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From Hegemony to Multipartism:
Issue-Voting and the Emergence of Partisan Cleavages
in Mexico

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Abstract

The emergence of partisan cleavages in Mexico is related to the voters' perception of the parties' stands on the issues and the distribution of voter's preferences. This paper analyzed several factors regarding the policy divisions among the three major parties in Mexico (PRI, PAN, PRD) and how they impact voting decisions. Although average perceptions of the relative positions of the three parties were accurate, individuals are still uncertain about the parties' relative stands. The paper shows that a) voters tend to be less uncertain about the issue positions of the party they like best; b) PRI supporters are highly uncertain about the issue positions of the opposing alternatives; c) there is heterogeneity in the electorate, with lower educated voters disproportionately being more uncertain about the policy positions of the three major parties. Voter uncertainty (about the issues positions of the parties) tends to discourage support for these parties; voters tend to support the party that better represents their points of view. This highlights one of the crucial coordination dilemmas faced by opposition forces in Mexico. While opposition parties and voters share similar views on the political dimension, potentially being able to form a united political front against the PRI, in the economic dimension they truly differ.

Síntesis

El surgimiento de divisiones partidistas en México, está relacionado con la percepción del posicionamiento de los partidos sobre políticas y la distribución de preferencias que sobre éstas tiene el electorado. El presente trabajo analiza distintas variables que diferencian el posicionamiento de los tres principales partidos políticos en México, así como el impacto que dicha diferenciación tiene sobre la decisión del voto. A pesar de que existe una percepción promedio de las posiciones relativas que tienen los partidos, los individuos carecen de la información necesaria sobre la posición exacta de los partidos. El artículo muestra que: a) Existe menor incertidumbre por parte de los votantes en el caso del partido de su mayor preferencia; b) las bases electorales del PRI tienen un alto grado de incertidumbre sobre las posiciones políticas de las alternativas opositoras; c) existe heterogeneidad en el electorado, pues a menor educación, mayor incertidumbre sobre las posiciones que guardan los tres partidos mayoritarios. La incertidumbre del electorado tiende a desalentar el apoyo a estos partidos; los votantes tienden a apoyar al partido que mejor representa sus puntos de vista. Este resulta ser uno de los dilemas cruciales de coordinación que enfrenta la oposición en México. Mientras que los partidos de oposición y los votantes comparten posiciones en la dimensión política, siendo potencialmente capaces de formar un frente político unificado en contra del PRI, en la dimensión política realmente difieren.

How do voters perceive the parties' positions with respect to the issues? Are these perceptions meaningful? How is the electorate distributed on these issues? Do voters appear to vote for the party perceived as representing more closely their preferences? These are central questions about the role of parties and elections in democratic societies. To the extent that parties represent different policy alternatives, and that voters are capable of understanding these differences and vote appropriately, one can expect policy making to be increasingly constrained by the policy positions parties adopt and the preferences of their supporters.

In this paper, I first discuss the research on issue voting. I then turn to the evidence on Mexico and explore the voters' perception of the parties' stands on the issues and the distribution of voter's preferences. The third part seeks to provide evidence of chronic voter uncertainty about the parties' issue positions. Finally, the paper estimates the impact of the issues on voting intentions. The data employed comes from a survey collected by *Reforma*[1] in July of 1995. The questionnaire was designed by the author in collaboration with those responsible for conducting surveys in Reforma for the specific purpose of exploring issue voting[2]. It was conducted in three cities: Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey. 509 respondents were surveyed.[3] Seventeen issues where included in the survey

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[1]*Reforma* newspaper has become one of the leading independent (i.e., not sponsored and directed by the government) survey centers in Mexico since the 1994 presidential elections. Other major source is the Technical Advisory, Presidency of the Republic, sponsored and conducted by the Mexican presidency. Reforma has often worked in collaboration with Los Angeles Times.

[2] Rafael Giménez from *Reforma*, together with the author, designed the questionnaire.

[3]Unfortunately, a nation-wide survey could not be conducted. Nonetheless, these cities are the largest of the country and, although they do not necessarily represent the opinions of the urban Mexican population, other analysis have found that opinions in these three cities do not differ significantly from opinions in which other cities are included. For instance, Buendía (1996) reports, in his analysis of presidential approval ratings in several Mexican cities, that surveys that

following the typical National Elections Study format of seven-point policy scales used since 1968. Respondents were asked to state their own position in the scale and then to state their perceived positions of the PRI, PAN and the PRD on the same scale. The complete survey questionnaire is reproduced in the appendix.

Existing Research on Issue Voting[4]

Are issues important determinants of voting behavior? Are voters capable of choosing between parties on the basis of the issues? The early empirical studies found that voters had very little understanding of the issues. In their pioneer work, *The American Voter*, Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960) concluded that "knowing little of particular policies and what leads to them, the mass electorate is not able to appraise either [the government's] goals or the appropriateness of the means chosen to serve these goals (Campbell et al. 1980, 543). The authors argued that the preconditions necessary for issue voting where that 1) the voter must cognize the issue and have an opinion concerning it; 2) the issue must arouse some affect or feeling; and 3) the issue must be accompanied by the perception that one party best represents the respondent's position. They concluded that since a very "low"[5] percentage of voters met these criteria, the

only included Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey are not very different from those which also included Tuxtla Gutierrez and Mérida, two cities located in the South, and Tijuana, a northern city. See Buendía (1996, p. 575, footnote 25). The survey results that will be presented in this chapter, however, might be quite different if the rural population is included, only because those located in rural districts tend to receive much less political information and also possess lower education levels.

[4]The following discussion largely follows from Niemi and Weisberg's (1993) and Alvarez's (1997) revisions of the existing literature.

[5]As Alvarez (1997) argues, the percentage meeting the criteria was not really that "low". Nonetheless, they interpreted their data as demonstrating a very low capability on the part of voters to assess parties on the grounds of the issues.

mass electorate was incapable of using issues to make their voting decisions according to issues. Voters instead employed other, simpler, clues, such as party identification. Most of the early literature on voting behavior built on the idea of ill-informed voters and focused on party identification[6], candidate image[7] and social groups as the main explanatory factors of voting behavior.

V. O. Key Jr. (1966) provided the earliest critique of the arguments advanced in *The American Voter.* In *The Responsible Electorate,* Key argued that issues would be important depending on the political context. That is, voters would employ issues as the basis of their choices only when parties actually differed on them. If candidates offered identical platforms or chose to remain ambiguous concerning the issues, the voter would not be able to perceive meaningful differences among the alternatives. This was called the "echo chamber effect" - the electorate would respond to issues when candidates presented issue contrasts, and would fail to do so if the candidates did not differ.[8] Thus, in Key's

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[6]Party identification is not necessarily a clue employed only by ill-informed voters, however. Voters may identify with one party because they believe such party better represents their interests. As Fiorina (1981) demonstrated, a voter may change his party identification, from A to B, if he believes that party B is a better alternative with respect to the issues he is most concerned about.

[7]Candidate-based voting need not be ill informed either. Most studies indicate that candidate appraisal process is not driven by an idiosyncratic response (e.g., liking the looks of the candidate) but that people rely on "the same information processing capabilities that guide their thinking and actions in other, nonpolitical domains" (Rahn, et. al, 1993: 189). Studies indicate, for instance, that the reactions to candidates correspond to different perceived capacities (Popkin Gorman, Phillips and Smith (1976). More recently Rahn *et. al.* (1993) have shown that the perceived competence and personal qualities of a candidate are not independent from issues positions and party identification.

[8]Another important contribution of Key's work, further developed by Fiorina (1981), was to distinguish between retrospective and prospective issues. Key showed that voters were capable of voting on issues -namely, their dissatisfaction or satisfaction with the incumbent's job. Although different in nature that prospective issues, retrospective evaluations are a form of issue voting. That voters were shown to respond to them was evidence that the mass electorate was capable of making reasonable and "responsible" political choices.

work, the lack of issue voting does no longer appear as the voter's fault, but rather it can be attributed to the party system.[9]

Another critique came from RePass (1971), who argued that the evidence of low issue salience stemmed from the assumption that all issues should concern everyone. He made use of a different question asking people to name the "most important problems" facing the government. He found that people were capable of listing problems and that they not only perceived differences among the parties on those problems but were also able to recognize the parties' position on those issues quite accurately. Other authors argued that the type of issues themselves might also influence the availability of issues. For instance, Carmines and Stimson (1980) talked about "hard" issues (like the pace of withdrawal from Vietnam) and "easy" issues (like racial desegregation), the latter being characterized as symbolic rather than technical; more likely to involve policy ends than means; and long debated in public. According to them, hard issues would be important only for those with high information levels, while easy ones would be available for those

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[9]Other works built on Key's argument of issue clarity. For instance, Page and Brody (1972) showed that in the 1968 presidential campaign, Nixon and Humphrey both had an ambiguous standing with respect to the Vietnam war and that their deliberately vague messages led the public to perceive minor differences between the candidates. The authors thus demonstrated that the ability of voters to take into account issues as a basis of their choices largely depended on the nature of the political context, just as Key had argued. Other works also built on Key's echo chamber argument. Pomper (1972) employed 1956-1968 surveys to demonstrate that issues became more salient after 1960. He showed that voters started to perceive meaningful and accurate differences among Democrats and Republicans precisely because the political context had changed: the two parties started to diverge in their issue standings, transmitted such differences during the campaigns, and the public could increasingly perceive differences between the parties. Nie, Verba and Petrocik (1976) made a similar point, arguing that the public became more issue oriented after 1960. According to the authors, these results derived from a significant change in the political context - from the relative stability of the 1950s, to a new turbulent decade where new issues emerged, such as Civil Rights and the Vietnam War. Their work was criticized on methodological grounds, however. After 1964, the format of the survey questions had changed, first moving to the traditional like and dislike format, to the choice between two opposing alternatives and later to the now dominant seven-point issue scale. Critiques pointed out that the apparent salience of issues after 1960 might very well have stem from the change of questionnaire (Bishop et al., 1978; Sullivan, et al., 1978).

with high and low levels of information and would be involved in elections even if they were not explicitly raised during the campaign. The contribution was important in pointing out to the heterogeneity within the electorate, in terms of the voter's available information, and the importance of such information for issue voting. [10]

Writing about the heterogeneity of issues and building on Key's (1966) and Downs (1957) works, Fiorina (1981) distinguished between "retrospective" and "prospective" voting. According to Fiorina, it may be more rational to concentrate on the incumbent's performance, rather than on campaign promises that the candidates may not keep. Fiorina models voting choices as a function of future expectations, with voters employing direct and mediated retrospective assessments to form those expectations. His work demonstrated the key importance of retrospective judgments, both directly and through their impact on future expectations, and showed that by excluding retrospective evaluations from the previous works, the extent of issue voting had been largely understated. The Abramson *et al.* (1983, 1987, 1991, and 1995) have further demonstrated the relevance of issue voting, both prospective and retrospective, and the manner in which their relative impact tends to vary in different elections. That is, in some electoral contests, retrospective voting appears to dominate, while in others both retrospective and prospective voting are shown to matter, particularly when presidential candidates campaign on the issues and adopt clear stands. Aldrich *et al*[11] (1989) also have established the significant impact of foreign issues on voting behavior.

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[10] These last points have been systematically incorporated into models of issue voting by Alvarez (1997), see below.

[11]Challenging the prevailing scholarly consensus on foreign affairs in the US political system, which had repeatedly portrayed voters as ill-informed and incapable of holding preferences on

These works have changed the focus of the research on voting behavior. As Niemi and Weisberg (1993) point out, "the role of issues in voting today is one controversy that has been largely settled. Few political scientists would now characterize the electorate as always issueless or as chronically unequipped to deal with the issues (whether due to intelligence or interest). Particular campaigns may be more or less issue-oriented, and some candidates and some voters may stress issues more than others. But there is no doubt that issues often play an important role in elections, especially in salient campaigns, such as the presidency" (p. 99).

The debate on issue voting has thus moved away from whether or not issues affect voting decisions. Three lines of research can be distinguished: the first one is the debate between spatial and directional theories, the second focuses on the relative importance of issues, candidate and party; and the third highlights the crucial importance of information processing for issue voting. I will address the first and last of these lines of research; for the relative importance of issues, parties and candidates, and of the possible interaction effects among each of these variables the reader might consult the articles cited in Weisberg and Niemi (1993: 99-103), Niemi and Kent (1991) and Rahn et al. (1993).

The spatial model of voting, which builds on Downs (1957) and Black (1958), depicts voters and the parties as having a position along the issue

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foreign issues, Aldrich *et al*. (1989) show that foreign issues are generally *available* and *accessible* to the public despite their complex nature. The authors argue that what is required for voters to possess preferences on the issues is that they are made accessible to the public, either during the campaigns or through the mass media; that the public senses that the issues are significantly relevant; and that parties or candidates differ on their standings with respect to the issues. The authors show that foreign affairs were both accessible and salient in the elections they considered, that voters saw meaningful differences between the Democratic and Republican candidates on the issues - often a larger difference than in domestic issues - and that they impacted voting choices in a non too different manner as domestic issues did. Thus, even foreign issues, which had been traditionally portrayed as too alien and complex, are shown to be consequential to the US public. Foreign issues affect voting behavior because, as the authors conclude, issues such as peace and war are of supreme importance to the public and, moreover, because these issues were enhanced in the 1980 and 1984 presidential campaigns.

dimensions. The theoretical prediction is that the voter will tend to choose whichever alternative is seen as "closest" to his or her own ideal point -"closest" in some weighted Euclidean space (Davids and Hinich, 1966; Davids, Hinich and Ordeshook, 1970; Enelow and Hinich, 1984). The model predicts that, *ceteris paribus*: a) the voter will choose the party which policy positions are closer to his own relative to the other alternatives and b) in a one-dimensional setting and in two-party systems, parties will converge at the median. [12]

The directional theory, developed in Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989) and in MacDonald, Listhaug and Rabinowitz (1991)[13] asserts that instead of minimizing Euclidean distances, voters tend to base their choices on the "directional compatibility" of the voter's and parties´ issue positions and on the "intensity" levels of the different issues. The theory argues that issues are generally diffuse and symbolic, rather than concrete.[14] "If we attempt to represent this type of symbolic response in a formal way, we can imagine two qualities that are evoked by the symbol. First, there is a direction to the response. Does the person feel favorable or unfavorable toward the symbol? Second, there is a magnitude or intensity to the response. How strongly does the person feel about the issue?" (Rabinowitz and MacDonald, 1989:94). Thus, the directional theory assumes that voters possess no clear preferences for particular policies, but general preferences for the direction they would like the policy to go (Listhaug et

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[12]Other approaches that come from the spatial tradition do not predict convergence at the median, but only partial convergence. See, for example, Alesina and Rosenthal, 1995. In Alesina and Rosenthal political parties are not free to move to the median, nor do they prefer to do so, on the one hand because they possess clear policy preferences, and on the other, because they must enhance their credibility that they will implement their policy goals when in office.

[13]Also see MacDonald and Rabinowitz, 1993.

[14]For a review of the debate and some of its recent developments see the "Symposium. The Directional Theory of Issue Voting: I and II" (1997).

al. 1994). The implications of the model are: a) voters will tend to prefer extremist parties; b) voters need not prefer a party which shares their views; and c) parties will tend to adopt non-central positions (Merril and Grofman, 1997: 27).

Most of the research that directly addresses this theoretical debate has focused on whether either the spatial or directional theory predicts voting behavior best. Empirically, both theories tend to perform equally well.[15] Thus, a central question for assessing these theories should be their relative theoretical robustness and empirical implications. The directional theory challenges the spatial approach based on the great computational and informational capabilities the theory requires on the part of voters. Nonetheless, the alternative framework is not fully robust, at least in its present state. Its major problem has to do with "extreme" parties. One of the central implications of the original formulation of the directional theory was that the electorate should favor parties holding extreme positions. Since empirically this is not always the case, the authors modified the theory to penalize parties that are "too" extreme and, as Alvarez (1997) points out, this "appears to be simply ad hoc" (p. 15).[16] Another, perhaps more fundamental

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[15] In Rabinowitz and McDonald (1989) and McDonald, Listaug and Rabinowitz (1991), the criteria for comparing the empirical performance of both models are R^2 and the differences in the standardized regression coefficients. The R^2 of the directional theory in the 1989 article is only .002 larger or a bit more, which as Alvarez (1997) points out, is not likely to be statistically significant. Differences in the standardized regression coefficients are larger; nonetheless, this is "a poor test since any differences observed could simply be differences introduced by the variations of the independent variables in the sample" (Alvarez, 1997: 15, footnote 8).

[16] Other approaches have employed a "mixed" model in which both theories are incorporated into a unified framework, as in Iversen (1994). The mixed model, according to Iversen, can be interpreted as a variant of the directional theory but instead of having the analysts define where the "region of acceptability lies", it is idiosyncratically defined for each voter from the spatial part of the voter's utility function. The idea of the mixed model is that voters still like stimulation in the policy direction they favor, but as long as it is not too distinct from their own policy position. The interpretation Iversen provides is that voters tend to seek policy leadership from elites, thus favoring more extreme positions, but still possessing specific preferences regarding the policy position they favor. Iversen's approach still requires voters to possess specific preferences over the

problem, is that the reference point (i.e., point "0") from which the "direction" of the policies is defined is not deductively derived, but set case by case.

Writing within the spatial tradition, in his recent work, Alvarez (1997) provides a robust model that incorporates uncertainty of candidate positions into a fully specified model of electoral choice. Uncertainty is defined as the perceived level of *diffusness* of the candidate's issue positions (where uncertainty is higher, the larger the difference between the median perception of the candidate relative to the voter's perception of such candidate). Alvarez' work evolves in three stages. First, he estimates the determinants of uncertainty in the candidates' issue positions; second, he shows the manner in which uncertainty affects voting behavior; and finally he provides a framework for understanding variation of uncertainty across elections and during campaigns.

Regarding the determinants of uncertainty, Alvarez´s voters vary in their ability to determine precise candidate positions. Those with higher levels of political information, education and media attention and who are less attached to the parties but possess a greater sense of political efficacy, are better equipped to determine a more precise candidate position (chapter 6). In Alvarez' words "the variation between voters in their uncertainty about candidate positions is caused by differences in information costs between voters, by differences in their exposure to political affairs and their attachments to the political system. Voters with lower information costs, and greater exposure and attachment to the political word, are more certain of policy positions of the presidential candidates" (1997: 106).

Alvarez provides three results regarding voting behavior: voters discount candidate policy uncertainty in their evaluations, meaning that *ceteris paribus*,

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issues, and in this sense does not differ significantly from the spatial model in the assumption that voters are capable of evaluating candidates on the basis of their issue standing.

they tend to vote for whichever candidate they feel less uncertain about; policy issues had a significant impact on voting choices in each of the elections considered; and those being more uncertain about candidate issue positions are less likely to employ issues as a basis of their choices. Finally, Alvarez provides evidence that incumbency, previous electoral experience and national prominence of the candidates influence the variation of uncertainty across. Generally, incumbents tend to be perceived as possessing more clear issue positions, but that also applies to candidates [parties] that have had previous electoral experience, and to candidates that have been prominent political figures in the political system. Voters learn about the parties positions during the campaigns but, consistent with a Bayesian framework of learning, campaign information is particularly informative to "less educated and informed individuals", who had least-well formed *prior* perceptions of the candidates (1997: 201).

In sum, during the last forty years, the scholarly consensus regarding the role of issues in voting decisions has greatly changed and in six major ways:

1. The ability of voters to employ the issues should not be *a priori* underestimated.

2. Consonant with Key's echo chamber argument, any analysis of issue voting should take full account of the prevailing political context.

3. Voters are likely to be more capable of cognizing issues that are made *accessible* through public debate, campaigns and mass media, and which the public regards as *salient*, as was made explicit in Aldrich *et al.* (1989).

4. Even where parties do not explicitly campaign on the issues, voters might still posses some *a priori* understanding of where the parties stand, particularly if parties possess experience in government, have had previous electoral exposure,

or their candidates have held prominent positions in the political system, as was made explicit in Alvarez (1997) work.

5. The mass electorate is likely to be characterized by heterogeneity in terms of their accessibility of information, the opportunity cost of acquiring information, and their capabilities of processing such information.

6. The more uncertain voters are regarding the standings of the parties on the issues, the less likely they will employ issues as the basis for their choices.

In the following sections, I seek to employ these lessons in my study of elections in contemporary Mexico.

Voter learning of Issues in Emerging Democratic Party Systems.

Although voters are imperfectly informed about political affairs, they are capable of making policy-based choices, the more so when politicians articulate policy positions, either by emphasizing them during the political campaigns or because the candidates or parties to which they belong enjoy a clear reputation regarding the type of policies which they advocate. These lessons come from the study of voting behavior in advanced industrial democracies. However, emerging democracies are less likely to be conducive for issue voting for two reasons. First, political parties (and candidates) tend to be more uncertain entities given that many of the emerging parties are not likely to have had previous electoral experience and record in government.[17] Second, in rapidly changing political

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[17]Quite often, however, political parties existed before the period of authoritarian rule and when the military regime cedes power, the same old parties reemerge. Thus, in these instances, consistent with the assumptions and statemates of the Bayesian retrospective model, voters might still be able to employ their memories to infer the identity of the parties. This pattern is most common in transitions from military rule in many Latin American countries. In some ex-communist systems, parties did compete in elections before the communist regime was installed. But often in founding elections voters have turned to those who led the resistance to communist rule.

environments, the issue positions of the parties might be changeable. Since cleavage structures are likely to be unclear and just emerging, parties might not possess sufficient information on voters' preferences, therefore possessing strong incentives to "experiment" with new issues, changing their policy stands depending either on the great issues of the day or the minor issues of the moment.

Despite these difficulties, voters and parties might be able to learn. All that might be required for things to appear more clearer are, first, a few repeated elections, second, sufficient disagreement among political elites and the electorate regarding the major issues of the day, and third, parties actually taking stands on the issues during the political campaigns which, moreover, should receive enough media coverage.

The Mexican party system has evolved considerably in the last decade. Although we are still observing a party system in the making, voters have been repeatedly exposed to the same parties in consecutive elections, particularly since 1988. One of the crucial defining characteristics of transitions to democracy from single party regimes is that they take place in the electoral arena, from which the competitive party system might emerge through repeated electoral contests. At the time the survey that will be analyzed in this paper was collected, three national competitive elections had already taken place (namely, 1988, 1991 and 1994), and, moreover, political parties had faced repeated local electoral context in increasingly more competitive environments. Thus, presumably not only the incumbent dominant party but also its opposition contenders had become less uncertain entities to the public election after election.[18]

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[18]The Bayesian model showed that uncertainty in expected economic performance, given the lack of record in government of opposition parties, affects voting behavior. The issue standings of opposition parties might also be more uncertain than the incumbent's simply because the voters possess less information to assess those parties with, a point that will be further explored below.

Parties also differ in their issue positions, particularly the economic and political ones. The market-oriented reforms, as was argued in Magaloni (1997), produced a strong ideological polarization among Mexican political elites. Parties differ on some crucial economic issues such as liberalization of trade, privatization of state owned enterprises, and the role of the government in the economy. During the Salinas term, political parties organized mainly along the new economic cleavage produced by the market-oriented reforms, the PRD strongly opposing those reforms, the PAN supporting many of the economic changes that were consonant with its economic platform, and the PRI backing the president's economic agenda although it represented a fundamental departure from the nationalistic policies this very same party had advocated since the 1930s.

The major limitations with respect to the possibility of issue voting are that political parties have seldom campaigned on their policy positions, and even when parties have *tried* to emphasize some issues, their messages have not necessarily reached the mass electorate since, until very recently, the government has tightly controlled the Mexican TV media.

In the political campaigns, generally the PRI has sought to portray itself as the party most capable of bringing about economic growth, without stressing the specific means to achieve such goal. The opposition parties, for their part, have normally devoted scarce campaign time and resources to stress retrospective-type of issues - such as criticizing the PRI's economic performance, government corruption, and authoritarianism - without defining alternative policy positions.

Among the three major political parties, the PRD has taken clearer policy positions on some issues, particularly the economic ones. Two time presidential candidate of the left-wing opposition party Cuaúhtemoc Cárdenas has repeatedly criticized the government's market-oriented reforms, explicitly arguing against the

privatization of state-owned enterprises (many of which his father, Lazaro Cárdenas, had nationalized in the 1930s) and against the North American Free Trade Agreement. Moreover, PRD leaders have explicitly emphasized the need to increase government spending, in particular social spending, and redistribution of wealth, arguing that the market-oriented reforms implemented during the last years have increased poverty and accentuated income inequalities. This message, however, has not necessarily reached the mass electorate.[19] In TV news the PRD has received little attention and the few news reported are often purposely manipulated (e.g., during the Salinas term most reported news on the PRD were violence-related ones, which might have largely contributed to the perception of this party as violent-prone.[20]

Thus, given the political context and the high costs of information, one should expect a great deal of voter uncertainty about the parties' issue positions. Despite this uncertainty, my hypothesis is that since parties have repeatedly exposed themselves to the electorate in electoral contexts, they should have developed some reputation.[21] These reputations might be quite diffuse, however,

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[19]The PAN's campaign statements on economic issues have been less clear. Although the PAN has repeatedly objected to some of the government's policies, its critiques have mostly been related to corruption, lack of political accountability and excessive concentration of resources in the hands of the federal government. But regarding the market-oriented reforms, this opposition party has chosen to remain extremely ambiguous. As discussed in chapter 1, the PAN supported many of the market-oriented reforms implemented by Carlos Salinas by voting for them, in a congressional coalition with the PRI, in the Chamber of Deputies. Nonetheless, the PAN's approval of such reforms was not directly emphasized to the electorate during the campaigns.

[20]Opposition parties receive more attention in written sources, such as newspapers and political magazines, but these sources of information do not have mass reach; only the most attentive and higher educated voters become informed through written news.

[21]As was explained in chapter 1, the PAN enjoys a reputation of favoring polices that are conventionally associated with right-wing alternatives. The PAN's reputation was built during the party's long trajectory of opposing the hegemonic PRI, period during which the right-wing opposition party explicitly combated the increasing expansion of the government's role in the economy and the nationalization of industries in key sectors of the economy. The PRD has created

and voters might require additional information to determine more precise party positions. If this interpretation is correct, I expect average perceptions of the parties' standings to be accurate, but individual perceptions to be uncertain.

Hypotheses Regarding the Relative Stands of the Parties.

Although PAN and PRD share similar characteristics that turn them into "opposition" parties, these parties truly disagree on many issues. That is, while both opposition parties share an interest in transforming the political status quo such that clean and competitive elections become the crucial mechanism for allocating power, they further disagree on their economic stands. The PAN favors economic policies conventionally associated with right-wing parties, while the PRD holds left-wing stands on most of the economic issues. In addition, even though the PAN does not explicitly emphasize in the campaigns issues such as abortion or sexual liberty, this party is traditionally portrayed as holding conservative stands on these issues.

If this interpretation is correct, I expect to find systematic differences in the way voters perceive the relative stands of both opposition parties on economic

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its reputation of a left-wing alternative in a shorter period of time - that is, since 1988, when the party emerged as a coalition of minor left-wing parties and former PRI politicians, all opposing the market-oriented reforms and favoring a stronger role for the government in the economy. The PRI's long-term reputation has been of a center-nationalistic party, sometimes emphasizing more popular oriented polices and others more business oriented ones, but always keeping in place strong trade barriers for protecting local producers from international competition. Nonetheless, during the last two presidential terms, the government promoted radical changes in economic polices which represent a fundamental departure from the party's old nationalistic platform. The clearest example of this shift was the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which signaled the end of the Import Substitution Industrialization policies followed by all PRI presidents since the 1930s.

and value-related issues, while I expect voters to perceive both parties as standing very close together on most of the political issues. To facilitate the exposition, issues are thus classified into three categories: a) economic, which refer to the voter's attitudes and assessments on privatization of PEMEX, the national oil company; evaluations of NAFTA and foreign trade; whether the government should guarantee a job and standard of living; if the government should redistribute wealth through taxes; if the government's main goal should be to fight against poverty through social spending or rather promote the development of private enterprises to generate jobs; and the role of the state in the planning of the economy.[22] b) Political issues, concerning evaluations of the desirability of democracy, corruption in government, respect for human rights, the government's response to the Zapatista uprising and centralization versus decentralization of power and resources. c) Value-related issues such as abortion, state-church relationships, marriage through the church or free union, autonomy of indigenous communities, and equality between men and women.

[Table 7.1 about here]

Table 7.1 reports the set of hypotheses regarding the relative stands of the three major parties. When I do not hold a priori expectations, I indicate so with a

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[22]These issues broadly correspond to the four major "areas" of economic policy making that, according to Lipjhart (1984), invariably are present in any democratic political system. The four areas are: 1. Public versus private property of the means of production. 2. A strong versus a weak role for the government in economic planning. 3. Support versus opposition to the redistribution of wealth through taxes. 4. Support versus opposition to the expansion of government social programs. International trade, not included by Lipjhart on the list, should be a fifth major area of economic policy, which today has become a central area of political division in many developing countries around the globe. The division is generally manifested in terms of support versus opposition to trade liberalization and/or industrial policy.

question mark. In the *economic issues,* I expect the average respondent to perceive clear differences between the PAN and the PRD on *all* the economic issues, the PAN located to the right of the PRD. I expect the average respondent to perceive the PRI as located in between both parties in most of the issues. However, since the policies favored by the PRI have shifted from left to right and back again, my expectation is that the PRI might be seen as positioned to the left of the scale on some issues and in others to the right. That is, in some of the issues on which the incumbent party has not taken clear stands in the recent years, voters might still perceive the party as standing where it traditionally has. For instance, since the government has not made clear attempts to privatize the state owned oil company, I expect voters to perceive this party as standing against the privatization of PEMEX. However, given the recent signing of NAFTA, I do not expect the public to perceive the PRI as a nationalistic party anymore.

A summary average measure of the parties' stands on the six economic issues will be created that reflects the *overall* position of each of the parties on the six economic issues[23]. In this overall measure, I expect the average respondent to perceive the PRD as a left-wing party, the PAN as a right-wing alternative and the PRI as located in between both parties.

In the *political issues* I expect both opposition parties to be perceived, by the average respondent, as standing for changes in the political arrangement such that clean elections become the primary mechanism for allocating power, human rights are respected, and corruption in government is punished. Only in two political issues, Chiapas and federalism, I expect the average respondent to

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[23]The *overall* mean perception are obtained by creating a summary measure of each of the parties' stands on the economic issues; such measure comes from adding the voters' perception on the stands of each party on the economic issues and then dividing it by the number of issues. The overall mean placement is then obtained by calculating the average value of such summary measure. The same procedure will be employed for the political and value-related issues.

perceive differences among both opposition parties. In the issue of Chiapas, the PRD has been considerably more sympathetic to the demands of the Zapatistas than the PAN has; I thus expect the average respondent to perceive a clear difference among both opposition parties on this issue. Since analysts usually regard the PAN as the localist party *par excellence* (Lujambio, 1997) and most conflicts over the distribution of resources and demands of decentralization have been voiced by PAN local politicians, I expect the average respondent to perceive the PAN as standing more in favor of decentralization of power. In the overall mean measure that reflects the parties' positions on the five political issues, I thus expect the average respondent to perceive the PRD and the PAN as holding an anti-political-status quo stand - both located very close to each other - and the PRI as holding a pro-political-status quo position.

In the *value-related* issues, I expect the average respondent to perceive the PAN as a conservative party.[24] The PAN has generally been seen, at least by some political analysts, as a conservative party on issues such as abortion, women's rights, and sexual liberty. Some of the most conservative Mexican groups, such as pro-life organizations and some catholic organizations of *Padres de Familia*

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[24]A much easier way to learn about party stands is by looking the party's record in government. Since in Mexico opposition parties hold no record in government at the national level, presumably some of their actions at the local level can be employed to assess the parties' issue positions, particularly if these actions gain national attention and media coverage. Some interesting instances of how the PAN's local record have gained national attention in the last years are related to issues such as women's rights, freedom of advertisement, and sexual liberty. For instance, the municipal governor of Guadalajara, the capital city of the northern state of Jalisco, ordered an add of Wonderbra to be removed unless the woman showing the underwear was "properly" dressed. The new Wonderbra adds now displayed show the very same woman but now dressed with a blouse. In the same state, a new government regulation forbade homosexuals to display any form of physical affection in public places and the local PAN government publicly said that it will enforce an old regulation that forbade saying "bad" words in public places. Another instance, which gained national attention in the media, was that new PAN bureaucrats, again in Jalisco, asked women secretaries not to wear miniskirts in public offices. Yet another instance, which took place in the northern state of Nuevo León, was that the new PAN municipal governor of the city of Monterrey issued a regulation restricting "indecent" performances in local theaters.

(Heads of Family) are activists of such party. Although these issues have not been mobilized or directly addressed in the campaigns, the average respondent should perceive the party's old-term conservative reputation. Thus, in the overall value-related measure, I expect the average respondent to perceive the PAN as conservative and the PRD and PRI both as liberal.

To summarize, the overall order of the three parties should be: in the economic issues, PRD left, PRI center and PAN right. In the political issues, voters should order PRD and PAN to the left (anti-political-status quo) and the PRI to the right (pro-political-status quo). In the value-related issues, the party order should be PRD and PRI left (liberal) and PAN right (conservative).

Table 7.2. reports the mean perceptions of the three parties and the results of hypotheses test that show whether the average perception of a party on each of the issues is statistically different from that of the other parties. In parenthesis I indicate whether hypotheses in table 1 were correct, partially correct or incorrect. In the economic issues, most hypotheses were correct. The PRD and the PAN, on average, were located at statistically different points in the scale on *all* economic issues and, as expected, the mean perception of the PRD is always to the left of the PAN. Hypotheses regarding the PRI's stands were correct in three issues: NAFTA, privatization of PEMEX and poverty/subsidies. However, in the issues of redistribution through taxes and economic planning, the PRI was not perceived, on average, as located in between both opposition parties. In the first of these issues, the PRI is perceived as standing together with the PAN and in the second as standing in the same position as the PRD. The last row of the economic issues provides the *overall* mean party placement on the six economic issues. Hypotheses regarding the overall economic placement of the parties in table 1 were correct: on average, the overall perception of the three parties are statistically different, the PRD to the left, the PRI in the middle, and the PAN to the right.

[Table 7.2. about here]

On the political issues, most hypotheses of table 7.1. were also correct. That is, as expected, according to the mean respondent, the PAN and PRD were close together on almost *all* the political issues, the only exception being on what the government should do with respect to the Zapatista uprising. On this issue, as expected, the PRD is perceived, on average, as much more sympathetic to the demands of the Zapatistas. However, my hypothesis that PAN should be perceived as the party most in favor of decentralization was incorrect - on the issue of federalism, that is, the mean placements of both opposition parties were not statistically different. Thus, the PAN might still needs to emphasize more this issue in order to get across its federalist credentials.[25] The overall mean placements of the three parties on the five political issues turned out to be statistically different from each other, a result that I did not expect. That is, the PRD is perceived as slightly more anti-political status quo than the PAN.[26] As expected, the PRI is perceived as a pro-status quo party, relative to the other two alternatives.

The last part of table 7.2. reports the hypothesis tests for the value-related issues. On almost all the value-related issues the mean placements of the three parties were statistically different from each other, the PAN perceived as holding more conservative positions, the PRD more liberal ones and the PRI standing in

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[25]Another possibility is that the wording of the question was somehow confusing, which in fact was. See appendix.

[26]Clearly, this results derives from the fact that while, as expected, the PRD was perceived as more sympathetic with the demands of the Zapatistas, the PAN was not perceived as more in favor of federalism than the PRD.

between both parties. My expectations were thus only partially correct for I had predicted the PRI and the PRD to be perceived as holding similar positions on almost all the value-related issues. In the issues of autonomy of indigenous communities, the PRI, not the PAN, was perceived as the party most against establishing legal autonomies for these communities. The overall average placement of the three parties turned out to be statistically different. As expected, according to the mean perception, the PAN was placed as the most conservative party. Of the tree parties, the PRD was seen as the most liberal one; however, I did not expect this party to be perceived as more liberal that the PRI.

Spatial Distribution of Parties and Voters.

To posses a clearer grasp of the issue position of the parties and the distribution of voter preferences on each of the issues, I develop a spatial representation of parties and voters along the political spectrum by presenting the median placement of the parties and the median-self-placement on each of the issues. Employing median party perceptions instead of mean perceptions is useful since they tend to reflect more accurately the differences among the parties, particularly when the distributions of responses about perceived party placements are not normal. In a sense, median perceptions weight more heavily the opinions of the majority. The precise numbers corresponding to the median perceptions of the parties and the median self-placements are provided in the appendix.

a) Economic issues.

Figure 1.1. provides the spatial distribution of the median perception of the parties' stands, the median-self placement and the percentage of respondents who placed themselves on each point on the scale on all the economic issues. The first thing to note is that the two opposition parties offer clearly distinct economic

platforms since their median placements on most of these issues are two or more full points apart. The PRD was consistently placed to the left of the midpoint of 4 on most issues, meaning that it was perceived as favoring positions that clearly fall to the left-wing side of the scale. It is perceived as opposing the privatization of PEMEX; standing against NAFTA and foreign trade; favoring government's guarantees of jobs and a good living standard; supporting redistribution of wealth through taxes; standing for an increase in government spending and subsidies to alleviate poverty; and supporting a strong role for the state in economic planning. All of these polices are conventionally favored by left-wing alternatives. The average median placement of the PRD on the economic issues was 2.41, clearly to the left of the mid-point.

[Figure 1.1. about here]

The PAN was placed to the right of the midpoint 4 on most issues, meaning that in almost all of them it was perceived as favoring positions that are normally associated with right-wing alternatives. The median perception is that the PAN is in favor of privatization of PEMEX, against redistribution through taxes, and supporting the development of business activity to generate jobs. The PAN's position is regarded as more centrist on NAFTA, economic planning and government's guarantees on jobs/standard of living. The PAN gets an overall median placement on the six economic issues of 4.56, slightly to the right of the mid-point. Thus, the party is perceived as right wing, but not as a purely free marketier, since on the one hand, it does not unconditionally support NAFTA, and on the other, it favors a strong role for the state in the economy. It should be noted that in all the economic issues, the median placement of PAN and PRD are almost

two points apart, meaning that according to the median response in the survey, they offer clearly different economic platforms.

In all issues but NAFTA and poverty alleviation, the PRI is perceived as standing together with either opposition party. The PRI was not perceived as a nationalistic party, since its median placement was on point 7 of the scale, strongly in favor of the free trade agreement. However, the ruling party is still perceived as a "statist" alternative in the sense that it favors a strong role for the government in economy and opposes the privatization of PEMEX[27]. In issues that deal with the redistribution of wealth and government guarantees for jobs and living standards, the PRI of today is seen, by the average respondent, as standing to the right of the mid-point, meaning that it is regarded as experiencing a rightist swing -a perception that is quite accurate. The average median placement of the PRI was centrist, at point 4.02 and in between both parties. Thus, while the PRI is perceived as the centrist alternative, in some issues if favors policies conventionally associated with left-wing parties and in others it takes rightist stands. Only in the issue of poverty/subsidies the party is clearly placed close to the center of the scale.

Figure 1.1. also shows the percentage of respondents who placed themselves on each point on the scale and the median-self placement. The median respondent stood to the left of the midpoint of 4 on most issues. The median self-placement is clearly to the left on the following issues: privatization of PEMEX (3), government's guarantees for jobs and good standard of living (3.3), and economic planning by the state (2.31). The median respondent is more centrist in his evaluations on NAFTA and foreign trade and in the issue of redistribution through taxes. Only in one issue, increase in government spending to alleviate

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[27]It is interesting to note that this perception is quite accurate. As was argued in chapter 1, PRI politicians have prevented the Zedillo government from privatizing PEMEX.

poverty versus promotion of business activity to generate jobs, the median respondent was clearly to the right of the scale, in point 5.29. Overall, the average median response on all economic issues was 3.62, slightly to the left of the mid-point.

b) Political Issues.

Figure 1.2. provides the spatial distribution of the median perception of the parties' standing, the median-self placement and the percentage of respondents who placed themselves on each point on the scale on all the political issues. It can be seen that on most of the political issues, both opposition parties are perceived as sharing similar positions, mostly anti-political-status-quo ones (the left hand side of the scale), and the PRI is seen as holding a more pro-political-status-quo position (the right hand side of the scale).

On the issues of democracy, corruption and respect for human rights, the median placements of both opposition parties are practically identical. The median self-placement on the issue of democracy issue was 1.79. Clearly the majority favors democratic elections and possible alternation of political power in office versus a strong hand. The issue of corruption shows as similar pattern. Both opposition parties are seen as favoring "ruthless punishment, even with jail, of all the corrupt politicians and public authorities". The PRI was placed to the right of the mid-point, favoring a different solution which is that "the government should forgive what is already the past, punishing corruption from know on, in order to avoid political revenges among politicians". The median self-placement was on point one, meaning that the overwhelming majority believed corruption should be severely punished. At the time the survey was collected, the surge of corruption scandals involving politicians occupying high-level bureaucratic or political positions was impressive. The public was clearly infuriated.

On the issue of human rights or whether the government, when fighting against crime, should strictly respect the human rights of criminals or instead should be tough with crime even though this might imply violating human rights, the PRI is perceived close to the mid-point, but not too far apart from both opposition parties. Although this issue is of central importance, particularly considering the mounting crime that Mexicans have witnessed during the last couple of years and the constant violation of human rights on the part of the police that takes place in their fighting against crime, the parties do not appear to have taken clear and distinctive stands on it. [28]

On the issue of federalism, although the median placement of the PAN is slightly to the left of the PRD, meaning that this party is perceived as more in favor of decentralization, the difference among both parties is not very significant (the parties' median placement is less than one point apart). The PRI is perceived as a highly centralist alternative, close to the right hand side of the scale.

On the issue of Chiapas, the positions of both opposition parties are clearly different. The PRD is perceives as highly sympathetic with the Zapatistas, the PAN is perceived in between both parties, holding a centrist position, and the PRI as located to the right of both parties, favoring the alternative of sending the army to Chiapas to "put order in the state" (which makes sense, since the army was already in Chiapas and the government had repeatedly refused to withdraw).

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[28]One of the central problems in the Mexican criminal system is that policemen have traditionally fought crime openly violating human rights (e.g., torturing and violating basic rules of procedure such keeping persons incomunicated, denying them access to their lawyers and "making up" evidence, among many others). Special government bodies, Human Rights Commissions, have been created to monitor the policemen and defend human rights. Policemen and prosecutors often claim (privately) that due to this body and to the new legislation against torture that was recently approved, most crimes now go unpunished, which is another way of saying that without violating human rights they cannot fight against crime.

[Figure 1.2. about here]

As with the economic issues, there are strong disagreements among respondents on these political issues. In the issue of democracy, 43% placed themselves at the origin of the scale, favoring democratic elections and alternation of power. Although this percentage is very high, close to 26% still favors a "strong hand" and, naturally, these respondents are closer to the median perception of the PRI than to that of opposition parties. In only one issue, corruption, there is almost absolute agreement among respondents, 72.32 placing themselves at the origin of the scale.

c) Value-related Issues.

Figure 1.3. provides the summary of the spatial distribution of the parties and respondents on these value-related issues and the percentage of respondents who placed themselves on each point of the scale. In all the issues but abortion, respondents tend to heavily lean toward the liberal side of the scale and the PRD's median placement is closer to the median respondent in almost all of them. However, in the abortion issue, the median respondent leans towards the conservative side of the scale. Still, the distribution of self-placements is slightly bimodal, with 27% supporting a pro-choice option and 37% a pro-life alternative. Although the three parties are perceived as standing to the right of the midpoint of 4, clearly supporting the notion that "abortion should always be forbidden by law", the PAN is perceived as the party which holds a more pro-life position and located farthest from the median respondent.

In the issue of state-church relationships, the PRD and the PRI are perceived as anti-clerical parties, more so the PRD. Both parties, that is, are perceived as supporting the notion that the church should not "intervene in politics and that the government should prohibit priests to make their political opinions

public, to get involved in political organizations and to vote".[29] The PAN is perceived, by the average respondent, close to the midpoint of 4, but slightly to the left. Thus, although the PAN is not perceived as favoring a strong political involvement of the church in public matters (or as a confessional party), its position is seen as far more friendly to the church than that of the other two parties. The median self-placement is clearly anti-clerical.

The issue of autonomy of indigenous communities became an important debate that emerged after the Zapatista uprising. The debate was on whether indigenous groups should be allowed to possess political autonomous territories, where indigenous laws and customs are applied and indigenous representatives are elected, or if these groups should obey the same laws applied to all the other citizens, even though these laws are sometimes in opposition to their own values and customs. The median respondent was located closer to the first of these alternatives, in favor of autonomy of indigenous groups and closer to the average perception of the PRD. In this case, the PRI is perceived, on average, as standing against autonomy of these groups, while the PAN's position is in between both parties. In the issue of whether a couple, in order to live together and have sex, must get married before the church or the state, versus the notion that it is "perfectly alright" to live with someone without getting married, the PAN is perceived, again, as holding a more conservative position, more than one point and a half to the right of the midpoint of 4, while the PRD is perceived as holding the most liberal position, slightly to the left of such point. The PRI is perceived in between both parties. The median respondent was clearly on the liberal side of the

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[29] This result makes sense, particularly considering that the PRD emerged from former communist and socialist parties, generally anti-clerical ones, and from former PRI politicians who presumably shared the anti-clerical creed of the old PRI platform. In the case of PRI, it is interesting to note that despite the Constitutional changes that were promoted by Carlos Salinas through which official anti-clericalism came to an end, the PRI is still perceived as anti-clerical.

scale, in point 1.58 and standing closer to the PRD. In the issue of equality between men and women, all parties are perceived in favor of it; however, the PRD is again perceived as more liberal than the other two parties.

[Figure 1.3. about here]

The picture that emerges from these results is that the average voter is quite capable of placing the parties in correct positions. The PAN and the PRD are perceived as offering a clearly different economic and value-related packages, the first consonant with right wing conservative polices and the second with left wing liberal ones. The opposition parties, however, are perceived as sharing a very similar political goal, namely, changing the prevailing institutional arrangement. The PRD is perceived as slightly more anti-political-status quo than the PAN because of its sympathies with the Zapatistas. In the economic and value-related issues, the PRI is in between both parties.

Relative Standing of the Parties and Requirements for Issue Voting

I have established that the average respondent was capable of placing the parties in quite accurate positions and of recognizing meaningful differences among them. In order assess whether issues might play a role in voting behavior, however, the unit of analysis must be the individual voter.

To assess whether individuals fulfill the conditions for issue voting, Campbell and his colleagues argued that it was necessary that the issue must be cognized, arouse some affect and be accompanied by the perception that one party represents it best. These conditions can be operationalized by using seven-point issue scales as: a) the percentage of respondents able to place themselves on the

scale; b) the percentage of respondents who in addition are able to place the parties on the scale; c) the percentage who, moreover, were able to place the parties in different positions; and d) the percentage of respondents who were in addition able to place the parties in correct order[30]. Note that the percentages are cumulative.

Since in the Mexican party systems three parties compete and, moreover, often two of them tend to converge on the issues, the criteria of observing difference between at least two parties must suffice for voters to believe that one party better represents their positions. The "correct" party order is defined according to the hypotheses of table 1.[31] When I did not expect two parties to hold different policy stands, the "correct" order in defined as perceiving those two parties as standing no more than one point apart.

Table 7.3. presents the data that evaluate these issue-voting conditions. In each issue, the percentage of voters who were able to place themselves on the scale is extremely high. The percentage of respondents who, in addition, were able to place at least two parties in the scale is equally high. Averages of over 80% of the respondents could place themselves *and* at least two parties. The third column shows that this percentage drops slightly when the criteria are placing oneself and the three parties. Still, over 70% of the respondents met these criteria on all the issues as well. These percentages closely parallel what Aldrich *et al.* (1989) find for those placing themselves and the two parties in the US case.

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[30]The operationalization of Campbells´ conditions by using seven-point issue scales is derived from the Abramson *et. al.* series cited above.

[31]The "correct" order largely corresponds to the average party order, as was shown in tables 1 and 2. Thus, the same procedure could be assessed employing mean party placements. Aldrich et al (1989); Markus and Converse, 1979; Page, 1978 and Alvarez, 1997) all employ mean party placement as "correct" placements.

[Table 7.3. about here]

Column four reports the percentage of respondents who could place themselves on the scale and in addition placed at least two parties *and* recognized differences among at least two of the parties. In most of the economic issues, close to 50% could recognize differences among at least two parties. The highest percentage was PEMEX and NAFTA and the lowest the issue of poverty/subsidies versus promotion of business activity. In the political issues, respondents were also able to perceive differences. On average, 47% saw two parties standing on different points of the scale. On the value-related issues, fewer were able to see parties as standing on different positions. Still, on average 38% saw differences between at least two parties.

Columns 5, 6 and 7 shows the percentage of respondents who could satisfy the four issue criteria. Since the criteria is cumulative, these columns show the percentage who a) place themselves on the issue; b) placed at least two parties on the scale; c) saw differences between at least two parties; and c) got those two parties in "correct" order. Thus, in the issues were I predicted actual agreement among two parties, I do not report the percentage who got those two parties "correct" (meaning that they saw them standing no more than one point apart in the scale). In any of these issues, the percentage placing the two parties that hold similar positions in the same point of the scale is very high (e.g., on most of the political issues, on average 54.9% saw PAN and PRD as located no more than one point apart in the scale). So the really interesting issues are those were I expected to find clear differences among two parties and the respondent got them in "correct" order. On some of these issues and among two specific alternatives, the percentage meeting the criteria is reasonable. For instance, on NAFTA, 45% were

able to see accurate difference among PRI and PRD, placing the first party to the right and thus more favorable to NAFTA. Moreover, on this same issue, 37% were able to see an accurate difference among PAN and PRI, again a reasonable percentage.

The general picture is that around a third of the sample was able to satisfy the four issue criteria on the economic and political issues, and in the value-related issues, this percentage is lower (averages of around 20%). These percentages are close to the average percentages found for US elections during the 1970s, when US political parties tended to be perceived as standing very close to each other because presidential candidates did not adopt clear and distinct issue positions.[32] The percentages fall short of comparable post-1980 US data, which are around 50%, though sometimes even higher in some type of issues (see Aldrich *et al.*, 1989: table 11-1, page 173).

It should be noted, however, that when respondents placed two parties in different positions, the overwhelming majority got the differences accurately. That is, as can be seen in columns 7, 8 and 9, among those who saw differences among two parties, very few got those two parties in the wrong order. Averages of 70% had accurate perceptions of the differences among two parties when they saw such two parties as standing on different points of the scale. This is an important result: it implies, one the one hand, that perceptions were not arbitrary; and on the other, that when parties were seen as actually differing, most respondents perceived those differences accurately.

A central question is whether failing to meet the four issue criteria precludes any possibility of issue voting. My hypothesis is that this is not the case. Voters might be able to hold an opinion on the issue, place at least their most

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[32] See Abramson *et al.*, forthcoming.

preferred party on the scale, and vote for such party because they believe it represents their point of view without having to make elaborate comparisons among all the existing alternatives. For instance, a voter who holds left-wing preferences, may learn through friends, political rallies and the like, that the PRD stands for those type of positions. He thus may choose to vote PRD without incurring in the cost of finding out what the PAN really offers. In a political environment where the costs of acquiring information are high and where opposition parties were not given enough access to TV media until very recently, this type of cost-saving behavior would make sense.

Table 7.4. presents the percentage reporting having an opinion on an issue whom reported voting for the closest party. The closest party is defined as the party which median position on the issue is closer to the issue preference of the respondent. Employing median positions, as has been argued in the Abramson *et al.* (1994) and many others, "reduces the effect of individual's rationalizing their perceptions of the candidate's [parties'] to be consistent with their own vote, rather than voting for the candidate [party] whose views are actually closer to their own" (p. 183). Employing median perceptions has an additional advantage: it permits to place the parties in a unique position, one which has been shown to a quite reasonable estimate of the true positions of the parties (Aldrich *et al.*, 1989; Markus and Converse, 1979; Page, 1978 and Alvarez, 1997).

[Table 7.4. about here]

The first column in table 7.4. reports the percentage who placed themselves on the issue and voted for the closest party.[33] If issues were not related

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[33]The percentage comes from dividing the number of respondents who where closer to the median perception of PAN and voted for such party, who were closer to the median perception of PRD and

to voting intentions, one should expect such percentage to be less than 50% in cases where there is convergence among two parties and less than 30% in cases where the three parties, according to the median perception, hold distinct issue stands.[34] There appears to be issue voting. The effect looks stronger on issues such as Pemex, taxes and redistribution; government guarantees for jobs and standard of living; democracy; corruption; federalism and abortion. It thus appears that those who hold an opinion on the issues and who were not necessarily able to place the three parties on the scale are still capable of voting according to the issues by choosing a party which holds similar positions to their own. The second column of table 7.4. reports the percentage who could place all three parties in correct order and who voted for the closest party. The percentage voting for the closest party increases substantially in almost all issues. The effect looks even stronger on the economic and political issues, where average of seventy and eighty percent respectively reported intending to vote for their closest party.

Hence, while those who are more uncertain about the *relative* issue standings of the three existing alternatives appear to be capable of voting for the party which issue positions are similar to their own, those who can place all the three parties in "correct" order appear to make use of the fuller amount of information, voting for the closest party on most issues. This is another way of saying that the less uncertain voters are regarding the relative positions of the parties, the more relevant issue voting should become. Indeed, the percentages

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voted for such party or who were closer to the median perception of PRI and voted for it by the total number of those who reported voting for either of these parties and placed themselves on the issue scale. When two parties do not hold statistically different issue positions, it means that those two parties actually converge. This implies that a voter reporting voting for either of those parties is, in fact, reporting voting for the closest party.

[34] In other words, in cases where there is convergence among two parties, it is as though it were a two party system and a random choice would mean a 50% chance of voting for each of the alternatives. In cases where the three parties do not converge, the random choice is close to 33%.

that are reported in the second column of table 7.4 are quite high. The last column reports the percentage of voters who could place themselves on the issue but who failed to satisfy at least one of the issue criteria. These voters, that is, either could not place at least two parties on the scale or even when they did, they placed them in an incorrect order. Generally, as one should expect, the percentage voting for the closest party is lower than those reported in the first two columns.

An Uncertain Political Environment and Voter Heterogeneity

Key (1966) argued that an important determinant of voter information is the context of the political campaigns and how the parties and the media frame the available choices. The information, and clarity of that information, presented to them largely determine what voters know or fail to know about the parties. According to this view, the level of voter uncertainty is largely exogenous - determined by party or candidate strategy and lack of campaign emphasis on policy issues. Parties, on the one hand, might strategically choose to remain ambiguous on the issues, particularly in those type of issues upon which voters have intense and polarized preferences (Shepsle, 1972)[35]. On the other hand, even when parties adopt more or less clear policy stands, they might choose to emphasize other type of issues during the campaigns, such as retrospective

[35]One of the implications of Downs model is that, at least in two party systems, candidates would have incentives to offer identical platforms, which is another way of saying that parties would have incentives to remain ambiguous on the issues and thus to discourage issue voting. Shepsle (1972) later demonstrated that, under some conditions, candidates will have strong incentives to present uncertain positions to the electorate. From Alvarez (1997) recent work, it is clear that the early conclusions on candidate ambiguity must be tempered. He shows that voters tend to dislike alternatives which issue positions are seen as uncertain. However, this does not mean that candidates have an unequivocal incentive to define clear-cut issue positions, as Alvarez himself notes. However, neither from a formal nor from an empirical perspective, the precise combination of ambiguity versus clarity in candidate strategy appears all that clear.

evaluations, the performance of the incumbent, or evaluations of candidate personality (Page, 1976).

According to Alvarez (1997) "while some of the uncertainty voters posses about the policy positions of candidates in an election clearly is the result of candidate ambiguity and equivocation, some uncertainty is also due to the voter's ability to gather and process costly information" (p. 30). Voter uncertainty is partly endogenous, meaning that voters possess few incentives to become informed since information gathering is costly. Thus, the amount of information voters possess would be determined by their own personal characteristics and the opportunity costs of becoming informed. While candidates may *try* to define their positions in an important issue, they might not be very successful. The media, the candidate's opponents and the few incentives voters possess to become informed would all intervene to influence how the electorate perceives the candidate's position on the policy issues (Alvarez, 1997: 29).

Only around a third of the sample was able to see clear and accurate differences among two parties, when those two parties actually differed. This empirical pattern is partly explained, as argued above, by the ambiguity in the parties' stands with respect to the issues and by the fact that parties have tended to emphasize non-policy issues during campaigns. But endogenous voter uncertainty might also be playing a role. If this interpretation is accurate, one should expect, consistent with Alvarez (1997) findings, heterogeneity of voter uncertainty, which should be manifested in three ways.

First, voters should be more uncertain about the issue positions of less visible parties. Alvarez (1997) found that voters were generally less uncertain about the issue positions of the incumbent candidates than about those of the

challengers. In the Mexican context, this needs not be necessarily so.[36] The PRI has not had a consistent economic platform throughout the years given that economic policies usually shift, often in unexpected ways, from one presidential term to the other. For this reason, voters might be similarly uncertain about the ruling party's issue positions than about those of the opposition parties. Nonetheless, since the PRI has had a privileged access to the media, and moreover, has a greater visibility stemming from incumbency, a larger percentage of voters might be able to *place* the party on the issues. The voter placement might still be quite diffuse given the high ambiguity about this party's stands. [37]

Second, voters should be less uncertain about the policy positions of the party they like the best. According to Alvarez (1997) voters to whom the value of becoming informed is low but the costs are high "might be more attentive to, or process, only information about their preferred candidate [party], and avoid or ignore information about the other(s), less preferred candidate(s)" or parties. (p. 83).

Third, voters should differ in their levels of uncertainty depending on their opportunity cost of becoming informed, with less educated voters facing higher

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[36]Note that, as argued in chapter 4, uncertainty about party issue positions in not equivalent to uncertainty about expected party performance. The Bayesian retrospective model argues that the latter is ono of the crucial mechanism that accounts for the electoral longevity of the PRI. Voters are more uncertainty about the expected economic performance of opposition parties because they have never tested their capacity to govern, since they lack a record in government. However, voters might be equally uncertain about the PRI's policy stands than about the opposition's *if the ruling party adopts ambiguous positions on the issues*.

[37] A relevant question is if the presidential candidates of the PRI also choose to remain ambiguous on the issues. My impression is that PRI presidential candidates are starting to take clearer policy stands on some issues. For instance, Ernesto Zedillo campaigned promising to deliver judicial reform and a tougher system of justice on crime and corruption. The impact of campaigns on issue clarity and voter uncertainty cannot be assessed with the available data, however.

information costs and presumably being more uncertain about the parties policy positions.

While I will not estimate a full model of uncertainty due to the limitations of the data, I can provide some evidence for each of these hypotheses. Following Alvarez, I define voter uncertainty about the parties as a dispersion of points around some placement of the party's position, such that:

$$v_{ij} = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{k=1}^{K} (P_{iJk} - T_{Jk})^2 \qquad (1)$$

where v_{ij} refers to the uncertainty of voter i in the placement of party J, P_{iJk} is the placement by voter i of such party in each of the relevant k policy issues, and T_{Jk} is the mean (or true) position of party J on the issue k (Alvarez, 1997: 70). The greater the value of this expression, the greater the dispersion of the voter's perceptions of the policy positions of the party and the larger the voter uncertainty with respect to the party's issue positions.

Table 7.5. presents the mean voter uncertainty about each of the parties policy positions on each of the issues. Voter uncertainty is calculated only for those who could place the party on the issue. The table also shows the mean percentage of respondents who placed each of the parties on the issues. It should be noted that mean levels of voter uncertainty about the policy positions of the PRI, the PAN and the PRD do not differ considerably. This means that those who could place them on the scale perceived the three parties as equally ambiguous. If one disaggregates voter uncertainty issue by issue, the PRI is less uncertain in the issue of NAFTA (mean 3.84), an issue over which that party seems to have adopted a clear stand, at least from the voters' point of view. The PAN is perceived as less uncertain in the issue of abortion (mean 4.48) and support for

business activity versus increase in subsides to alleviate poverty (4.93) and the PRD in the issue of economic planing (4.78) and equality among women and men (4.95). Overall, however, voters who placed the parties on the issues were similarly uncertain about the three parties' policy positions.

[Table 7.5 about here]

Voter uncertainty with respect to three parties does not vary much, probably because the three parties have been equally ambiguous on most issues. It should be noted, however, that what varies considerably is the percentage of respondents who could place the parties on the scale. That is, generally, much more respondents were able to place the PRI and the PAN's policy positions on the scale, than those of the PRD. If one considers those who could not place a party on the scale as "maximally uncertain", which is what Alvarez (1997) does, the mean voter uncertainty about the three parties differs in a more fundamental way. Figure 1.4. presents the mean party uncertainty in all the issues, coding the non-responses as "maximally uncertain" (i.e., an uncertainty of six squared). The figure presents the mean voter uncertainty of all respondents in the survey and also the mean voter uncertainty by stated voting intentions.

[Figure 1.4. about here]

The first thing to note is that the mean voter uncertainty about the PRI's policy positions is slightly lower. However, despite the party's higher visibility, stemming from its privileged access to the media and from its incumbency, voters perceived it almost as uncertain as the PAN. I attribute this result to the high ambiguity of the PRI's policy stands. The PRD, for its part, was seen as the most uncertain party in the sample. I contend, however, that this result is attributable to

endogenous voter uncertainty, not to a higher ambiguity on the part of the party's policy positions. If one compares figure 1 with table 4, it is clear that the relative higher level of voter uncertainty about the PRD stems mostly from non-responses. That is, among those who could place the parties on the scale, the PRD does not appear as more uncertain. However, once non-responses are introduced, the PRD becomes highly uncertain, relative to the other alternatives. Thus, it appears that this party was perceived as more uncertain because of its low visibility in the media.

Although this hypothesis cannot be systematically tested with the available data, there is some evidence supporting it. Presumably, consistent with Alvarez (1997) argument, voters should be less uncertain about the policy positions of the party they like the best. If PRD's own supporters perceived it as a highly uncertain, one could conclude that this party, relative to the other two alternatives, has adopted more ambiguous stands on the issues. But if the opposite is true, if those who support the PRD, who presumably possess more incentives to be more attentive to information about it, perceive this party as less uncertain than the sample did, one can conclude that the higher voter uncertainty about the PRD can largely be attributed to higher costs of becoming informed about it.

The remaining columns in figure 1.4. report the mean voter uncertainty by stated voting intentions. Hypotheses tests about the difference of means reported in the figure are provided in the appendix. Three important results emerge from the data. The first result is that those who like a party best were less uncertain about its policy positions that the total sample was. The strongest impact is found among PRD voters. Voter uncertainty about this party's policy position in the total sample was 13.36, and the mean uncertainty drops to 9.19 among those who

reported intending to vote PRD (the difference is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level). [38]

Thus, as argued above, the higher voter uncertainty about the PRD can be largely attributed to higher costs of becoming informed about this party, since the most attentive ones did not regard this party as particularly uncertain. In fact, comparing the three groups of supporters, the Perredista group is least uncertain about their own party policy stands. PAN voters were also significantly less uncertain about their party's policy positions than the total sample was. The mean PAN voter uncertainty about this party was 10.42 while the uncertainty about this party in the whole sample was 11.87 (the difference of means is statistically significant at the 99% level). It should be noted that while the mean uncertainty about the PRI also drops among its supporters, the difference among those who reported intending to vote PRI and the total sample is not statistically significant. Thus, the PRI was regarded as an ambiguous party by its own followers, even more ambiguous than what PAN and PRD supporters judge of this party, a point that will be further discussed below.

The second important finding emerging from figure 4 is that voters tend to be less uncertain about the issue positions of their most preferred party than about the positions of the other parties. These differences look particularly strong in the case of PRI voters. That is, those who reported intending to vote for the PRI were more uncertain about the PAN's, and particularly about the PRD's, policy stands than about the PRI's positions (the difference of means are statistically significant at the 99% confidence level). Note that PRI voters were more uncertain about

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[38]The direction of causality cannot be assessed with the data. It might be that voters prefer such party precisely because they were less uncertain about its policy stands; or, alternatively, these voters might be less uncertain about the PRD precisely because the like this party best, presumably possessing more incentives to become informed about such party (e.g., being more willing to attend to party rallies or to be attentive to the information filtered through the media).

these two parties than the total sample was. For PRI voters, that is, opposition alternatives are rather unknown and uncertain entities. The pattern is clearly different among opposition supporters. Those who reported to vote PAN were equally uncertain about their own party's policy stands than about those of the PRI (the difference of means is not statistically significant). Panistas, nonetheless, were more uncertain about the policy positions of the other opposition party than about the issue stands of their own party and the ruling party (differences of means are statistically significant at the 99% confidence level). Thus, it appears that for Panista voters the left-wing alternative is rather uncertain. For the Perredistas, the PRI and the PAN were slightly more uncertain than the PRD was (differences of means were statistically different from zero at the 99% confidence level). However, in absolute terms, the Perredistas were much less uncertain about the other parties' issue positions than comparable PRI and PAN supporters. PRD voters, that is appear to be the best informed about the *three* parties.

The third result is that those who reported intending to vote PRI were the least informed about the three parties' policy stands. Although PRI voters are less uncertain about their own party's issue positions than about the opposition alternatives, they were much more uncertain about the issue positions of the three parties than comparable PAN and PRD supporters. This result can be attributed to two factors. First, as was demonstrated in Magaloni (1997), the PRI tends to receive disproportionate levels of support from lower educated voters who presumably face higher opportunity costs of information. Second, relative to PRI voters, those who *a priori* sympathize with the opposition parties face higher incentives to become informed about politics from sources other than the rather uninformative TV media, which has, until very recently, been tightly controlled by the government. Thus, if a voter intends to keep on supporting the PRI, presumably he faces little incentives to be attentive, and purposely seek

information, about politics, remaining content with the little accidental information, employing Downs (1957) terminology, that is made available in the mass TV media.

The evidence presented in figure 1.4. is summarized in the form of three very simple regression expressions in table 7.6. The regression analyses do not seek to account for voter uncertainty systematically, since other relevant variables, such as media exposure, attention to political campaigns, and political awareness were not included in the survey. Thus, all that I seek to show is that the patterns described in figure 1.4. are statistically significant, and, moreover, that there is evidence of voter heterogeneity in terms of levels of uncertainty according to the voter education. The dependent variable is voter uncertainty about each of the parties and the independent variables are two sociodemographic variables, education and gender, and the respondents' stated party choice.[39] The major conclusions emerging from figure 1.4. were: first, PRI voters are highly uncertain and uninformed about the opposition alternatives; PAN voters are more certain about their own party's and the PRI's policy positions than about the PRD stands; third, PRD voters are not only more certain about their own party's stands, but also about the other two parties' positions. The conclusions are supported by the regression estimations. Moreover, there is evidence that education tends to affect voter uncertainty systematically, with lower educated voters being significantly more uncertain about the three parties' policy positions.

[Table 7.6. about here]

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[39]I am aware that the best statistical technique for estimating voter uncertainty would be a two-stage probit least squares methodology (2SPLS), as in Alvarez (1997). However, as said above, the regressions are only intended to summarize the findings of figure 4 and not to provide a systematic account of voter uncertainty. To provide a systematic model of voter uncertainty and to perform a 2SPLS analysis, I would need information that was not included in the survey.

The final task of the paper is to estimate the impact of the issues on stated voting intentions. Since the survey I am employing was not collected during an

party voters between themselves[40]

might predict *actual*

considering that a high percentage (24%) of respondents in the survey did not report a party preference; the behavior of the undecided would thus be crucial for

[41]

Two major questions need to be addressed. First, what determines that a

extent issues determine stated voting intentions? My hypothesis is that the issues have an impact on both types of decisions. I expect voters to choose a party that

uncertain about the issue positions of a party, presumably this will *discourage*

more certain about the issue positions of the three major parties to be more likely to report a vote intention and, conversely, that the undecided should

parties stand on the issues. Second, among those who report a vote choice, I

The relative impact of policy issues with respect to economic retrospective and prospective evaluations, candidates, and attitudes on parties cannot be assessed given that the survey did not

[41]In addition, it is also possible that those who report a party preference change their voting

expect to find a systematic relationship with the issues, meaning that voters should support a party which is "closets" to them. [42]

Estimating Undecided versus Major Party Voters

To evaluate the first of these hypotheses, a binary logit model can be employed, coding those who did not report a party choice as the high category, and those who reported voting for either of the three major parties as the low category. The respondents that reported intending to vote for other alternative (3.7%) are set as missing values. As said above, I expect to find that the higher the voter uncertainty about the three major parties' issue positions, the more likely will such voter report not having a party preference at the time the survey was conducted. Voter uncertainty about the three parties is operationalized as the sum of voter uncertainty about the issue positions of PRI, PAN and PRD. Table 7.7 presents the results of the logit model.

[Table 7.7 about here]

As expected, voter uncertainty about the three parties' issue positions had a positive and highly significant impact on stated voting intentions, with those reporting not having a party preference disproportionately coming from those who

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[42]Unfortunately, I cannot evaluate the impact of voter uncertainty on stated voting intentions. Since there are reasons to suspect voter uncertainty to be partly endogenous (i.e., the product of party choice), a two stage procedure would be needed to estimate the impact of uncertainty on stated voting intentions. However, the survey does not permit me to perform such procedure, since, as said above, other relevant variables for estimating voter uncertainty were not included in the survey. The correct procedure would imply estimating a two-stage model where a reduced form OLS equation for voter uncertainty is estimated from which I can obtain predicted values to employ in the vote models. With only two available variables (education and gender) the OLS reduced voter uncertainty model would be quite mispecifed, however.

were more uncertain about the three major parties' positions. This is an important

result. It appears that uncertainty about the issue positions of the parties tends to

[43] The result also underscores the

to possess incentives to campaign attempting to reduce voter uncertainty defining

clearer positions on the issues. This is at odds with the conventional campaign

parties seldom camping on the issues. The PRI normally seeks to portray itself as

the most competent party and opposition parties devote most of their scarce

but without defining policy alternatives. But I contend that there appear to be

potential electoral payoffs of following partially different strategies - at least for

[44] In Magaloni (1997, chapters 4 and 5) I showed that

purely retrospective voters

economic performance of the parties. Thus, to convince voters, opposition parties

must not only stress that things are wrong as they stand today, but that they can be

if they win - i.e., that they can do a better job than the incumbent.

Presumably, one way of doing this is by showing that they do have an alternative

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The direction of causality is not that clear, however. The impact of uncertainty on the decision
not to state a party choice may reflect the unwillingness of those who won't vote to invest in

[44]The real trick, however, would be to know on which type of issues should they adopt clearer

Major Party Voters

I follow Alvarez and Nagler (1994) in employing a multinomial probit for estimating the impact of issues on stated voting intentions. The multinomial probit allows one to solve the Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives assumption implicit in more conventional multinomial logit models. The IIA assumption might be problematic if one is modeling issue voting.

First, consider the spatial model of voting where individuals vote for the candidate closest to their ideal point in an issue space. If we imagine a new candidate entering the election our intuition is that the new candidate would take most of his/her votes from the candidates closest to him/her in the issue space. This is not consistent with IIA: IIA imposes the constraint that the new candidate must take votes from each of the previous candidates at rates proportional to their share of the previous two-candidate vote (Alvarez and Nagler, 1994:8)

The intuition behind the IIA is that if a new party were to enter the electoral market, it would not take more votes from a party that is located closest to its own issue positions. Alvarez and Naglerś (1994) multinomial probit model for three alternatives estimates error correlations across the utility functions for the parties such that IIA is not assumed. The authors constrain their model such that a single coefficient for the effects of issue distances across the three candidates is obtained; i.e., only one β is estimated, the same for all the parties. I do not desire to impose such constraint, however. On the one hand, I want to assess the relative effects of the various types of issues (i.e., economic, political and value-related issues) on voting choices. On the other, I seek to evaluate whether each type of issue affects the decision to vote for the three parties *in different manners*. For instance, it might be that PAN voters do not take value-related issues into account while PRD ones do or vice versa.

Thus, I modify the author's model in the following way:[45]

possibility that the beta coefficients vary across the three parties so that I can account for possible differences between supporters of the three different parties

estimate nine coefficients for the effects of issue distances, three for each party, instead of one single coefficient for all of them. Thus, I define the voter's utility

$$U_{ij} = a_i \mathbf{y}_j + X_{ijk} \mathbf{b}_{jk} + \mathbf{e}_{ij} \tag{2}$$

where, dropping the subindex, X are the choice specific characteristics unique to party j on the three types of issues k and *a* is a vector of characteristics unique to voter i.

For solving the problem of the Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives assumption implied in multinomial logit models, the authors assume that the tree error terms have a multivariate normal distribution and that the error variances are homoskedastic (in other words, they assumed that $\mathbf{s}_1^2 = \mathbf{s}_2^2 = \mathbf{s}_3^2 = 1$). The authors allow, however, for the possibility that errors are correlated across the candidates or parties. Their model directly estimates values for j-1 pairs of error covariances, $\mathbf{s}_{12}, \mathbf{s}_{13}, \mathbf{s}_{23}$. These estimations are error correlations, due to the normalization of the error covariances, which can normally be obtained in large samples. Thus, the idea of the multinomial probit model is to account for the error correlations across the three utility functions in a three-candidate race such that IIA is not assumed.

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[45] The author´s model, as discussed in the previous chapter, defines the voter utility function as:

$$U_{ij} = a_i \mathbf{y}_j + X_{ij} \mathbf{b} + \mathbf{e}_{ij}$$

However, there is no need to estimate error covariances for all pairs of alternatives. Theoretically, as suggested by Alvarez to the author, estimating the covariances among at least the two alternatives which one suspects to be more seriously correlated should suffice.

The vector of characteristics unique to party j will be obtained employing the square root of the sum of squared distances between the voter's position and each party's actual position on the issues, where actual position is defined as the median position of the party in the survey data such that:

$$ID_{ijn} = \sqrt{\sum_{k=1}^{K} (P_{j_k} - V_{ik})^2} \qquad\qquad (3)$$

where ID_{ij} stands as the issue distance between voter i and party j, P_{j_k} are party j's actual position on the k issues and V_{ik} are voter i's issue positions.

The prediction of the Downsian spatial model is that voters should vote for the party which issue positions are closer to their own views. Thus, the sign of the issue coefficients should be negative, meaning that the closer a voter is to party j's positions, the higher the chance of supporting that party. As said above, three betas for each party will be estimated, one for each type of issue. The characteristics unique to voter i will be Education (degrees attained) and Gender (a dummy variable coded as 1 for males).

The prediction of the model is that once comparing the three alternatives, the voter will choose the one from which the highest utility is obtained. The model explicitly takes into account the *comparative* nature of the vote choice

making probabilities of voting for party j determined by the difference in utilities of the three parties.

Since I am interested in assessing which types of issues matter for different types of party supporters, I estimate two MNP models. The first seeks to assess which types of issues determine that voters decide *among either opposition parties or the PRI*. Thus, in such model, the PRI will be employed as the base category. This means that the beta coefficients of the issue distances and the individual-specific coefficients for PRI will be set to zero. Therefore, the coefficients of such model should be interpreted as giving the effects of a particular variable for PAN or PRD support, *relative* to support for PRI. In this first model, I thus expect political issues to have the strongest impact, since the relevant choice set is PRI *versus* either of the opposition parties. This expectation derives from the fact that, as has been demonstrated throughout this paper, political issues are what divide the PRI and the opposition parties in the most fundamental manner.

The second model, which is a transformation of the first, seeks to estimate the issues dividing the opposition parties among themselves or, put in other words, what issues matter lead voters to decide *between the two opposition parties*. Thus, I estimate a MNP model employing PRD as the base category. The beta coefficients of the issue distances and the individual-specific coefficients for PRD will be set to zero. Therefore, the coefficients of such model should be interpreted as giving the effects of a particular variable for PRI or PAN support, *relative* to support for PRD. Since I want to assess what type of issues matter the most for different party supporters depending on their choice sets, estimating both models seems appropriate. In that way I will be able to assess, first, what issues matter when voters are choosing between PRI and either of the opposition parties, and second, which issues are more relevant when a voter chooses between the two

opposition parties. My expectation is that political issues should *not* be relevant determinants of voting choices when the comparison is between PAN and PRD. However, given that these parties truly differ on the economic and value-related issues, voters must take them into account when choosing between them. Regarding the behavior of PRI voters, I expect political issues to be relevant when comparing the ruling party versus both opposition parties. I do not hold a priori expectations on the impact of economic and value-related issues on a vote for PRI over the opposition parties.

1. MNP model: PRI as the base category

When choosing between the PRI and one of the opposition parties, say the PAN, the existence of the PRD cannot be assumed to be an irrelevant alternative *precisely* because both parties stand close together on the issues which I expect voters to employ when this choice set is considered. Thus, it seems appropriate to control for the possibility that the error terms of the voter's utility functions unique to each of these parties are correlated. Table 7.8 presents the results of a MNP model where I estimate the correlations between the error terms of PAN and PRD, setting the error terms of PAN and PRI and of PRI and PRD to zero. Note that, as said above, the issue distance parameters are estimated as choice-specific coefficients, while gender and education as individual-specific coefficients, as in Alvarez and Nagler (1994).

Only the political issue distance show a statistically significant impact in accounting for a vote for *both of the opposition parties* over the PRI. The coefficients do reach statistical significance, though only at the 90% confidence level. This is probably due to the fact that the error correlation among PAN and PRD captures most of the variance in the model. That is, there is a very strong and

highly significant correlation between the errors of PAN and PRD. All the other issues are correctly signed but not significant. These results suggests that the issues that most clearly divide the ruling party versus de opposition are the political ones; however, when choosing between the PAN over the PRI or between the PRD over the PRI the existence of the other opposition party is *not* an irrelevant alternative. As argued above, this results makes sense since both opposition parties stand close together on the political issues. [46]

[Table 7.8 about here]

2. MNP model: PRD as the base category

Table 7.9 presents a transformation of the previous model, where PRD is employed as the base category. I attempted to control for the correlation of at least one pair of error terms -preferable those between PAN and PRI. However, the matrix of coefficients could not be inverted. This is probably due to the lack of sufficient observations since the MNP model is quite data intensive and unfortunately the sample size is limited. Thus, results should be read as independent multinomial probit estimates, meaning that the three sigmas, one for each pair of correlations between the errors, are assumed to be zero. There is a possible specification problem in the model. However, since I have reasons to suspect that the IIA is particularly problematic when PAN and PRD are not *directly* model as part of the choice set, as in table 5 above, the mispecification of the following model might not be all that problematic. This is because the model

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[46]In other words, the IIA assumption is particularly problematic when two parties hold similar issue positions since the theory predicts that issue voters should be equally likely to support both parties, meaning that these alternative are not "irrelevant."

directly incorporates PAN and PRD, the alternatives that have been shown not to be "irrelevant", as part of the choice set. I am assuming, however, that when a voter chooses between PAN over PRD or vice versa, the existence of the PRI is irrelevant. The rationale of this assumption might be the following: once an opposition voter decides to cast of vote against the PRI, the choice of PAN over PRD or vice versa is completely determined by the characteristics unique to both of these parties regardless of where the PRI stands on the economic or value related issues. Whether this assumption is accurate, however, could not be assessed with the data. [47]

Table 7.9 provides the results of the independent multinomial probit model where the PRD served as the base category. It can be seen that all the issue coefficients are correctly signed and quite a few reach statistical significance. The first thing to note is that, as expected, economic issue distances are statistically significant and quite strong in the case of PAN. This implies that the closer a voter is to the PAN on the economic issues, the higher the chance of supporting such party, relative to the PRD. Since we know that PAN is located to the right-hand side of the scale on all the economic issues, we can conclude that voters who hold right-wing preferences, thus being closer to the PAN's economic issue positions, tend to disproportionately vote for the right-wing opposition party over PRD. It should be noted that the political issues are not significant in the case of PAN,

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[47]Due to the limitations of the data in terms of the small size of the sample, a model like Alvarez and Nagler could have been appropriate because it would be less data demanding. In other worlds, I could first, constraint the beta issue coefficients such that they equal among the three parties, and second, only estimate one issue coefficient for each adding up the moral, political and economic issues all together. In that way, I could have more degrees of freedom so as to be able to estimates the three pair of error correlations. In the appendix such model is provided. The results are irrelevant, however, for nothing turns out to be statistically significant, not even the error correlation parameters. This suggests that, for the particular problem at hand, modeling the beta coefficients unconstrained (i.e., different for each party) and, moreover, distinguishing between the three types of issues makes sense, which is what the two MNP models shown do.

which implies that what makes a voter choose PAN over PRD is economics, not politics. Economic issues are also significant for PRI voters, meaning that the closer a voter is to the PRI on all the economic issues, the higher the chance of supporting this party over the PRD. This is an interesting result; it implies that those who support the PRI do take economic issues into account when choosing between PRI and PRD. As expected, political issues are also significant and quite strong in the case of PRI. In neither case were the value-related issues significant.

[Table 7.9 about here]

These results suggest that there are two highly relevant dimensions of party competition in Mexico - a political and an economic dimension. On the political dimension, voters and parties are divided along an anti-pro-political-status-quo continuum. Voters tend to take these issues into account when making their choices, PAN and PRD supporters sharing similar views which turns them into "opposition voters". In the economic dimension, voters and parties are divided along a left-right dimension. On this dimension, opposition voters hold opposite views on the issues, taking them into account when they decide to choose one opposition party over the other.

Value-related issues were not highly silent to voters. Although the average respondent perceived the PAN as conservative and the PRD as liberal, voters did not appear to employ these issues in their voting decisions. Low salience of moral issues might stem from the fact that parties have seldom campaigned stressing them. However, since both voters and parties hold rather divergent views on these issues, the are potentially relevant, meaning that if parties start to stress them during the campaigns, voters might act accordingly. There is some evidence that

PRD supporters hold slightly more liberal views on these issues and that they care about them. In the appendix I provide a logit model which shows that the value-related issues are statistically significant when analyzing the behavior of PRD voters versus both PAN and PRI supporters. This explains why feminists in Mexico tend to lean towards the left-wing opposition party.

Conclusion

This paper has analyzed several factors regarding the policy divisions among the three major parties in Mexico and how they impact voting decisions. I first showed that the average respondent could place the three parties on quite accurate relative positions. On most of the economic issues, the PRD was placed as a left-wing, the PAN as a right-wing, and the PRI in between both opposition parties, though sometimes sharing left stands with PRD and other sharing right positions with the PAN. On the political issues, both opposition parties were seen as sharing anti-political-status quo positions and the PRI was placed as a pro-political-status quo party. On the value-related issues, PRD was placed as a liberal party, PAN as more conservative and PRI in between both.

I then showed that although average perceptions of the relative positions of three parties were quite accurate, individuals are still uncertainly about the relative stands of the three parties. I demonstrated that uncertainty across the three parties does not vary significantly, although more voters could place the PRI on the scale probably because this party is more visible. In addition, I showed that a) voters tend to be less uncertain about the issue positions of the party they like best; b) PRI supporters are highly uncertain about the issue positions of the opposition alternatives; c) there is heterogeneity in the electorate, with lower educated voters disproportionately being more uncertain about the policy positions of the three major parties.

Finally, I estimated two types of models that showed the impact of issues on stated voting intentions. The three major conclusions of the results were. First, voter uncertainty about the issue positions of the parties tends to discourage support for these parties, with the undecided voters disproportionately coming from those who where more uncertain about the issue positions of the parties. This result highlights the potential impact of political campaigns since campaigns are a crucial vehicle for disseminating information. Second, voters tend to support the party that better represents their points of views. Third, the MNP estimations showed that there are two highly significant dimensions dividing Mexican society.

Parties and voters are divided along a political dimension, with opposition voters, relative to PRI voters, disproportionately coming from those who share the opposition parties' political issue positions. These voters, and the parties they support, seek to transform the political status quo such that elections become the crucial mechanism for allocating power, resources are decentralized, and corruption in government is punished, among others. Political forces are also divided along a left-right economic dimension. I demonstrated that those who reported support for PAN over the PRD disproportionately came from those who share this party's stands on the economic issues. PAN voters favor a set of right wing policies composed of liberalization of trade, privatization of PEMEX, and promotion of business activity versus poverty alleviation. They also stand against increases in taxes and wealth redistribution. Conversely, PRD voters, as their own party, prefer a more activists and nationalistic state, government programs for poverty alleviation and redistribution of wealth. They also stand against the privatization of PEMEX.

I showed that those who reported support for PRI over the PRD also share the ruling party's economic policy positions, which, compared to the PRD's stands, tend to be more centrists. Hence, in the economic dimension, the PRI and

its supporters stand in between both opposition parties, while in the political dimension they are on the opposite side of both opposition parties.

This highlights one of the crucial coordination dilemmas faced by opposition forces in Mexico. While opposition parties and voters share similar views on the political dimension, potentially being able to form a united political front against the PRI, in the economic dimension they truly differ.

Table 1. Median Perception of Parties on Seven Point Issue Scales and Median Self-Placement.

Issue Area	Median Perception of Parties			Median Self Placement
Economic Issues	**PRI**	**PAN**	**PRD**	**MP**
Pemex[a]	2.24	5.17**	2.46	3
Nafta[a]	7**	4.82**	1.99**	4.17
Jobs and Living Standards	3.46	3.30	1.82**	3.30
Redistribution/Taxes	5.27	5.17	3.18**	3.7
Poverty Alleviation/ Subsidies	4.73**	5.89**	3.4**	5.29
Economic Planning	1.43	3.01**	1.65	2.31
Average	4.02	4.56	2.41	3.62
Political Issues				
Chiapas[a]	6.22**	4.42**	2**	3.86
Democracy	3.49**	1.79	1.71	1.79
Human Rights	3.83**	3.37	3.10	3.73
Federalism	5.6**	2.89	3.22	3.34
Corruption	4.48**	1	1	1
Average	4.72	2.69	2.2	2.74
Moral Issues				
Abortion[a]	5.71**	7**	5.15**	5.26
Indian Autonomy	5.03**	3.46**	2.20**	1.88
Marriage/Wedlock	3.91**	5.69**	3.26**	1.58
State-Church	1.59**	3.18**	1**	1
Women-Men	1.82	1.23	1**	1
Average	4.12	4.55	3.16	2.78

** Indicates that the party's mean placement is statistically different from the others at a 95% confidence level (two-tailed test).
[a] Reversed from actual scoring, to make a more "leftist", "anti-system" and "liberal" answers closer to 1 and a more "rightist", "pro-system" and "conservative" ones closer to 7.

Table 1.1. Hypotheses on Relative Mean Perceptions of the Parties' Stands on the Different Issues.

Issue Area	Mean Perception of Parties			Three Parties Different
Economic Issues	**PRI**	**PAN**	**PRD**	
Pemex Left = anti-privatization	To the left of PAN; not different from PRD	Right of both	To the left of PAN; not different from PRI	No
Nafta Left = anti-NAFTA	Right of both	Center	Left of both	Yes
Jobs/Living Standards Left = Pro-government guarantees of jobs	?	?	Left of both	Yes
Redistribution/Taxes Left = Pro-redistribution	Center	Right of both	Left of both	Yes
Poverty Alleviation/ Subsidies Left = pro-poverty alleviation	Center	Right of both	Left of both	Yes
Economic Planning Left = pro-economic planning	Center	Right of both	Left of both	Yes
Mean Overall Placement on Economic issues	**Center Party** (Close to mid-point of 4)	**Right-wing Party** (Right of mid-point of 4)	**Left-wing Party** (Left of mid-point of 4)	Yes
Political Issues				
Chiapas Left = pro-Zapatistas	Right of both	Center	Left of both	Yes
Democracy Left = pro-democracy	Right of both	To the left of PRI, not different from PRD	To the left of PRI, not different from PAN	No
Human Rights Left = pro-respect for human rights	Right of both	To the left of PRI, not different from PRD	To the left of PRI, not different from PAN	No
Federalism Left = pro-descentralization	Right of both	Left of both	Center	Yes
Corruption Left = pro-punishing corruption	Right of both	To the left of PRI, not different from PRD	To the left of PRI, not different from PAN	No
Mean Overall Placement on Political Issues Left = anti-political-status quo	**Pro-political- Status quo Party** (Right of mid- point of 4)	**Anti-political- Status-quo Party** (Left of mid-point of 4)	**Anti-Political- Status quo Party** (Left of mid- point of 4)	No
Moral Issues				
Abortion Left = pro-choice	Left of PAN; not different from PRD	Right of both	Left of PAN; not different from PRI	No
Indian Autonomy Left = pro-autonomy	Center	Right of both	Left of both	Yes
Marriage/ Wedlock Left = pro-free choice	Left of PAN; not different from PRD	Right of both	Left of PAN; not different from PRI	No
State-Church Left = pro-strict speparation Church/state	Left of PAN; not different from PRD	Right of both	Left of PAN; not different from PRI	No
Women-Men Left = pro-equality	Left of PAN; not different from PRD	Right of both	Left of PAN; not different from PRI	No
Mean Overall Placement on Value Related Issues Left = Liberal	**Liberal Party** Left of mid-point of 4	**Conservative Party** Right of mid-point of 4	**Liberal Party** Left of mid-point of 4	?

Table 1. 2. Mean Perception of Parties on Seven Point Issue Scales (parenthesis indicates whether hypotheses in table 1 were fulfilled or not)

Issue Area	Median Perception of Parties			Three Parties Different
Economic Issues	**PRI**	**PAN**	**PRD**	
Pemex[a]	3.22	4.28**	3.17	No
1 = Against Privatization	(Yes)	(Yes)	(Yes)	
Nafta[a]	5.81**	4.33**	3.26**	Yes
1 = Against Nafta	(Yes)	(Yes)	(Yes)	
Jobs/Liv. Standards	3.88	3.83	3.09**	No
1= Pro-government guarantees of jobs			(Yes)	
Redistribution/Taxes	4.97	4.86	3.77**	No
1= Pro-redistribution	(No)	(partially)	(Yes)	
Poverty Alleviation/ Subsidies	4.70**	5.22**	4.05**	Yes
1=Pro-poverty alleviation	(Yes)	(Yes)	(Yes)	
Economic Planning	2.97	3.68**	2.95	No
1=Pro-economic planning	(No)	(Yes)	(partially)	
Overall Mean Placement	**4.20****	**4.34****	**3.36****	**Yes**
1=Left-wing	**(Yes)**	**(Yes)**	**(Yes)**	
Political Issues				
Chiapas[a]	4.90**	3.90**	2.77**	Yes
1=Pro-Zapatistas	(Yes)	(Yes)	(Yes)	
Democracy	3.96**	3.30	3.14	No
1=Pro-democracy	(Yes)	(Yes)	(Yes)	
Human Rights	4.29**	3.85	3.70	No
1=Pro-respect for human rights	(Yes)	(Yes)	(Yes)	
Federalism	4.92**	3.73	3.80	No
1=Pro-descentralization	(Yes)	(partially)	(No)	
Corruption	4.31**	2.26	2.58	No
1=Pro-punishing corruption	(Yes)	(Yes)	(Yes)	
Overall Mean Placement	**4.48****	**3.45****	**3.20****	**Yes**
1=Anti-political status quo	**(Yes)**	**(partially)**	**(partially)**	
Moral Issues				
Abortion[a]	4.78**	5.44**	4.52**	Yes
1=Pro-choice	(partially)	(Yes)	(partially)	
Indian Autonomy	4.78**	4.07**	3.47**	Yes
1=Pro indigenous Autonomy	(No)	(No)	(Yes)	
Marriage/ Wedlock	4.45**	4.91**	3.38**	Yes
1=Pro-freedom of Choice	(partially)	(Yes)	(partially)	
State-Church	3.20**	3.74**	2.88**	Yes
1=Pro-strict separation State/Church	(partial)	(Yes)	(partially)	
Women-Men	3.17	3.11	2.80**	No
1=Pro-equality	(partially)	(partially)	(partially)	
Overall Mean Placement	**4.03****	**4.25****	**3.45****	**Yes**
1=Liberal	**(No)**	**(Yes)**	**(Yes)**	

** Indicates that the party's mean placement is statistically different from the others at a 95% confidence level (two-tailed test). Same results hold if hypothesis tests is one-tailed.

[a] Reversed from actual scoring, to make a more "leftist", "anti-political-status-quo" and "liberal" answers closer to 1 and a more "rightist", "pro-political-status-quo" and "conservative" ones closer to 7

Table1.4. Percentage Voting for Closest Party by the Issue Criteria they Met.

	Placed Self on Issue Scale	Placed All "Correct"	Placed Self but Failed to Meet all Criteria
ECONOMIC			
PEMEX	58	70	54
Economic Planing	49	63	31
NAFTA	34	58	30
Redistribution /Taxes	60	74	50
Jobs and Quality of Life	62	87	46
Poverty/ Subsidies[a]	47	52	41
Average	52	81	50
POLITICAL			
Democracy	55	72	42
Corruption	72	76	52
Human Rights	46	63	38
Chiapas/ EZLN	39	57	38
Federalism	58	75	31
Average	54	69	40
MORAL			
Abortion[a]	57	47	57
Church and State[a]	44	56	35
Marriage[a]	48	51	50
Indian Autonomies	30	53	24
Average	45	52	42

[a] Although the mean perception of the two closest parties is statistically different, the difference in the median perception is less than one point. For such reason, the "correct" order is defined as "convergence" between such two parties.

Table 1. 5. Mean Voter Uncertainty about the three Parties' Issue Positions (means include only those who placed party on scale)

	Mean Uncertainty			% Placing Party		
	PRI	PAN	PRD	PRI	PAN	PRD
Economic Issues						
Pemex	6.57	6.61	6.02	82	79	73
Nafta	3.84	5.86	6.31	85	83	77
Jobs and Living Standards	5.45	5.59	5.00	82	82	75
Redistribution/ Taxes	5.05	5.27	5.65	78	80	74
Poverty Alleviation/ Subsidies	5.48	4.93	5.96	82	82	75
Economic Planning	5.19	6.15	4.78	80	80	71
Average	**5.26**	**5.73**	**5.60**	**82**	**81**	**74**
Political Issues						
Chiapas	5.23	5.9	5.09	84	81	79
Democracy	6.44	5.96	5.51	82	82	75
Human Rights	5.66	5.73	5.42	82	82	76
Federalism	5.95	6.61	6.23	77	76	71
Corruption	6.91	5.48	5.20	82	81	76
Average	**6.20**	**5.71**	**5.49**	**81**	**89**	**76**
Moral Issues						
Abortion	4.91	4.48	5.54	80	80	71
Indian Autonomy	5.45	6.24	5.98	78	77	75
Marriage/ Wedlock	5.32	5.98	5.33	76	77	70
State-Church	5.88	6.80	5.53	81	80	74
Women-Men	5.42	5.92	4.95	79	80	76
Average	**5.39**	**5.88**	**5.53**	**79**	**79**	**73**

Table 1.6. Regression Analysis of Voter Uncertainty

Independent Variables	Voter Uncertainty about PRI	Voter Uncertainty about PAN	Voter Uncertainty about PRD
Gender	.831	.245	.587
(1=Male)	(.893)	(.881)	(.984)
Education	-1.05***	-.863**	-1.973***
	(.390)	(.387)	(.4305)
PRD Voter	-3.55***	-3.28***	-5.74***
	(1.50)	(1.49)	(1.66)
PAN Voter	-2.98***	-3.55***	-2.12*
	(1.05)	(1.04)	(1.20)
PRI Voter	-3.08**	-1.95	-1.63
	(1.39)	(1.38)	(1.53)
Adjusted R^2	.026	.02	.05

Table 1.7. Logit Analysis of Effect of Uncertainty on Undecided versus Three Major Party Voters

Independent Variables	Voter Reported Being Undecided
Constant	-1.633***
	(.4111)
Education	.1450
	(.0952)
Gender	-.4835**
(1=Male)	(.2155)
Voter Uncertainty	.0237***
About Three Major	(.4111)
Parties	

*p<.10   Predicted Correctly 74.04%
**p<.05   N=470
***p<.01   -2ll 526.864
                   Goodnes of Fit 468.681
                   Chi 2 11.391***

Table 1.8. Multinomial Probit Analysis (PRI base Category)

	PAN	PRD
Independent Variable		
Constant	-.0317	.4926
	(.0278)	(.6241)
Education	.3312***	.3076***
	(.1084)	(.1140)
Gender (1=Male)	.2592	.2171
	(.2404)	(.2457)
PAN Economic Distance	-.0317	
	(.0278)	
PAN Political Distance	-.0936*	
	(.0549)	
PAN Moral Distance	-.0397	
	(.0311)	
PRD Economic Distance		-.0143
		(.0191)
PRD Political Distance		-.0881*
		(-.0529)
PRD Moral Distance		-.0466
		(.0363)
σPANPRD	.9374***	
	(.0805)	

*p<.10
**p<.05
***p<.01

Predicted Correctly
N=292
ll -0.8625

Table 1.9. Multinomial Probit Analysis (PRD base Category)

	PAN	PRI
Independent Variable		
Constant	2.630 (.4530)	3.642*** (.7394)
Education	.0066 (.0883)	-.3098*** (.1155)
Gender (1=Male)	.2484 (.2315)	-.0324 (.2443)
PAN Economic Distance	-.1477** (.0599)	
PAN Political Distance	-.0647 (.0541)	
PAN Moral Distance	-.0783 (.0571)	
PRI Economic Distance		-.1510** (.0657)
PRI Political Distance		-.2496*** (.0841)
PRI Moral Distance		.0318 (.0774)

*p<.10
**p<.05
***p<.01

Predicted Correctly
N=292
ll -0.8768

Table 2. Differences in Mean Total Uncertainty About Each Party by Voting Intention

	Voted PAN	Voted PRD	Voted PAN	Voted PRI	Voted PRD	Voted PRI
Uncertainty About PRD	12.90***	9.19***	12.90	14.95	9.19***	14.59***
Uncertainty About PAN	10.42	10.62	10.42*	12.56	10.62	12.56
Uncertainty About PRI	10.62	9.90	10.52	11.17	9.90	11.17

* Significant at the 90% confidence level
*** Significant at the 99% confidence level

Table 3. Difference in Mean Voter Uncertainty about Their Own Party versus the Other Alternatives

	Uncertainty About PRI	Uncertainty About PRD	Uncertainty About PRI	Uncertainty About PAN	Uncertainty About PRD	Uncertainty About PAN
PRI Voters	11.17***	14.59***	11.17***	12.56***	14.59	12.56
PAN Voters	10.52***	12.90***	10.52	10.42	12.90***	10.42***
PRD Voters	9.90***	9.19***	9.90***	10.62***	9.19***	10.62***

*** Significant at the 99% confidence level

Table 4. Summary Statistics for Variables in Issue Voting Model

	Independent Variables			
Variable	Mean	S. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Gender	.48	.49	0	1
Education	3.64	.50	1	6
Moral Issue Distances of				
PRD	39.09	26.04	2.23	112.45
PRI	39.15	22.45	3.08	102.92
PAN	45.55	24.45	1.50	112.02
Political Issue Distances of				
PRD	40.63	29.23	1.14	118.58
PRI	49.93	22.66	4.66	98.00
PAN	39.59	27.74	.640	105.00
Economic Issue Distances of				
PRD	48.84	27.52	4.07	113.499
PRI	53.29	27.14	3.89	125.73
PAN	43.82	24.35	2.03	98.00

Table 4. Summary Statistics for Variables in Issue Voting Model

Independent Variables

Variable	Mean	S. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Gender	.48	.49	0	1
Education	3.64	.50	1	6
Moral Issue				
Distances of				
PRD	5.62	1.92	1.49	10.73
PRI	5.79	1.58	1.76	10.14
PAN	6.29	1.78	1.22	10.57
Political Issue				
Distances of				
PRD	5.74	2.15	.747	11.22
PRI	6.59	1.40	2.16	9.10
PAN	5.53	1.87	.793	10.24
Economic Issue				
Distances of				
PRD	6.37	1.97	2.01	11.34
PRI	6.69	1.81	2.01	11.20
PAN	6.25	1.78	1.37	10.10

Table 5a. Logit Analysis on PRD

	Coefficient	S.E.
Constant	.5879	.9302
Education	.0163	.1423
PRD Economic Issue Distance	-.0571	.080
PRD Political Issue Distance	-.1413*	.0797
PRD Moral Issue Distance	-.1800**	.0878

*p<.10
**p<.05
***p<.01

Predicted Correctly 81.36%
N=295
-2l 271.317
Goodness of Fit 288.466
chi 2 12.48***

Table 5b. Logit Analysis on PRI

	Coefficient	S.E.
Constant	2.264**	1.002
Education	-.4397***	.1329
PRI Economic Issue Distance	-.1387*	.0851
PRI Political Issue Distance	-.2764***	.1107
PRI Moral Issue Distance	.1078	.0982
	Predicted Correctly 80% N=295 -2l 279.662 Goodness of Fit 279.429 Chi 2 23.705***	

Table 5c. Logit Analysis on PAN

	Coefficient	S.E.
Constant	1.23	.7674
Education	.2239**	.1119
PAN Economic Issue Distance	-.1325*	.0745
PAN Political Issue Distance	-.0558	.0625
PAN Moral Issue Distance	-.0714	.0680

Predicted Correctly 69%
N=295
-2l 389.397
Goodness of Fit 293.319
Chi 2 25.705***

Figure 1.1. Median Placement of the Parties and Median Self-placement of the Different Economic Issues (numbers are percentage placed on each point of scale).

PEMEX[a]

	PRI/PRD **M**			PAN		
	Þ Þ			Þ		
41.09	8.91	5.26	11.74	5.26	6.68	21.07

Remain in government's   Should be privatized
Hands

NAFTA[a]

	PRD			**M**	PAN		PRI
	Þ			Þ	Þ		Þ
20.57	5.33	5.91		21.79	8.35	7.33	30.75

Is harmful for Mexico   Benefits Mexico

Jobs and Standard of Living

	PRD		PAN/**M** PRI			
	Þ		Þ Þ			
26.15	7.58	8.78	24.35	5.99	6.59	20.56

Government should see to a   Gov't let each person
job and standard of living   get on own

Redistribution/Taxes

		PRD	**M**	PAN PRI		
		Þ	Þ	Þ Þ		
19.88	6.29	8.52	21.7	6.09	9.33	28.19

Government should redistribute   Gov't should not tax more
Wealth taxing the rich   the rich because there will be less
                                                                                               investment

Poverty/Subsidies versus Buisness Activity

		PRD		PRI	**M**	PAN	
		Þ		Þ	Þ	Þ	
16.33	3.43	4.44	17.74	5.44		8.87	43.75

Government should fight poverty   Gov't should instead
by increasing subsidies   promote the development
                                                                                     of enterprises and jobs

Economic Planning

---

[a] Reversed from actual scoring to make a "left-wing" response closer to 1 and a right-wing response close to 7.

```
      PRI  PRD    M            PAN
      Þ Þ         Þ            Þ
37.8            9.96        7.11        18.5        3.66        4.07        18.9
Government should                                                  The economy is a
direct and plan the economy                                 matter of private initiative
```
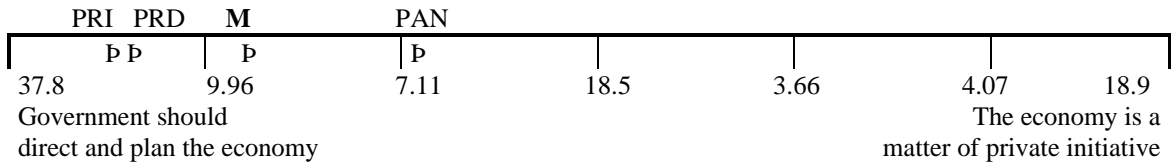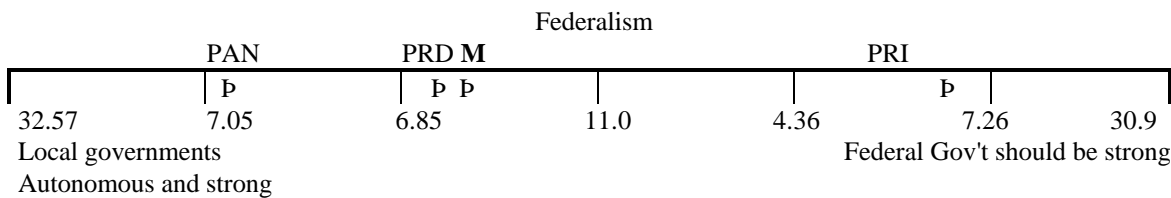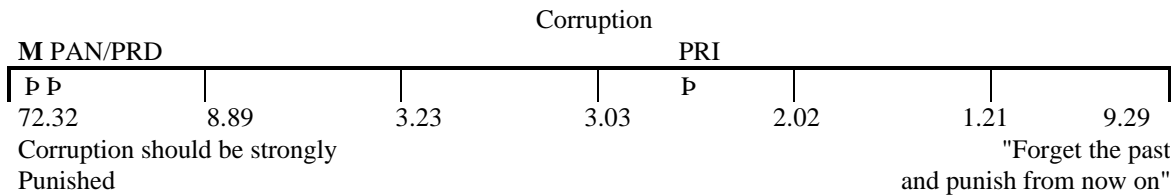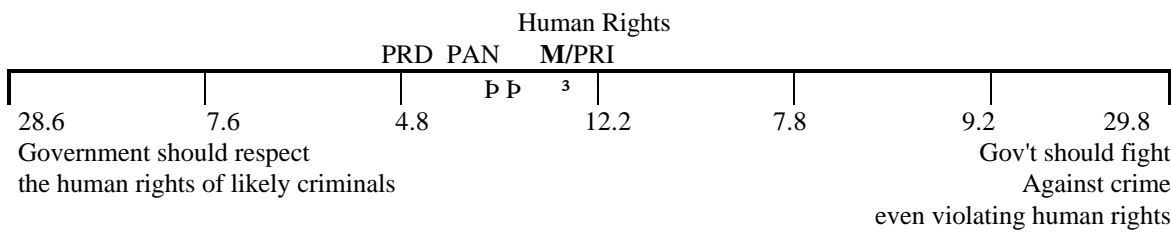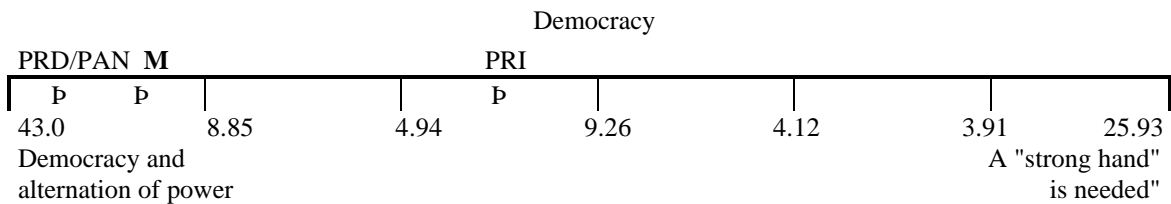
Figure 1.2. Median Placement of the Parties and Median Self-placement of the Different Political Issues (numbers are percentage placed on each point on scale).

Democracy

```
PRD/PAN  M                          PRI
  Þ       Þ                    Þ
43.0            8.85        4.94        9.26        4.12        3.91        25.93
Democracy and                                                      A "strong hand"
alternation of power                                                  is needed"
```

Human Rights

```
              PRD  PAN     M/PRI
                     Þ Þ    3
28.6            7.6         4.8        12.2        7.8         9.2         29.8
Government should respect                                        Gov't should fight
the human rights of likely criminals                             Against crime
                                                               even violating human rights
```

Corruption

```
M PAN/PRD                              PRI
Þ Þ                              Þ
72.32           8.89        3.23        3.03        2.02        1.21        9.29
Corruption should be strongly                                      "Forget the past
Punished                                                     and punish from now on"
```

Federalism

```
        PAN            PRD M                        PRI
         Þ             Þ Þ                        Þ
32.57           7.05        6.85        11.0        4.36        7.26        30.9
Local governments                                  Federal Gov't should be strong
Autonomous and strong
```

Chiapas/EZLN[b]

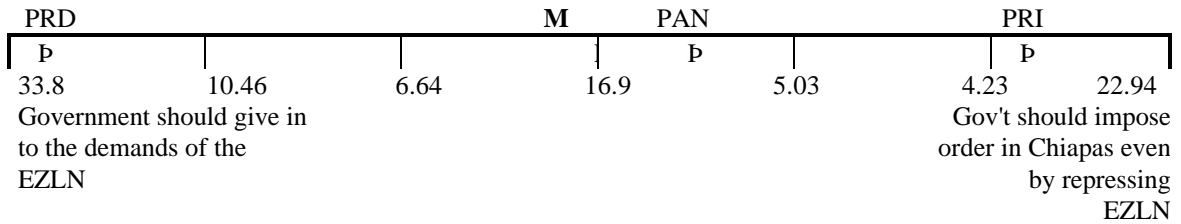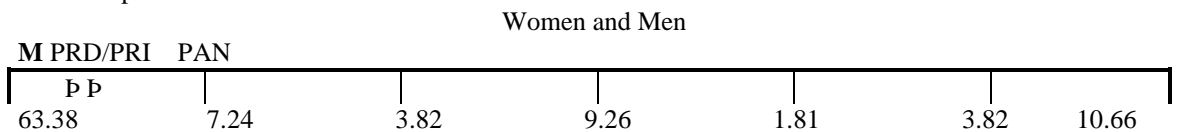[b] Reversed from actual scoring to make an "anti-status quo" response closer to 1 and a "pro-statos quo" closer to 7.

PRD   **M**   PAN   PRI

33.8	10.46	6.64	16.9	5.03	4.23	22.94

Government should give in
to the demands of the
EZLN

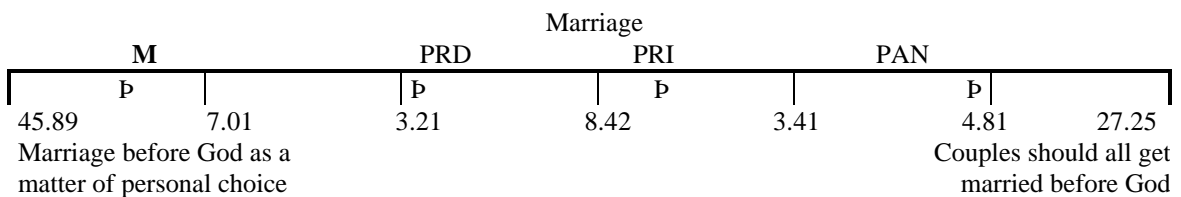Gov't should impose
order in Chiapas even
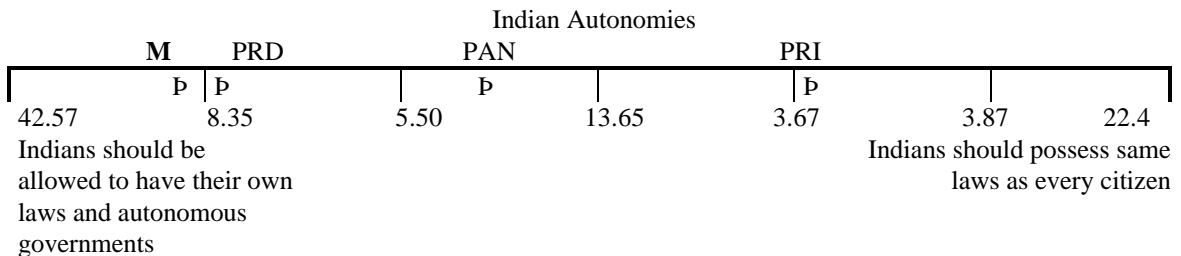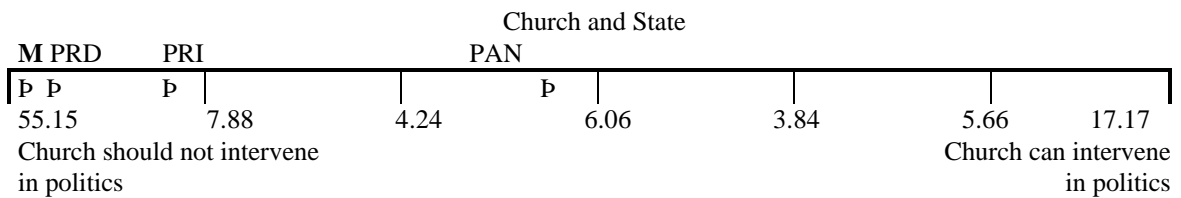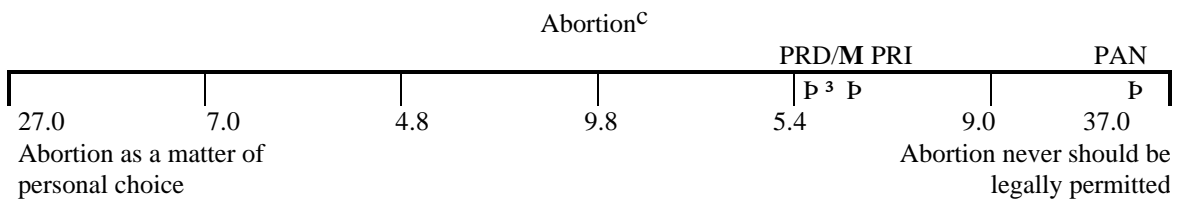by repressing
EZLN

Figure 1.3. Median Placement of the Parties and Median Self-placement of the Different Moral Issues (numbers are percentage placed on each point on scale).

Abortion[c]

PRD/**M** PRI   PAN

Þ ³ Þ   Þ

27.0	7.0	4.8	9.8	5.4	9.0	37.0

Abortion as a matter of
personal choice

Abortion never should be
legally permitted

Church and State

M PRD   PRI   PAN

Þ Þ   Þ   Þ

55.15	7.88	4.24	6.06	3.84	5.66	17.17

Church should not intervene
in politics

Church can intervene
in politics

Indian Autonomies

       M   PRD   PAN   PRI

    Þ Þ   Þ   Þ

42.57	8.35	5.50	13.65	3.67	3.87	22.4

Indians should be
allowed to have their own
laws and autonomous
governments

Indians should possess same
laws as every citizen

Marriage

      M   PRD   PRI   PAN

    Þ   Þ   Þ   Þ

45.89	7.01	3.21	8.42	3.41	4.81	27.25

Marriage before God as a
matter of personal choice

Couples should all get
married before God

Women and Men

M PRD/PRI   PAN

Þ Þ

63.38	7.24	3.82	9.26	1.81	3.82	10.66

Should possess equal job   Women should take
Opportunities/ share responsibilities   care of children/men
with children   of household economy

Mean Voter Uncertainty by Stated Voting Intention (mean uncertainty includes those who could not place party on scale who are coded as "maximally uncertain")
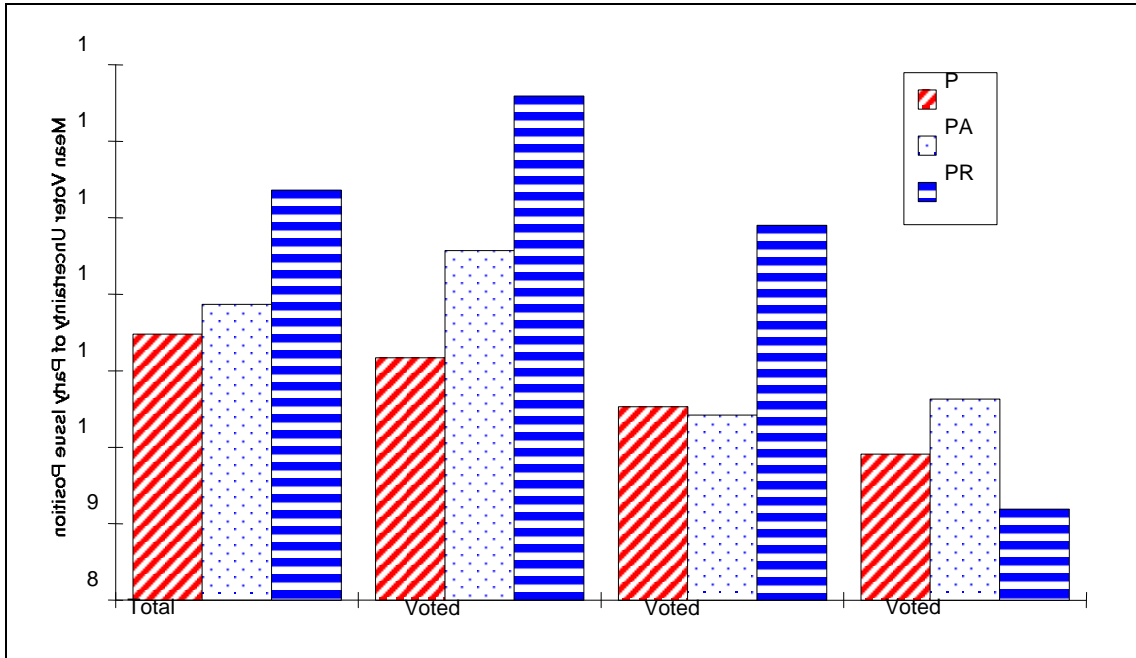

Figure 1.4.

Appendix

Survey Questions.

SURVEY ON ISSUES
Date: July 1995
Cities: Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey.

1. Some people think that since the government is inefficient administering enterprises, PEMEX should be privatized. Others believe that PEMEX is the Nation's patrimony and that it should hence remain in the government's hands. With which of these two opinions do you identify the most. Assume that the persons that hold the first statement are in one extreme of the scale, that is in number 1, and the ones that hold the second opinion are in the other extreme, that is in number 7. Of course, there are also persons that hold opinions somewhere in between these two extreme positions, in the numbers 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Where do you locate yourself?

```
1            2            3            4            5            6      7
|            |            |            |            |            |            |
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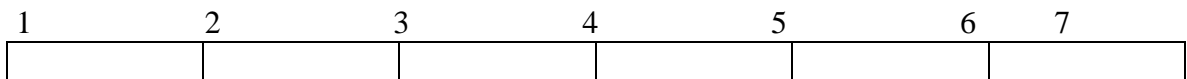
In which point of the scale would you place the PRI, the PAN and the PRD?

2. There are several opinions on the Chiapas armed rebellion. Some people think that the government should order the army to impose order in the state, which might imply repressing the Zapatistas. Others think that the government should immediately order the army to withdraw from Chiapas and agree to all the Zapatista demands. Where do you place yourself in the same 1 to 7 scale? Where do you think the PAN, the PRI and the PRD are located?

3. There are several opinions regarding abortion. Some people think that abortion should never be allowed by laws. Others believe that all women, by law, should possess the right to get an abortion as a matter of personal choice.

4. Some persons believe that the government should see that everybody has a job and a decent quality of life. Others believe that each person should be responsible for himself or herself without the government's help.

5. Some people think that the government should intervene more in economic planning, for example, fixing prices, administering public enterprises and directly generating jobs. Others think that economic planning should be done by the private sector and that the government should intervene as little as possible in the economy.

6. There are several opinions on NAFTA. Some believe that NAFTA is a great opportunity for Mexico and that through international trade our country will be able to grow more. Others believe that NAFTA has harmed Mexico, forcing many firms to go bankrupt, and that the government should hence get us out of it.

7. Some people believe that democracy and that there can be alternation of power in government are the best political alternatives for Mexico. Others, on the other hand, believe that democracy brings instability and that the best political option for Mexico today is a "strong hand" that can impose order.

8. Some people believe that the indigenous communities should be allowed to possess political autonomous territories, where Indian laws and customs are applied and Indian representatives are elected. Others are against Indian autonomy and think that indigenous groups should obey the same laws applied to all the other citizens, even though these laws are sometimes in opposition to their own values and customs.

9. Some people think that the respect for human rights is a moral value. Thus, when fighting against crime, the government should strictly respect the human rights of criminals. Others, on the other hand, think that the government should be tough against crime even though this might imply violating the human rights of criminals.

10. Some people think that local or state authorities should posses more autonomy, more resources and more ability to define the direction of their own political and economic development without intervention from the federal government. Others believe that local authorities are corrupt and inefficient, and that the federal government should hence keep the capacity to define the direction of local development and directly intervene in the states when there are political conflicts.

11. Some people think that the government's main goal should be fighting against poverty subsidizing basic food-stuffs, health, education, and housing. Others

believe that the government's main goal should be to promote the development of private enterprises that can generate wealth and jobs.

12. Some people believe that income inequality should be diminished by transferring resources from the rich to the poor through an increase of taxes. Others believe that the government should not take form the rich to give it to the poor, because if the rich are forced to pay more taxes, less private firms will exist.

13. Some people believe that it is perfectly all right to live with someone without getting married because the decision to marry or not to marry is a personal one. Others believe that it is imperative to get married either before the state or the church in order to live with someone.

14. Some believe that women should posses the same job opportunities and earn the same salary as men and that both should share the same responsibilities in providing money for the house and in raising and educating children. Others believe that in the family, the man should be mainly in charge of the economic responsibilities and the woman should be mainly in charge of educating children. In this sense, it is perfectly appropriate that men posses better job opportunities and better salaries.

15. Some people believe that the church should not intervene in politics, and that the government should hence prohibit priests to make their political opinions public, to get involved in political organizations and to vote. Others believe that the church should be free to get involved in politics and that the only restriction to the political activities of priests should be that they are legal.

16. Some people believe that the government should ruthlessly punish, even with jail, all the corrupt politicians and public authorities. Others believe that we should try to avoid political revenges and violence among politicians and that the government should thus "forgive what is already the past", punishing corruption from now on.

17. If elections were today, for which party would you vote?
1) PAN 2) PRD 3) PRI
4) Other 5) None 6) Don't know.

Personal Data:

1. Sex 1) Male   2) Female.

2. Age

3. Education.
1)None   2)Primary School   3)Secondary School
4)High School5)College and post-graduate education.
6) Didn't Answer.

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Table 1.3. Percentages Meeting Various "Issue Criteria" on Different Dimensions

Issue Area	I. Placed Self on Scale	II. Placed at least two parties	Placed all three parties	III. Saw difference between at least two parties	IV. Saw "Correct" Difference PAN and PRD, If applicable	Saw "Correct" difference PRI and PAN, if applicable	Saw "Correct" Difference PRI and PRD, if applicable.	Of those who saw PAN and PRD different, percentage who ordered parties "correctly"	Of Those who saw PRI and PAN different, percentage who ordered parties "correctly"	Of Those who saw PRI and PRD different, percentage who ordered parties "correctly"	V. Saw difference between the three, if applicable	Got all three "correct"
Economic Issues												
PEMEX	98	80	69	58	28	32		71	71			11
Economic Planing	98	86	71	48	23	26	18	62	67	54		13
NAFTA	98	84	77	59	30	37	45	75	84	87	21	13
Redistribution /Taxes	98	79	74	45	26	13	28	72	45	74		9
Jobs and Quality of Life	100	81	73	46	23		28	70		75		11
Poverty/ Subsidies	99	81	74	44	29	21	25	80	71	66	14	6
Average	99	82	73	50	27	26	29	72	68	71	18	11
Political Issues												
Democracy	97	83	75	46		24	28		68	71		16
Corruption	99	82	76	47		35	35		86	86		23
Human Rights	100	82	76	40		22	22		66	67		13
Chiapas	99	83	73	57	30	31	43	77	76	86	20	11
Federalism	98	79	73	43	14	28	27	55	79	80		10
Average	99	82	75	47	22	28	31	66	75	78	20	15

Table 1.3. Percentages Meeting Various "Issue Criteria" on Different Dimensions (continued)

Issue Area	I. Placed Self on Scale	II. Placed at least two parties	Placed all three parties	III. Saw difference between at least two parties	IV. Saw "Correct" Difference PAN and PRD, if applicable	Saw "Correct" difference PRI and PAN, if applicable	Saw "Correct" Difference PRI and PRD, if applicable.	Of those who saw PAN and PRD different, percentage who ordered parties "correct"	Of Those who saw PRI and PAN different, percentage who ordered parties "correct"	Of Those who saw PRI and PRD different, percentage who ordered parties "correct"	Saw difference between the three	V. Got all three "correct"
Moral Issues												
Abortion	99	78	69	34	20	20		80	79		12	9
Church and State	99	80	74	44	26	22		69	63		14	12
Marriage	99	76	70	36	25	21		85	72		13	11
Women-Men	99	79	75	32	14	12		60	48			7
Indian Autonomies	98	80	72	45	21	21	31	66	68	77	17	6
Average	99	79	72	38	21	19	31	72	66	68	13	9

Note: "If applicable" refers to hypotheses on table 7.1. When I don not expect parties to be different, I do not test hypothesis for differences.