation on these appointments and the reforms of the secondary laws was stalled by the parties' disagreement on four topics: i) the total amount of public funds that would be distributed to political parties; ii) the cap on campaign expenditures; iii) the formula to distribute the public slots in radio and television among parties; and, iv) the requirements to nominate coalition candidates (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000; Andrade, 1997).

In an attempt to overcome the stalemate, the negotiations were divided in two parts: the appointment of the nine members of the General Council –and

¹⁷This obligation was established in a transitory article included in the constitutional reform. In order to do that, at least the COFIPE's articles related to the integration and attributions of both institutions had to be reformed as well.

the corresponding changes to the COFIPE (see footnote 17)– and the rest of the secondary laws reforms. The approval of the first part was achieved just five minutes before midnight on October 30 and almost divided the vote of the PRI’s federal deputies. As with other important elements of the reform, the bargain of this issue took place directly at the office of the Secretary of Interior, Emilio Chuayffet, and the final list of nominees was sent to all legislative groups in the Chamber of Deputies –including the PRI– ten minutes before the deadline. After receiving the proposal, the representatives of the PRI’s labor sector, led by José Ramírez Gamero, threatened to vote against it, but were finally dissuaded by the PRI’s legislative leader, Humberto Roque Villanueva.¹⁸ At the end, the appointment of the Counsellor President was approved with 455 votes in favor and 4 nays (all by PRD’s deputies); the appointment of the other eight counsellors, as well as the first set of reforms to the COFIPE, were approved unanimously (Pérez et al., October 31, 1996).

5.1.3 Third period

After the counsellors’ appointment, the parties achieved an agreement in three of the four most contentious topics of the electoral reform during the first days of November, but the overall negotiation was still blocked by the lack of consensus on the total amount of public funds that should be allocated to the political parties. The PAN, PRD and PT considered the proposal made by the government and the PRI to be excessive, and suggested to cut it at least in half. The confrontation rapidly escalated. Zedillo and the PRI’s leadership were immovable on their position about public funding,¹⁹ largely because this was one of the main

¹⁸The voting procedure used to approve the appointments was modified to prevent the indiscipline of the PRI’s labor deputies. Instead of voting secretly, as established in the law, all deputies were asked to vote by raising their hands in favor or against the proposals (Pérez et al., October 31, 1996). This allowed the PRI’s legislative leaders to monitor the behavior of the party members and, if necessary, punish them.

¹⁹According to Julia Preston and Samuel Dillon, *The New York Times*’s correspondants in Mexico at the time, “Suspicious of the PRI’s motives, both the PAN and the PRD said the

benefits offered by the government to the official party in exchange for their support with the rest of the reform (see page 138). Knowing that they had enough votes to approve the changes to the COFIPE and other laws without the support of the opposition,²⁰ the PRI –with the consent of the government– threatened to rollback some of the agreements reached so far if the opposition did not support the amount of public funding they proposed (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000; Castellanos, 1998, 421).

Meanwhile, the opposition’s dominant strategy was to stand firm despite the government’s pressure at this point of the negotiation. The most substantive changes to the electoral system were already implemented –and assured– by the constitutional reform and they were satisfied with the integration of the IFE’s General Council. In addition, the government’s public funding proposal was very unpopular. And even if the PRI could modify certain agreements and approve the changes to the secondary laws of the electoral reform without opposition support, this would severely damage Zedillo’s efforts to portray the reform as the product of broad consensus.

The deadlock was finally broken by the pressure of time on the government’s side.²¹ On November 7, Zedillo decided to unilaterally introduce a bill to reform the COFIPE and other legal dispositions. This project contained the formula that Zedillo and the PRI desired to calculate –and significantly increase– the level of public funds allocated to political parties, as well as the rules to distribute 70%

amount was exorbitant. The opposition parties assumed that the PRI brass was driving the finance dispute, trying to maximize its own funding” (2004, 277). See also Sotelo (November 8, 1996) or Mayolo (November 10, 1996).

²⁰In 1996 the PRI still had more than 50% of the seats in both houses of Congress, enough to make any reform to a secondary law.

²¹The COFIPE establishes that the federal electoral process formally starts the first week of October of the year prior to an election (therefore, the 1996-1997 electoral process had already started when Zedillo presented the bill), and it defines a precise calendar of activities that the electoral commission must perform over the following months. The problem, then, was that many of these electoral activities were likely to be affected by the legal changes included in the remaining part of the reform. This put the electoral commission in a rather uncertain legal position, which could become a reason for future complaints and legal challenges.

of these funds in a proportional way, and the remaining 30% in equal shares to all parties.²² However, Zedillo's bill still included *all* the other agreements reached between the PAN, PRI, PRD and PT in the previous months –embodied in 157 articles and 22 transitory articles of the COFIPE– in an attempt to facilitate a final deal (Andrade, 1997; Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000).²³

During the following days several efforts were made to avoid a fracture in the negotiations (Juárez, November 12, 1996). However, as positions hardened, the PRI fulfilled its promise. On November 14, all the PRI deputies, without the support of any opposition party, approved the package of legal changes of the electoral reform,²⁴ modifying several of the agreements previously reached with the opposition,²⁵ as well as some elements of the project sent by Zedillo to the Chamber of Deputies a week before.²⁶ Still, it is important to highlight the fact that the changes made by the PRI deputies to Zedillo's bill did not modify the formula proposed by the president to calculate the level of public funds allocated to political parties,²⁷ nor the rules by which these resources should be distributed (70%-30%).²⁸

²²Both items were explicitly stated on Zedillo's bill on Article 49 of COFIPE (Cámara de Diputados, 1996). In addition, the 10th transitory article of COFIPE's reform was specifically designed to assure a significant increase in the amount of public funds, at least during the 1997 federal deputies election (Andrade, 1997, 267-268).

²³According to the declarations of some PRD leaders, "almost all the agreements were respected" by the bill proposed by Zedillo. Their only explicit disagreement had to do with the public funds dispositions (Román, November 8, 1996).

²⁴The legal reforms were ratified by the Senate with the vote of all 89 PRI legislators on November 20. They were promulgated on November 22.

²⁵For a detailed description of these changes see Andrade (1997, Ch. 9).

²⁶Brinegar, Morgenstern and Nielson (2006) argue that these final modifications reveal a confrontation between Zedillo and what they call the "hard-liners" of the PRI. I disagree. In the following section I propose an alternative interpretation of these events.

²⁷This part of the reform successfully increased the amount of public funds distributed to parties: the figures of 1997 were 640% higher than in 1994 (Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg, 2000, 426). Once the reforms to the secondary laws were approved the leaders of the PAN and PRD declared that they would either return a large part of the public funds that were assigned to them to the electoral commission, or that they would donate a significant proportion of them to NGOs and other social causes. After a few months they decided to keep all the resources allocated to their parties.

²⁸In contrast, the PRI legislators did change the original agreement to distribute the state-controlled radio and television spots among political parties. Instead of establishing that 60%

Despite the significant improvements achieved with the 1996 electoral reform, and the fact that most of the changes were the result of agreements reached among all political parties, the way in which the electoral reform concluded also fulfilled, to some extent, the opposition's predictions. Significant sectors of public opinion perceived the whole process as an imposition by the government and the PRI, not the result of a general consensus among the political parties.

5.2 Why did Zedillo Propose the Reform?

The existing literature on the 1996 electoral reform provides very detailed descriptions of the bargaining process and the final result,²⁹ as well as the effects of the reform on the composition of both houses of Congress and the nature of the electoral competition.³⁰ However, there is still relatively little research done to explain why Zedillo promoted this reform. Guillermo Trejo (2012) provides one of the few existing explanations on the topic. As part of an insightful study on the emergence and transformation of Mexico's indigenous movements, he argues that the electoral reform of 1996 was a direct response by the federal government to the radicalization of the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN). According to Trejo, by December 1994 “the Zapatistas and other Chiapas's influential peasant indigenous movement were undergoing a radical metamorphosis into a self-determination movement” and threatening to form a revolutionary movement –along with other indigenous movements and the PRD– in order to launch a major social insurrection across the country (2012, 342-344). To avert this possibility, Zedillo “consented to democratize the electoral institutions” in an effort to “undo a potential coalition” that could threaten the stability of the regime (Trejo, 2012,

of the total would be distributed in proportional terms and 40% in equal shares, the electoral law replicated the 70%-30% formula used for public funding.

²⁹See, for example, Andrade (1997), Castellanos (1998), Becerra, Salazar and Woldenberg (2000) and Labastida and López (2004).

³⁰See Balinski and Ramírez González (1997), Molinar and Weldon (2001) and Weldon (2001).

347).

While it is indisputable that the conflict in Chiapas represented one of Zedillo's main political concerns after winning the 1994 election,³¹ the chronology of events does not seem to fit Trejo's explanation. As I described before, Zedillo and his team started to discuss a potential new electoral reform with the opposition parties weeks before taking power (see footnote 9), and he made the reform one of the main topics during his inaugural address on December 1. However, the radicalization of the EZLN took place *after* these events, on December 19.³² Furthermore, the evidence indicates that while the conflict with the EZLN was a *political* priority for Zedillo's administration, the federal government was not concerned by the *military* threat it represented, nor its potential spread. According to Marco Antonio Bernal, Zedillo's chief negotiator in Chiapas since 1995, even when the EZLN was trying to extend the conflict to other regions of the country in late-1994, "[b]y the beginning of 1995, the EZLN was a guerrilla [movement] that had shown once more its limited military capacity, as well as its weakness and dispersion as a rebel social movement" (1999, 34, 48).³³

From a rather different perspective, Brinegar, Morgenstern and Nielson (2006) (henceforth BMN) argue that Zedillo called the political parties to construct a new electoral reform because he "was highly motivated to pursue democratizing reforms" since the beginning of his term. This motivation, the authors propose,

³¹Once elected president, Zedillo sent six letters to the EZLN between September 15 and November 21, 1994, offering them a "direct and sincere dialogue." After his inauguration, one of Zedillo's first instructions to the Secretary of Interior was to start direct contact with the rebel group in order to start formal negotiations (Bernal and Romero, 1999, 29, 35-36).

³²On that day the EZLN expanded its territorial control and established local rebel governments in 38 of Chiapas's municipalities. This was an explicit reaction to the investiture of Eduardo Robledo, the PRI's candidate, as governor of the state on December 8.

³³With respect to the radicalization of the EZLN on December 1994, Bernal argues that by December 23 the Zapatistas have retreated from most of the 38 municipalities taken four days before, and that by the end of the month "the military profile" of the EZLN had significantly decreased (1999, 39). *The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Country Report for Mexico* corresponding to the 2nd quarter of 1995 reported that "It has been widely accepted since February's military operation [by the federal government] that the Zapatistas no longer pose any military threat" (2nd quarter 1995a, 9).

stemmed from the fact that Zedillo was “a classic technocrat” who had “limited experience within the PRI” and “lacked [a] strong clientelistic base,” and also from the fact that, unlike previous presidents, “he had fewer debts to pay to the individuals who brought him to power” given the circumstances in which he was appointed candidate (2006, 88).³⁴

Although the last two elements might be true and could have facilitated the proposal, approval and extension of the 1996 reform and several others,³⁵ they do not explain why Zedillo wanted to pursue another electoral reform, nor the *type* of reform he wanted. Furthermore, if being a technocrat with limited experience within the party shapes the preferences of the incoming president, how can we explain the fact that Salinas—a technocrat who never held a position within the PRI, was never elected for office before becoming president, and who lacked the support of a clientelistic base—made significantly fewer concessions during the negotiations of the electoral reforms of 1989-90, 1993 and 1994?

In contrast to these authors, I propose that even if Zedillo might have had strong pro-democratic personal preferences, something that is very difficult to prove *a posteriori*, his decision to propose a new electoral reform derived from the political circumstances he faced when coming to power. During his inaugural speech Zedillo argued that Mexico required an electoral reform in order to dissipate “the suspicions, recriminations and mistrusts that tarnish the electoral processes,” adding that “The electoral democracy should no longer be a central concern of the political debate, nor a cause of animosity and division” (1994). A few weeks later,

³⁴Luis Rubio seems to agree with this argument when he claims that “Adopting the perspective of a citizen who had ended up in the presidential chair by chance rather than that of a political animal hungry for power, Zedillo identified a series of problems and abuses in the traditional structure of the presidency” (Rubio, 1998, 14).

³⁵Zedillo’s chief of staff confirmed to me in an interview that one of the elements that allowed the president to propose a new electoral reform was the fact that, given the way he was appointed, he did not have commitments with any of the PRI’s sectors (Zedillo’s Chief of Staff, 2011, interview).

during the signature of the *Acuerdo Político Nacional* by the leaders of all political parties on January 17, 1995,³⁶ Zedillo reinforced and extended his message by declaring that “The electoral democracy must guarantee an equitable and transparent competition, so that every municipal, state or federal election leaves us satisfied, whatever the results” (1995*a*).

Taken at face value, these declarations suggest at least two things. First, Zedillo seemed to think that the electoral rules of the time were incapable to process and contain the political competition within the existing institutions. This, in turn, had transformed the “electoral democracy” into a source of recurrent conflicts and divisions at all levels of government. Second, the president also seemed to think that in order to have a functional electoral system, one that produced results accepted by all parties, the existing rules needed to be reformed to make them fairer and more transparent. Therefore, according to this interpretation Zedillo’s main motivation to propose an electoral reform was the increasing number of disputes over election results, as well as the need to redirect and contain the raising political competition within the institutional framework.

This hypothesis has been proposed by authors like Rubio (1998, 25) and Berra et al. (2000, 373-376). The problem, though, is that unless we empirically test it, there is always the possibility that the reasons publicly argued by Zedillo were only part of a rhetorical strategy to hide his real, non-observable, intentions. In the reminder of this section I provide quantitative and qualitative evidence that supports the idea that the frequency and consequences of the post-election conflicts staged between 1988 and 1994 were of such magnitude that they led Zedillo to propose a new electoral reform. In addition, I present a detailed causal mechanism that explains why and how these conflicts motivated Zedillo’s decision.

³⁶This agreement set the bases for what later became the 1996 electoral reform. See section 5.1.

5.2.1 The Emergence of Post-Election Conflicts

The results of the 1988 elections represented a milestone for Mexico's political system. Carlos Salinas won the presidential election with 50.7% of the vote and the PRI obtained 260 of the 500 seats (52%) in the Chamber of Deputies and 60 of the 64 seats (94%) in the Senate. Although these results seemed to give Salinas an enviable position to start his term, they not only represented the PRI's worst performance in a presidential or legislative election since the party's creation,³⁷ but, more importantly, they also transformed the relationship of the executive and the PRI with the opposition forces in important ways. First, the controversy that surrounded Salinas's election was followed by the first national and sustained post-election conflict staged by any party against the PRI in decades (i.e., Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's *Frente Democrático Nacional*). Additionally, in order to prevent the PAN from endorsing Cárdenas's protests, Salinas agreed to propose an electoral reform in exchange for this party's tacit recognition of his victory (Eisenstadt, 2004, 45).³⁸ Most importantly, the PRI lost control of the two-thirds majority of votes in the lower house, forcing the party to form a coalition for the first time since the 1930s to reach the required two-thirds majority of votes to amend the constitution.³⁹

The combination of these elements –the PRI's legitimacy crisis and the historical improvement of the opposition in the lower house– significantly increased

³⁷To give an idea of what these results represented, consider that the six presidents elected before Salinas won with more than 70% of the vote. In addition, while the PRI lost a federal deputy election in only 72 districts between 1946 and 1985, in 1988 the party was second or third in 66 of the 300 single-member districts (Molinar and Weldon, 1990, 235).

³⁸Salinas conceded to formalize the agreement through a signed letter (Eisenstadt, 2004, 45). The PAN, in exchange, abstained from voting during the certification of the presidential election in the Chamber of Deputies on September 10, 1988.

³⁹The PRI's situation significantly improved in the midterm elections of 1991, when it won 320 of the 500 (64%) seats of the Chamber of Deputies. It is interesting to notice that although 51 articles of the constitution were amended during Salinas's administration, only nine of them were reformed between 1988 and 1991: the first electoral reform of Salinas's term and the privatization of the banks. Both were part of the PAN's demands after the 1988 elections and both were approved in 1990 (Anaya, 2008, 218-220).

the bargaining power of the PAN –and, to a lesser extent, the PRD– within and outside the institutional framework. While the PAN used its new institutional and political position to pressure Salinas and the PRI to recognize its electoral victories (or what they conceived as such), the PRD exploited the regime’s loss of credibility after the 1988 election to challenge the results of future races. The sum –and interaction–⁴⁰ of these strategies ignited a cycle of post-election conflicts in which one or more parties –mostly the opposition, but also the PRI– would stage protest actions (e.g., mass demonstrations, takeover of public buildings)⁴¹ in order to increase their gains *after* the election have taken place through political and generally extra-legal negotiations with the federal government.

Although there are some scattered antecedents of post-election disputes in the 1970s and early 1980s (Eisenstadt, 2004), the magnitude and frequency of such conflicts after 1988 was unprecedented in the PRI’s regime. At the state level, eight of the 33 gubernatorial elections (24.2% of the total) held after Salinas was elected (August 1988) and before he left the presidency (December 1994) were followed by a conflict.⁴² Eisenstadt (2002) describes a similar phenomenon at the county level. After analyzing the mayoral elections that took place between 1989 and 1998 in a sample of 14 of the 32 Mexican states,⁴³ Eisenstadt finds that the PAN and PRD staged post-election conflicts in 13.3% of all the races of the period (467 conflicts in 3,518 elections). Interestingly, while 16.6% of the mayoral elections held during Salinas’s term were followed by a dispute (333 conflicts in

⁴⁰Eisenstadt argues that “the visceral and lawless uprisings by *PRDístas* made PRI-state administrators cringe, rendering the measured and hierarchical PAN more attractive as a national legislative coalition partner with each PRD building occupation” (2004, 133, original emphasis).

⁴¹The typical post-election conflict could be described as one in which “[t]he losing party staged mass demonstrations, blocked freeways, burned ballots and electoral material, took over public buildings, declared parallel municipal governments to sabotage public works by the winning party, and initiated mob brawls when demonstrations were dissipated by local authorities or challenged by PRI counter-demonstrations” (Eisenstadt, 2004, 122).

⁴²These states are Tabasco in 1988, Guanajuato and San Luis Potosí in 1991, Michoacán and Tamaulipas in 1992, Nayarit in 1993, as well as Chiapas and Tabasco in 1994.

⁴³The sample includes the states of Campeche, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Estado de México, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Yucatán and Zacatecas. All states had three rounds of municipal elections in the period studied.

2,005 elections), this figure declined to 8.85% in the period 1995-1998 (134 conflicts in 1,513 elections).

Figure 5.2 offers a more detailed picture of the evolution of these municipal post-election conflicts over time. Consistent with the aggregated figures just mentioned, the graph shows that between 1989 and 1994 at least 12% of the mayoral elections held every year in the 14 states considered were followed by a conflict, and while in 1990, 1992 and 1993 this figure was between 17-19%, in 1989 it reached 41.6%.⁴⁴ In addition, although Zedillo's term started with a significant increase in the frequency of post- electoral conflicts with respect to the previous year (from 12.5% in 1994 to 18.2% in 1995), in the following three years this figure dropped to less than 7% and in one of them, 1997, this figure was even less than 1%.⁴⁵

The opposition obtained significant gains from these post-election protests. In five of the eight conflicts (62.5%) mounted after a gubernatorial race between 1988 and 1994, the elected candidate (always a PRI member) was forced by the president⁴⁶ to either not take office or to resign shortly thereafter.⁴⁷ In one of these cases (Guanajuato 1991) a member of the PAN was even appointed by the local congress to replace the elected PRI candidate. This last solution was adopted in several municipal races. For example, the PRI elected mayors of Mazatlán (1989), Guaymas (1991), Merida (1993) and Monterrey (1994) were not allowed to take office or were forced to resign, to be replaced by a member of the PAN (Molinar,

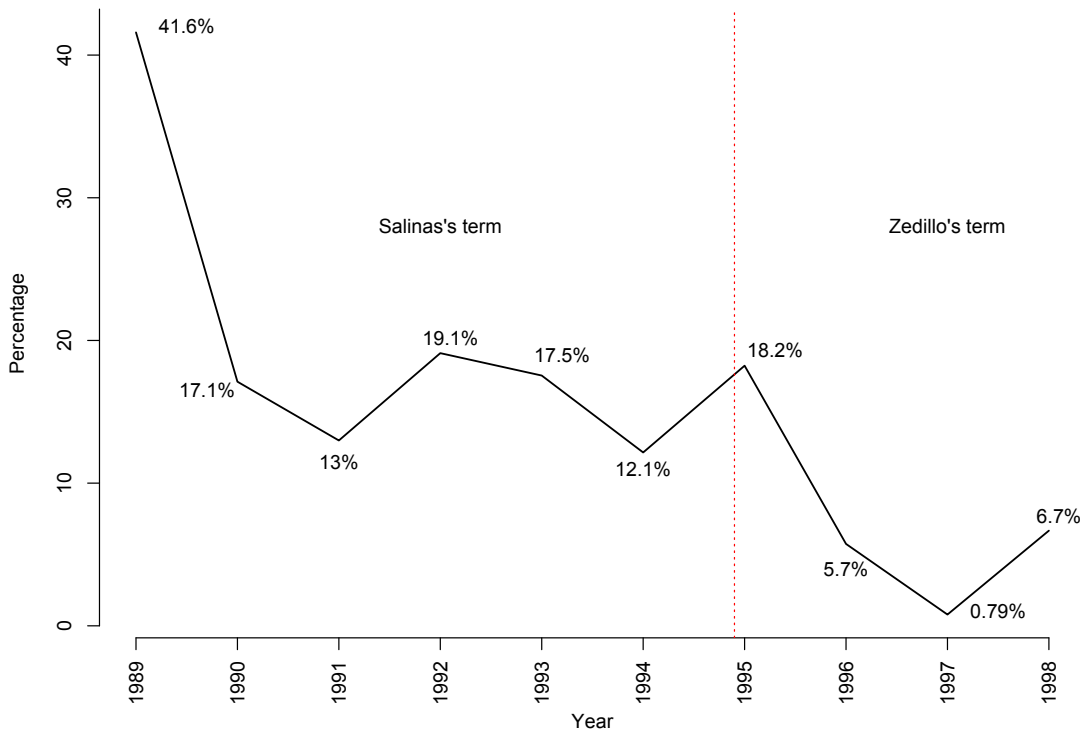
⁴⁴For 1989 Eisenstadt's database only includes the highly contended and controversial municipal elections of Michoacán (Cauhtémoc Cárdenas's home state), where the PRD staged a conflict after 47 of the 113 mayoral races (2002, 53).

⁴⁵Several of these conflicts involved human casualties. While at least 125 PRD members were killed "between 1989 and 1994 as the direct result of local postelectoral conflicts, and an additional 27 between 1995 and 2000," the PRI's post-election conflicts resulted in 18 deaths and the PAN's in three (Eisenstadt, 2004, 122, 139-140).

⁴⁶See page 143 for an explanation of how the president could do this.

⁴⁷Four of these governors (Guanajuato and San Luis Potosí in 1991, Michoacán and Tabasco in 1992) were forced to resign by Salinas –this figure represents almost one quarter of the 17 governors he removed– and one (Chiapas 1995) by Zedillo. These figures are different from Eisenstadt's, who argues that Salinas removed seven governors as a result of a post-election conflict (2004, 104).

Figure 5.2: Percentage of post-election conflicts in mayoral elections, 1989-1998



Source: Eisenstadt 2002

1992; Vega, 1994; Reveles, 2002; Eisenstadt, 2006).⁴⁸ In addition, the post-election negotiations allowed the opposition to establish 76 interim municipal councils between 1990 and 1995, to include members of their parties in the PRI municipal cabinets,⁴⁹ to bargain over proportional-representation city council seats,⁵⁰ and, in a few cases, to even appoint two or three co-mayors (Eisenstadt, 2004, 123).⁵¹

Ironically, the initial concessions made by the Salinas's administration to settle the first post-election disputes (e.g., Mazatlán's mayorship in 1989 and Guan-

⁴⁸For a detailed description of the cases of Mazatlán and Mérida see Vega (1994) and Eisenstadt (2006, 236), respectively.

⁴⁹This solution was adopted in 18% of Veracruz's 207 municipalities after the 1991 post-election conflicts (Eisenstadt, 2004, 123).

⁵⁰This was particularly common among the smaller opposition parties "which rarely won mayorships but retained electoral strongholds" (Eisenstadt, 2004, 123).

⁵¹According to Eisenstadt, in 1990 bull-dozers were "offered to discontented *Priistas* in Coahuila [...] in exchange for their vacating city hall in Parras where they had lost to the PAN" and "In Chiapas 1995, even librarian's assistants and part-time city driver positions were negotiated by the PRI-state to placate losers" (2004, 125).

ajuato's governorship in 1991) set a powerful and counterproductive precedent for his interests. Each gain obtained by the PAN or the PRD worked as a self-reinforcing incentive to keep staging post-election conflicts after any close election at the state and municipal level. As Rubio puts it, “[b]y agreeing to negotiate ‘under the table’ following an election, the administration provided an incentive for opposition parties to concentrate their actions not on the electoral race itself but on raising doubts about its outcome” (Rubio, 1998, 20). Consequently, the opposition parties started to “spend most of their funds after election day, which was when the real negotiations began” (Rubio, 2004, 14).

5.2.2 Zedillo's Decision

As a result of these factors, by the end of Salinas's administration a large share of Mexico's state and municipal elections were characterized by what Eisenstadt describes as a “dual cycle of high expectations from extralegal bargaining and low expectations from legal proceedings” (Eisenstadt, 2004, 129). The recurrent post-election conflicts that derived from this politically costly but stable equilibrium negatively affected the relationship between the president and the opposition forces. While each post-election protest generated inevitable political frictions between the participants, the PAN and the PRD started to condition the negotiations over an increasing number of political and economic issues in exchange for particular electoral concessions at the state or municipal level. The list of examples includes, among others, constitutional amendments,⁵² the certification of Ernesto Zedillo's victory by the lower house,⁵³ and the 1993 and 1996 electoral reforms (Eisenstadt, 2006, 234; see section 5.1 above).

⁵²According to Eisenstadt (2004, 107), in 1991 Salinas agreed to request Ramón Aguirre, the elected PRI governor of Guanajuato, not to take office and to appoint a PAN member as interim governor, in exchange for this party's support to approve the “constitutional reforms of Church-state relations (Article 27), and to end Mexico's post-Cárdenas agrarian reform (Article 130).”

⁵³The PAN agreed to abstain during the lower house certification of Zedillo's election only after being given the mayorship of Monterrey, Nuevo León (Eisenstadt, 2006, 234).

While each of the concessions made by the federal government to the PAN and PRD between 1988 and 1994 reinforced the opposition's incentives to keep staging post-election conflicts, they also worsened the already tense relationship between the president and his party.⁵⁴ While the results of the 1988 federal elections made evident that the president could no longer assure the victory of the PRI's candidates –one of the most effective incentives to join and remain in the official party according to Molinar and Weldon (1990), the post-electoral concessions of these years revealed that Salinas was willing to sacrifice the electoral “victories” and political interests of the party's local elites in favor of the bargaining priorities and the legitimacy of the federal government. Even when this might have been motivated by the new political reality in Congress, it had no precedent in the PRI's history and it was perceived by many *Priístas* as a betrayal of the bond of complicity and solidarity that had historically united the president and the ruling party.

Although many of the affected local elites showed their disagreement with these decisions by distancing from the center in a silent and obedient manner (González Compeán and Lomelín, 2000, 651), others made their dissent explicit. For instance, in 1989 Juan S. Millán, then president of the PRI's chapter in Sinaloa,

⁵⁴The relationship started to deteriorate after the 1982 debt crisis, when President Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) was forced to significantly cut the public funds transferred to the PRI as a result of the fiscal limitations of the federal government (González Compeán and Lomelín, 2000; Eisenstadt, 2004). Two additional factors made the relationship between Salinas and the PRI even tenser during his administration. First, Salinas made constant use of the president's informal power to nominate the party's candidates at all levels (see page 142). Although this had been a common practice in the past, the party's state chapters started to resent it not only because they felt largely excluded from the nomination process (in general, previous presidents made explicit attempts to consult the local political elite before nominating candidates (González Compeán and Lomelín, 2000)), but also because these centralized decisions took place in a context of increasing electoral competition but decreasing financial support from the federal government (González Compeán and Lomelín, 2000, 651). Second, Salinas mobilized the support of the PRI to amend 51 articles of the constitution, many of which affected or contradicted several of the ideological theses historically defended by the party (e.g., the relationship between the State and the Church; the agrarian reform, the *ejido* and the tenure of land in general; as well as the role of the State in the economy). Unlike other important reforms adopted in the past, these changes were proposed and approved without a formal debate within the PRI or even an attempt to build a consensus around them (González Compeán and Lomelín, 2000, 594). For a more detailed analysis of this period, see González and Lomelín (2000, Ch. XIII and XIV).

publicly resigned his position –but not the party– to express his disagreement with Salinas’s decision to give the victory in Mazatlán’s mayoral race to the PAN (Cano and Gallegos, 1998). Two years later, dozens of PRI members took over the offices of several municipalities in Guanajuato to protest against Salinas’s acceptance to replace the PRI elected governor by a member of the PAN. Dulce María Sauri, interim governor of Yucatán appointed by Salinas in 1991, resigned her position in 1993 in protest of the president’s decision to give the PAN the victory in Merida’s mayoral election that same year. In 1994 Leónardo Rodríguez Alcaine, one of main leaders of the PRI’s labor sector and then senator, publicly criticized Salinas’s decision to concede Monterrey’s mayorship to the PAN and called the PRI’s state chapter to defend the party’s victory in the streets. Similar examples can be found after the presidential concessions made in Yucatán in 1990, San Luis Potosí and Sonora in 1991, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Puebla and Sinaloa in 1992, Guerrero and Estado de México in 1993, as well as Tlaxcala in 1994 (Eisenstadt, 2004, 189, 256).⁵⁵

The combination of all these factors led Zedillo and his team to two conclusions shortly after winning the 1994 presidential election. First, along with the events that had shocked Mexico’s political life that year (e.g., the emergence of the EZLN, the assassination of the PRI’s original presidential candidate, and the kidnapping of important businessmen),⁵⁶ the stability of Mexico’s political system was threatened by a structural factor: the existing electoral rules were insufficient

⁵⁵Remarkably, though, as I showed in Chapter 4, even when a large sector of the party might have had strong grievances against the president and the national leaders, most of them remained in the PRI until 1996.

⁵⁶A few weeks after the presidential election of 1994, another event shook the country: on September 28, 1994, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, then PRI’s General Secretary and representative at IFE, was killed. According to one of the advisors of Esteban Moctezuma –Zedillo’s first Secretary of Interior, Ruiz Massieu was one of Zedillo’s main political brokers. Shortly before being murdered he was elected leader of the PRI’s legislative group in the lower house, where he was expected to serve for a couple of months before becoming Secretary of Interior. Ruiz Massieu was one of the main advocates for a new electoral reform within Zedillo’s team. His assassination temporarily halted the negotiations that the elected president had started on this matter with the opposition forces before taking power (Secretary of Interior’s Political Advisor, 2011, interview).

to process and contain the political competition within the existing institutions. According to Zedillo's chief of staff during the presidential campaign and his entire term, before taking power the elected president "was very concerned by the fact that after every election there was a bargain, that the competition was not settled in the ballot box but in a posterior roundtable [...] There was always a conflict" (2011, interview).

Second, the solution for this problem required the approval of a new electoral reform,⁵⁷ one that should be supported by all political parties in order to assure its legitimacy (see footnote 8) and that should also be substantive enough to change the existing equilibrium. That is, the reform had to modify the electoral system to such an extent that parties would find it more profitable to compete electorally and solve their potential disputes through pre-established institutions and procedures, rather than stage post-election conflicts to try to improve their situation through *ad-hoc*, political and often extralegal negotiations. This point is also confirmed by Zedillo's chief of staff, who argues that the president's main motivation to propose a new electoral reform was "to allow the new legal framework to settle the disputes" in order to "avoid future post-electoral conflicts" (2011, interview).⁵⁸

⁵⁷Zedillo adopted two additional strategies to improve the executive's relationship with the opposition (the PRD in particular), and the PRI. In the first case, Zedillo offered to construct a relationship with all opposition parties based on "dialogue, respect and the truth" (Zedillo, 1994). This materialized in the meetings that the elected president and his team held with the opposition forces before taking power (e.g., Juárez and Medina, October 21, 1994). In the second case, Zedillo proposed the PRI to reconstruct their relationship based on a "healthy distance," meaning that he would not longer intervene in the internal affairs of the party. Both promises represented a significant departure from Salinas, who, as was discussed above, had constantly intervened in the decisions of the PRI, and had openly marginalized the PRD during most of his administration, famously summarizing his animosity for this party by saying "I neither see them nor hear them." As I discuss in the next section, while the "healthy distance" rhetoric might have helped Zedillo to distend the relationship with the PRI, he was still in control of the most fundamental positions and decisions made by the party.

⁵⁸Zedillo's aim to prevent future post-election conflicts through the reform was so strong that one of the commitments signed in the *Acuerdo Político Nacional* on January 1995 required: "To guarantee that, once the electoral reforms are over, and, in consequence, the conditions of fairness before the elections and the legality of the process are met, none of the [signing] parts will stage post-electoral actions that force the legal framework and the respect for the institutions" (Castellanos, 1998, 343).

There are two final points worth stressing before analyzing why the PRI supported Zedillo's decision. First, although it might be true that the president took advantage of the bargaining process of the electoral reform to improve his legitimacy and manage the complicated beginning of his administration (Labastida and López, 2004; Zedillo's Political Advisor, 2011, interview), it is important to emphasize that these factors did not *motivate* Zedillo to propose the reform in the first place. Actually, according to Zedillo's chief of staff, while the president decided to reform the electoral system months before the radicalization of the EZLN and the economic crisis of December 1994, he also chose to continue its negotiation even when many of his advisors recommended to postpone it given the political and economic crises Mexico was experiencing in the first half of 1995 (2011, interview). Second, although Zedillo and his team anticipated many of the consequences that the electoral reform would imply (e.g., improving the opposition's conditions of competition, reducing the discretionary power of the federal and state executives), they never foresaw that these institutional changes would significantly reduce the discipline within the PRI while opening them the door to migrate to other parties (Zedillo's Chief of Staff, 2011, interview). As I showed in the Chapter 4, these unexpected results proved to be devastating for the survival of the dominant-party regime led by the PRI.

5.3 Why did the PRI Approve the Reform?

Knowing how the story ended for the PRI, it is hard to understand why the members of this party were willing to approve an electoral reform that implied making such significant concessions to the opposition and that would eventually lead to the demise of the authoritarian regime established in 1929. It is surprising, though, that despite the important changes brought by this reform, the literature that analyzes why the PRI supported these modifications is very sparse. To my

knowledge, only Brinegar, Morgenstern and Nielson (2006) have addressed this particular topic. According to these authors, the negotiation of the 1996 electoral reform took place in a context in which “Zedillo had granted the party and its congressional delegation much more independence than had his predecessors.” This is illustrated, the authors suggest, by Zedillo’s rhetoric of creating a “healthy distance” between him and the PRI, as well as by the fact that while Salinas removed or reassigned 19 governors during his term,⁵⁹ Zedillo could not remove two “recalcitrant governors” (2006, 82).⁶⁰

The authors suggest that this alleged transformation of the relationship between the executive and the PRI influenced the negotiations of the electoral reform in several ways. First, given that Zedillo had decided to stop providing resources from the discretionary and secret fund controlled by the president,⁶¹ and that the party could no longer “count on the state governors, owing to the opposition’s control of many governorships and legislatures,”⁶² the PRI decided to support the reform as a way to assure a “continuing and secure source of funds” (2006, 83). Moreover, the new terms of the relationship between Zedillo and the PRI allowed the conservative sector of the party to limit the benefits that the president’s original proposal provided to the opposition. According to BMN, the last-minute changes made by the hard-liners to Zedillo’s project watered down the reform in several important ways.⁶³ BMN argue that these modifications raised the total

⁵⁹According to Weldon (1997, 253), Eisenstadt (2004, 96) and Solís (January, 19, 1994) Salinas removed 17 governors, not 19.

⁶⁰The authors also cite the declarations of Jorge Moreno Collado, a PRI deputy, who in the last days of the electoral reform bargain stated that “This is not a matter for the president of the republic. This is what we [the PRI’s congressional delegation] want” (2006, 82).

⁶¹According to BMN (2006, 83, citing Preston and Dillon 2004), this fund represented “the most strategic reserve” of resources for the PRI.

⁶²This argument is not supported by evidence. As was mentioned before, by December 1994 the PRI still controlled the governorships –and resources– of 30 of the 32 Mexican states. Even in 1996 the PRI governed 28 states, which represented 87.5% of the total. Likewise, by 1995 the PRI held more than 50% of the seats in 94% of the state legislatures (Lujambio, 2000, Annex 1).

⁶³See page 84 of Brinegar, Morgenstern and Nielson (2006) for a list of all the changes enumerated by the authors. Eisenstadt seems to share this opinion, and he further argues that “these reforms [i.e., the ones proposed by Zedillo] proved so potent that many PRI congres-

amount of money to be distributed among the parties and increased “the proportion of funds to be divided based on the parties’ electoral support from 60 to 70 percent (thereby reducing the share to be divided equally among the parties from 40 to 30 percent)” (2006, 84). These changes, the authors conclude, “reflect the differences between the preferences of the president and his party’s legislators” (2006, 83-84).⁶⁴

In addition, BMN propose that although the PRI’s hard-liners successfully limited the scope of the reform in important respects, “the dinosaurs calculated that pushing too hard would lead the President to turn against his own party and cut a deal with the opposition” (2006, 78). That is, even when Zedillo preferred to close a deal with the PRI and keep the party united, he “could veto their changes [i.e., the hard-liner’s] and negotiate with the opposition to gain a deal closer to his ideal point” (2006, 85). Anticipating this possibility, the conservative sector of the PRI in Congress preferred to concede on certain aspects of the reform rather than risking a more radical change.

While BMN correctly highlight that the PRI had important incentives to support *part* of the changes included in the 1996 reform,⁶⁵ their explanation has two serious problems. The first is the alleged independence given by Zedillo to the PRI in general, and the party’s congressional group in particular.⁶⁶ Despite

sional members, in an unprecedented lack of party discipline, voted against them, even though they had been previously endorsed by the party’s leadership” (2004, 50, footnote 12). However, it is worth remembering that, as I mentioned in the first section of this chapter, the PRI *unanimously* approved the constitutional and legal components of the electoral reform in both houses of Congress.

⁶⁴Preston and Dillon, one of the main sources cited by BMN, argue that it was Zedillo’s idea, not the PRI’s, to drastically increase the amount of public funds given to political parties. See (2004, 277-279).

⁶⁵Even when the substantive increase of public funds and other measures directly benefited the PRI, these elements only explain why the legislators of the official party would be interested in approving those aspects of the reform that were convenient for their interests. But why did the deputies and senators of the still official party also supported by unanimity the changes that affected their interests, particularly when the opposition voted against them? I propose an answer to this question below.

⁶⁶Below I provide a more detailed explanation of the constitutional and extra-constitutional elements that allowed Mexico’s presidents to have tight control of the PRI. I also present several

his “healthy distance” rhetoric, there is substantive evidence that Zedillo actually kept tight control over the party. Like previous presidents, he designated at will six presidents of the National Executive Committee of the PRI during his six-year administration (González Compeán and Lomelín, 2000, 753-755).⁶⁷ In addition, shortly after appointing Zedillo as presidential candidate in late March 1994, Salinas conferred upon him the responsibility to integrate the list of PRI candidates for federal deputies and senators (Salinas, 2000, 896), continuing the tradition that had historically allowed the Mexican president to align the interests of Congress to his own.⁶⁸ Furthermore, it is important to recall from the previous section that the most significant parts of the negotiation of the electoral reform took place directly at the Secretary of Interior’s office (e.g., the modifications to the COFIPE and other secondary laws),⁶⁹ and that in some cases the PRI’s legislative groups were notified about the executive’s agreement with the opposition briefly before they had to vote (e.g., the appointment of the members of IFE’s General council).⁷⁰

pieces of evidence that indicate that Zedillo still enjoyed and made constant use of these powers.

⁶⁷No other Mexican president changed the head of the official party so many times (González Compeán and Lomelín, 2000, 732-756).

⁶⁸Additionally, Zedillo appointed a close collaborator, Humberto Roque Villanueva, as the leader of the PRI’s legislative group in the lower houses of Congress, to reaffirm his control over the legislature. Actually, this was the second leader of the PRI deputies Zedillo appointed before taking power. His original choice, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, was assassinated shortly after being appointed by Zedillo. See footnote 56.

⁶⁹This was confirmed to me by Zedillo’s Under-Secretary of Interior (Under-Secretary of Interior, 2011, interview). See also Irizar (November 3, 1996) and (November 5, 1996).

⁷⁰In addition, the comparison between the number of governors removed or reassigned by Salinas and Zedillo is a problematic measure of the degree of control that each president had over the PRI. To start with, these differences could be explained by the capacity *or* the willingness of each president to change a governor, and it is very difficult to determine which is the main reason. In addition, Salinas was an atypical case in this respect: along with Lázaro Cárdenas, he was the president with the highest number of governors removed during the 71 years of PRI rule, with 17. The rest of the presidents –excluding Zedillo– removed, on average, five governors each (Solís, January, 19, 1994), and this was a rather uncommon practice during the 1960s and 1970s (Eisenstadt, 2004, 100). Additionally, Zedillo not only removed or reassigned governors during his administration (e.g., Eduardo Robledo in Chiapas, Emilio Chuayffet in Estado de México), but, as mentioned before, he also removed the PRI’s mayor of Huejotzingo, Puebla. This last case is particularly significant, because Zedillo imposed his decision over the will of the state’s governor, Manuel Bartlett, the leader of what BMN call the hard-liners of the PRI (Under-Secretary of Interior, 2011, interview). According to Preston and Dillon’s account,

The second and more serious problem is that BMN exclusively analyze the third stage of the negotiation presented on Figure 5.1 (i.e., when the COFIPE and other secondary laws were reformed), implicitly assuming that this was the only stage of the bargain and, consequently, that all the changes of the electoral reform were defined then. This leads them to erroneously conclude that the conservative or hard-liner sector of the PRI in Congress was able to significantly water down Zedillo's original project, as well as to overstate the divisions within the PRI and the power of the hard-liners.

According to BMN, the two major modifications made by the PRI conservatives to Zedillo's reform project were, first, to substantially increase the total amount of public resources allocated to political parties, and, second, to change the formula used to distribute these funds, from 60%-40% to 70%-30% (2006, 82, 84; page 133 above). Although it is true that reforms approved by the PRI to the secondary laws on November 14 (lower house) and 20 (upper house) did modify almost twenty of the agreements previously reached with the opposition,⁷¹ the two alleged changes highlighted by BMN did not take place. In the first case, the bill unilaterally presented by Zedillo to the lower house on November 7 already included the legal specifications designed to boost the level of public funds allocated to the political parties, as desired by both the PRI *and* the president (Cámara de Diputados, 1996).⁷² In the second case, the formula to distribute

Zedillo told Bartlett "Listen, Manuel, the trouble in that little town [i.e., Huejotzingo] is holding up a political reform that is the most important item on my whole agenda [...] I don't care how you do it, but you go back there right now and recognize the PAN's victory and you bring the *priístas* in that town into line" (2004, 275-76)

⁷¹It is important to keep in mind that despite these changes, the most significant aspects of the electoral reform of 1996 had been defined by the constitutional amendments approved in the summer of that year (see section 5.1), and there was little that the PRI hard-liners could do to revert them later.

⁷²Zedillo's bill established this significant increase of public funds through Article 49, Number 7 of COFIPE, as well as through the 10th transitory article of the same law. It is also worth highlighting that the same day that Zedillo unilaterally introduced his bill to the lower house in order to reform the COFIPE and other secondary laws (i.e., November 7, 1996), he also sent the federal government budget proposal for 1997 to the Chamber of Deputies. This budget already contemplated a drastic increase on the public funds allocated to political parties in case the reforms he proposed to the electoral law were approved (Cámara de Diputados, 1996).

public resources was defined by the constitutional reforms promulgated almost three months before the approval of the reforms to the secondary laws.⁷³ And the same formula was also included in the bill sent by Zedillo to the lower house on November 7.⁷⁴

The evidence also indicates that modifications made by the PRI to Zedillo's bill were not only consulted by the official party's deputies with the Secretary of Interior, but they were actually been promoted by the officials of this last institution.⁷⁵ For instance, shortly after the reform was approved the leader of the PRD deputies at that moment, Pedro Etienne, explicitly blamed the Secretary of Interior, Emilio Chuayffet, for the modifications (Juárez and Gutiérrez, November 14, 1996). In addition, according to Oscar Levín Coopel, one of the PRI deputies involved in the negotiations, the day of the final vote –November 14– the legislative leader of his party, Roque Villanueva, consulted with the “highest levels”⁷⁶ and made a final offer to the PRD: the official party was willing to make any changes to the final bill, except with respect to public funding and coalitions, if the PRD voted in favor of the rest of the reform (Juárez and Reyes, November 15, 1996; Albarrán, November 17, 1996b).⁷⁷ All these elements suggest that instead of reflecting “differences between the preferences of the president and his party's legislators” after the PRI hard-liners gained control of the party's caucus in the

⁷³This formula was established on the new version of Article 41, Number I, paragraph a) of the Constitution, promulgated on August 22, 1996 (Secretaría de Gobernación, 1996).

⁷⁴The formula was explicitly mentioned on Zedillo's bill on Article 49, Number 7, paragraph a), section V of COFIPE (Cámara de Diputados, 1996).

⁷⁵According to Zedillo's Under-Secretary of Interior, his office convinced the PRI legislators to limit the extent of the changes they wanted to introduce to the presidential bill (Under-Secretary of Interior, 2011, interview). Furthermore, *The New York Times's* correspondents mention that during an appearance at a business convention a few days after the reform was approved, Zedillo “announced that he alone –not the PRI– had overruled the opposition and broken the consensus and, furthermore, he wasn't sorry for doing it” (Preston and Dillon, 2004, 279).

⁷⁶On that day Arturo Núñez, the government's main negotiator of the 1996 electoral reform, was operating the last-minute bargains of the reform from an office inside the Chamber of Deputies (Albarrán, November 17, 1996a).

⁷⁷Levín Coopel also detailed that this proposal was made in a meeting in which Roque Villanueva, Roberto Campa and himself represented the PRI, while Javier González, Juan Guerra and Francisco Kuri the PRD. This last party finally rejected the offer (Juárez and Reyes, November 15, 1996; Albarrán, November 17, 1996b).

lower house, as BMN argue (2006, 83-84), the final changes to Zedillo's electoral reform bill seem to represent the coordinated retaliation of the federal government and the official party against the PAN, PRD and PT because they consider that the opposition had broken the consensus just for electoral gain.⁷⁸

Finally, even when the preferences of Zedillo and the PRI's conservative sector did diverge with respect to particular topics,⁷⁹ these differences played a minor role in most stages of the negotiation.⁸⁰ The reason is that, contrary to BMN's depiction of the PRI hard-liners as a powerful sector within the party's legislative group,⁸¹ the relative power of Zedillo was far superior than any of the party factions. Hence, as Rubio puts it, "Though many leading members of the PRI opposed the reforms, Zedillo made full use of his vast presidential powers to get it through the congressional process" (2004, 14). I come back to this point below.

In the remainder of this section I argue that the PRI's legislators supported the 1996 electoral reform for two main reasons. First, as BMN correctly point out, there were some aspects of the reform that significantly benefited the PRI. How-

⁷⁸Some political analysts argued this shortly after the reform was approved. See Zepeda Patterson (November 17, 1996).

⁷⁹According to the politicians I interviewed, the strongest opposition to the reform within the PRI came from the legislators that were members of the labor sector of the party (the *Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos*, CTM), two governors –Manuel Bartlett from Puebla and Dióforo Carrasco from Oaxaca– and the representatives from Baja California and Chihuahua, the only two states then governed by an elected member of the PAN. The issues that generated particular opposition within the official party included the historic exclusion of the Secretary of Interior from the electoral commission, the appointment of the nine non-partisan counselors of the IFE, Mexico City's political reform, as well as banning the possibility to collectively affiliate citizens to the party (a common practice among the unions that were part of the PRI).

⁸⁰As I explain in more detail below, even when Zedillo conceded to certain concerns of PRI members (e.g., maintaining the prohibition for overseas voting), he convinced –and, if necessary, forced– the legislators of his party to approve his own priorities (e.g., distributing public funds and media spaces in more proportional terms), as well as a large number of topics that the opposition established as pre-conditions to support the reform (e.g., the improvement of the electoral judicial system, the changes in Mexico City's political system, prohibiting the massive affiliation of citizens to a party).

⁸¹The authors even conceptualize the PRI conservatives as a veto player in the spatial model included in the paper. However, they do not provide any evidence (e.g., number of deputies or institutional mechanisms under their control) to support this claim.

ever, these benefits were not limited to the substantive increase in public funds received by the party, as these authors suggest. The second reason has to do with the institutional and extra-institutional factors that had historically made the Mexican president the most powerful actor within the PRI regime, and that allowed Zedillo to convince and, if necessary, force the members of his party to approve the parts of the reform that were more relevant for him.

5.3.1 The Carrots

As was candidly put by Zedillo's Under-Secretary of Interior during our interview, even though most analyses of the six electoral reforms approved in Mexico between 1977 and 1996 emphasize the concessions made by the PRI to the opposition, each of these reforms also included attractive carrots for the members of the official party (2011, interview). In the case of the 1996 reform, at least three aspects benefited the PRI. The first and most evident has to do with the improvement of the financial situation of the party, something particularly valuable in a period in which the party was going through an economic crisis. As BMN have noted, the reform implied a drastic increase in the amount of public funds allocated to the PRI. As I describe in Chapter 4, the reform also allowed the party to institutionalize and make transparent a source of resources that had historically depended on the discretionary power of the president.⁸² Equally important, these changes were instrumented at both the federal and state level, assuring the local branches of the party important resources.

A second aspect that favored the PRI was the establishment of a significantly

⁸²Preston and Dillon argue that the PRI's "most strategic resources came from the discretionary fund controlled by the President. It provided the walking-around money during election campaigns, the timely donations to community causes, the payment to journalists and hard-working party hacks" (2004, 290). Actually, this had been one of the many mechanisms that allowed the federal executive to keep a close control over the party. According to Levín Coppel, one of the crucial reasons why the PRI agreed to support the electoral reform was precisely the fact that party would gain financial independence from the president, and that this would be defined through transparent and legal mechanisms (Albarrán, November 17, 1996*b*).

larger number of television and radio spots that the state would distribute for free among the parties. The PRI was particularly benefited by this decision because, as mentioned before, the formula adopted to distribute them implied allocating 30% of the spots in equal terms, and the remaining 70% in proportional terms. Finally, although the PRI governors and local *caciques* saw their discretionary powers reduced by the fact that the reform forced all states to replicate the federal electoral system and drastically strengthened the electoral judicial system, other components of the reform also reduced the capacity of the federal executive to intervene and modify the results of state and municipal elections. As a result, the president could no longer bargain with the opposition parties over any elected position won by a PRI candidate in exchange for political support at the federal level, eliminating one of the main sources of tension between the executive and his party in previous years.

5.3.2 The Stick

Even though each of the carrots just described significantly benefited large sectors of the PRI, these elements only explain why the ruling party legislators would be interested in approving a small part of the whole reform: the one that was convenient for their interests. In order to understand the final result and, particularly, the extent of the constitutional and legal modifications approved, we need to explain what allowed Zedillo to obtain the PRI's support to approve the rest of the constitutional and legal modifications. The answer to this question can be summarized as follows: at least since the mid-1930s, the head of the federal executive was the most powerful figure in Mexico's political regime. Although this power was strictly constrained to a six-year term, its magnitude allowed the president to decisively influence, one way or the other, the political career of virtually any other politician in the country. As a result, the president had numerous formal and informal mechanisms to convince and pressure the members of the PRI to

endorse his decisions, as well as to punish those who deviated from his instructions. Despite the deterioration of the relationship between the executive and the official party since the early 1980s, Zedillo still enjoyed most of these powers when he became president and during the negotiation of the 1996 electoral reform.

To be clear, I am not arguing that the executive was always able to force the PRI's legislators to approve his bills without modifications. Rather, I claim that even when a presidential bill might be negotiated with the party and changed before its approval, the executive had enough formal and informal powers to guarantee that the core aspects of the bill –which usually were the most important parts for the president and implied profound transformations of the status quo– would be approved by the PRI.

Carpizo (1978), Weldon (1997), Casar (1999) and several other scholars have studied Mexico's *presidencialismo* in great detail. Here I just present a brief description of some of the most important institutional and extra-institutional factors that explained the executive's power and predominance within the PRI regime.⁸³ Then I discuss whether these elements were still present during Zedillo's administration.

The first source of presidential power lies in the constitution and laws. The executive has the power to propose bills directly, and veto –partially or totally– most of the laws approved by Congress.⁸⁴ He also has exclusive agenda setting power on the federal budget.⁸⁵ Mexico's executive has very extensive regulatory powers⁸⁶ but, contrary to other Latin American presidents, his decree attributions are significantly constrained.⁸⁷ In addition, until 1995 the president had

⁸³The description presented below largely draws from Carpizo (1978) and Weldon (1997).

⁸⁴The two exceptions are the laws passed by only one chamber (e.g., budget law) and constitutional amendments. A presidential veto can be overturned by a two-thirds vote in each house of Congress.

⁸⁵See Carpizo (1978, 146-148) and Weldon (1997, 238)

⁸⁶The president can promulgate regulations in administrative and security matters, as well as with respect to foreign trade (e.g., tariffs, quotas). See Carpizo (1978, 105-109) and Weldon (1997, 240).

⁸⁷The executive can only legislate on its own, without the participation of Congress, during

the power to appoint and remove all members of cabinet without the approval of Congress,⁸⁸ and –as mentioned before– until 1997 the executive appointed and removed Mexico City’s mayor as well. Furthermore, even though the Senate must confirm the Supreme Court justices appointed by the president, until December 1994 the president had the upper hand in this process.⁸⁹ The executive had great control over the composition and behavior of the legislative branch (see below), as well as the particular procedure used to appoint the Justices.⁹⁰

During the PRI regime the president also had extensive legal powers in electoral matters. For example, after the several legal reforms adopted in the 1940s and the first half of the 1950s, the organization of all federal elections was concentrated in the *Comisión Federal Electoral* (CFE), an electoral commission completely dependent on the federal executive through the Secretary of Interior. The electoral law also established that the only way to compete in a federal election was as candidate of a registered national political party. In turn, the legal registration of any political party depended on the CFE, and the requirements were significantly increased after the 1954 reform.⁹¹ And, as mentioned in section 5.2, until 1990s the executive had large discretionary capacity to determine the amount of public funds allocated to each party, including the PRI.⁹²

In addition to these formal attributions, Mexico’s presidents progressively gained significant informal powers –usually referred in the literature as *metaconstitutional* powers– over the years. The most important one was the executive’s emergencies and only in order to suspend civil liberties. See Carpizo(1978, 99-105) and Weldon (1997, 239-240).

⁸⁸This was modified by Zedillo’s judicial reform, which established that the nomination of the general attorney should be confirmed by the Senate (Weldon, 1997, 241).

⁸⁹The executive was also entitled to appoint several other lower-rank judges and members of the judiciary branch. See Carpizo (1978, 82).

⁹⁰See Weldon (1997, 242).

⁹¹See Molinar (1991, 26-39) for a detailed explanation.

⁹²Furthermore, Mexico’s constitution and laws also conferred upon the president strong institutional powers in matters related to the economy, foreign relations, education and mass media. For a description of these powers see Carpizo (1978, 129-169).

position as the leader of the PRI.⁹³ As Weldon puts it, “[w]hen the president took office, he also acquired the powers belonging to the head of the party” (1997, 250-251). These powers included, among others, appointing and removing at will the formal leaders of the party and the heads of the party sectors (except the CTM), drafting –or at least approving– the lists of candidates to most elected positions (e.g., president, governors, senators, federal deputies and mayors), as well as functioning as the final referee in major partisan disputes.⁹⁴

The centralization of the PRI leadership in the executive’s hands, combined with the fact that since 1933 no Mexican elected official could be immediately re-elected for the same position and that all federal deputies and senators are elected at the same time as the president,⁹⁵ conferred upon the president two additional meta-constitutional powers. First, it allowed the executive to significantly strengthen party discipline because “[o]nce the prohibition for reelection was placed in the constitution, deputies and senators no longer had incentives to be responsible and accountable to their local constituents (local political machines and bosses)” but to the president (Weldon, 1997, 248). Second, it also allowed the president to align the interests of the federal deputies and senators, as well as the governors, state deputies and mayors, to his own.⁹⁶ The autonomy and power of the other branches of government were further weakened by the fact that between

⁹³Weldon (1997, 249-250) interestingly points out that this was not the case during the first years of the PRI. While Emilio Portes Gil, Pascual Ortiz Rubio and Abelardo Rodríguez were the presidents of Mexico between 1929 and 1934, Plutarco Elías Calles, founder of the PNR and Mexico’s president between 1924-28, was the informal leader of the party and the national political boss. This period is known as the *maximato*. Although this bifurcation of power was not new for the post-revolutionary Mexican political system, it was a source of constant instability. The situation changed in 1936, when President Lázaro Cárdenas reasserted his power over Calles, forcing this last to exile and gaining complete control of the party and the government. From this point on, Mexico’s president remained as the *de facto* head of the PRI.

⁹⁴For an exhaustive description of these attributions see Carpizo (1978, 190-199) and Weldon (1997, 246-247).

⁹⁵While the senators are elected for a six-year period like the president, the federal deputies are elected every three years.

⁹⁶In Weldon’s words, “Since national party leaders [referring to the PRI], through their control of the nomination process, would determine the future of members of Congress after their terms ended, the incentives of deputies and senators were aligned with the interests of the leader of the PNR” (later of the PRI) and, consequently, the president (1997, 248).

1929 and 1997 the PRI always held a unified government, controlling the federal executive and, at least, the simple majority in both houses of Congress (Weldon, 1997, 244).⁹⁷

Once the appointed candidates were elected, the executive's chain of control over the members of his party continued through institutional mechanisms. In the case of the legislators, the internal rules of both houses of Congress were structured in a very centralized way, giving enormous powers to the PRI's parliamentary leaders –elected and responsible to the national leadership and, ultimately, the president– to allocate resources and benefits, monitor the behavior of the other legislators and, if necessary, punish uncooperative behavior (Nacif, 2002).

Additionally, the president had a significant economic leverage over the governors due to the highly centralized nature of the fiscal system (Carpizo, 1978, 197) and –as mentioned before– the fact that he could remove them.⁹⁸ The legal procedure required the Senate to declare the “disappearance of powers” in the state where the president wanted the governor removed, and to then appoint a provisional governor from three candidates proposed by the head of the federal government. Given the executive's control over the composition and functioning of the upper house, this was not usually an impediment and in many cases it was not even necessary; the mere threat of being removed was enough for most governors to quit their jobs, with the hope of being politically rehabilitated in the future in other positions (Carpizo, 1978; Weldon, 1997).⁹⁹

To sum up, the predominance and unmatched power of the Mexican presi-

⁹⁷As mentioned in section 5.2, the PRI had a qualified majority in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate until 1988.

⁹⁸The total number of governors removed during the PRI's regime ranges 93 and 123, depending on the source. See Eisenstadt (2004, 96) and *Reforma* (December 4, 1993; January, 19, 1994).

⁹⁹Actually, while the formal procedure to remove a governor was frequently used in the first years after the creation of the PRI, “since 1954, there have been only three cases of the Senate removing governors and no cases after 1975.” After that year 23 governors were still removed –most during Salinas's term– but the Senate's intervention was not necessary (Weldon, 1997, 253).

dent during the PRI regime was the result of four conditions: i) the presidential system established in the constitution; ii) the executive's leadership within the official party; iii) the high partisan discipline kept within the PRI; and, iv) the existence of a unified government controlled by the executives's party (Weldon, 1997, 227). These formal and informal powers allowed the executive to align the interests of almost every other member of his party with his own. In exchange for their support, disciplined and loyal PRI members were rewarded with new –and usually better– political positions. Uncooperative behavior was usually punished in various ways by the president.¹⁰⁰

What remains to be proved, though, is that these formal and informal elements were still present during Zedillo's presidency, in particular during the negotiation of the 1996 electoral reform. The issue is relevant in part because Zedillo's alleged pledge to maintain a "healthy distance" from the PRI, and also because several scholars considered him a rather weak president. Weldon, for example, argues that during the first months of Zedillo's administration it was widely believed that Salinas controlled "large parts of the party apparatus [...] which has caused a situation approximating that of 1935, when the *jefe máximo* [i.e., Plutarco Elías Calles] challenged the president over the control of the government of the party" (1997, 257). Likewise, some researchers suggest that Zedillo's incapacity to remove Roberto Madrazo –the *Priísta* elected as governor of Tabasco in a very controversial race on November 1994– is a sign of the declining power of the executive office and Zedillo's difficulties in being acknowledged as the PRI's main leader (Weldon, 1997; Eisenstadt, 2004; Brinegar, Morgenstern and Nielson, 2006).¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰Rubio argues that those politicians who failed to accept the president's leadership and instructions "were punished, usually through the imposition of a penalty associated with a formal rule. For example, a politician who failed to submit to a presidential nomination for a candidacy to a state government might have been charged with corruption" (Rubio, 1998, 12).

¹⁰¹During the 1st quarter of 1995, *The Economist Intelligence Unit* (EIU) Country Report for Mexico stated "Far from quickly establishing his authority as he had been expected to do, the president, Ernesto Zedillo, has shown worrying signs of weakness in his first three months in

In the remainder of this section I present evidence that supports two ideas. First, a large part of the formal and informal elements that made the executive the most powerful politician in the heyday of the PRI regime were still present when Zedillo became president. Second, contrary to what some scattered evidence might suggest, Zedillo made frequent use of these powers to keep tight control over the PRI and mobilize the party's support to approve the 1996 electoral reform and many other significant measures.

The first important element to consider is that most of the fundamental powers granted by the constitution to the executive branch in previous administrations were intact when Zedillo became president. Probably the two most significant changes introduced before his election were the extension of the electoral commission's independence¹⁰² and the conferral of complete constitutional autonomy to the central bank on March and April 1994, respectively. However, Zedillo enjoyed the same legislative prerogatives as Salinas, as well as the same formal powers to appoint and remove his cabinet and Mexico City's mayor. In addition, at the beginning of his administration Zedillo had the same favorable legal conditions to influence the nomination of the Supreme Court's justices.¹⁰³

There is also evidence that indicates that Zedillo started to gain control of the PRI's apparatus even before taking power, and that he maintained and consolidated this control once he was president. For instance, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, one of Zedillo's closest political advisors (see footnote 56), was appointed as the PRI's general secretary (the second highest position in the institution's hierarchy) and the party's representative at the IFE on May 13 and June 3, 1994, respectively.¹⁰⁴ This gave Zedillo significant powers to coordinate the actions of his campaign team and the PRI, as well as to mobilize the support of the party's ma-

office" (1st quarter 1995*b*, 4).

¹⁰²It is important to remember that even after the 1994 electoral reform, the Secretary of Interior still was the head of the IFE, Mexico's electoral commission.

¹⁰³This was changed by the judicial reform Zedillo proposed on December 1994.

¹⁰⁴Zedillo was appointed as the PRI's presidential candidate on March 29.

chine behind his candidacy. After the assassination of Ruiz Massieu on September 28, 1994, Zedillo –then president-elect– appointed María de los Ángeles Moreno as the new General Secretary.¹⁰⁵ Another important piece of evidence is that Zedillo was able to appoint, remove or reallocate at will many of the PRI’s leaders, including the six presidents of the party’s National Executive Committee during his term.¹⁰⁶

In addition, since the beginning of his term Zedillo was able to exert a significant degree of control over the PRI’s legislators in both houses of Congress through two of the traditional mechanisms used in the past. As a presidential candidate, Zedillo first aligned the interests of the future PRI legislators by decisively participating in the elaboration of the final lists of candidates for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Once elected, Zedillo reinforced his capacity to monitor, reward and punish the PRI legislators by appointing their leaders in each house (see footnote 68).¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, even though Salinas might have tried to keep controlling the PRI during the first months of Zedillo’s administration, specifically through the parallel structure created around PRONASOL, several events indicate that these efforts –if true– were completely unsuccessful. On February 28, 1995 –three months after Zedillo assumed power– Raul Salinas de Gortari, brother of the former president, was arrested and accused of planning the assassination of Ruiz Massieu (his former brother-in-law).¹⁰⁸ A few days later, on March 10, Carlos Salinas left Mexico for

¹⁰⁵During Zedillo’s administration, she was the first president of the PRI.

¹⁰⁶The list includes María de los Ángeles Moreno (1994-1995), Santiago Oñate Laborde (1995-1996), Humberto Roque Villanueva (1996-1997), Mariano Palacios Alcocer (1997-1999), José Antonio González Fernández (1999) and Dulce María Sauri Riancho (1999-2000).

¹⁰⁷Although the leaders of the PRI’s deputies and senators were formally elected by their respective peers, it was the executive who appointed them (Carpizo, 1978, 191, footnote 7). Both points are confirmed by Carlos Salinas’s account, who writes that “On April 1994, candidate Zedillo was in charge of integrating the list of PRI candidates for federal deputies and senators. It had always been like this. I respected the tradition. That is why the leader of the Chamber of Deputies on November 1994 [. . .] was Mr. Roque Villanueva. The press published that President Zedillo referred to Roque Villanueva as his *brother*” (Salinas, 2000, 896, original emphasis).

¹⁰⁸Later that year Raul Salinas was also accused of money laundering. He stayed in jail until

virtual exile at Zedillo's request (Golden, March 13, 1995*b*).¹⁰⁹ Thus, if Salinas's alleged attempts to keep controlling the PRI were perceived by some observers as a potential re-edition of Elías Calles and the *maximato* (see footnote 93), Zedillo solve the problem in a similar way as Lázaro Cárdenas did 60 years before: by forcing the former president to leave the country.

Zedillo's tight control over the PRI materialized in several important constitutional and legal modifications even before the different components of the electoral reform were approved. One example, already mentioned in this chapter, was the profound reform of the judicial system, approved and enacted the same month Zedillo took power. A second relevant case is the 50% increase (from 10 to 15%) in the value-added tax (VAT) approved on March 17, 1995. If tax increases tend to be unpopular, this one was particularly so because it was adopted in the midst of the 1994-95 Peso Crisis, and it was one the conditions established by the Clinton administration to approve a financial rescue plan for Mexico. Remarkably, though, despite its potential political costs and the fact that all opposition parties voted against it, the PRI approved it by virtual unanimity in both houses of Congress.¹¹⁰

A third significant example is the reform of the Social Security Law, approved in December 1995. This reform drastically modified the pension system of private sector workers, replacing the existing collective fund by individual accounts for pension holders which could be administered by private and public institutions.

June 2005.

¹⁰⁹The story of these days is a bit more colorful. Shortly after his brother was arrested, Carlos Salinas harshly criticized Zedillo's government, breaking one of the unwritten rules for former Mexican presidents. Then, he started a 36-hour hunger strike in the house of a low-income family in Monterrey, Nuevo León, demanding Zedillo to absolve him of any responsibility for the assassination of Colosio and the 1994-1995 Peso Crisis. Zedillo and Salinas met on March 3. Although the charges against Carlos Salinas were publicly dropped the next day, on March 10 he was forced to leave the country for most of the remaining period of Zedillo's administration. See Golden (March 4, 1995*a*) and (March 13, 1995*b*). For Salinas's version see (2000, 1177-1207).

¹¹⁰Only one member of the PRI voted against the tax increase in each house: Alejandro Rojas Díaz Durán in the Chamber of Deputies and Layda Sansores San Román in the Senate. One more PRI senator, Alberto Santos de Hoyos, abstained from the vote.

One of the central goals of this initiative was to propitiate a substantial increase in the domestic saving rate in order to revitalize the financial sector, then in severe crisis (Trejo and Jones, 1998, 83).¹¹¹ Although the bill originally proposed by Zedillo was first opposed by an important share of the PRI's labor sector, it was unanimously approved by the official party's deputies and senators on December 7 and 11, respectively.¹¹² Importantly, despite the high number of changes introduced to Zedillo's bill (more than 60), the core reforms included in the original project prevailed. Thus, in the opinion of scholars that have closely analyzed this reform, "the PRI's legislative majority –whose members abided by party discipline– granted the fast approval of the New Social Security bill with no substantial modifications" (González, 2001, 233).

To wrap up, the evidence provided in the last pages illustrates that during the first years of his administration Zedillo enjoyed most of the formal and informal powers that had historically made the president the most powerful political actor in Mexico's political system. This predominant position allowed Zedillo to propose profound constitutional and legal reforms, as well as to mobilize the unanimous support of the PRI to approve the central –and more controversial– aspects of these modifications.

5.4 Final remarks

In this chapter I propose that Zedillo invited all political parties to jointly construct a new electoral reform as a way to change the costly equilibrium that

¹¹¹A second goal of this reform was to re-engineer the finances of the public institution in charge of providing social security to the private sector's workers (i.e., the Mexican Social Security Institute or IMSS). Since the early 1980s it had become a common practice to use the surplus funds from pensions' collective fund to ease the chronic shortfall in the health insurance operations of the Institute. The reform eliminated this possibility (González, 2001, Ch. 6).

¹¹²The reform was approved by 289 votes in favor and 160 against in the Chamber of Deputies, and by 92 votes in favor and 25 against in the Senate. Only the PRI deputies and senators voted in favor of the reform.

characterized Mexico's political system in the late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. This equilibrium was marked by frequent post-election conflicts at the state and municipal level, as well as by increasing levels of confrontation between the federal executive branch with the opposition forces and, most importantly, the PRI. Thus, I argue that by proposing a new electoral reform, Zedillo's central goal was to eradicate one of the main structural sources of political instability inherited from the previous administration.

Zedillo might have had personal democratic preferences. Indeed, many PRI hardliners angrily accused him of being *too* democratic. However, it is difficult to prove *a posteriori* that Zedillo's democratic credentials were the main motivation behind the 1996 electoral reform or any of the other legal changes he proposed. Furthermore, we do not know how strong his democratic will might have been if he had faced a different political context, one that did not require him to modify important parts of the electoral system in order to restore and preserve the political competition within the institutional framework, and, as a consequence, the stability of the regime.

Additionally, I propose that despite the important concession made to the opposition, the 1996 reform was approved with the unanimous support of the PRI in both houses of Congress for two main reasons. On the one hand, the reform increased the financial independence of the PRI from the federal executive, while reducing the president's capacity to intervene and modify the results of state and local elections. On the other hand, Zedillo still enjoyed enormous formal and informal powers to pressure, convince and even force the members of his party to support his priorities within the electoral reform. These priorities included the legal changes that reflected Zedillo's personal preferences, as well as the numerous agreements reached by the federal government with the opposition in order to obtain their support.

Ironically, though, by making use of the traditional presidential powers to mo-

bilize the support of the PRI to approve the 1996 electoral reform, Zedillo actively promoted several institutional changes that –purposefully or not– weakened the powers of the executive branch in decisive ways. As a consequence, even when the 1996 reform achieved Zedillo’s original goal, effectively and significantly reducing the rate of post-election conflicts and the political instability that surrounded them (see Figure 5.2), the approval of these legal modifications also led to an unexpected result: the drastic erosion of the PRI’s internal unity. By leveling the conditions of electoral competition, this reform reduced the expected benefits that the PRI could offer to its high-rank members while simultaneously increasing the expected payoffs associated to opposition parties. This, in turn, opened the possibility for many disgruntled PRI leaders to leave the party and continue their political careers in the opposition with high probabilities of winning office. The systematic migration of experienced cadres and their clientelistic machines to the opposition soon translated into significant electoral defeats for the PRI, including the loss of the presidency in the 2000 election.

5.5 Appendix

All of the politicians interviewed and listed in Table 5.1 were directly involved in the bargaining of the 1996 electoral reform at one or more points during the 23 months of negotiation.

Table 5.1: List of politicians interviewed

No.	Institution	Position
1	President's Office	Chief of Staff
2	President's Office	Press Secretary
3	President's Office	Political Advisor
4	Secretary of Interior	Secretary
5	Secretary of Interior	Under Secretary
6	Secretary of Interior	Political Advisor
7	Chamber of Deputies	PRI legislator

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions

This research makes several contributions to understand the survival and demise of dominant-party regimes, in general, and the end of the authoritarian regime led by the PRI, in particular. Building on the literature on authoritarian elites and clientelistic politics, the theory presented in this study proposes that not all factional defections are caused by the same factors or threaten the regime's survival in the same way. This subtle but important distinction improves our theoretical leverage to predict when and why factional defections are likely to cause the end of this kind of autocracy (i.e., when many mid- and high-ranked factions leave the dominant party), and solves an apparent contradiction between the theory and reality (i.e., not all defections cause the end of a dominant party).

The explanation advanced here explicitly assumes that most dominant-party regimes have a clientelistic nature, and argues that this is a fundamental characteristic to understand why these types of autocracies are so resilient and what circumstances endanger their survival. One of the future goals of this research is to test the power of this argument to explain the demise of such diverse cases as Taiwan's *Kuomintang* (2000) and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1991), as well as the survival in power of regimes like the ones led by UMNO in Malaysia and the *Cham cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) in Tanzania.

In addition, while several authors have argued that the survival of a dominant-party regime largely depends on the unity of its elite or factions, this research offers the first empirical test –to my knowledge– of this hypothesis. Using two new and

comprehensive databases on defections from the PRI between 1986 and 2006, I analyze i) the relationship between alternative economic and political factors and the probability of a factional defection; and, ii) the effects of these splits for the electoral performance of the dominant party and the opposition.

This is also the first research that highlights and explains why the 1996 electoral reform had such a profoundly negative impact on the unity and discipline of the PRI's factions, and, consequently, on the survival of this dominant party. The institutional changes implemented in 1996 (the substantial increase of public funds allocated to political parties, the adoption of a more proportional formula to distribute these resources, the strengthening of the electoral judicial system, among many others) drastically reduced the expected utility that the PRI could provide to its faction leaders, and simultaneously increased the expected utility that the opposition parties could offer to them. As a consequence, the reform opened an unprecedented opportunity for many PRI's faction leaders to continue their political careers in an opposition party in case they did not receive the benefits (e.g., nominations, perks) they expected from the ruling party. Thus, by transforming the structure of incentives for many of the PRI's faction leaders, the 1996 reform initiated the progressive and systematic erosion of this party's unity across the country.

This argument is supported by the evidence. According to the statistical results presented in Chapter 4, the 1996 reform increased by almost 400% the probability that a mid- or high-ranked PRI leader would defect from the party, even after controlling for alternative factors (e.g., economic growth, socioeconomic levels, past electoral performance). The evidence also suggests that while these massive splits had a significant negative impact on the PRI's electoral performance, they improved the opposition's electoral performance. Additionally, the results of this research indicate that, contrary to what many authors have argued,

the PRI was more likely to suffer the defection of a mid- or high-ranked member in those states where the party was stronger, not weaker.

Given the negative consequences of this reform for the PRI, an obvious question is why it was proposed and approved by this party. As I argued in Chapter 5, President Zedillo promoted the negotiation of a new and *definitive* electoral reform since his first day in power in an effort to reduce the political instability generated by the recurrent post-electoral conflicts that characterized Mexico's state and municipal elections between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s. In order to obtain the support of the legislative groups of the PRI, Zedillo combined the offer of political carrots and the latent threat of the presidential power. Thus, while the reform included several elements that benefited the interests of the PRI (e.g., increasing the financial independence of the national and state branches of the party from the federal executive), the legislators of this party also approved many dispositions that went against the interest of the still dominant party largely because the president could use his formal and informal powers to decisively influence the political future of most *Priístas*.

Additionally, my theory explicitly emphasizes that one of the central advantages that the PRI was able to maintain until the mid-1990s—one that proved particularly valuable when the electoral competition increased in the mid-1980s—was its unparalleled capacity to mobilize voters through its extensive clientelistic networks. It was not until the PRI's clientelistic machine started to weaken as a result of the systematic erosion of the party's unity that the opposition parties substantially improved their capacity to mobilize voters, mainly by incorporating former PRI leaders along with their respective factions or local clientelistic political machines. Hence, Mexico's democratization was possible not because the PRI's clientelistic structure disappeared, as some authors have implicitly or explicitly argued, but because it fragmented and parts of it migrated to other par-

ties. This, in turn, gave way to a more competitive clientelistic market in which opposition parties could have their own structure.¹

This conceptualization of Mexico's democratic transition is consistent with many facts that challenge previous theories. For instance, the argument proposed here is able to explain the temporal lag between the economic crises, the liberalization of the economy and the electoral reforms that took place between the late-1970s and the mid-1990s, on the one hand, and the final defeat of the PRI in the 2000 presidential election, on the other. This theory also accounts for why the PRI suffered massive defections after the 1996 electoral reform, but was largely able to maintain its internal unity after the five previous electoral reforms. Likewise, this argument helps us understand why if by the mid-1990s voters had so many complaints against the PRI and its members, many former hard-core *Priístas* were elected as governors, mayors or legislators under an opposition banner, only a few months after leaving the dominant party.

Finally, the theory proposed in this study also provides a new framework to examine some of the most relevant features of Mexico's current political system. The argument advanced in the previous pages sheds new light on questions like: why the PRI did not collapse and disappear after losing the presidency, as many observers forecasted? Why has clientelism been so persistent and common across Mexico's parties after the transition (Osorio, 2010), when this type of political relationship used to be only associated with the PRI? How and why has the opposition parties' electoral base of support changed since 1996, both in terms of magnitude and geographic distribution? What is the relationship between these changes and the factional defections suffered by the PRI? Why have only two of the nine national political parties created after 1994 (i.e., *Movimiento Ciudadano* –

¹Again, my point is not that the persuasion and coordination of voters were irrelevant strategies for the opposition parties, as other authors have emphasized (e.g., Magaloni, 2006; Greene, 2008), but that they were insufficient to defeat the PRI.

previously *Convergencia Democrática*– and *Nueva Alianza*) been able to maintain their national register for more than one federal election? I plan to analyze these questions in future stages of this research agenda.

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