Explaining the Quality of New Democracies:
Actors, Institutions, and Socioeconomic Structure in Mexico's States

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ABSTRACT
FREDERICK SOLT:
Explaining the Quality of New Democracies:
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(Under the direction of Professor Evelyne Huber)

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, governments selected in contested elections replaced authoritarian regimes in dozens of countries around the world. As the initial euphoria subsided, however, observers came to realize that contested elections, commonly considered the hallmark of democracy, did not assure that national leaders would share power with other elected representatives, allow their fellow citizens to participate in politics free from pressure, or even respond to public demands for improved public services. The extent to which the new regimes matched widely held expectations of democracy, in short, could not be assumed. The question of why some new democracies have performed better than others in these respects motivates this dissertation; I draw on the experiences of Mexico's states to answer it.

Beginning in the late 1980s, for the first time since the country's independence nearly two centuries before, the notoriously centralized Mexican federal government devolved wide swaths of policy to the states, granted state governments autonomy to pursue reforms, and allowed increasingly competitive state politics to yield growing opposition-party representation. In many states, governments demonstrated a new respect for civil and political rights and became more responsive and effective in meeting their citizens' needs. The new, robust Mexican federalism, however, also allowed states

to take a different course: the authoritarian practices of some governments belied the appearance of democracy provided by regular, contested elections.

Previous research has identified many potential explanations for the quality of new democracies, but these hypotheses have not been systematically and convincingly tested against each other. Using a subnational comparative research design and a combination of methodologies, I examine the differences across Mexico's states to provide such a test. My analyses reveal that economic inequality, the strength of the radical democratic opposition, and legislative pluralism have strong and consistent effects on democratic quality. These findings demonstrate that each of the three major theoretical approaches to the study of democracy—political actors, institutional characteristics, and socioeconomic structure—makes an important contribution to our understanding of the origins of the quality of new democracies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"We are, today, building democracy in the provinces," declared Vicente Fox after taking office as governor of the Mexican state of Guanajuato in 1995. There were many reasons to believe that Fox was right. The progress toward the democratization of Mexico's federal government had been fitful, with the long-ruling *Partido Revolucionario Institutional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI) seemingly granting concessions on the one hand only to take them away with the other.[1] But for the first time since the country's independence nearly two centuries before, the notoriously centralized federal government had devolved wide swaths of policy to the states, granted state governments the autonomy to pursue reforms, and allowed increasingly competitive state politics to yield a growing number of opposition-party governors.[2] In many states, as Fox suggested, governments were demonstrating a new respect for civil and political

[1] The 1990 electoral reform, for example, placed some restrictions on the PRI's ability to manipulate election results, but it also guaranteed that the largest party receiving at least 35% of the vote would receive a majority in the lower house of the Mexican congress while making electoral coalitions more difficult. The net result ensured that the PRI would retain its legislative majority in the face of a strong but fragmented opposition (Bruhn 1997, 244-245).

[2] The parallel processes of devolution and subnational political liberalization in Mexico attracted intense scholarly attention and generated an extensive literature. Victoria Rodríguez and Peter Ward made especially important contributions to the understanding of the newly robust Mexican federalism (see Rodríguez 1992; Rodríguez 1997; Ward and Rodríguez 1999b; Ward and Rodríguez 1999a). Lujambio (2000) offers perhaps the best overview of the process of Mexico's subnational political liberalization.

rights and were becoming more responsive and effective in meeting their citizens' needs. The new, robust Mexican federalism, however, was also allowing states to take a different course: the authoritarian practices of some state governments belied the appearance of democracy provided by their regular, contested elections.

The widely varying experiences of the Mexican states mirrored those of the many newly democratic countries that formed the third wave of democratization. During the last quarter of the twentieth century, governments selected in contested elections replaced authoritarian regimes in dozens of countries around the world. As the initial euphoria subsided, however, observers came to realize that elections, commonly considered the hallmark of democracy, did not assure that national leaders would allow their fellow citizens to participate in politics free from pressure, whether physical or economic; or share power with other elected, representative institutions; or even respond to public demands for improvements in government services. The extent to which the new regimes matched the widely held expectations of democracy, in short, could not be assumed. The question of why some new democracies have performed better than others in these respects motivates this dissertation; I draw on the experiences of the Mexican states to answer it.

Previous research has identified many potential explanations for the quality of new democracies, but these hypotheses have not been systematically and convincingly tested against each other. Using a subnational comparative research design and a combination of methodologies, I examine the differences across Mexico's states to provide such a test. My analyses reveal that economic inequality, the strength of the radical democratic opposition, and legislative pluralism have strong and consistent effects

on democratic quality. These findings demonstrate that each of the major theoretical approaches to the study of democracy— socioeconomic structure, the strategic interaction of important political actors, and institutional characteristics—makes an important contribution to our understanding of the origins of the quality of new democracies.

Empirical Research on Democratic Quality

The divergence between the expectations for new democracies and the reality led many political scientists to move beyond research on the circumstances that tended to induce or prevent transitions from authoritarian rule and focus on the *quality* of new democracies. As one would expect from a young field of inquiry, many of the first important contributions in the study of the origins of democratic quality were primarily theoretical. Karl (1990), for example, had been working on how the strategic decisions of important political actors affected the likelihood of a democratic breakthrough and was quick to offer the theoretical grounds to expect that the particular strategic interactions that had resulted in competitive elections would shape the quality of the resulting democracies. In another early and influential work, O'Donnell (1994) provided the theoretical underpinnings for the expectation that re–democratizing countries would be of higher democratic quality than new democracies without prior experience with democratic institutions. Although it is clear that these and other early works were grounded in their authors' familiarity with the experiences of democratizing countries, it is just as clear that their emphasis was on the elaboration of theories and concepts rather than empirical investigation.

Empirical study of the causes of the quality of newly democratic governments has lagged behind the early theoretical works. As in other topics of interest in comparative politics, this empirical work has proceeded, for the most part, on one of two tracks: in-depth studies of one or a few countries and cross-national studies that examine many more cases but in much less detail. Both of these approaches have strengths, but their weaknesses have yet to be overcome in the study of democratic quality.

Studies of one or a few countries have usefully defined and elaborated the issues involving the quality of new democracies: We know that many newly democratic governments often neglect their citizens' needs and refuse to respect basic civil and political rights because of the many careful case studies that document the experiences of one or a few countries.[3] This approach can also yield exceptionally high quality data for the study of new democracies. Measurement validity is rarely problematic; the familiarity gained by close study of a single country prevents investigators from relying on indicators that fail to match their concepts. Moreover, the thoughts and statements of politicians, public officials, and other involved figures available to researchers conducting case studies can constitute very convincing evidence for or against a hypothesized explanation. Despite these strengths, studies of one or a few countries face insurmountable difficulties in adjudicating between rival hypotheses when the number of variables to be considered exceeds the number of outcomes to be explained (Collier 1993). Even if a single explanation can be identified in such research, it may depend on antecedent conditions that can be difficult to identify in the context of one or a few countries (Van Evera 1997, 51-53). For this reasons, the many causal hypotheses

[3] David Collier and Steven Levitsky (1997) present a typology of the shortcomings attributed to many new democracies in this literature.

suggested by the case-study literature for differences in democratic quality may not apply beyond the context that generated them and, indeed, may not even adequately explain outcomes in that context.

Cross-national investigations into the causes of quality of new democracies, on the other hand, have faced a different set of obstacles. Examining the experiences of many countries provides more opportunities to evaluate the general applicability of rival hypotheses, typically through statistical techniques, but the quality of available evidence for use in such studies is questionable. Existing cross-national datasets on the quality of democracy, although widely used, suffer from serious defects.

Freedom House (2002), perhaps the most commonly used cross-national dataset on democratic quality, scores countries on two seven-point scales representing respect for political rights and for civil liberties.[4] Scholars typically add these two scores together to generate a single, thirteen-point scale of the quality of democracy. However, the Freedom House coding rules consist of "little more than a 'checklist'" of attributes to be considered, with little indication of their relative importance or how actual conditions are translated into scores (Munck and Verkuilen 2002, 14). The lack of explicit rules for coding cases has resulted generally in doubts regarding the reliability and validity of the Freedom House dataset and specifically in two systematic biases: first, the scores are consistently biased against leftist governments, and second, the scoring has become considerably stricter over time (Mainwaring, Brinks, and Pérez-Liñán 2001).

The Polity IV dataset is also commonly used as a measure of democratic quality. It consists of two scales ranging from 0 to 10, one measuring characteristics associated

[4] The Freedom House dataset is available for download at the project website: <www.freedomhouse.org>.

with democracy and the other measuring characteristics associated with autocracy.[5] These scales are based on five dimensions—the competitiveness of the political system, the regulation of political participation, the competitiveness of executive recruitment, the openness of executive recruitment, and the constraints on the chief executive—each of which has multiple indicators (Marshall et al. 2002). Subtracting the autocracy scores from the democracy scores generates a single scale of the quality of democracy. Despite the apparent sophistication of the Polity IV coding procedure, it has been faulted for omitting measures of two key aspects of democracy: the inclusiveness of political participation and, more seriously given the relative scarcity of formal suffrage restrictions in recent times, respect for human rights and civil liberties (Mainwaring, Brinks, and Pérez-Liñán 2001). Further, the weighting of the five dimensions has resulted in a scale that effectively "collapses in the contemporary epoch into a straightforward split on whether there are substantial constraints on the chief executive" (Gleditsh and Ward 1997, 380).

A third cross-national dataset on the quality of democracy was constructed by Vanhanan (1997). It measures democratic quality through the uncomplicated procedure of multiplying the proportion of the population that voted in the last election by the share of all votes that went to parties other than the largest. Despite the intuitive appeal of an index based on such simple indicators of participation and competition, neither of these indicators can be justified as a component of democratic quality. Participation in elections can have very different meanings for voters whose ballot choices are limited by the exclusion of some opposition parties, for those who cast their votes in exchange for

[5] The Polity IV data is available for download at the project website: <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity/index.htm>.

particularistic patronage benefits, and for those enjoying fully free and fair elections; not all of these meanings equate participation with democracy (see, for example, the essays collected in Hermet, Rose, and Rouquié 1978). Although the share of votes going to parties other than the largest helps to identify cases in which opposing the government is illegal or highly restricted, it is not at all clear that a country in which the largest party won 46% of the vote, as in Sweden in the early 1980s, is only about half as democratic as one where the largest party won 24%, as in neighboring Finland during the same period (cf. Mainwaring, Brinks, and Pérez-Liñán 2001, 60).

The three cross-national datasets are highly correlated with each other, but this does not mean that, despite their respective flaws, they all capture the underlying essence of democratic quality sufficiently well to allow us to draw conclusions about its causes. Casper and Tufis (2003) have convincingly demonstrated that, despite their intercorrelations, the three measures of democratic quality yield very different conclusions regarding the effects of many commonly hypothesized explanations including per capita income, trade openness, presidentialism, and legislative pluralism.

If the available cross-national data on the quality of democracy are only low grade, the existing quantitative data on many of its most important hypothesized causes are even worse. Relative equality in the distribution of economic resources has been linked to democratic governance for millennia, for example, but the best available cross-national data on inequality are plagued by differences in the methodologies employed by the national surveys on which they are based, rendering the observations only roughly comparable at best (Deininger and Squire 1996; Londoño and Székely 1997). Moreover, no data at all are available on inequality and many other important potential explanations

in many newly democratic countries.[6] Ragin (1987, 70) has argued that "[w]ide-ranging cross-national studies . . . are biased in favor of structural explanations" as opposed to variables based on human agency and political processes, but this "bias" can be seen as simply the product of the absence of good-quality cross-national data measuring these variables: hypotheses that are excluded from the analysis for lack of data cannot, of course, receive any support.[7] Cross-national studies often pay scant attention to issues of the quality and comparability of the data they analyze, but these issues have thus far prevented the accumulation of knowledge on the origins of the quality of new democracies.

To summarize, studies based on one or a few countries often generate rich, high quality data, but are poorly equipped to adjudicate among the many extant hypotheses of causes of the quality of new democracies, and their conclusions may not hold beyond the countries studied. Cross-national analyses, conversely, examine the many observations needed to test rival hypotheses and establish general relationships, but, despite ongoing efforts, have been shackled by the low grade of data available on democratic quality and many other important variables. The result of this combination of weaknesses for the

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[6] Indeed, the authors of one recent paper on democratic transitions went to extreme lengths to overcome these issues by estimating economic inequality indirectly as the residual of a regression of infant mortality on indicators of economic development and natural disasters on the grounds that "a major portion of the residual variability . . . can be attributed to differentials in the access to assets and services" (Epstein et al. 2003, 9-10). Although ingenious, there is little way to ascertain the success of this indicator in actually measuring inequality in economic resources across nations.

[7] The findings of cross-national research that such actor-centered variables as political protests and divisions within the authoritarian regime and in the democratic opposition had large and consistent effects on democratic transitions in Africa demonstrates that such explanations are compatible with cross-national work when the data needed to test them are available (see Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Solt 2001).

present state of scholarship has been a growing proliferation of plausible hypotheses, none of which have been conclusively disconfirmed or convincingly supported.

Actors, Institutions, and Structure in the Study of Democratic Quality

The many hypothetical explanations for the quality of new democracies arise from three major theoretical approaches. The first approach, with roots in the highly influential multivolume study of democratic transitions edited by O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead (1986), focuses on the strategic decisions of important actors at critical moments. The balance and interaction of political forces within and between regime and opposition, according to these hypotheses, are the critical determinants of transition outcomes and the quality of the resulting democracies. Actor-centered hypotheses have perhaps suffered most from the shortcomings of the common research designs described above. In the absence of comparable cross-national data, actor-centered hypotheses on democratization and democratic quality have been supported mainly by studies of one or a few countries over relatively short time periods, that is, research designs in which antecedent conditions are particularly hard to discern and rival hypotheses are rarely considered—if the variables suggested by those alternate hypotheses vary at all (cf. Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992, 33).

A second set of hypotheses concerns institutional factors. The arrangements and political compositions of the basic institutions of government, particularly the executive and the legislature, are frequently considered important to democratic development. Juan Linz's (1990) arguments on the advantages of parliamentary systems for the stability of new democracies provoked an extensive literature on the effects of divided government

and legislative pluralism on presidential democracies (examples include Shugart and Carey 1992; Mainwaring 1993; Jones 1995; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997b). Although such factors often lend themselves to straightforward measurement, and cross-national studies based on these measures have made notable advances in our understanding of the effects of some institutional configurations on the survival of democratic regimes, the lack of reliable cross-national data on democratic quality has prevented similarly convincing advances in the work on that subject.[8] Single-country studies on institutions like judiciaries whose proper functioning tends to enhance the quality of democratic government, on the other hand, have thus far yielded little hint of the circumstances that facilitate their development (see, for example, the works collected in Schedler, Diamond, and Plattner 1999).

The final approach links democracy and its quality to aspects of socioeconomic structure. Arguments that regime characteristics can be traced to the social and economic attributes of a society have been advanced by many students of politics, from the ancient Greek philosophers through the classical political economists of the nineteenth century to contemporary political scientists. Some socioeconomic explanations point to modernization, in the form of either economic or cultural development, as the source of differences in democracies (see, e.g., Lipset 1960; Almond and Verba 1963). Class structure is central to other socioeconomic explanations of democratic quality, with large, labor-intensive agricultural sectors and other societal configurations characterized by high levels of economic inequality seen as providing the wealthiest members of society

[8] The works of Arend Lijphart (1999) and G. Bingham Powell (2000) on the differences generated by majoritarian and proportional-representation electoral rules constitute a partial exception, but, unusually for cross-national studies, neither accounts for alternate hypotheses for the differences in democratic quality that they observed.

with the resources to resist pressures for responsive government and respect for civil and political rights (Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens 1997). Like the other two groups of hypotheses, explanations based on socioeconomic structure remain largely untested due to the weaknesses of the most common research designs. On the one hand, studies of one or a few similar countries are poorly suited to capture the effects of socioeconomic structure, which tends to vary only slowly over time (Ragin 1987, 70). On the other, cross-national studies have been unable to overcome their measurement issues.

Advantages of a Subnational Comparative Research Design

The subnational comparative research design employed in this dissertation provides a means of combining the best attributes of works on one or a few countries and of cross-national research to determine which of these many hypotheses have the power to explain differences in the quality of new democracies. The quality of quantitative data on many aspects of subnational units within a single country is considerably higher than that of datasets often used in cross-national work. Measurement validity is less likely to be problematic in subnational contexts for two reasons. First, because it is conducted within a single country, subnational comparative research facilitates the acquisition of the detailed knowledge needed to reduce errors in the selection of measures in the same manner as works examining one or a few countries. Second, subnational units within a single country share many commonalities that assist in the identification of indicators for even the most difficult to measure concepts. Accurate indicators of the rule of law, for example, are easier to identify when all of the units of observation share a common set of laws. Comparability is also easier to ensure in subnational work; government-collected

statistics in particular are often more comparable for subnational units than individual countries because they are typically collected by the same central government agency using a single methodology. For these reasons, the dataset on the quality of democracy and its causes in Mexico's states used in this dissertation represents a substantial improvement in reliability and validity over existing cross-national data on the quality of new democracies.

Subnational comparative work also offers one advantage offered by cross-national research over studies of one or a few countries: a sufficiently large number of observations to test and evaluate a multitude of alternate hypotheses (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 219-221; Snyder 2001, 95). Given the abundance of explanations that have been offered for differences in the quality of newly democratic governments, the ability to adjudicate among these supposed causes is essential for the advancement of our knowledge on the subject. By comparing the diverging experiences of the thirty-one state governments of Mexico, this dissertation is able to identify which of the many aspects of political agency, institutional development, and socioeconomic structure suggested in the literature have strong and consistent effects on democratic quality in a manner that would be impossible in a study of the governments of one or a few countries.

The subnational comparative research design employed in this dissertation therefore combines the best attributes of case-study and cross-national approaches in a fashion particularly useful for overcoming the stumbling blocks that have thus far hobbled the study of the causes of differences in the quality of new democracies. This design is not, however, without its own potential weaknesses. As a single-country study, this dissertation shares with works on one or a few countries the potential for problems of

generalizability; the relationships it reveals may depend on antecedent conditions that may not be present in other contexts (Snyder 2001, 103). One antecedent condition inherent in a subnational comparative design may be particularly troublesome: the units of observation are, of course, not independent nations. The state governments of Mexico are all constrained to some degree by their relationship to the federal government; certain aspects of their democratization may have unfolded differently but for this constraint. A related weakness of subnational comparative work is that many variables do not, in fact, vary within a single country; although this issue does not bias findings regarding other hypotheses, it does prevent any conclusions from being drawn about the effect of the constant "variables" (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 140-141). Nevertheless, an awareness of these potential difficulties can help prevent drawing unjustifiably broad conclusions, and the many advantages of the subnational comparative research design make it well suited to expand our knowledge of the origins of the quality of new democracies.

Outline of Chapters

This study of the origins of the quality of new democracies begins by taking advantage of the wide variation in the experiences of the thirty-one Mexican states since the formerly highly centralized federal government yielded more power and autonomy to the state governments than they had ever before enjoyed. Chapter 2 reviews the many conceptualizations used in the comparative study of democracy and concludes that the quality of a democracy depends not only on the existence of contested elections, but also on the extent to which civil and political rights are respected and institutionally protected

as well as on the responsiveness of government to citizen needs. Based on this conceptualization, the chapter then identifies a number of reliable indicators of the democratic quality of Mexico's state governments. These aspects of democratic quality are highly correlated: from the use of political violence to the financing of legislatures to the provision of basic education, some state governments consistently demonstrated a higher quality of democracy than others. This pattern allows the creation of an index that maps the quality of Mexico's state governments without privileging the idiosyncrasies of any single indicator. This index, I confirm, matches both conventional wisdom and more limited datasets measuring aspects of democracy across the states, providing additional assurance of its validity.

In Chapter 3, I draw on the extensive literatures on democracy and democratization and on Mexican state politics to collect ten actor-centered, institutional, and socioeconomic-structural hypotheses that, although often suggested, have not previously been convincingly and systematically tested against each other. Taking advantage of the high-quality data available across the Mexican states, I demonstrate the wide variation across the states on each of the variables of interest corresponding to these common hypotheses. Employing the index of democratic quality derived in the preceding chapter as my dependent variable, I use the experiences of the Mexican states to perform statistical tests on the competing hypotheses and determine which factors consistently contribute to the quality of their newly democratic governments. Intriguingly, I find support for one hypothesis from each the three major theoretical approaches. Economic inequality, an aspect of socioeconomic structure; the strength of the radical opposition, in line with actor-centered predictions; and legislative pluralism,

an institutional characteristic, all demonstrate strong and consistent effects on democratic quality across Mexico's states. Many other often-suggested factors, such as alternation in government or cultural differences between Mexico's Spanish-speaking and traditional-indigenous populations, do not display a direct impact.

The following three chapters take advantage of the flexibility of the subnational comparative research design. Quantitative analyses like those presented in Chapters 2 and 3 are well suited to identifying those hypotheses with explanatory power, but they often do a bad job of helping us understand *why* an association between two variables exists—the mechanisms between apparent cause and effect (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992, 29-30). Case studies are much better suited for such investigations (Rueschemeyer and Stephens 1997; Van Evera 1997, 64-67). By shifting the research focus from quantitative comparisons of all thirty-one states to closer examinations of the experiences of a few carefully selected states, I take advantage of the power of case studies to discern how each of the three variables found to affect democratic quality—legislative pluralism, the strength of the radical opposition, and economic inequality—actually shapes politics in new democracies.

Chapter 4 examines the effects of legislative pluralism, arguing that more pluralism generates higher democratic quality by fostering the institutionalization of legislatures as powerful and independent branches of government. First, it takes up and disconfirms a very plausible alternate explanation for the association between the number of parties with significant representation in the legislature and the quality of democracy, namely that democratization generates pluralism rather than the other way around. Drawing on earlier research on the institutionalization of Mexico's state legislatures, the

chapter then presents a controlled comparison of three central Mexican state legislatures to demonstrate legislative pluralism's effects on the development of the legislatures and to confirm that competition in the electorate does not have an independent direct effect on this process. Finally, I trace the process by which an increase in pluralism in the state legislature of Michoacán rapidly transformed the body into an institution strong enough to hold the executive accountable and prevent abuses of power. The chapter concludes by placing its findings in the context of recent works on presidential systems of democracy and outlining its implications for efforts to design appropriate electoral systems in newly democratic countries.

In Chapter 5, I turn to the role of the radical democratic opposition. The explanation for why stronger radical oppositions result in lower quality democracies is rooted in the well developed actor-centered theory of democratic transitions. When moderates in the opposition negotiate a transition with reformers within the regime, but radicals do not agree to the terms of the deal, this theory predicts that more of the authoritarian regime will be preserved to repress the radicals. In Mexico, the extremely confrontational stance of the *Partido de la Revolución Democratica* (Party of the Democratic Revolution, PRD) after the 1988 presidential election, the pact between the moderate *Partido Acción Nacional* (National Action Party, PAN) and reformers within the long-ruling PRI, and federalism combined to result in more authoritarian governments in states where the PRD was stronger. This understanding—that confrontation in the midst of a negotiated transition yields repression and so lower quality democracy—is supported by a variety of evidence, including the contrasting experiences of Michoacán, the PRD's home state and stronghold, and Yucatán, where the party was at its weakest.

The experiences of Mexico's state governments also reveal, however, that the effects of actors' transition strategies on the quality of the democracies that result tend to fade after these strategies are abandoned.

Chapter 6 considers the strongest predictor of the quality of democracy in the Mexican states, economic inequality. It links greater economic inequality to lower democratic quality through its effects on the character of political participation. I show how the experiences of Yucatán, a state with one of the most unequal distributions of economic resources in Mexico, and Baja California Sur, the state with the most egalitarian distribution, along with other evidence from Mexico's states, demonstrate that disparities in economic resources constitute disparities in the ability to influence others' actions or to resist others' influence. High levels of economic inequality, for these reasons, facilitate vote buying and patronage politics, which work to defeat the ability of citizens to use elections to convey their preferences and so hold government officials accountable for their performance. Government is less responsive to citizen demands as inequality increases, and the quality of democracy suffers.

The concluding chapter takes up the applicability of the dissertation's findings to new democracies beyond Mexico, a potential difficulty for any work based on the subnational comparative research design. All three of the explanations for the quality of new democracies supported by the experiences of Mexico's states are dependent on antecedent conditions of the Mexican context. The positive effects of modest increases in legislative pluralism over two-party systems on the institution of legislatures as checks on executive power may apply only to presidential systems like those of the Mexican states; the states' experiences can offer no insight into the inherently different relationship

between branches of government in parliamentary systems. Stronger radical opposition parties like the PRD should only be expected to result in lower quality democracy in the context of a pacted transition. Greater economic inequality produces more vote buying and so less responsive democratic government, but the increase in patronage-based politics likely occurs only in low- to medium-income countries. Fortunately for the generalizability of these explanations, all of these antecedent conditions are quite common among the third-wave democracies. The chapter also reviews the hypotheses such as O'Donnell's regarding prior experiences with democracy that could not be tested by reference to the states' experiences because the variables of interest were constant across all of Mexico.

In sum, this dissertation makes an important contribution to our understanding of the causes of differences in the quality of new democracies. Using a subnational research design based on the widely varying experiences of the newly empowered state governments of Mexico, I overcome the hurdles inherent in studies of one or a few countries and in cross-national work. My results provide convincing evidence of which of the many extant actor-centered, institutional, and socioeconomic-structural hypotheses actually explain differences in democratic quality and, further, the manner in which they have their effects. In so doing, they illuminate both the challenges and the opportunities faced by those, in democracies both new and old, who seek to advance toward the ideal of government that protects the rights and responds equally to the preferences of all citizens.

CHAPTER TWO

MEASURING DEMOCRATIC QUALITY IN MEXICO'S STATES

In the years after the disputed presidential election of 1988, the Mexican federal government initiated a process of decentralization and devolution that granted state governments considerably more power than they had enjoyed at any time since the revolution (see Rodríguez 1997; Ward and Rodríguez 1999b). Many observers believed this new trend toward federalism, along with increasing political liberalization and burgeoning opposition strength, would result in growing democracy at the state level throughout the country (Mizrahi 1997; Ward and Rodríguez 1999a). On the other hand, some scholars argued that the new, robust Mexican federalism had allowed pockets of authoritarianism to persist and become consolidated in some states (Fox 1994; Cornelius 1999).

This chapter explores the thirty-one states' performances on a broad range of indicators of democracy. I find that these indicators are quite consistent: as the latter scholars contended, some states have democratized quickly, but others have lagged considerably behind. Before proceeding to this analysis, however, a discussion of how democracy and related terms are defined and used in this study is in order.

Understanding Democracy and Democratic Quality

Of the concepts frequently used in political science, democracy is perhaps the most difficult to define in a satisfactory manner. Although the roots of this difficulty can be traced back centuries, it is perhaps best illustrated by the first four pages of one of the most celebrated modern works of comparative democracy, Dahl's (1971) *Polyarchy*. First, Dahl defined democracy as a political system that is "completely or almost completely responsive to all of its citizens," considered as political equals (Dahl 1971). In this formulation, democracy is defined in terms of a particular *outcome*: government conduct that responds to citizens' equally weighted preferences. Next, he reasoned that, in large societies, such an outcome depends on a list of eight institutional guarantees, reproduced in Table 2.1 below (Dahl 1971, 3). Rather than an outcome, democracy had been defined as an institutionally protected collection of *rights and liberties*. As the book's subtitle, *Participation and Opposition* suggests, Dahl then argued that these rights and liberties actually constituted a *process* of public contestation of the conduct of government through elections in which all citizens may participate (Dahl 1971, 4). These three formulations—stated within three pages—are clearly related, but the question remains: Is "democracy" best understood as a responsive outcome, a collection of institutionally guaranteed rights and liberties, or a process of contested elections with broad suffrage?

Table 2.1: Dahl's Eight Institutional Guarantees of Rights and Liberties

1. Freedom to form and join organizations
2. Freedom of expression
3. Right to vote
4. Eligibility for public office
5. Right of political leaders to compete for support
6. Alternative sources of information
7. Free and fair elections
8. Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

Source: Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, p. 3.

All three of these definitions have supporters among prominent scholars of democracy. Putnam, in his lauded *Making Democracy Work*, relied entirely on indicators of responsive outcomes to determine the quality of democracy, arguing that "effectiveness and responsiveness [are] the two fundamental criteria for democratic government" (Putnam 1993, 78). Bollen, a pioneer in the quantitative cross-national study of democracy, has argued repeatedly that democracy should be understood to be a collection of institutionally protected rights and liberties (Bollen 1986; Bollen 1991).[1] Moreover, Bollen takes the position that outcomes are irrelevant to political democracy and that "it is theoretically possible for a one-party system to respect political rights and political liberties," and so be perfectly democratic (Bollen 1991, 8-9). Adam Przeworski, on the other hand, contends that only the parsimonious definition of democracy as a regime that regularly holds contested elections is useful for scholarly work; the other definitions, in his view, conflate democracy with its potential effects (Przeworski et al. 2000).

[1] Interestingly, two of Dahl's students also adopted the institutional-guarantees definition to construct a cross-national index of democracy (Coppedge and Reinicke 1990, 52).

In this dissertation, I avoid taking one of these narrower approaches and follow Dahl's intuition that all three definitions of democracy—responsive outcomes, institutionally protected rights and liberties, and contested elections—are closely related. The requirement of contested elections with broad suffrage is typically treated as a dichotomous variable: such elections are either held or not (Lipset 1960, 47-49; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992; Przeworski et al. 2000). As all of Mexico's states held contested elections during the years examined, I treat this democratic threshold as uniformly met. Government responsiveness, on the other hand, is a continuous variable: outcomes may match citizen preferences more or less closely. The extent to which institutions protect political rights and liberties similarly varies continuously (Coppedge and Reinicke 1990, 51-53; Bollen 1991, 9). Therefore, I turn to a broad array of indicators of both responsive outcomes and institutional guarantees of political rights and liberties to determine the quality of democracy in Mexico's states from 1988 to the year 2000. As will be demonstrated below, these aspects of democratic quality are indeed closely related across the states.

It is worth noting that a number of recent studies of politics in the Mexican states, as well as some broader comparative works, have adopted yet another distinct formulation of democratic quality. These works have defined democracy, at least in part, in terms of the degree of competition found in particular elections (see Vanhanen 1997, 34; Hernández Valdez 2000; Lujambio 2000, 13). The quality of the democracy does not, in my view, depend on specific election results per se. Variation in the fragmentation of the electorate or in the political parties that come to power are more fruitfully treated as potential causes of variation in democratic quality understood as

responsive outcomes and institutional guarantees of rights and liberties. These factors and others expected to affect democratic quality in the Mexican states are examined in the next chapter.

The foregoing discussion has avoided two terms that are frequently used in the study of new democracies: transition and consolidation. A "democratic transition" is commonly defined as the process by which, in the words of Linz and Stepan (1996, 3), the important political actors reach

> sufficient agreement . . . about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government *de facto* has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies *de jure.*

"Consolidation," in turn, is used to describe the situation in which all political groups and actors accept democracy as "the only game in town"—no group attempts to overthrow the regime, a strong majority believe democracy is the most appropriate form of government, and the rule of law is established (Linz and Stepan 1996; O'Donnell 1998). Both of these definitions imply dichotomous concepts: a transition has occurred, or it has not; a democracy has become consolidated, or it remains unconsolidated (Diamond 1999, 18-21).

Although the use of these definitions is widespread, a growing number of scholars have begun to question their usefulness for understanding recent political regime changes or distinguishing among them. Many have observed that few if any countries in Latin America have successfully completed a democratic transition as defined above. In particular, the ability of elected representatives in Latin America to

generate and implement new policies is often limited by the extreme concentration of power in the presidency (O'Donnell 1994; Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens 1997).

The concept of consolidation also appears to be problematic. The democratic regime in Venezuela, for example, had been accepted as the only game in town for decades until a series of coup attempts in the early 1990s rocked the country (Karl 1987; Karl 1995b). Even some who continue to find utility in the term have argued that "talk of consolidating democracy is premature and misleading" in Latin America until the institutional guarantees of democracy are more "solidly constructed" (Lowenthal 1997). The difficulty in applying the concepts of transition and consolidation to actual cases, as well as their dichotomous nature, have led to a profusion of additional terms to describe various "diminished subtypes" of democracy (Collier and Levitsky 1997).

I believe that my approach of constructing a continuous measure of democratic quality from an array of indicators of responsive outcomes and institutional guarantees of rights and freedoms avoids these problems while addressing many of the same issues. The elements of the definition of democratic transition align with many of Dahl's institutional guarantees; considering the *extent* to which these elements are present, rather than treating them as dichotomous and, collectively, as a threshold to be met, allows finer distinctions in the evaluation of particular cases and facilitates comparisons across cases. Similarly, consolidation is more readily useful when disaggregated into the rule of law and the legitimacy accorded to democracy both by elites and by citizens generally. The rule of law is a vital mechanism for the institutional protection of political rights and liberties and so, like the elements of transition, is an aspect of democratic quality as I have conceptualized it. I would suggest that democratic

legitimacy, on the other hand, is an entirely separate concept that should not be confused with the quality of a polity's democracy.

Indicators of Democratic Quality in the Mexican States

Given the presence of contested elections with broad suffrage, measuring democratic quality in Mexico's states requires indicators of responsive outcomes and institutional guarantees of political rights and liberties. To measure the degree to which different aspects of political rights and liberties enjoy institutional protection, I rely on indicators of the states' nascent division of powers, their relations with the elected municipal governments within their boundaries, and their records on political and civil rights. The states' performance in the provision of basic education should provide a particularly good measure of the responsiveness of outcomes. I discuss each of the indicators in turn below.

Division of Powers

Recent scholarship has refocused attention on the venerable idea that a division of powers is necessary to provide checks against governmental abuse of power (see especially the collection of essays published in Schedler, Diamond, and Plattner 1999). Horizontal accountability, as opposed to the vertical accountability of elected officials to citizens at the ballot box, requires "state agencies that are authorized and willing to oversee, control, redress, and/or sanction unlawful actions of other state agencies," most fundamentally (although not exclusively) separate and autonomous executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government (O'Donnell 1999, 39).

Problems in establishing and maintaining a separation of powers most frequently consist of the tendency of executives to view themselves as the embodiment of the electorate's will, singularly entitled to govern without interference for the duration of their elected terms (O'Donnell 1999, 40). Legislatures, however, are also elected and so are similarly entitled by democratic principles to influence government policy (Linz 1990). The encroachment of executive power into responsibilities of the legislature therefore erodes any concept of democratic representation and, eventually, democratic government (O'Donnell 1999, 42; Beer 2001, 425). Further, when judiciaries lack the capacity to sanction public officials from unlawfully taking advantage of their positions or to protect citizens' rights against infringements by both the government and other citizens, that is, to maintain the rule of law, the development of the meaningful citizenship integral to democratic control of government by society is impossible (Domingo 1999, 152-153). A robust separation of powers, then, is critical to the quality of new democracies.

Echoing the extreme presidentialism of the federal government, Mexico's states have a long history of executive dominance. Traditionally, governors within the PRI were given a free hand over many aspects of local affairs, so long as they avoided truly spectacular instances of corruption or repression that embarrassed the president and their states continued to support the PRI at the ballot box (Cornelius 1999, 10; Ward and Rodríguez 1999b, 679). Governors who failed to respect these standards of minimal political competence, however, were subject to summary removal by the president. Except for the no-reelection clause, there was little potential for additional checks to a governor's power; state legislatures and judiciaries rarely if ever failed to act in

accordance with the executive's will (Rodríguez 1997, 20-21; Conch Cantú and Caballero Juárez 2001, 128).

Governors may have grown even more powerful in the course of the 1990s, as President Zedillo's commitment to federalism provided additional resources and policy autonomy to state governments while, for the most part, eliminating the threat of forced removal that previously provided some constraints on governors' actions (Cornelius 1999; Eisenstadt 1999a).[2] Some governors, however, have responded to their increased autonomy by allowing power (and so responsibility) to spread to their coordinate branches of government, although there has been "considerable variation in the style and apparent willingness to 'let go' on the part of the state executive" (Ward and Rodríguez 1999b, 690).[3] In those states where the state legislature and judiciary gained some power and autonomy from the governor, this nascent division of powers and the potential for horizontal accountability that it represents constituted an important advance in democratization.

To measure the degree to which the states institutionalized a division of powers by the end of the 1990s, I look to the budgetary allocations made to the legislature and the judiciary as my indicators. Adequate budgets mean staffs, computers, and the

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[2] The Aguas Blancas massacre of seventeen unarmed peasants in August 1995 did eventually lead to the removal of Guerrero's PRI governor, Rubén Figueroa, but only after a videotape of the killings was aired on national television and picked up by the international media. Zedillo had initially declined to intervene in the matter on federalism grounds (Cornelius 1999, 7).

[3] Ward and Rodríguez (1999b, 690) attribute this variation to, first, the extent to which governors have had to deal with legislatures "dominated by a party or faction unsympathetic to the executive," and, second, "genuine choice and human agency," that is, the personal preferences of individual governors. An evaluation of various causal hypotheses for variation in state democratization is found in the next chapter.

resources in general needed to act autonomously from the executive; scarce funding, on the other hand, results in low salaries, inactivity, and often rampant corruption and bribery.[4] Without resources, a legislature is forced to rely on the information provided by the governor to evaluate his proposed policies, and the knowledge of current conditions needed to make independent proposals to compete with those advanced (or on other issues not on the executive's agenda) is therefore, in most cases, lacking (Beer 2001, 426). Under-financed judiciaries can encourage more competent jurists to seek better-compensated opportunities in private practice. A lack of resources also tends to yield understaffed and poorly equipped courts, which lead in turn to backlogs of proceedings and long delays in the resolution of cases (Domingo 1999).

As Beer's (2001, 431) study of Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, and Hidalgo reveals, states vary greatly in the amount of resources allocated to their legislatures: some legislatures possess the wherewithal to hire many legal advisors, policy analysts, and other aides to assist all parties in gathering and analyzing information independent of the data provided by the executive, while the budgetary constraints of other legislatures result in only a few aides who work strictly for the majority party. In this study, a state's legislative resources are measured using the amount budgeted to the legislature in 1999 for each state resident (INEGI 2001b). By this measure, Puebla and Guerrero were at the low end nationally, with about five pesos per inhabitant in legislative spending. The legislatures of Baja California Sur and Campeche were the

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[4] Guillermo O'Donnell (1999, 44 & n.47) notes that adequate funding and the autonomy it creates are "tricky": the Brazilian judiciary, for example, has used its autonomy from the executive and legislature to grant judges very high salaries and great privileges without substantially improving performance. Pilar Domingo (Domingo 1999, 160) similarly observes that budgetary support is necessary, but not sufficient, for institutional autonomy and efficiency.

best financed; both received more than fifty pesos per citizen. The mean state legislative appropriation for 1999 was equivalent to 28.9 pesos for each resident.

Real budgetary allocations for judiciaries increased in all of the states during the late 1990s, leading to a burst of construction of new courthouses, renovation of existing facilities, and purchases of new equipment; many states also expanded the number of state judges and magistrates (Conch Cantú and Caballero Juárez 2001, 152). There was substantial variation in allocations, however, and only 22% of the states' judiciary presidents felt that their budgets were adequate in the year 2000 (Conch Cantú and Caballero Juárez 2001, 153). I measure the financing of state judiciaries by reference to the amount allocated in the state budget, standardized by the demand for judicial services as reflected in the state's population, using the budgetary data for the year 2000 collected by Hugo Conch Cantú and José Antonio Caballero Juárez (2001, 151-152). On average, the states provided approximately fifty pesos to the judiciary for every state resident, but Jalisco, Michoacán, and Puebla each provided their judiciaries with less than twenty pesos per inhabitant. By contrast, Coahuila, Querétaro, and Baja California Sur allocated the most to their judiciaries, spending ninety pesos or more per resident.

Municipal Finance

If the creation and maintenance of the division of powers needed for democratization to advance requires authority to be spread across a state's three branches of government, democratic relations with the *municipios* (municipalities) necessitate that power traditionally held at the state level be surrendered downward. Mexico is divided into over 2,400 municipalities, which are roughly analogous to

counties in the United States. Although municipal governments are directly elected and their autonomous status is enshrined in the 1917 federal constitution under the revolutionary slogan of the *Municipio Libre* (Free Municipality), even the most mundane policy decisions affecting a municipality have long been controlled by state governors (Fagen and Tuohy 1972, 20-22; Rodríguez 1997, 34). A 1983 constitutional reform that many hoped would increase the municipalities' autonomy by granting them official responsibility for the provision of basic services such as water, sewerage, and electricity only worked to consolidate the states' domination as the federal government withdrew (Rodríguez 1992, 136; Nickson 1995, 200-201). State laws define municipal administrative structure, and state legislatures can suspend a municipal government for failing in its duties (Nickson 1995, 202).

Most important to the states' dominance of the municipalities within their borders, though, has been their control of municipal finances; federal transfers to the municipalities flow through state governments, and very few municipalities have successfully developed independent streams of income (Rodríguez 1997, 35). Under the federal *Ley de Coordinación Fiscal* (Fiscal Coordination Law, LCF), the central government collects income tax, value-added tax, and certain other taxes and distributes a portion of this revenue, the *Fondo General de Participaciones* (General Participations Fund, FGP), among the state governments in accordance with an automatic transfer formula. The states, in turn, are obligated by law to pass on twenty percent of the FGP transfers they receive to the elected governments of their municipalities. Not all states, however, consistently distribute the amount of funds mandated by the LCF's provisions. Further, each state determines how the transfers are distributed among its municipal

governments. The result often has been municipal transfers based on the discretion of the governor, that is, on "arbitrary and subjective political judgments" (Nickson 1995, 205). The frequent lack of transparency in municipal transfers was underscored by the responses of municipal presidents interviewed during the early 1990s as part of a World Bank mission to improve municipal government in eight of Mexico's poorest states: although all of the presidents knew the date on which the payment would arrive (as specified in the federal LCF), none had any idea how much they would receive or how that amount was determined (Rodríguez 1997, 109).

By 1997, over half of the states had improved transparency and minimized corruption and abuse of discretion in the allocation of transfers to municipalities by passing their own fiscal coordination laws patterned on the federal LCF (Ward and Rodríguez 1999b, 698); several more did so before 2000. These state fiscal coordination laws specify the formula that determines each municipality's share, typically by reference to a combination of its population, tax revenue generated, and poverty rate. In 1997, then-governor Manuel Bartlett championed the reworking of Puebla's distributive formula to favor municipal poverty rate rather than population size and so, it was argued, generally shift transfers away from urban municipalities where the PAN enjoyed support and towards rural PRI strongholds. The *Ley Bartlett* (Bartlett's Law) resulted in a failed constitutional challenge by the PAN and withering criticism from some observers (Cornelius 1999, 8-9), although it also drew some measured praise for reducing the urban bias often found in municipal transfers (Ward and Rodríguez 1999a, 124). Regardless of whether Bartlett's Law constituted an unconscionable and authoritarian manipulation or a long overdue corrective, there can be no doubt that the allocation of

municipal transfers in Puebla continued to be more transparent and less arbitrary than those in states where the distribution of transfers remained solely in the governor's discretion.

Compliance with federal provisions on municipal transfers reflects respect not only for the rule of law but also for the elected governments of the municipalities and their constitutional autonomy. The timing of passage, if ever, of a fiscal coordination law indicates a reduction in often-abused executive discretion. Both of these factors are appropriate to include in an evaluation of state-level democratization.

The states' adherence to federal law with regard to municipal transfers is here measured as the number of years from 1990 to 1999 in which a state failed to distribute 20% of its FGP receipts to its municipalities. The amount states distributed was calculated using data on state and municipal incomes published by the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Geografía, e Informática (INEGI), Mexico's federal institute of statistics (INEGI 1995; 1998; 1999; 2001b). Only twelve states fully complied with the federal LCF during this period. Oaxaca was the worst offender, failing to distribute the statutory minimum amount in six of the ten years, and Hidalgo, Morelos, and Tlaxcala complied only half of the time.[5]

The transparency of municipal distributions from 1988 to 2000 was calculated as the proportion of these years without a state fiscal coordination law multiplied by the number of *municipios* in the state (then multiplied by negative one so that higher scores

[5] Hidalgo's poor performance on this indicator—the state government failed to distribute the federal minimum of 20% of its FGP *participaciones* five years running from 1994 to 1998—may be seen as particularly disconcerting because, as Rodríguez (1997, 106) observes, state law since 1989 has provided that no less than 25% of these funds are to be turned over to municipal governments. This provision was respected in only three out of the ten years examined.

indicate more transparency). The number of municipalities within a state is essential to an accurate measurement of transparency: even before the passage of the state fiscal coordination law in 1987, the governor of Baja California, with only three municipalities in his state, had only very limited discretion compared to that enjoyed by the governor of Oaxaca, who has 570 municipalities to reward or punish as he sees fit.[6] My survey of state laws revealed that Nuevo León, México, Guanajuato, and Baja California led the nation in the transparency of transfers to their municipalities; all four states passed laws that specified the formula by which municipal *participaciones* were to be distributed before 1988.

Service Provision: Basic Education

Although people will frequently tolerate disappointing short-run economic and social performance, they expect democratic governments to be responsive in addressing societal needs, at least incrementally (Diamond, Hartlyn, and Linz 1999, 5-6). The neoliberal policy environment prevalent in Mexico and internationally since the 1980s makes direct income redistribution to address the severe poverty found throughout the country scarcely conceivable. Public education, however, continues to be seen as an acceptable policy instrument for providing at least some opportunities for the children of the worst-off families to improve their condition (Boeninger 1997, 43).

In the early 1990s, standardized test scores indicated that fewer than one in six students who finished primary school nationwide met minimum academic requirements. The ensuing public uproar over the quality of basic education led to a fundamental

[6] Two additional municipalities have since been created in Baja California, bringing the state's total to five.

reform of the Mexican educational system (Trejo 1995). Citizen demands for improvement resulted in the devolution of education, long highly centralized under the control of the federal *Secretaria de Educación Publica* (Department of Public Education, SEP), to the states. The 1992 *Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación Básica* (National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education) and the 1993 *Ley General de Educación* (General Education Law) charged the state governments with control over educational expenditure, the administration of primary and secondary education, and teacher training. The states, many of which already operated comparably tiny state educational systems, quickly formed education bureaucracies to accept these new responsibilities (Ward and Rodríguez 1999a, 135-136). The result, as Ward and Rodríguez (1999a, 19) observed, is that there is "little ambiguity about who now runs the educational system in Mexico: the states."

Public education is particularly appropriate to examine, not only for its salutary societal effects, but also because it was seen by the federal and the state governments as the "cutting edge of decentralization efforts," a crucial test of states' ability to respond to citizen demands for effective service provision (Ward and Rodríguez 1999a, 127). The devolution of responsibility to the states in most other policy areas occurred only during President Zedillo's term; not incidentally, Zedillo had served as Education Secretary during the education reform. A case study of basic education policy in five states concluded that devolution generally had met with "remarkable success," although some states had clearly managed better than others (Ward and Rodríguez 1999a, 155).

Evaluating the states' performance in delivering education is not straightforward because the information collected and disseminated by the state education bureaucracies

is rarely comparable (Secretaría de Educación Pública 2000). Standardized test scores, for example, are an unreliable measure of educational quality due to disparities in the fraction of students taking the tests: perhaps not surprisingly, the states suspected to have the worst educational systems also test the fewest of their students (Secretaría de Educación Pública 2000, 173-174). Fortunately, comparable indicators are available that correspond to the two dimensions of educational provision that best coincide with citizen demands: its breadth and its quality.

The breadth of students served by an educational system is particularly important to determining if education will serve as a gradual solution to societal ills such as poverty: children of impoverished and economically marginalized families are those least likely to be reached. Breadth is measured here using the data on educational coverage, that is, the percentage of school-aged children who are enrolled in school, collected by Mexico's federal statistical institute in the country's 2000 census (INEGI 2001a). The portion of school-aged children not enrolled in the educational system by the 2000-2001 school year varied from one in every six children in Chiapas to one in twenty in Nuevo León; the states' average was for one in every twelve school-age children not to be enrolled.

To measure improvement in the quality of an educational system since the states' takeover of education, I use data generated by the federal SEP on terminal efficiency, the percentage of entering primary school students who complete the six primary grades on schedule.[7] To avoid correlation with the state's initial terminal efficiency scores, the

[7] A database of state-by-state terminal efficiency scores for the 1970-1971, 1980-1981, and 1990-1991 through 2000-2001 school years is available from the SEP's website: <http://www.sep.gob.mx>.

indicator employed is the percentage decline in the fraction of entering first graders who failed to complete sixth grade six years later, comparing the 2000-2001 school year to the last year before devolution, 1991-1992. Baja California Sur had successfully reduced the fraction of students unable to make it through primary school on time by over 90%, but Morelos schools were able to cut the figure by only one-fifth. The average state improvement in terminal efficiency was 54.6%.

Political and Civil Rights

Contested elections are a central institutional feature of democracies, but these elections are not always conducted freely and fairly. To measure differences in the extent to which elections were free and fair across states, I use violations of ballot secrecy as the indicator. Monitoring of voters' candidate choices is an important component in what Jonathan Fox has referred to as authoritarian vote-buying: the practice by which authoritarian elites retain electoral support through the use of a "combination of material inducements and coercive threats" (Fox 1994, 157). When the ballot is not secret, state actors are able to identify and punish those who vote for opposition politicians; in short, elections, although contested, are decidedly not free and fair. Ballot secrecy, of course, cannot alone ensure fair elections, but as Fox notes, there is a qualitative difference between secret elections, in which state resources may still be used to induce electoral support through the provision of particularistic benefits, and elections without respect for ballot secrecy, where voting one's conscience may put one's life at risk (Fox 1994, 157-158).

The most comprehensive study of the conduct of elections across Mexico's states was conducted by the Mexican poll-watching organization Alianza Cívica during the

1994 presidential elections. Although this election was widely considered at the time to be the cleanest in Mexico's history, Alianza Cívica observers documented a broad range of irregularities in many of the 1,810 polling stations in the organization's stratified sample: violations of ballot secrecy, pressuring of voters, cases in which more than one vote was put in the ballot box ('tacos'), mobile groups of repeat voters ('carrousels'), and cases in which disorder seriously obstructed the voting process (Alianza Cívica 1994, 12). The most serious and widespread problem, the organization concluded, was the systematic violation of the right to vote in secret, which occurred in nearly four of every ten polling stations observed. Respect for ballot secrecy, however, varied widely across states. Only 13% of polling stations in Chihuahua and 17% in Baja California experienced irregularities in voting secrecy. In Chiapas, by contrast, 68% of polling stations had ballot secrecy violations, and in Hidalgo the figure reached 60%.[8] Although Alianza Cívica (2000) did not record ballot secrecy violations state-by-state during the 2000 presidential elections, and the rate of such violations nationwide fell to approximately half of 1994 levels, the differences between rural and urban polling stations and those between northern and southern Mexico suggest that the pattern across states remained similar to that found in 1994.

Freedom from state repression is similarly fundamental to democracy: without the basic rights of expression and association, meaningful political participation is impossible (Dahl 1971, 2-3; Fox 1994, 151-152). The effects of political violence,

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[8] Unfortunately, Alianza Cívica's coverage of polling stations was sufficient for making statistically valid conclusions in only twenty-two of the thirty-one states (Alianza Cívica 1994, 1); for the remaining nine states, I have used the average number of ballot secrecy violations for the region of the country (north, center, or south) in which the state is located.

moreover, go beyond its direct victims: "Oppressive countries imprison their opponents, or worse, both to silence the particular individuals, and to warn others of the dangers of opposing the system" (Gastil 1991, 35). The extent to which these civil rights have been respected, therefore, is an important aspect of the quality of democracy.

The available evidence indicates that political violence in Mexico tends to be committed by states rather than the federal government.[9] In his survey of political violence across Mexico between 1988 and 1994, Rojas Alba concluded that "criminality and violence occur with greater intensity during state electoral processes than in federal ones" (Rojas Alba 1996). The fact that "excessive" levels of repression provided grounds for the extraconstitutional removal of a governor by the president during the PRI's long reign strengthens this conclusion.

Political violence by nature is often difficult to detect: its perpetrators typically are (or are sanctioned by) the very state officials with the power to expose and prosecute the crime.[10] I rely on information from the parliamentary report on human rights violations published in 1994 by the PRD and endorsed by Mexico's other opposition parties (Partido de la Revolución Democrática 1994), as supplemented by the carefully documented study that Rojas Alba, a former Mexican federal deputy, originally prepared on behalf of the Canadian government (Rojas Alba 1996). Although political violence declined fairly dramatically in Mexico after the period covered by these works, 1988 to 1994, the memory of recent and widespread abuses can be expected to have continued to

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[9] Mexico's most notorious incident of repression, the massacre of hundreds of unarmed protestors during the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, is a notable exception.

[10] This fact again underscores the importance of the creation of effective mechanisms of horizontal accountability, in particular an autonomous judiciary, to the process of democratization.

exert an influence on state politics; indeed, this effect is precisely what the perpetrators of these abuses sought. [11]

Political violence is measured here as the density of acts of political violence, that is, acts per million in average population for the period examined, rather than the absolute number of violations. Although a normative argument can be made that each incidence of repression should be granted equal weight, a single event typically has a greater effect in a small polity than in a larger one (Gastil 1991, 31-32). Michoacán suffered from the highest density of political violence: from 1988 to 1994, nearly sixty-five acts of violence occurred for each million citizens. In the states of Baja California, Baja California Sur, and Colima, no political violence was reported. The experiences of Zacatecas and Hidalgo were near the mean for the states; in these two states approximately thirteen acts of political violence occurred per million inhabitants.

The Index of Democratic Quality

The preceding discussion reveals that the quality of subnational democracy in Mexico is very uneven. Some states provide their legislatures and judiciaries with five to ten times the amount of funding, proportional to population, that others do. Some consistently respect elected municipal governments by transferring funds in accordance with federal law; others disregard these concerns more often then they meet them. The decentralization of education in response to citizen demands has led to impressive performance in some states, but other states have lagged far behind. A few states have

[11] Obviously, this is not to say that political violence ended in 1994; well-publicized massacres of opposition supporters occurred in Guerrero in 1995 and Chiapas in 1997. These continued incidents, however, are consistent with the indicator presented below: Guerrero was second only to Michoacán in the density of political violence, and Chiapas had the fourth worst record of the states.

been virtually free of political violence, while citizens in other states have suffered terrible rates of human rights abuses. None of these facts, however, reveals whether it makes sense to describe some states as more democratic than others: the differences in some aspects of democratic quality may crosscut the differences in others, leaving each state with a mixture of more democratic and less democratic attributes.

A principal-components factor analysis of the eight indicators of responsive outcomes and institutional guarantees reveals that these aspects of democratic quality are not so confused: some states indeed are more democratic than others. The results of this analysis are dominated by a single factor with an eigenvalue of 3.36; an eigenvalue of 1.00 or greater is typically considered evidence of coherence among indicators.[12] The loadings for each indicator on this factor are displayed in Table 2.2 below. All of the loadings are in the expected direction and are statistically significant at the .001 level. I have used this factor, therefore, to create a state-level index of the quality of democracy. To be sure, this index does not capture every aspect of a state's experience—the loadings of the indicators are not perfect. It does, however, provide a convenient summary of a state's democratic quality without privileging the idiosyncrasies of any single indicator.

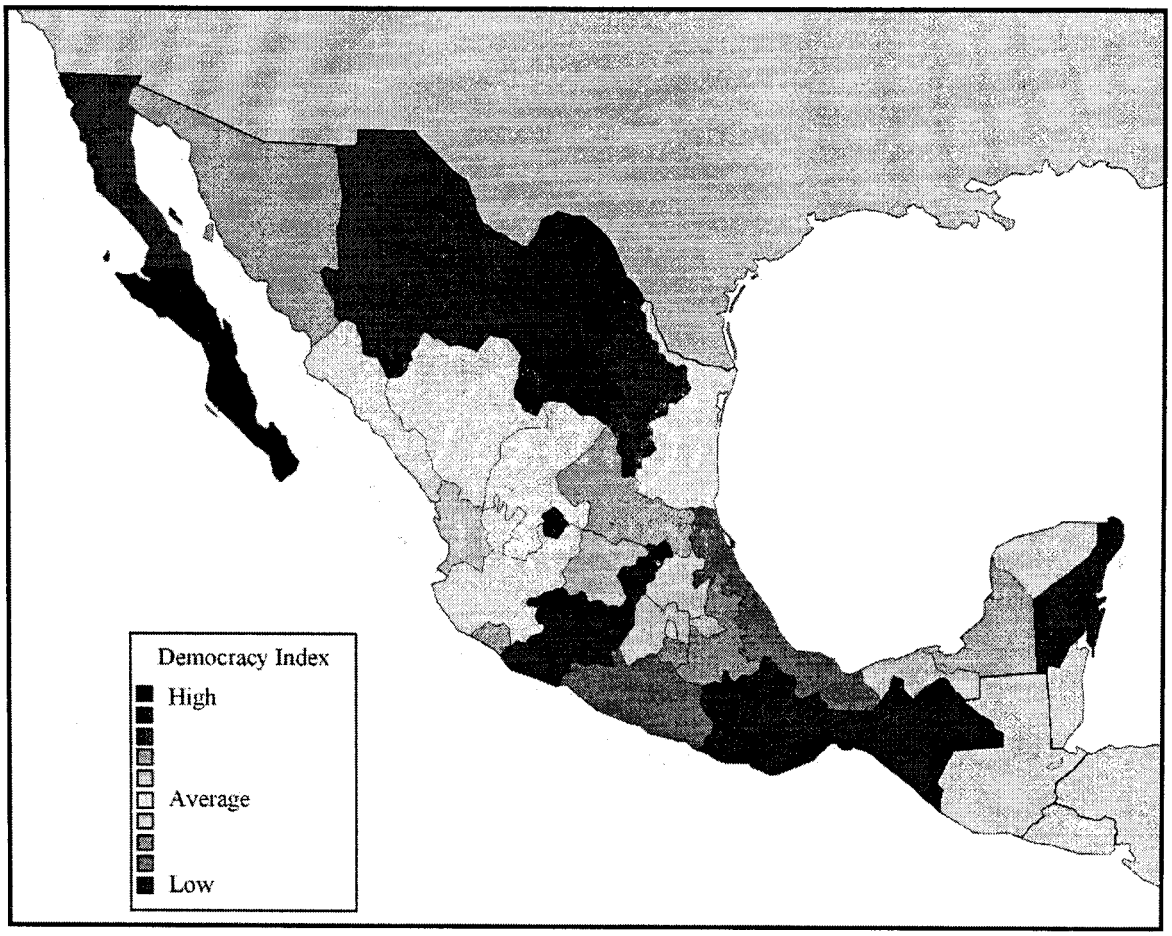
[12] Other frequently used techniques of factor analysis, such as principal factors and principal components, yield nearly identical results.

Table 2.2: The Index of Democratic Quality in Mexico's Thirty-One States

Indicator	Factor Loading
Division of Powers	
Legislative Budget, 1999	0.572
Judicial Budget, 2000	0.759
Municipal Finance	
Federal LCF Violations, 1990-1999	-0.548
Transparency in Distributions, 1988-2000	0.726
Service Provision: Basic Education	
Educational Coverage, 2000	0.743
Improvement in Terminal Efficiency, 1991-2000	0.514
Political and Civil Rights	
Ballot Secrecy Violations, 1994 Federal Elections	-0.570
Acts of Political Violence, 1988-1994	-0.701

Figure 2.1 maps the variation in the index of democratic quality across Mexico's states. Consistent with the conventional wisdom, the northern tier of states and the Baja peninsula have enjoyed a relatively high quality of democracy since 1988. But some central states, such as Aguascalientes and Querétaro, also enjoy quite high levels of democratic quality, as do parts of the Yucatán peninsula. Again consistent with the conventional wisdom, the least progress occurred in the states along Mexico's southern Pacific coast: Michoacán, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas have the four lowest scores on the index.

Figure 2.1: Democratic Quality in the Mexican States



A Test of External Validity

The index of democratic quality presented above displays impressive internal coherence, but it would be reassuring to know that it coincides with other, independent measures of aspects of the quality of democracy in the Mexican states. Eisenstadt's (1998) measures of the institutionalization of electoral courts in fourteen states provide an opportunity for just such a test of the index's external validity. Eisenstadt argued that electoral institutions "are frequently the major legal arena of power struggles" in authoritarian regimes, such as Mexico's, that liberalize through increasingly competitive

elections and that their institutionalization constitutes an important development in the democratic rule of law (Eisenstadt 1998, ch. 3, p. 6).

To explore this topic, Eisenstadt developed multiple indicators of the institutionalization of electoral courts, the keystone component of the states' electoral institutions, in nearly half of Mexico's states. He painstakingly coded these states' electoral laws to determine the extent to which electoral institutions were granted autonomy, at least formally, from executive interference. Reasoning that the parties' choice to mobilize, protest, and bargain directly rather than settle disputes through the electoral courts was the most observable indicator of the failure of electoral institutions, he also calculated a "rule of law ratio" of electoral protests to electoral complaints in each of his states for three election cycles. [13]

Table 2.3 below, presents the correlations between the index of state democratic quality generated above, Eisenstadt's rule of law ratio for elections between 1992 and 1995 (the only period for which he found both data and variation), and his measure of the autonomy granted to electoral courts by the 1995 to 1998 cycle of elections, the last he examined. The democracy index correlates fairly well with both of Eisenstadt's measures in his fourteen-state sample, and both correlations are statistically significant at the .05 level. In fact, the rule of law ratio and the states' electoral-institution autonomy scores correlate more highly with the democratization index than they do with each other. This result provides additional support for the validity of the index of democratic quality.

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[13] Unintuitively, Eisenstadt's rule of law ratio yields higher scores as respect for the rule of law declines. In the analysis below, I multiply his original ratio by negative one so that higher scores indicate greater respect for the rule of law.

Table 2.3. Bivariate Correlations Between the Index of Democratic Quality and Eisenstadt's Measures of State Electoral Court Institutionalization

	Democratic Quality	Rule of Law	Autonomy
Democratic Quality	1.000		
Rule of Law	0.600 (p = .012)	1.000	
Autonomy	0.496 (p = .036)	0.399 (p = .079)	1.000

One-tailed tests; n = 14. The sign of "Rule of Law" is reversed from Eisenstadt's coding so that high scores reflect a high degree of respect for the rule of law.

Conclusions

Scholars working on state-level political processes in Mexico are divided in their evaluation of the democracies that took shape as the states were granted additional power in the years after 1988: some have seen a relentless spread of democracy across the country from the municipalities to the states and then to the federal government, while others have pointed to the prospect of subnational authoritarian enclaves in many states. The findings of this chapter support the view of the latter, pessimistic position. A wide range of indicators of responsive outcomes and institutional guarantees of political rights and liberties demonstrates that although many states enjoy relatively high democratic quality, others have lagged well behind. The following chapters examine the hypotheses presented by scholars of democracy and of Mexican politics to come to an understanding of the causes of these differences in the quality of the new democracies in Mexico's states.

CHAPTER THREE

EXPLAINING DIFFERENCES IN DEMOCRATIC QUALITY

To explain the variation in the experiences of the state governments since 1988, I draw on the extensive literatures on democracy and democratization and on Mexican state politics. These works suggest a host of explanations for differences in the quality of new democracies, but these hypotheses are rarely systematically tested. By performing statistical analyses of the states' scores on the index of democratic quality derived in the preceding chapter, I am able to move beyond those explanations that may be idiosyncratic to the case that inspired them and determine which actor-centered, institutional, and socioeconomic factors consistently contributed to the quality of democracy found in the Mexico's state governments.

Many examinations of political transitions and their outcomes focus on political actors and the institutional arenas in which they interact. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986, 3-4) shaped the field with the argument that democratic transition is a moment of "'underdetermined' social change," and therefore a "situation [that] should be analyzed with distinctly political concepts" rather than with more static features of socioeconomic structure. According to this line of scholarship, "individual behavior hinges on subjective perceptions of the actions of others and calculations of the potential risks and benefits of aligning with political incumbents or opposition movements" (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, 24). The balance and interaction of political forces within and between regime and

opposition, therefore, are the critical determinants of transitions outcomes. These same factors should be expected to continue to influence the development of democracies beyond the initial upheaval that brings the regime into existence. Karl (1990, 8), for example, contended that the quality of new democracies is a product of the dynamics of the transition: the struggles of political actors to establish new rules and roles during periods of regime change coalesce and "often become persistent barriers to change, barriers that can even scar a new regime with a permanent 'birth defect.'" Similarly, the arrangements and political compositions of the basic institutions of government, particularly the executive and the legislature, are frequently considered important to democratic development. Linz's (1990) arguments on the advantages of parliamentary systems for new democracies provoked an extensive literature on the effects of divided government and legislative pluralism on the stability of presidential democracies (examples include Shugart and Carey 1992; Mainwaring 1993; Jones 1995; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997b).

Other scholars have insisted on the importance of socioeconomic structure to understanding democratic transitions and the quality of the regimes that result. Socioeconomic structure, these authors maintain, powerfully shapes the identities, interests, and relative power of political actors. Modernization theory was one of the earliest structural accounts of regime formation: economic development, it holds, brings about the conditions that favor democratization. As the income of average citizens rise, they grow more likely to demand a political voice, and urbanization provides new opportunities to press these demands for responsive and representative government (Lipset 1960). A related argument hinges on the development of a modern culture that

supplants earlier, traditional modes of deference to authority and hierarchy that are incompatible with democracy (Almond and Verba 1963). Class structure is central to many socioeconomic explanations of democratization, with large, labor-intensive agricultural sectors and other societal configurations characterized by high levels of economic inequality seen as providing the wealthiest members of society with the resources to resist pressures for a democratic opening and, even if competitive elections are held, for responsive government and respect for civil and political rights (Moore 1966; Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens 1997).

Of course, actor-centered, institutional, and structural explanations for variation in democratic quality are not mutually exclusive. Although she argues that the strategic decisions of political actors are the most proximate causes of the outcomes of regime change, Karl (1990, 7) also found that "structural and institutional constraints determine the range of options available to decision makers and may even predispose them to choose a specific option." Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992, 53) began their analysis of differences in regimes with structural causes, but acknowledged that "one cannot derive typical ideas and outlooks or the existence and the goals of collective organization from the structural class position in any teleological fashion," that is, that political actors may stray from the strategies apparently dictated by socioeconomic structure.

The advantage of these and similar approaches, as Mahoney and Snyder (1999) pointed out, is that they integrate the various explanations while remaining relatively parsimonious. Their disadvantage, however, is that "the very mechanisms that give them integrative power and elegance can have the undesirable consequence of privileging

structural or voluntarist factors" (Mahoney and Snyder 1999, 22). Because these authors rely on theory to specify how different sorts of variables relate to each other, the variables' relative importance is in effect predetermined by the choice of theory. The cost of more fully integrating political, institutional, and socioeconomic explanations is the loss of "a method for adjudicating among the multiple variables that co-vary with regime outcomes" (Mahoney and Snyder 1999, 23). Scholars who attempt to avoid "premature reductionism and analytic rigidity," Mahoney and Snyder (1999, 22) noted, risk "an 'indiscriminate eclecticism' that does not produce systematic explanations of regime change." This weakness is particularly debilitating for works using the qualitative, comparative-historical approach that dominates the study of regime change and democratic quality.

In this chapter, I take advantage of the wide variation both in democratic quality and in many political, institutional, and socioeconomic circumstances across the many Mexican states to perform statistical tests of the contending hypotheses. Because statistical techniques can determine which of several variables are consistently associated with more or less democratic outcomes, they provide a means of generating a systematic explanation for the differences across states that avoids prejudging the relative importance of the various factors (see Ragin 1987, 55-56). The actor-centered and institutional hypotheses are considered first, followed by an analysis of the effects of socioeconomic structure, and finally an integration of all three approaches to understanding the quality of democracy in Mexico's states. The conclusion discusses the implications of these findings for the further study of democratic quality that comprises the remaining chapters of this work.

Assessing Actor-Centered and Institutional Explanations

Actor-centered and institutional explanations for the differences in democratization across the Mexican states appear promising: the balance of political forces varied considerably across the country during the 1990s. The strength of the opposition differed dramatically from state to state, as did the number of years of opposition rule. The radical opposition party, the PRD, was much stronger in some states than in others. Although Mexico's states share the basic institutional arrangements of presidentialism—all governors are directly elected for fixed terms rather than chosen by a majority of the legislature—the political composition of these institutions varied considerably. Some states had many years of divided government, while the governor's office and a majority of the legislature were consistently held by the same party in others. State legislatures were essentially split between two parties in some parts of Mexico; elsewhere, a broad range of parties held congressional seats. The actor-centered and institutional hypotheses for differences in democratic quality as well as the data used to test them are set forth below.

Opposition Strength. One straightforward hypothesis is that democratic quality improves with the growing political strength of the opposition to the incumbent regime. Linz and Stepan (1996, 72), for example, argued that "the retention of many nondemocratic features in the new political system" occurs when the democratic opposition is weaker in relation to the forces of the regime. With respect to the Mexican states, Trejo and Jones (1998, 94) contended that "the failure of opposition parties to gain ground in the south" of Mexico accounted for the regional differences they observed in

the effectiveness of poverty-alleviation efforts after these programs were turned over to the states in 1996. Cornelius (1999, 11) similarly argued that, in contrast to states where the opposition is stronger, "in those subnational spaces where entrenched, hard-line PRIista leaders continue to hold sway, we can anticipate even greater impunity and more rigid authoritarian control, including freer recourse to violence."

To gauge the strength of the opposition from 1988 to 2000, I use the average percentage of legislative seats held by parties other than the PRI during those years. The opposition was strongest in Baja California, where an average of 53.5% of the legislature was in opposition hands during this time. Campeche had the weakest opposition: on average, opposition parties held less than one in five legislative seats. The opposition in Coahuila, which held an average of 35.7% of the legislature, was near the mean for the states.

PRD Strength. The opposition in Mexico was not unified; it was divided into two parties. The PRD formed the radical opposition: born of the merger of the Mexican Socialist Party with former members of the ruling party that rejected its abandonment of economic nationalism, the party took the radical stance that its leader, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, had won the 1988 presidential election and that the PRI's long rule must come to an immediate end. The moderate, center-right PAN was generally marked by its willingness to work with the regime. An important implicit hypothesis of many works on Mexican politics is that the PRI was willing to accept the PAN as a legitimate opponent, but did everything in its power to fight the PRD—so democratic quality should be lowest where the PRD was strongest. "The behavior of the PRI-government apparatus in several key elections held during the Salinas *sexenio*," Cornelius (1996, 75) observed, "signaled

that it would never allow a PRD government to come to power at the state level, anywhere in the country."

I measured PRD strength in terms of the average PRD representation in state legislatures from 1988 to 2000. The PRD was strongest in Michoacán, the home state of Cárdenas, where it held an average of 25.5% of the legislature. Nuevo León and Yucatán had the weakest state PRD organizations; the party's average share of the legislature was approximately 2% in these states. Sonora, where the PRD held an average of 10% of legislative seats, was just above the mean of the states.

Opposition Government. Alternation in office has often been considered an essential element of democratization (see, for example, Przeworski et al. 2000, 23-30). The alternation of political parties in government, some scholars argue, is critical to reducing the ability of incumbents to take advantage of the opportunities presented by a transition to rewrite the rules of political and economic life in their own favor (Vachudova 2003). Observers of Baja California, Mexico's first state to have an opposition government, have concluded that alternation in the governor's office directly resulted in an improved separation of powers among executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government; greater municipal autonomy; better administered elections; and other aspects of higher quality democracy (Rodríguez and Ward 1994; Guillén López 1995; Espinoza Valle 1999). Others have argued that PRI governors, where they remained in power, took advantage of Mexico's new federalism to personally monopolize political and economic power in their states (Trejo and Jones 1998, 91; Cornelius 1999).

Opposition government is measured here as the number of years in which the governor was from a party other than the PRI.[1] Between 1988 and 2000, the state with the most experience with governors from the opposition was Baja California, where *panistas* were elected in 1989 and again in 1995, but the PRI continued to govern without interruption in more than half of Mexico's states during this time.

Divided Government. Lujambio (2000, 67-72), a close observer of Mexico's democratization, has argued that divided government led Mexico's state legislatures to play larger roles in policy making, focused public attention on the parties' policy positions, and therefore created more responsible and higher quality democratic government. One study of six Mexican states concluded that those governors whose parties did not hold a majority of congressional seats were the most willing, at least as a matter of pragmatic politics, to share power with their states' legislatures (Ward and Rodríguez 1999b, 690).

Divided government is measured as the number of years in which the governor's party did not have a majority in the legislature.[2] Only fourteen states had any experience with divided government from 1988 to 2000. Guanajuato had the most years of divided government: the PAN won the governorship in 1991 and continued to hold it throughout the years examined here, but the PRI controlled the legislature until 1997, and even then the PAN won only a plurality of legislative seats.

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[1] Treating opposition government dichotomously by using a dummy variable coded one for states that had a non-PRI governor at any point in the years from 1988 to 2000 yields essentially similar results.

[2] As with opposition government, divided government might also be considered a dichotomous variable. A dummy variable coded one for states in which the governor's party ever failed to enjoy a legislative majority produces results similar to the operationalization presented in the text.

Legislative Pluralism. Increased pluralism has been found to be closely associated with more balanced executive-legislative relations across a diverse set of democracies (Lijphart 1999). By strengthening the balance of powers, legislative pluralism should also facilitate other aspects of democratic quality by reducing executive discretion in matters such as municipal finance and preventing executive abuses of civil and political rights (O'Donnell 1994; 1999).[3] The experience of Baja California lends preliminary support to this hypothesis in the Mexican states: according to Rodríguez and Ward (1994, 121), increased pluralism in the 1989-1992 legislature "transformed the congress into an arena of policy-shaping debate for the first time in the state's history" that both proactively generated important legislation and reactively checked executive action.

The extent of legislative pluralism achieved in Mexico's states by the year 2000 is here operationalized as the effective number of parties in the legislature, N_S:

$$N_S = 1 / \Sigma p_i^2$$

with p_i representing the fraction of legislative seats held by party i. If two parties each hold half of a legislature's seats, N_S equals two, three equally sized parties yield an N_S of three, and so on. As the parties' seat shares diverge from equality, the effective number of parties declines. The effective number of parties, therefore, provides a count of the parties in the legislature, with each weighted by its relative size. With an effective number of parties of 1.99, Tabasco's legislature exhibited the least pluralism. The

[3] A number of scholars of democracy in Latin America, however, have argued that presidential systems become increasingly vulnerable as the president's party's share of the legislature falls and therefore that more legislative pluralism increases the likelihood of democratic breakdown (Shugart and Carey 1992; Mainwaring 1993; Jones 1995). These theoretical expectations are reconciled in the conclusion to Chapter 4.

greatest legislative pluralism was found in the state of México, where N_S equaled 3.39. San Luis Potosí was just below the mean for the states with an effective number of legislative parties of 2.42.

Having only thirty-one cases puts some strain on the assumptions underlying the ordinary-least-squares estimates of linear regression, especially that regarding the normality of errors. In fact, the distribution of the values on the index of democratic quality is decidedly non-normal, with a positive skew and a cluster of cases at extreme negative values. This non-normal distribution means that, although the coefficients generated by OLS regression are trustworthy, the associated standard errors are not. Bootstrap regression provides a solution to this problem by repeatedly drawing samples from the thirty-one states while allowing each state to be chosen more than once in any given sample. By performing regressions on thousands of samples, a distribution of regression coefficients is constructed from which the statistical significance of the independent variables' coefficients may be determined.[4]

[4] I performed bias-corrected bootstrap regressions with 10,000 resamplings to produce the results presented in this chapter.

Table 3.1: Effects of Actors and Institutions on Democratic Quality

	Model 1 Coefficient (Std. Coeff.)
Opposition Strength, 1988-2000	0.001
	(0.004)
PRD Strength, 1988-2000	-0.085**
	(-.462)
Opposition Government (years)	0.032
	(0.087)
Divided Government (years)	0.034
	(0.076)
Legislative Pluralism, 2000	0.987*
	(0.375)
Constant	-1.691
R^2	.392
Adj. R^2	.270

# $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; one-tailed tests. Results contrary to hypothesis are italicized.

The strength of the opposition to the PRI does not exhibit the hypothesized positive relationship to democratic quality across the states, and neither do the number of years of opposition government or divided government.[5] The hypothesis that the stronger the challenge of the PRD a state government faced, the lower its democratic quality, however, is strongly supported: PRD strength has a large, negative effect on state-level democratic quality, and this effect is highly statistically significant. Legislative pluralism also appears from this model to have had an important effect on the extent of democratic quality in the states.

[5] Opposition government and divided government were somewhat collinear among the states from 1988 to 2000, roughly doubling the standard errors associated with each in Model 1, but omitting either one from the model does not substantively affect the results obtained for the other.

Evaluating the Effects of Socioeconomic Structure

Some scholars who favor political and institutional explanations have discounted socioeconomic structure as "usually insufficiently nuanced to explain divergent political paths in countries of similar socioeconomic status" and "too blunt to discriminate among" cases with differing outcomes (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, 23, 41). Despite being part of a single country, Mexico's states nevertheless displayed considerable variation in socioeconomic characteristics that could explain the divergences in the quality of their democratic governments. Some states were marked by much higher levels of economic inequality than others, and differences in average incomes across states were sharp. The proportions of state population working in agriculture, living in rural areas, and living in traditional indigenous communities also varied greatly. This section presents the hypotheses tracing the quality of new democracies to aspects of their socioeconomic structure and the data used to test them. To guard against endogeneity, the possibility of confusing the causes of democratic quality with its effects, all of these structural variables are measured at or close to the beginning of the federal government's movement toward empowering the states in 1988.

Economic Inequality. Inequality in the distribution of wealth and income is often hypothesized to affect the quality of democratic regimes. Because economic resources determine the extent to which "an actor can influence other actors in at least some circumstances," it has been argued that inequalities in economic resources constitute inequalities in political resources (Dahl 1971, 101-102). Where such inequalities are great, economic and political power are concentrated in the hands of relatively small groups of elites who frequently oppose participatory and competitive politics (Moore

1966; Dahl 1971; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992). Even after competitive politics are established, the concentration of power engendered by economic inequality could continue to limit the responsiveness of government. By making independent political participation appear futile to those on the lower rungs of a society (Dahl 1971, 101-102) and facilitating both its outright repression and its cooptation through patron-client networks (Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens 1997, 334), economic inequality can be expected to limit the effectiveness of elections as mechanisms for holding government officials accountable. Historically rooted patterns of economic inequality appear to have had just such an effect on the quality of democracy in Italy's regions (Solt 2003a), and income inequality has been found to have a strongly negative relationship with the performance of state governments in the United States (Knack 2002).

To determine the extent of economic inequality in each of Mexico's states, I look to data on the distribution of income, wealth, and human capital collected in the 1990 census (INEGI 1992b). The distribution of income is the first measure of economic inequality across states. Using data on the incomes of economically active individuals (INEGI 1992b, 518-544), I calculated the Gini index, which measures the deviation from a perfectly egalitarian distribution, for each state.[6] The number of rooms per person in a household (INEGI 1992b, 597-617) provides an indicator of household wealth. Although of course the quality of Mexican homes also varies greatly, from dirt-floored shacks built

[6] The 1990 census divides the economically active population of each state into ten income categories defined by reference to the minimum wage, from those without income to those earning more than ten minimum wages. To calculate the Gini index, each category was assigned its midpoint value; those earning more than half but less than one minimum wage, for example, were treated as earning three-quarters of one minimum wage. Those earning more than ten minimum wages were conservatively estimated to have earned eleven minimum wages.

with scrap lumber to luxurious mansions, the former often have only a single room for a large family while the latter can be many times more spacious; the Gini index of rooms per person, therefore, serves as a good measure of inequalities in household wealth.[7] In addition to income and wealth, the distribution of human capital reflects the variation in economic opportunities available to a state's residents. To measure the extent of these disparities, I calculated the Gini index from census data on years of education in the population aged eighteen and older (INEGI 1992b, 114-216). These three measures of economic inequality are highly correlated with each other, and so the construction of a single index is appropriate. Table 3.2 below displays the economic inequality index generated by a principal-components factor analysis of the Gini indices of income, housing, and education across the thirty-one Mexican states.

Table 3.2: Index of State-Level Economic Inequality, 1990

Indicator	Factor Loading
Income Distribution	.914
Housing Distribution	.860
Education Distribution	.937

[7] Household rooms per person has other shortcomings as a measure of wealth. The data do not distinguish between rented and owned residences, although the discrepancy is likely small as renting is relatively rare in Mexico. More problematic is the fact that while the home often constitutes the only form of household wealth, this clearly is not universally true: as those with spacious homes are more likely to have other investments, the distribution of housing underestimates the extent of inequality, and, given the general dearth of reliable data on the distribution of other forms of wealth, there is no way to know the degree to which this bias varies across states. Despite these imperfections, the household distribution of rooms per person provides considerable information about the distribution of wealth, and its high correlation with measures of income distribution and the distribution of human capital lend confidence to its general accuracy.

According to this index, Baja California Sur had the most egalitarian distribution of economic resources of any state in 1990. Oaxaca, closely followed by Chiapas, was the most unequal. Morelos was near the average across the states.

Average Income. Like economic inequality, differences in average incomes may also have an effect on the quality of democracy through an effect on political participation. For any given distribution of economic resources, an increase in average incomes means that all citizens will be better equipped to participate in politics. If some minimum level of well-being is required for meaningful political participation, more citizens will reach this minimum as the average income rises. Higher average incomes may also positively affect the quality of government by providing greater resources for responding to citizen needs, although much of any such effect across Mexican states may be mitigated by the federal funding provided for many policies, such as education, that are now responsibilities of the state governments.

Average incomes are considered here in terms of gross domestic product per capita in thousands of pesos, measured in 1988 (INEGI 1992a). Oaxaca had the lowest average annual income, 2272 current pesos, while the average incomes of Campeche, 17552 pesos, and Nuevo León, 8435 pesos, were the highest.[8] The average income for Tamaulipas, 4988 pesos, was near the average for the states.

Agricultural Employment. Large peasant sectors and labor-intensive agriculture have been repeatedly found to be detrimental to democracy (Moore 1966; Rueschemeyer,

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[8] Campeche's average income in 1988 reflects the discovery of oil in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of the thinly populated state in the early 1980s. Although Campeche's average income was more than twice that of the second richest state, Nuevo León, dropping it from the sample does not substantively affect the results presented below.

Stephens, and Stephens 1992). In Mexico, agricultural workers were incorporated into the ruling PRI through the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (National Peasant Confederation), an umbrella organization of land-reform beneficiaries, in 1938. The reliance of small-scale peasant agriculture in Mexico on government policies that distribute land, water, credit, and fertilizer left *campesinos* particularly vulnerable to authoritarian political control (Cornelius 1996, 77-79).

The share of each state's economically active population working in agriculture was measured in the 1990 census (INEGI 1992b). Chiapas had the highest percentage of its economically active population in agriculture in 1990, 57%. By contrast, only 6% of workers were employed in agriculture in Nuevo León. Yucatán was typical for the states, with nearly 27% of its economically active population working in agriculture.

Rural Population. Rural society is often associated with lower quality democracy. Politics in the countryside, it is suggested, are especially subject to domination by local notables who manipulate electoral outcomes and abuse governmental resources (Fox 1994; Karl 1995a, 80-82). Wayne Cornelius (1996, 63) argued that "authoritarian control mechanisms" are much more effective in Mexico's rural areas than in its cities, as urban living provides more opportunities to organize against governmental abuses. States with larger rural populations, therefore, may be hypothesized to exhibit lower quality democratic government.

A state's rural population is here defined as the percentage of population living in localities with fewer than five thousand inhabitants according to the 1990 census (INEGI 1992b). Campeche and Guanajuato were near the average for the states of 38.5%. Over

60% of the population of Coahuila and Zacatecas lived in rural areas, but fewer than 12% of the populations of Baja California and Nuevo León did so.

Indigenous Population. Traditional indigenous societies, it has often been suggested, are contradictory to democratic development. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, in their classic *The Civic Culture*, for example, argued that "tribal societies and autonomous local communities," in which "there are no specialized political roles [but only] diffuse political-economic-religious roles," are incompatible with democratic governance (Almond and Verba 1963, 17-18). Some scholars have maintained that the organization of indigenous communities in Mexico, in which "[i]solated villages tend to be highly cohesive, and relations between individual community members and the government are mediated by traditional Indian authorities," both facilitated the PRI's continued authoritarian rule and complicated efforts to design effective public policies (Trejo and Jones 1998, 91).

I measured each state's indigenous population as the percentage of the population at least five years old that speaks an indigenous language, according to the 1990 census (INEGI 1992b). In eight states, indigenous peoples made up less than one percent of the total population, but more than one-third of state residents are indigenous in Oaxaca and Yucatán. The indigenous population of Veracruz, 10% of the state's total, approximates the states' average.

Table 3.3: Effects of Socioeconomic Structure on Democratic Quality

	Model 2 Coefficient (Std. Coeff.)
Economic Inequality, 1990	-.695***
	(-.695)
Average Income, 1988	0.096#
	(.263)
Agricultural Employment, 1990	-.020
	(-.247)
Rural Population, 1990	*0.014*
	(.224)
Indigenous Population, 1990	*0.010*
	(.113)
Constant	-.530
R^2	.699
Adj. R^2	.639

# $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; one-tailed tests. Results contrary to hypothesis are italicized.

This model of the effects of socio-economic structure on the quality of democracy in Mexico's states is revealing in several ways. First, it demonstrates the consistently large negative impact of economic inequality on democratic quality. Higher average incomes have the hypothesized positive effect, but this effect is less consistent across the states, reaching statistical significance only at the less demanding 0.1 level. The model does not support the hypotheses regarding agricultural employment or rural population, nor does the size of the indigenous population appear to have an important independent effect on democratic quality. Second, the fit of this model is much better than that of the model based on actor-centered and institutional factors: the R^2 is 0.70 compared to 0.39 for the prior analysis. In other words, the model based on socioeconomic structure

explains nearly twice as much of the variation in democratic quality across states as the actor-centered and institutional hypotheses do.

Building a Comprehensive Model of Democratic Quality in Mexico's States

The actor-centered and institutional model and the socioeconomic model both yielded important findings. The strength of the radical opposition party, the PRD, and the extent of legislative pluralism were both found to affect the quality of the new state-level democracies in the political-institutional model, but the overall strength of the opposition, opposition government, and divided government were not. The socioeconomic model indicated that economic inequality and average incomes shaped the development of democracy across the Mexican states, and that agricultural employment, rural populations, and indigenous populations did not have direct effects. Multicolinearity does not cloud the results of either model; the variance inflation factors for all variables in both models (with the exception of that for economic inequality) remained below four, the point at which standard errors double. Moreover, although not reproduced here, analyses that added controls for economic inequality and average income to the political-institutional model did not raise any of the other included variables to statistical significance, and adding PRD strength and legislative pluralism to the socioeconomic-structure model did not affect its results.

Table 3.4: Explaining Democratic Quality in the Mexican States

	Model 1 Coefficient (Std. Coeff.)	Model 2 Coefficient (Std. Coeff.)	Model 3 Coefficient (Std. Coeff.)
Actor & Institutional Variables			
Opposition Strength, 1988-2000	0.001		
	(.004)		
PRD Strength, 1988-2000	-.085**		-.058**
	(-.462)		(-.316)
Opposition Government (years)	0.032		
	(.087)		
Divided Government (years)	0.034		
	(.076)		
Legislative Pluralism, 2000	0.987*		0.498*
	(.375)		(.189)
Socioeconomic Structure			
Economic Inequality, 1990		-.695***	-.526***
		(-.695)	(-.526)
Average Income, 1988		0.096#	0.108#
		(.263)	(.296)
Agricultural Employment, 1990		-.020	
		(-.247)	
Rural Population, 1990		*0.014*	
		(.224)	
Indigenous Population, 1990		*0.010*	
		(.113)	
Constant	-1.691	-.530	-1.206
R^2	.392	.699	.742
Adj. R^2	.270	.639	.703

# $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; one-tailed tests. Results contrary to hypothesis are italicized.

Model 3, which includes all of the variables found to have important effects in the political-institutional and socioeconomic-structure models, confirms their findings: all four variables continue to exhibit strong and statistically significant effects. The negative effect of economic inequality on the states' democratic development is the strongest in this model and is statistically significant at the .001 level. Although the strength of the

PRD has a somewhat smaller negative effect than that estimated in the political-institutional model when controlled by the socioeconomic variables, its effect is still powerful and statistically significant. The positive effect of higher average incomes appears similar in magnitude to that of PRD strength, but continues to be less consistent across states. The introduction of controls for the states' socioeconomic structure roughly halved the estimated impact of differences in legislative plurality. Nevertheless, this variable continues to display an important and statistically significant independent effect on the states' democratization.

The variation explained by combining the actor-centered, institutional, and socioeconomic-structural variables is impressive; the R^2 indicates that Model 3 accounts for three-fourths of the differences in democratic quality across the states. Examining the remaining, unexplained variation, however, might lead to important potential causes that have been overlooked. The residuals, the differences between each state's actual score on the index of democratic quality and the score predicted by Model 3, measure the unexplained divergences in the states' experiences. As expected given the large share of explained variation, the residuals for most states are quite small, but one state stands out: Quintana Roo, on the Caribbean coast of the Yucatan peninsula. Quintana Roo is among the highest-scoring states on the democratization index, but the variables in Model 3 suggest that the state should be expected to have been below average.

The fact that Quintana Roo is the home of Cancún and the state that draws the most foreign visitors by far suggests the hypothesis that foreign tourism induces higher quality democracies that minimize social unrest that could disrupt the fragile tourist economy. This hypothesis can be tested using data from Mexico's *Secretaría de Turismo*

(Department of Tourism) on nights stayed by foreign tourists annually per capita. Foreign tourists stay in Quintana Roo 16.5 nights annually for each state resident, a figure five times higher than that of the next most-visited state, Baja California Sur. When controlled by the effects of the variables included in Model 3, the effect of foreign tourism is estimated to be quite strong—similar to that of legislative pluralism. This estimate, however, depends entirely on Quintana Roo: bootstrap regression confirms that the effect is not sufficiently consistent across states to reach statistical significance at even the .1 level, and when Quintana Roo is dropped from the sample, the size of the estimated effect is cut by three-fourths. The enormous importance of foreign tourism to the economy of Quintana Roo may explain the state's unusually rapid democratization, but within the range of variation observed in the other Mexican states, foreign tourism does not appear to have an important effect. Although the foreign-tourism hypothesis is not supported, the failure to find additional causes of democratic quality by examining the residuals lends some additional confidence to the findings of the analysis presented above.

Conclusions and Implications

As shown in the preceding chapter, some of Mexico's state governments responded to their new power and autonomy by institutionalizing protections for civil and political rights and becoming more responsive to their citizens' needs, while others remained, to varying degrees, more authoritarian. A careful examination of the possible causes of the differences in the quality of democracy in the thirty-one states reveals that three considerations made important contributions. Most important is the distribution of economic resources within the state. In states where income, wealth, and human capital were concentrated in the hands of relatively few, little progress was made toward dispersing political power, but where economic resources were distributed more evenly among citizens, the quality of democracy was considerably higher. This aspect of socioeconomic structure accounts for the greatest share of the variation in democratic quality across the Mexican states.

The cross-state analysis also indicates that actors and institutions shaped the democratic quality in two ways. It provides strong support for the hypothesis that the state governments achieved less democratization where Mexico's confrontational opposition party, the PRD, had a stronger presence. In addition, pluralistic legislatures consistently yielded higher quality democratic governments, although this effect was somewhat weaker than those of economic inequality and the strength of the PRD.

Statistical analysis of a large number of cases is an excellent tool for discerning between those variables that demonstrate a consistent association with the quality of new democracies—legislative pluralism, the strength of the confrontational opposition, and economic inequality—from those that do not. It often does a bad job, however, of

helping us understand *why* these associations exist, that is, the mechanisms between apparent cause and effect (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992, 29-30). Case studies bring additional evidence that allow these mechanisms to be identified.

The next chapter further explores the effect of legislative pluralism on the quality of new democracies. Arguing that greater legislative pluralism generates higher quality democracy by facilitating the institutionalization of legislatures as coordinate branches of government, I present a case study of the experiences of the state of Michoacán. After the elections of 2001, there was a sharp increase in the pluralism in Michoacán's legislature; tracing the process by which this pluralism led to the body's rapid institutionalization provides a clear understanding of the association between legislative pluralism and democratization found in the analysis set forth above (cf. Rueschemeyer and Stephens 1997).

Michoacán and Yucatán were selected to highlight the effect of the strength of the PRD on a state's democratic quality. Based on the actor-centered theory of democratic transitions, Chapter 5 argues that the negative relationship between a state's quality of democracy and the strength of its PRD is the result of the PRD's position after the 1988 presidential election as the radical opposition in a negotiated transition. Michoacán is the home state of the PRD's standard-bearer, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, and the party's stronghold. Yucatán, along with Nuevo Leon, had the weakest PRD organization: the party had very little presence in the state for most of the 1990s. Yucatán, further, has more economic inequality and less legislative pluralism than Michoacán. Comparing these two states provides an especially strong test of theory: the sharp difference in PRD strength generates very certain predictions of distinct differences in how the process of

democratization played out and, because the values of inequality and pluralism considered alone predict more democratization in Michoacán, these predictions are unique (cf. Van Evera 1997, 30-34).

The weakness of the PRD in Yucatán also makes the state ideal for inclusion in an investigation of the effect of economic inequality on the quality of new democracies: although inequality was more severe in Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Guerrero, the PRD was also stronger than average in these three states, posing the risk of confusing the negative effects of high inequality with those of strong PRD organizations. Chapter 6 contrasts Yucatán with Baja California Sur, which had the most egalitarian distribution of economic resources of all of the Mexican states, to show how economic inequality enables vote buying and patronage politics, thereby preventing elections from serving as effective mechanisms for holding government officials accountable for their performance and yielding lower-quality democratic government.

By testing a large number of hypotheses regarding political actors, institutions, and socioeconomic structure against the experiences of Mexico's thirty-one state governments, this chapter has generated robust findings about the variables that have large and consistent effects on the quality of new democracies. These findings reaffirm the value of a broadly encompassing approach to the study of democracy and democratization. Many often-suggested explanations for variation in the quality of new democracies are not supported by the Mexican experience: democratic quality does not appear to depend on the simple strength of opposition parties, nor on the balance between modern and traditional-indigenous cultures. Still, elements of the three broad approaches to the study of democracy contribute to the explanation of differences across the Mexican

states. Socioeconomic structure, the interactions of important political actors, and institutions must all be included in our understanding of the quality of democracy in Mexico.

CHAPTER FOUR

LEGISLATIVE PLURALISM AND CONGRESSIONAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Beginning in the late 1980s, the formerly highly centralized Mexican federal government devolved wide swaths of policy to the governments of Mexico's thirty-one states. The state governments' reactions to the opportunities provided by this new decentralization of power, however, varied considerably. Chapter 2 found that, from the use of political repression and the financing of state legislatures and judiciaries to the funding of municipal government and the provision of basic education, some state governments have been consistently more democratic than others and that the regularity of this pattern allows the states to be arranged along a single index of democratic quality. The cross-state analysis presented in Chapter 3 pointed to three principal sources of these differences in quality of democratic government: the extent of inequality in economic resources; the strength of the initially highly confrontational opposition, the PRD; and the degree of pluralism, measured by the effective number of parties, found in state legislatures. This chapter examines more closely the effect of legislative pluralism on the quality of new democracies, arguing that more pluralism generates higher democratic quality by fostering the institutionalization of legislatures as powerful and independent branches of government.

This argument is tested using a variety of empirical data from Mexico's states. First, the chapter addresses a very plausible alternative explanation: that legislative

pluralism is an effect, rather than a cause, of democratic quality. Drawing on statistical data from all thirty-one states, it confirms that causation runs from legislative pluralism to the quality of democracy by verifying that differences in electoral systems and varying amounts of pluralism in official vote returns—the only factors taken into account by electoral officials when seats are awarded—caused the variation in legislative pluralism across all the Mexican states. Differences in electoral systems or in the pluralism of voters, however, do not display any close relationship with the quality of democracy across the states. More legislative pluralism causes higher democratic quality, this analysis demonstrates, not the reverse.

The chapter then draws on observations from earlier research on the institutionalization of three central Mexican state legislatures to reveal that legislative pluralism provides the best explanation for the diverging experiences of the three congresses. This controlled comparison takes advantage of the availability of rich qualitative data to show how differences in legislative pluralism yielded differences in the development of the three legislatures and to reconfirm that competition in the electorate does not have an independent direct effect on this process.

Finally, the method of analysis shifts from comparison across cases to comparison over time. Tracing the process of legislative development in the state of Michoacán, the chapter recounts the rapid transformation of the congress into a representative body strong enough to hold the governor accountable and prevent executive abuses of power following the January 2002 installation of the most pluralistic legislature in the state's history. Based on personal observations of the functioning of Michoacán's legislature and interviews with legislators and staffers from all four parliamentary parties, this

analysis provides a powerful demonstration of how greater legislative pluralism yields higher democratic quality. The chapter concludes by placing its findings in the context of recent works on presidential systems of democracy and outlining its implications for efforts to design appropriate electoral systems in newly democratic countries.

Legislative Pluralism, Institutionalization, and Democratic Quality

Legislative institutionalization is a critical component of the quality of democracies. In many new democracies, however, legislatures cede the lawmaking function to chief executives by routinely approving all executive initiatives or, equivalently, acceding to lawmaking by executive decree (O'Donnell 1994). Such less institutionalized legislatures also frequently fail to provide oversight of executive-branch actions, thus granting executives less formal means of making and remaking the law. More institutionalized legislatures, by retaining primary responsibility for making laws, can constrain the executive from simply taking whatever action he or she deems appropriate; measures that are approved independently by two elected branches of government are more likely to be representative of citizens' preferences. The policymaking process slows, but the loss of the decisiveness enjoyed by unconstrained executives also tends to result in polices "vaccinated against gross mistakes" (O'Donnell 1994, 62). Further, more institutionalized legislatures maintain oversight that allows them to hold officials of the executive branch accountable for abusing their power. Better-institutionalized legislatures therefore act to make governments more responsive and effective as well as more likely to protect citizens' civil and political rights, that is, to make them higher-quality democracies.

Greater legislative pluralism facilitates the institutionalization of legislatures in several mutually reinforcing ways. The electoral incentives for lawmaking activity increase as pluralism in the legislature increases. Low levels of legislative pluralism ensure that one party will have a majority of legislative seats. When the majority party in the legislature also holds the executive's office, simply enacting the executive's initiatives—or even granting extensive decree powers—is a potentially viable strategy for party leaders seeking to maintain electoral support (Jones 1995, 40). In this case, independent initiatives are unnecessary for the majority party. A party that controls a majority in the legislature but not the executive, simply blocking the executive's proposals may be viewed as sufficient to win votes in the future. Such an obstructionist strategy, however, can also lead frustrated executives to undermine any independent role for the legislature (Linz 1990; O'Donnell 1994). In both cases, minority parties can have little hope of passing a law and gaining credit at the polls for a legislative success. Rather than introducing their own initiatives, therefore, minority parties are likely to rely more on the missteps of the majority to gain support in coming elections.[1] Regardless of which party is in control, low levels of legislative pluralism and the consequent presence of a majority party can be expected to minimize electoral incentives toward the institutionalization of legislatures.

As legislative pluralism increases and more parties gain significant representation in a legislature, on the other hand, parties can distinguish themselves from each other by offering their own proposals, and so have an incentive to become more active in

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[1] This is not to say that minority parties never introduce policy initiatives in the presence of a majority party, only that they are less likely to do so then when there is greater legislative pluralism.

lawmaking. Moreover, the need in the absence of a majority party to build coalitions that likely include the executive's party to pass laws helps ensure that legislative initiatives will be acceptable to the executive and that the initiating party will be able to claim a share of legislative success. Over time, such legislative successes build acceptance of the legislature's independent lawmaking role and so lead to further institutionalization.

Beyond its positive effects on parties' electoral incentives, increased legislative pluralism necessarily creates a dispersion of power within the legislature, which also can be expected to yield greater legislative institutionalization. As more parties gain significant numbers of legislative seats, the ability of any one party to dominate decision-making power within the legislature declines. The decentralization of decision-making in the legislature's leadership and committee structure allows greater specialization and therefore encourages more legislative activity. Dispersed decision-making also generates increased oversight: the executive's party does not have the power needed to unilaterally overlook executive abuses, and most opposition parties will have little inclination to do so. As pluralism increases in legislatures, therefore, legislators can be expected to be more active in making laws and more vigilant of executive attempts to circumvent the law, with the end result being higher-quality democracy.

Legislative Pluralism and Democratic Quality: Disentangling Cause and Effect

A reasonable, and potentially devastating, counterargument to the explanation of the relationship between legislative pluralism and democratic quality presented above is that it mistakes the direction of causality. Unlike the structural variables in the cross-state statistical analysis in Chapter 3, all of which are measured early in the time period

examined, and the other actor-centered and institutional variables, which are measured over all twelve years from 1988 to 2000, legislative pluralism is measured towards the end of this time. Temporal precedence therefore does not solve this potential problem in the direction of causation. It would hardly be surprising if electorates in states where there was less repression, fewer ballot-secrecy violations, and generally higher quality democratic governments felt freer to vote their consciences and so voted for more pluralistic legislatures. Lower quality democratic governments can also be expected to engage in more outright fraud, further reducing pluralism in their official vote totals.

Although observers of subnational politics in Mexico and elsewhere have frequently overlooked the laws that convert votes to seats, the number of parties elected to the legislature also depends on the electoral system. Even those authors who have taken note of the state electoral systems in Mexico have minimized or dismissed outright any differences among them. Several recent works on the politics of the thirty-one Mexican states credit state electoral-system reform, in particular the addition of proportional-representation (PR) seats, with the increased representation of parties other than the long-dominant PRI in state legislatures (Crespo 1996; Lujambio 2000). Lujambio (2000, 54-62), however, made no distinctions among the state electoral systems of the last twenty years in his discussion of the increase in pluralism in state legislatures during this period. Beer (2001, 424) contended that the states' electoral systems can play no role in explaining variation in the institutionalization of their legislatures without discussing differences in the systems. Even Crespo's (1996, 73) comprehensive survey of state electoral laws only notes the differences in how PR seats are assigned in passing and fails to analyze the relationship between electoral systems and the partisan

composition of state legislatures. More proportional electoral systems, like more pluralistic electorates, plausibly could be a product of higher quality democracy. Could increased legislative pluralism be an effect of higher democratic quality rather than a cause?

This section establishes that the answer is no. It first examines the direct causes of legislative pluralism: the official electoral returns and the laws that convert those votes into legislative seats. Using data from canvasses of the official vote and electoral law in each state, it confirms that these two factors explain a large majority of the variation in legislative pluralism observed across all states in the late 1990s. The section then demonstrates that the states' democratic quality predict neither the pluralism in their electorates nor the proportionality of their electoral systems. Greater legislative pluralism leads to higher quality democracy, not vice versa.

Pluralistic Electorates in the Mexican States

Differences in the distribution of the vote are the most obvious source of differences in the number and size of parties elected to state legislatures. All else equal, where the electorate is more fragmented and the vote is divided among more parties, more legislative pluralism should result. The effective number of parties in the vote, N_V, is a convenient measure of the extent of pluralism in a state's electorate. Similar to N_S, the effective number of parties in the legislature introduced in Chapter 3, the effective number of parties in the vote is calculated as follows:

$$N_V = 1 / \Sigma\, p_i^2$$

The quantity p_i in this equation represents the proportion of the total vote cast for party *i*. Where the vote is divided evenly between *x* number of parties, N_V equals *x*. When some of these parties are bigger than others, N_V declines. The effective number of parties in the vote, therefore, can be understood as a count of the number of parties with each weighted according to its share of the vote.

A compilation of the returns of state elections held between 1996 and 1999 reveals that the extent of pluralism in the states' electorates varied considerably, from a low of 2.33 effective parties in the vote in Yucatán to a high of 3.63 in Morelos. Table 4.1 further illustrates the amount of variation across states and also provides concrete examples of the effective number of parties in the vote. It presents the share of the votes for each of the three major parties and for all others in three states for the elections of the late 1990s, along with the effective number of parties in the vote for each state. Oaxaca's electorate was among the least pluralistic. The PRI took half of the vote, and the PRD also won a large share. More than ten percent of the electorate supported the PAN. Only 1.5% of voters chose another party. This pattern, two large parties and one considerably smaller, yielded an effective number of parties in the vote of about two and a half.

Table 4.1: Vote Shares and the Effective Number of Parties in the Vote

	PRI (%)	PAN (%)	PRD (%)	All Others (%)	N_V
Oaxaca, 1998	50.0	11.7	36.8	1.5	2.51
Colima, 1997	33.8	39.9	22.5	3.8	3.07
México, 1996	37.3	30.2	21.6	10.9	3.57

Note: N_V was calculated using actual vote shares for each party included in the "All Others" category.

In Colima, the electorate split more evenly, with the PRI taking a third of the vote, the PAN somewhat more than a third, and the PRD somewhat less. Small parties received 3.8% of the vote. The relative equality of vote support for the three large parties, along with the stronger showing by small parties, resulted in slightly more than three effective parties in Colima's vote.

México was near the top of the states for pluralism in the vote in the late 1990s. Voters in México broke down in proportions similar to those in Colima, but with the PRI receiving the most votes and the PAN in second place. Importantly, however, the fourth-place Mexican Green Party, PVEM, won more votes (4.3%) than all of the small parties in Colima put together, and the fifth-place Labor Party, PT, and the sixth-place Party of the Cardenista Front for National Reconstruction, PFCRN, each had more support (2.5% and 2.2%, respectively) than all of Oaxaca's tiny parties combined. Three large, fairly evenly matched parties and a few small ones made for an effective number of parties in México of more than three and a half.

The Electoral Systems of the Mexican States

On their face, state electoral systems in Mexico appear quite similar: all tend to mirror fairly closely the 60/40 ratio of plurality seats elected in single-member districts to PR seats from a single, polity-wide district now found in the *Cámara de Diputados*, the lower chamber of the federal legislature.[2] A close reading of state constitutions and electoral laws in effect in the late 1990s, however, reveals that important distinctions exist. This section identifies four principal types of electoral systems found in the states from 1996 to 1999: pure PR systems, systems with disproportionality limits, systems defined by the average district magnitude, and systems with majority-manufacturing clauses.[3] These types are discussed below, in order of decreasing proportionality between vote shares and shares of legislative seats.

The primary features of an electoral law can be distilled to the concept of effective district magnitude. Effective district magnitude has been called the "decisive factor" of electoral systems (Taagepera and Shugart 1989, 112). It is defined as the average number of seats elected from each district, adjusted to take into account the effect of specific electoral rules on proportionality, that is, how closely parties' seat shares match their vote shares. Higher district magnitudes indicate more proportional electoral systems, because as the number of seats elected from a single district rises, the

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[2] All of the Mexican state legislatures are unicameral. Unlike Mexico's federal electoral system in which voters cast separate ballots for representatives from single-member districts and for party lists of PR representatives, all of the states employ single ballot voting, with PR seats assigned in accordance with the vote totals across single-member districts. For a concise explanation of Mexico's federal electoral system, see Klesner (2002)

[3] The legislatures of all of the Mexican states are elected to three-year terms, but the elections are generally staggered every few months. The period from 1996 to 1999 therefore encompasses one election in each state.

precision with which seats can be matched to votes rises as well. A comparison between a single-member district and a district that elects two seats illustrates this relationship. When two parties evenly split the vote in a single-member district, one party must win all of the district's representation, leaving the other with none: one seat cannot be divided. If the district has two seats, however, each party can be assigned one seat, and representation from the district, because the parties evenly split the vote, matches vote support perfectly. Even more seats allow more complex divisions of the vote total to be more faithfully reproduced in legislative seats, and specific rules, such as legal vote thresholds, can act to make an electoral system's results match those of systems with fewer or more seats per district. Effective district magnitude measures these phenomena across all of an electoral system's districts and so provides a convenient evaluation of an electoral system's predicted effects.[4]

The most proportional of the four types of state electoral systems is the *pure proportional-representation system*. Depending on the method by which PR seats are allocated, even electoral systems with a majority of seats from single-member districts can approximate the results of systems with only PR seats, where legislative seats are assigned to each party so that its share of the total number of seats mirrors the percentage of votes it received as closely as possible. This result occurs when the PR seats are assigned to compensate for the disproportionality introduced by the plurality races, so

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[4] The effective electoral threshold, another summary statistic often employed to describe electoral systems, is understood as the share of the vote needed to give a party a fifty-percent probability of achieving legislative representation (Boix 1999, 614). It is, then, simply the reverse of the effective district magnitude: Lijphart (1999, 153) has described their relationship as "two sides of the same coin: the *explicit* barrier against small parties imposed by a threshold has essentially the same function as the barrier *implied* by district magnitude."

that the percentage of the total number of legislative seats matches the percentage of votes.[5] The system's effective district magnitude, M, then equals the number of seats in the legislature, or, when a legal threshold acts to exclude parties with less than T% of the vote, 50/T (Taagepera and Shugart 1989, 133-135). Four of Mexico's thirty-one states have electoral laws which provide that PR seats are to be distributed in this compensatory manner: Baja California (4% threshold, M = 12.5), Guanajuato (3% threshold, M = 16.7), the state of México (1.5% threshold, M = 33.3), and Zacatecas (2% threshold, M = 25.0).

The *disproportionality limit* is the next most proportional of the state electoral systems. Found in seven states during the period examined, disproportionality limits appear to be a Mexican innovation. Although PR seats are not assigned to compensate for the plurality results in these cases, state electoral laws do provide that the share of seats awarded a party may not exceed the party's share of the vote by more than a specified amount, typically between eight and ten percent, except by plurality wins alone.

The calculation of the effective district magnitude for such systems is somewhat less straightforward than that for the pure PR systems described above. The electoral system of Campeche (35 seats: 21 plurality, 14 PR; disproportionality limit = 8%) serves as an illustrative example. Assuming a three-party system with an evenly divided electorate ($N_V = 3$; not an unreasonable assumption, as the actual effective number of parties in Campeche's 1997 election was 2.92) yields a variety of possible outcomes, depending on the distribution of votes across districts, which is assumed here to be

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[5] Because, as noted above, the candidate with the most votes in a single-member district wins the only seat, leaving the other candidates with nothing, the accumulated difference between parties' vote shares and seat shares across districts can be considerable. In fact, in systems with only single-member districts, this disproportionality is 25% on average ((Taagepera and Shugart 1989, 110).

random. The possible number of seats awarded to Party A, the party that wins the largest number of districts, and the disproportionality in the legislature that results are displayed in Table 4.2 below.[6]

Table 4.2: A Disproportionality-Limiting Electoral System: Simulated Election Results in Campeche, $N_V = 3$

Plurality Seats Won by Party A	Total Seats Awarded to Party A	Disproportionality (%)
21	21	26.7
20	20	23.8
19	19	21.0
18	18	18.1
17	17	15.3
16	16	12.4
15	15	9.6
14	14	6.7
13	14	6.7
12	14	6.7
11	14	6.7
10	14	6.7
9	14	6.7
8	13	3.8
7	12	1.0
		Average = 11.5%

Note: "Party A" refers to the party that wins the most single-member districts of the three evenly sized parties in the simulation.

When Party A wins fourteen or more of the plurality races, the disproportionality limit prevents it from being assigned any PR seats. Nine to thirteen plurality wins nets Party A fourteen seats, as its share of the legislature (40.0%) is then fewer than eight

[6] The disproportionality of an electoral system is defined as the sum of the differences between vote shares and seat shares for all parties divided by two. For the purposes of the calculation presented in Table 4.2, the sum of the differences between vote shares and seat shares of the other two parties is assumed to equal the overrepresentation of Party A. This simplifying assumption does not hold when a second party is also overrepresented (a possibility that arises when Party A wins 13 or fewer districts), but the averaged discrepancy is slight (a difference of less than 0.4% in the case of Campeche) compared with the additional complexity introduced in the simulation.

points more than its share of the vote (33.3%). With seven or eight plurality wins, Party A is assigned one-third of the PR seats to match its one-third share of the vote without invocation of the disproportionality limit. The result is an average legislative disproportionality of 11.5%. Inserting this into Rein Taagepera and Matthew S. Shugart's (1989, 141) equation for the relationship between disproportionality and effective district magnitude, $M = (25 / \text{Disproportionality})^2$, yields an effective magnitude of 4.8 for Campeche. The effective magnitudes of other disproportionality-limiting systems can be calculated similarly, with results ranging from M = 2.4 in Durango to M = 6.6 in Jalisco.

The third type of electoral system, that based on the *average district magnitude*, is found in thirteen of Mexico's thirty-one states and is the most straightforward to analyze. Proportional-representation seats in these states are allocated completely independently of the results of the plurality races, with the percentage of PR seats matching as nearly as possible the percentage of votes (in contrast to the pure PR systems, where *total* seat shares are matched to vote shares). Effective district magnitude, then, is simply the average of the district magnitudes: the total number of seats divided by the number of single-member districts plus one. This calculation yields effective magnitudes as low as 1.4 (in Aguascalientes) and as high as 1.8 (in Veracruz), but M = 1.6 is the result of the 60/40 ratio of plurality to PR seats found in eight of the states with such systems.

Finally, in seven Mexican states in the late 1990s, the details of electoral law worked in at least some circumstances to counteract the increase in proportionality that would ordinarily result from the addition of PR seats to those elected by plurality from single-member districts. These *majority-manufacturing clauses* specify that the party

winning a plurality of the vote (as in Hidalgo and San Luis Potosí) or a plurality of the single-member districts (Tlaxcala) or a majority of the single-member districts (Michoacán, 50%; Morelos, 56%; Sinaloa, 58%; Tamaulipas, 52%) is entitled to a majority of the total seats in the legislature.[7] For the first three of these states, the effective district magnitude equals one, as vote pluralities create legislative majorities in the same fashion as in systems with only single-member districts. For the second four states, effective district magnitude should fall between one and the average district magnitude, because the majority-manufacturing clause will not necessarily apply in all elections. I have coded these states as having M = 1.3, the midpoint between one and the average district magnitude in each case, but this decision does not substantially affect the results of the statistical analysis presented below.

[7] When the PRI introduced such a provision into the federal electoral system, the party euphemistically referred to it as a "governability clause" (Bruhn 1997, 244-245). Because "majority-manufacturing clause" is more descriptive of the provision's effect, I will use that term here.

Table 4.3: Mexican State Electoral Systems, Elections of 1996 to 1999

State	Seats	Plurality (%)	PR (%)	T	M	N_V	N_S	System Type
Aguascalientes	27	18 (66.7)	9 (33.3)	2.0%	1.4	2.57	2.04	Average District Magnitude
Baja California	25	16 (64.0)	9 (36.0)	4.0%	12.5	3.00	2.49	Pure Proportional Representation
Baja California Sur	21[a]	15 (71.4)	6 (28.6)	2.0%	3.2	2.89	3.03	Disproportionality Limit
Campeche	35	21 (60.0)	14 (40.0)	3.0%	4.3	2.92	2.38	Disproportionality Limit
Coahuila	32	20 (63.5)	12 (37.5)	3.0%	1.5	2.72	2.53	Average District Magnitude
Colima	20	12 (60.0)	8 (40.0)	1.5%	2.8	3.07	2.53	Disproportionality Limit
Chiapas	40	24 (60.0)	16 (40.0)	1.5%	1.6	2.90	2.16	Average District Magnitude
Chihuahua	33	22 (66.7)	11 (33.3)	2.0%	4.3	2.61	2.26	Disproportionality Limit
Durango	25	15 (60.0)	10 (40.0)	2.5%	2.4	3.33	2.59	Disproportionality Limit
Guanajuato	36	22 (61.0)	14 (39.0)	3.0%[b]	16.7	3.08	3.03	Pure Proportional Representation
Guerrero	46	28 (60.9)	18 (39.1)	1.5%	1.6	2.21	2.02	Average District Magnitude
Hidalgo	29	18 (62.1)	11 (37.9)	3.0%	1.0	2.85	2.16	Strong Majority-Manufacturing Clause
Jalisco	40	20 (50.0)	20 (50.0)	2.0%	3.4	3.01	2.31	Disproportionality Limit
México	75	45 (60.0)	30 (40.0)	1.5%	33.3	3.57	3.39	Pure Proportional Representation
Michoacán	30	18 (60.0)	12 (40.0)	1.5%	1.3	3.15	2.29	Weak Majority-Manufacturing Clause
Morelos	30	18 (60.0)	12 (40.0)	3.0%	1.3	3.63	2.85	Weak Majority-Manufacturing Clause
Nayarit	30	18 (60.0)	12 (40.0)	2.0%	1.6	2.14	1.92	Average District Magnitude
Nuevo León	42	26 (61.9)	16 (38.1)	1.5%	1.6	2.55	2.26	Average District Magnitude
Oaxaca	42	25 (59.5)	17 (40.5)	1.5%	1.6	2.51	2.18	Average District Magnitude
Puebla	39	26 (66.7)	13 (33.3)	1.5%	1.4	2.82	2.05	Average District Magnitude
Querétaro	25	15 (60.0)	10 (40.0)	2.0%	1.6	2.99	2.78	Average District Magnitude

State	Seats	Plurality (%)	PR (%)	T	M	N_V	N_S	System Type
Quintana Roo	25	15 (60.0)	10 (40.0)	2.5%	1.6	3.40	2.24	Average District Magnitude
San Luis Potosí	27	15 (55.6)	12 (44.4)	3.0%	1.0	2.88	2.42	Strong Majority-Manufacturing Clause
Sinaloa	40	24 (60.0)	14 (40.0)	2.0%	1.3	2.92	2.22	Weak Majority-Manufacturing Clause
Sonora	33	21 (63.6)	12 (36.4)	3.0%	1.5	3.34	2.89	Average District Magnitude
Tabasco	31	18 (58.1)	13 (41.9)	1.5%	2.8	2.36	1.99	Disproportionality Limit
Tamaulapas	32	19 (59.4)	13 (40.6)	1.5%	1.3	2.65	2.17	Weak Majority-Manufacturing Clause
Tlaxcala	32	19 (59.4)	13 (40.6)	3.0%	1.0	3.49	2.84	Strong Majority-Manufacturing Clause
Veracruz	45	24 (53.3)	21 (47.7)		1.8	3.05	2.34	Average District Magnitude
Yucatan	25	15 (60.0)	10 (40.0)	1.5%	1.6	2.32	2.13	Average District Magnitude
Zacatecas	30	18 (60.0)	12 (40.0)	2.0%	25.0	3.34	3.17	Pure Proportional Representation

Source: Author's survey of state constitutions, electoral laws, and election returns; N_S is the result of the author's calculations based on data presented in Alonso Lujambio, *El Poder Compartido: Un Ensayo Sobre la Democración Mexicana* (México: Editorial Oceano, 2000).

[a]Baja California Sur's legislature has a variable number of PR seats; figures given are the maximum number of total and PR seats.

[b]Guanajuato's electoral law provides that up to two PR seats may be awarded to parties with between 1.5 to 3.0% of the vote.

Testing the Origins of Legislative Pluralism

The extent of legislative pluralism in the Mexican states is hypothesized to be a function of pluralism in the states' electorates and of the states' electoral systems. Indeed, although the distribution of votes across districts injects an element of chance that prevents these relationships from being deterministic, no other factors can logically directly affect legislative pluralism: electoral officials consult only the official vote totals and the applicable electoral law to determine which parties gain congressional

representation and how much.[8] To test the hypothesis, I regress the effective number of parties in the state legislature on the state's effective district magnitude and the effective number of parties in the vote.[9] As the relatively small number of observations counsels against reliance on the central limit theorem, and the distribution of the effective number of legislative parties does not follow a normal distribution (in particular, it is skewed toward lower values), bootstrap regression is used to avoid bias in the calculation of significance levels. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Predicting Legislative Pluralism, 1996 to 1999 Election Cycle.

	Coefficient (Beta)
Effective Number of Parties in the Vote	0.5660*** (0.5420)
Effective District Magnitude	0.0209*** (0.4101)
Constant	0.7117*
R^2	.630

# $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; one-tailed tests. The dependent variable is the effective number of parties in the thirty-one Mexican state legislatures elected between 1996 and 1999. Linear regression, OLS estimates; significance levels determined by bootstrap, 5000 resamplings.

[8] As effective district magnitude is an imperfect means of condensing complex legal provisions into a single number, measurement error undoubtedly also adds to the error of the model of this hypothesis.

[9] A tobit analysis, which avoids any specification error introduced in a linear model by the minimum number of parties represented in a legislature (that is, one), produces near-identical results, indicating that this potential source of misspecification is not a serious problem with the OLS estimates. As linear regression is both more familiar among most political scientists and easier to interpret, I have chosen to present the OLS results here.

As expected, the fit of the model is quite good; it accounts for nearly two-thirds of the variation in the number of legislative parties observed in the late 1990s. The effects of both pluralism in the electorate and differences in electoral systems are strong and highly statistically significant. For each additional effective party in the vote, there were, on average, 0.566 additional effective parties in the legislature. Net of the effect of electoral laws, then, this result predicts that the difference between the state with most electoral competition, Morelos, where there were 3.63 effective parties in the vote, and the least, Guerrero, which had only 2.21 effective parties, would generate a difference of 0.80 effective parties in the legislature. The total effect of varying electoral laws is almost as great as that of differences in electoral competition. A one-point change in effective district magnitude increased the effective number of parties in the legislature by an average of 0.021 across the Mexican states in this cycle of elections. With equal levels of electoral pluralism, the difference between most proportional state electoral system and the least proportional system would result, according to this analysis, in an average difference of 0.67 effective legislative parties.

If higher democratic quality is actually the cause rather than an effect of increased legislative pluralism, it must do so by generating increased pluralism in the official vote or more proportional electoral systems. As shown in Table 4.5 below, however, the quality of democracy is not strongly correlated with either of these variables. Both correlations are in the expected positive direction, but are quite weak and do not approach statistical significance.

Table 4.5: Bivariate Correlations Between Democratic Quality, Pluralism in the Vote, and Electoral System Variation

	Democratic Quality	N_V	M
Democratic Quality	1.000		
N_V	0.110	1.000	
M	0.122	0.377*	1.000

# $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; one-tailed tests.

Two additional factors that may affect pluralism in the electorate could be masking a positive effect of higher levels of democratic quality and therefore should also be taken into account. First, the modest but statistically significant positive correlation between the effective number of parties in the vote and the effective district magnitude is evidence of the psychological effect of electoral systems. The negative effect of less proportional electoral systems on small parties' chances of representation leads some voters to opt for larger parties that, although not otherwise preferred, have a better chance to win legislative seats. Such strategic voting increases as the effective district magnitude falls and works to reduce the effective number of parties in the vote. Second, it has often been noted that, in presidential systems such as those of the Mexican states, electorates tend to be more fragmented during mid-term elections than when the chief executive is elected concurrently (Shugart and Carey 1992; Jones 1995; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997b). Although gubernatorial elections are typically concurrent (or nearly so) with those for state legislatures in Mexico, governors are elected for six years and legislators only three, so half of all legislative elections are held mid-term. To control for this effect,

a dummy variable was coded one for the twelve states that held mid-term elections during the 1996 to 1999 electoral cycle examined here.

Table 4.6 presents the results of a multiple-regression analysis that tests whether the level of democratic quality predicts electoral pluralism when these two controls are introduced. This analysis confirms that, although effective district magnitude does have the expected positive psychological effect and votes in mid-term elections are on average somewhat more pluralistic, higher democratic quality is not strongly or consistently associated with more pluralistic electorates across the Mexican states.

Table 4.6: Predicting Pluralism in the Electorate, 1996 to 1999 Election Cycle.

	Coefficient (Beta)
Democratic Quality	0.0312 (0.0856)
Effective District Magnitude	0.0164* (0.3346)
Mid-Term Election	0.0885 (0.1204)
Constant	2.9182***
R^2	.159

# $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; one-tailed tests. The dependent variable is the effective number of parties in the vote for the thirty-one Mexican state legislatures elected between 1996 and 1999. Linear regression, OLS estimates; significance levels determined by bootstrap, 5000 resamplings.

The very plausible hypothesis that higher democratic quality causes rather than results from more pluralistic congresses is false. Legislative pluralism is the product of pluralism in the official vote and the laws that translate these votes into seats. Higher

levels of democratic quality, however, do not generate greater electoral pluralism or more proportional electoral systems. The preceding analysis confirms that legislative pluralism causes democratic quality, not the reverse.

Pluralism and Institutionalization in Three State Legislatures

The central hypothesis of this chapter is that legislative pluralism leads to more democratic quality by creating legislatures that are more institutionalized and so better able to serve as checks against executive abuses of power. Beer's (2001) recent study of legislative institutionalization in three states in central Mexico provides the data for a controlled-comparison test of this hypothesis.[10] As she demonstrated, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, and Hidalgo were quite different in terms of legislative institutionalization in the late 1990s, despite being relatively similar in terms of economic structure. In this section, I show that variation in legislative pluralism—rather than electoral competition, as Beer argued—provides the best explanation for the differences in the institutionalization of these three state legislatures.

The predictions generated by the two rival hypotheses are similar but can be easily distinguished. After elections held in 1996 and 1997, legislative pluralism varied considerably across the three states. In Guanajuato, the PAN was the largest party in the legislature, but no party controlled a majority of congressional seats. The effective number of parties represented in the legislature was 3.03. In Hidalgo, the long-ruling PRI

[10] Controlled comparison here follows the logic of Mill's "method of difference," with cases selected to be similar except with respect to the variables of interest. A common approach in case-study research, controlled comparison provides a fairly good means of testing theory, but cases in political science are never nearly identical, as the method of difference requires to provide definitive results (Van Evera 1997, 57-58).

maintained its majority with two-thirds of the seats in the legislature; the effective number of parties was 2.04. In San Luis Potosí, the PRI clung to its legislative majority, with fourteen of twenty-seven seats. The effective number of parties in the congress was 2.42. If legislative pluralism is the cause of differences in institutionalization, Guanajuato's legislature should show the best performance on each of institutionalization's four dimensions and Hidalgo's congress the least. The legislature of San Luis Potosí should fall between the two, but closer to Hidalgo than Guanajuato.

If varying levels of electoral competition generated the differences in the institutionalization of the states' legislatures, we should expect to find a different pattern. The mean margin of victory across legislative districts that Beer reported for Guanajuato (13.82%), San Luis Potosí (15.03%), and Hidalgo (39.81%) in the elections held in 1996 and 1997 suggests the same rank ordering of the three states, but also suggests that the legislature in San Luis Potosí should be nearly as institutionalized as that of Guanajuato.

The evidence conforms to the prediction generated from the hypothesis that legislative pluralism rather than electoral competition is directly responsible for differences in institutionalization. Guanajuato's state legislature was consistently the most institutionalized by the late 1990s, while that of Hidalgo was the least so. The legislature of San Luis Potosí fell in between those of the other two states in terms of decentralized decision-making, autonomy, resources, and activity, but was much more similar to Hidalgo's legislature than Guanajuato's. Table 4.7, below, summarizes the findings of Beer's study, focusing especially on the measures that illuminate the position of San Luis Potosí between Guanajuato and Hidalgo.

Table 4.7: Legislative Institutionalization in Three Central Mexican States

	Guanajuato	San Luis Potosí	Hidalgo
Legislative Pluralism			
Effective Number of Parties (N_S)	3.03	2.42	2.04
Electoral Competitiveness			
Mean Margin of Victory	13.82%	15.03%	39.81%
Decentralized Decision-Making			
Leadership Structure	Internal Regime Committee	Grand Committee	Coordinator
Committee Chairs Dominated by a Single Party?	No	Yes	Yes
Committee Memberships Dominated by a Single Party?	No	Somewhat	Yes
Autonomy			
Number of Gubernatorial Vetoes	2	0	0
Congressional Staff for Budget Oversight	155	56	56
Congressional Auditors	98	42	40
Multiparty Control of Oversight?	Yes	No	No
Resources			
Mean Legislative Budget, 1975-97 (1990 new pesos)	6,263,000	2,995,000	2,231,000
Total Staff, 1998	344	177	137
Legislative Aides	37	11	5
Activity			
Average Pages of Debate, 1993-97	1525	903	n/a
Number of Initiatives per Year	16	10.25	3.6
Average Number of Radio or Television Interviews per Year	25	19	12

Adapted from Beer (2001).

The extent of decentralization in decision-making in the three legislatures varied considerably (Beer 2001, 432-33). In Guanajuato, an internal regime committee, with a rotating leadership and one member from each party represented in the legislature, was the body with responsibility for making committee assignments, setting the agenda, and making other important decisions regarding how the legislature worked. Committee chairs were distributed proportionally, and, in most committees, no party held a majority. In Hidalgo, on the other hand, a single person controlled the legislature: the coordinator of the congress. The PRI held the chair and a majority of the membership of every committee. The legislature of San Luis Potosí was directed by a grand committee. Although the PAN held one seat on the grand committee after the 1997 elections, there was a continuing "culture of domination by the president of the grand committee" (Beer 2001, 432), making the grand committee a variation of one-person rule essentially similar to Hidalgo's coordinator. Nearly all committee chairs were held by the PRI, and PRI members made up at least half of the membership of every committee.

Autonomy and legislative resources follow the same pattern (Beer 2001, 430-432). With respect to autonomy, the legislature of Guanajuato maintained slightly less than three times as many budget-oversight staffers and roughly two-and-a-half times as many auditors as those of either Hidalgo or San Luis Potosí. Only in Guanajuato had the legislature passed bills triggering gubernatorial vetoes or established multiparty control of committees charged with oversight of the executive branch. The differences in resources were similar; the average budget and total staff of the Guanajuato's legislature were roughly twice the size as those of San Luis Potosí's congress, which were, in turn, approximately 30% greater than Hidalgo's legislative budget and staff. Guanajuato's

legislators enjoyed the assistance of thirty-seven aides, who were distributed among the parties in proportion to representation. San Luis Potosí employed eleven legislative aides, and Hidalgo only five. In both of these states, aides worked only for the majority PRI.

The legislature of Guanajuato was the most active of the three by far: its record of debates averaged 1525 pages per year from 1993 to 1997, its legislators proposed sixteen initiatives in 1997-1998, and its members reported being interviewed on radio or television an average of twenty-five times a year. In Hidalgo, legislative debates are not published, which "suggests that there is very little debate" in that state (Beer 2001, 433). Hidalgo's legislators proposed an average of only 3.6 initiatives per year from 1996 to 1998 and were interviewed an average of a dozen times annually. San Luis Potosí fell more or less squarely between the two, with annual averages of 905 pages of debate, 10.25 initiatives, and 19 interviews.

This chapter argues that more legislative pluralism leads to higher democratic quality through its effects on the institutionalization of legislatures as bodies strong enough to check executive abuses of power. The evidence from Guanajuato, Hidalgo, and San Luis Potosí supports this explanatory hypothesis: across all four dimensions of institutionalization, San Luis Potosí was consistently more like Hidalgo than Guanajuato. The alternative hypothesis, that more electoral competition is primarily responsible for greater institutional development, is not supported. Although Beer theorized that electoral competition generates pressure for institutionalized legislatures through its effect on legislative pluralism, she assumed that state electoral systems are essentially identical and so that competition is uniformly converted into pluralism. The fact that the

pure proportional-representation system of Guanajuato and the strong majority-manufacturing clause of San Luis Potosí are on opposite ends of the Mexican electoral-system spectrum provides the missing piece of Beer's argument. At similar levels of electoral competition, more proportional electoral systems yield more representation for opposition parties and so greater pressure for legislative institutionalization.

Although this controlled comparison is very suggestive, tracing the process by which greater pluralism leads to more institutionalization would provide an even stronger test. The next section takes advantage of the sharp increase in the pluralism of Michoacán's legislature after the 2001 state elections to provide such a test.

Pluralism and the Institutionalization of a State Legislature: The Case of Michoacán

The recent experience of the state of Michoacán provides an additional and even stronger test of the explanatory hypothesis offered for the relationship between greater legislative pluralism and higher democratic quality: that greater legislative pluralism creates legislatures that are more institutionalized and better able to serve as mechanisms of horizontal accountability. There is much more pluralism in Michoacán's legislature for 2002-2004 than there was from 1998 to 2001 or any preceding *trienio*, and the legislature became more institutionalized than ever before within weeks of the new legislators taking office. Based on personal observation of the legislature's first months and interviews with legislators of all parties, this section presents strong evidence in favor of the explanatory hypothesis by demonstrating that the sequence of events in Michoacán

and the testimony of the legislators who took part in changing the congress conform to its predictions.[11]

The year 2001 saw a sharp increase in the pluralism in Michoacán's legislature. In February 2001, a new electoral code was enacted that eliminated the state's majority-manufacturing clause and introduced a disproportionality limit, increasing the effective district magnitude from 1.3 to 4.1. As the analysis presented earlier in this chapter leads us to expect, this new, more-proportional electoral system increased the amount of pluralism in the next legislature. State elections held on November 11, 2001 resulted in a legislature without a majority party: the PRI and the PRD won seventeen seats each, the PAN five seats, and the PT a single representative. The resulting effective number of parties in the legislature is 2.64, up from 2.29 in the preceding congress.[12]

The increased pluralism led rapidly to greater legislative institutionalization. Improvements in decentralized decision-making, autonomy, resources, and activity were easily observable within the first months of the new legislature. The progress along each of these dimensions is recounted below.

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[11] On the strength of such process-tracing analyses for testing hypotheses, see the works of Dietrich Rueschemeyer and John D. Stephens (1997) and Stephen Van Evera (1997, 64-67).

[12] This result further underscores the importance of electoral systems to legislative pluralism. If the election had been held using the old majority-manufacturing system, the PRD, by virtue of its twelve victories in the state's twenty-four single-member districts, would have garnered twenty-one of forty congressional seats, leaving the PRI with sixteen and the PAN three. The effective number of parties in the legislature then would have been 2.26, roughly similar to that of the previous legislature and again well below the average for the states in the 1996 to 1999 round of elections. Electoral competition actually declined slightly; the effective number of parties in the vote was 3.15 in 1998, but only 2.88 in 2001.

Pluralism led to decentralized decision-making structures in the congress, in terms of both internal leadership structure and committees' composition and leadership. In Michoacán's previous legislatures, the congress was directed formally by a grand committee and, in practice, by the committee's president. The president of the grand committee dictated committee assignments, distributed staff and other resources among legislators, and set the legislature's agenda. The PRI, moreover, held the chair and a majority of the members in every committee.

After the new legislature took office, however, no party had the support needed to name the new grand committee president. Nine days after being sworn in, the legislators agreed to abandon the grand committee in favor of a coordination council on which the PRD, PRI, PAN, and PT each hold a seat, with each party's vote weighted to match its representation in the legislature. The parties also agreed to a rotating presidency: the PRD holds the position for sixteen months, followed by the PAN for four months, and then by the PRI for the final sixteen months of the legislature's three-year term. This change was a direct result of increased legislative pluralism. In the words of one legislator, the opposition had advocated reform for years, but "once no party had a majority, there was no choice but to eliminate the grand committee."[13] Legislative committee assignments are now distributed relatively proportionally as well: the PRD heads eleven of the congress's twenty-four committees, the PRI ten, the PAN two, and even the lone PT member presides over one committee. The PRI and PRD hold the majority of members in six committees each; no party has a majority in the remaining twelve.

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[13] Interview with Diputado/Coordinador Francisco Morelos Borja (PAN, Michoacán), Morelia, February 4, 2002.

The autonomy of Michoacán's new legislature grew dramatically, particularly in the crucial arena of oversight of public finance. In 2001 and before, the PRI controlled both the executive branch and the legislative committees responsible for government oversight. In the legislature that began its three-year term on January 15, 2002, however, the PRI, PRD, and PAN are equally represented on the legislature's two oversight committees. Moreover, although the PRD now holds the governor's office, a PAN representative heads the Inspection and Auditing Committee, which is responsible for overseeing the executive branch. This multiparty control of oversight was agreed upon specifically to augment the legislature's ability to act independently to check executive abuses.[14] "It's the pluralism in this legislature that gave us this opportunity to reform how the government works," the new chair of the Inspection and Auditing Committee maintained.[15]

Resources for the congress also increased. After the new legislators were sworn in, the legislature's building was renovated to provide offices and telephones for each member. Unlike in previous legislatures, when the majority PRI monopolized staff and other resources, these are now distributed among the parties in proportion to their representation.

Finally, the legislature is now considerably more active. In the first year of the previous assembly, only one measure—an amendment of two paragraphs of the civil

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[14] Interviews with Diputado/Coordinador Francisco Morelos Borja (PAN, Michoacán), Morelia, February 4, 2002; Diputado/Coordinador Juan Iriarte Méndez, (PRD, Michoacán), Morelia, February 4, 2002; and Diputado/Coordinador Mario Magaña Juárez (PRI, Michoacán), Morelia, February 14, 2002.

[15] Interview with Diputado José Leonardo Vallejo Rojas (PAN, Michoacán), Morelia, February 13, 2002.

code—was introduced by a legislator. In the same period, eleven initiatives of the governor were presented, all of which passed. This record was typical of the less-pluralistic legislatures elected under Michoacán's majority-manufacturing electoral system. In the 1995-1998 congress, "the governor proposed measures, and we in the legislature approved them. We did not think of how to improve things ourselves then," recalled one repeat PRI representative.[16] By contrast, the current legislature set out an agenda of ten measures to consider in its first year: "There is an enthusiasm among legislators to take on the state's problems that is new to the congress," a repeat PAN legislator observed.[17] This activity has drawn attention; the work of the legislature and its committees now frequently garner extensive coverage and even front-page mentions in one or more of Michoacán's three daily newspapers, and legislative sessions are regularly covered by the local television news programs.

Since taking office, Michoacán's new legislature has made important strides toward its institutionalization as a representative body strong enough to hold the governor accountable and prevent executive abuses of power. This rapid advance occurred immediately after the new, pluralistic legislature was installed, and the legislators themselves attribute the changes to the greater pluralism in the chamber. Michoacán's experience lends strong support to the explanatory hypothesis that greater legislative pluralism generates higher-quality democracies by creating more institutionalized legislatures—and in at least some cases, doing so very rapidly.

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[16] Interview with Diputado/Coordinador Mario Magaña Juárez (PRI, Michoacán), Morelia, February 14, 2002.

[17] Interview with Diputado Juan Rafael Castelazo Mendoza (PAN, Michoacán), Morelia, February 12, 2002.

Conclusions

The experiences of Mexico's state governments provide strong support for the explanation that greater legislative pluralism generates higher quality democratic goverment by facilitating the development of legislatures as effective representative institutions that are able to check abuses of executive power. This finding is consistent with Lijphart's (1999) argument that pluralism is positively associated with balanced executive-legislative relations and O'Donnell's (1994; 1999) theorizing on the importance of such mechanisms of horizontal accountability for democratic development, but it stands in tension with some recent works on presidential democracy.

Responding to the arguments of Linz (1990; 1994) that presidential systems are more likely than parliamentary systems to suffer democratic breakdown, several scholars have argued that the perils of presidentialism are greatly exacerbated, if not caused entirely, by excessive legislative pluralism (Shugart and Carey 1992; Mainwaring 1993; Jones 1995).[18] Jones (1995), for example, argued that the stability of presidential democracies depends on the president's party holding a majority or nearly so in the legislature. He found that, across the presidential democracies of Latin America, as the effective number of legislative parties rises, the president's party's share of legislative

[18] Linz (1990; 1994) argued that presidential systems are poorly suited for fledgling democracies because the dual democratic legitimacy accorded to directly elected presidents and legislatures creates the potential for conflict between the branches of government that can be resolved only by recourse to undemocratic means. These means can range from rule by decree and the gradual executive usurpation of legislative authority to constitutional crises ultimately settled only by military intervention. Parliamentary systems, Linz contended, avoid these problems by vesting democratic legitimacy only in the legislature, which retains the executive at its pleasure and so ensures that the executive does not overstep its authority.

seats falls, and conflict between the executive and legislature increases.[19] Besides undermining democratic institutions, he reasoned that the increased conflict reduces the ability of the executive to act decisively to meet pressing problems and so further threatens the stability of democratic rule. On this basis, Jones advocated crafting electoral laws to minimize legislative pluralism and ensure majority support for the executive.

This chapter, however, finds that such measures work against the development of higher quality democracies. Legislatures dominated by the executive's party are indeed less likely to come into conflict with the executive, but they are also less likely to generate their own policy proposals, to enjoy multiparty control of important internal positions and so to exercise appropriate oversight, or acquire the resources needed to take these steps.[20] In other words, such legislatures tend to be mere rubber stamps for the executive branch, rather than independent checks on its power. Because less pluralistic legislatures fail to develop into effective institutions of horizontal accountability, lower quality democracies result.

Despite these seemingly contradictory findings, it does not appear that there is a tradeoff between the stability of a presidential democracy and its quality. Some more recent works argue that the history of Latin American presidential democracies

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[19] Jones also points to the deadlock experienced in the Argentine province of Salta to demonstrate the necessity of a legislative majority for the executive. The paralysis in Salta resulted not from legislative pluralism, however, but from a legislative majority held by an opposition party that, consistent with the theory discussed earlier in this chapter, sought only to obstruct the governor's efforts (Jones 1995, 56-63).

[20] Indeed, Jones's count of conflicts included such democracy-enhancing checks on executive power as legislative attempts to influence policy by modifying executive initiatives or to censure executive-branch officials for wrongdoing (Jones 1995, 197-198).

demonstrates that legislative pluralism endangers democratic stability only at quite high levels, over three-and-a-half or four effective parties (Mainwaring and Shugart 1997a, 466; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997b, 398-399). According to these works, although two-party systems and presidential majorities (or near majorities) are generally preferable, moderate amounts of legislative pluralism can be tolerated without threatening regime stability. The conclusion of this chapter extends this argument considerably: within the range of low to moderate legislative pluralism, more pluralism is not only tolerable in presidential systems, it actually results in higher quality democracies.

This conclusion has clear policy implications for electoral-system engineering. Where, as in the Mexican states, elections to executive office have been held on a plurality basis and concurrently with legislative elections, the effective number of legislative parties has only very rarely exceeded four, even when electoral systems with very high effective magnitudes were used (Jones 1995, 90; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997b, 406-408). Such provisions for the timing and formula of executive elections should therefore should be employed to mitigate the risks of regime instability that are associated with very high levels of legislative pluralism. To facilitate the institutionalization of legislatures as effective checks on executive power, on the other hand, electoral systems with large effective magnitudes should be adopted so as to allow the election of relatively pluralistic legislatures. Rather than a compliant legislature controlled by their own parties, or a do-nothing legislature held by a stonewalling opposition, executives will then face a more active, more vigilant, and more nearly coequal branch of democratic government.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONFRONTATION IN NEGOTIATED TRANSITIONS

The cross-state analysis presented in Chapter 3 provided strong support for the hypothesis that the state governments would demonstrate lower levels of democratic quality where Mexico's confrontational opposition party, the PRD, had a stronger presence. An actor-centered approach, focusing on the strategic choices of important players at critical moments, provides the explanation for this finding. When the moderate opposition negotiates a democratic transition with reformers within the regime and the radical opposition does not agree to the terms of the deal, actor-centered theory predicts that more of the authoritarian regime will be preserved to repress the radicals. In a federal system, such a political pact has varying implications across the states, depending on the local strength of the radical opposition. In Mexico, the PRD's extremely confrontational stance after the 1988 presidential elections and the agreement on transition between reformers in the PRI and the moderate PAN meant that state governments would remain more authoritarian where the PRD was stronger.

This chapter sets out the theoretical insights offered by a close attention to the strategic choices of important actors during a democratic transition. It then describes the negotiated transition that took place in Mexico after the country's pivotal 1988 presidential elections. Using a variety of evidence, including a controlled comparison of Michoacán, the PRD's home state and stronghold, and Yucatán, where the party was at

its weakest, the chapter then demonstrates how the PRD's confrontational stance in the midst of a negotiated transition led to lower democratic quality in states where the party was stronger.

The Actor-Centered Theory of Transitions and the Impact of Federalism

Many of those seeking to explain the wave of transitions from authoritarian rule of the 1980s were dissatisfied with the existing theories of democratization, which stressed aspects of economic structure that appeared to discount any possibility of meaningful political change. With a "bias for hope," these scholars turned to a more voluntarist perspective, arguing that the determinative factors in transitions were the strategic decisions made by important people at critical moments.

These important people can be divided into four groups. Within the authoritarian regime exist hardliners and reformers, distinguished by their willingness to accommodate changes in the political system. Those in the opposition are moderates or radicals, depending on the means they are willing to use to achieve political change and the amount of change they seek.[1] The interaction of these four groups, then, shapes how transitions unfold. As shown in Table 5.1, reformers within the regime and moderates in the opposition each face a strategic decision (Przeworski 1991, 67-71). Reformers must decide whether to remain united with the hardliners of the regime or to seek a deal with

[1] Other labels have also been used to identify these four basic transition actors. In the classic series *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, for example, the radical opposition was referred to as the "maximalists" (O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986). Although terminology differs, the actor-centered literature on democratic transitions is fairly consistent in its use of this four-actor framework.

the moderate opposition. Moderates, in turn, must decide whether to negotiate with the regime or to throw their weight behind the radicals.

Table 5.1: Actor-Centered Predictions of Transition Outcomes

		Moderates ally with:	
		Radicals	Reformers
Reformers ally with:	Hardliners	Unchanged authoritarian regime	Authoritarianism with concessions
	Moderates	Democracy without guarantees	Democracy with guarantees

Adapted from Przeworski (1991).

The combinations of these decisions yield the four ideal-typical outcomes displayed in Table 5.1. In the top-left corner of this two-by-two square, both the regime and oppositions stick together, and the authoritarian status quo persists. At the bottom left, reformers split from hardliners, but moderates take advantage of this division to join with radicals and push through an unlimited democratic project. In either of these cases, no deal is reached between the political forces of the regime and the opposition. On the right-hand side of the table, in contrast, are two versions of political pact that result when moderates choose the regime over the radicals. At the top right, reformers side with hardliners, but the moderate opposition negotiates with the regime and gains some concessions in exchange for its continued support. At the bottom right, reformers reach out to moderates, and moderates reciprocate: the result is a pacted democracy with guarantees that protect the interests of the reformers.

Although the radical opposition, having no decision to make, may not appear to play a direct role in this schema, it is nevertheless crucial. Without the threat to the regime posed by radicals, reformers have little incentive to seek to ally with moderates (Schmitter 1985, 86-89). Radicals are even more important to moderates' calculus: as Przeworski observed, "Moderates have no political importance unless they can restrain Radicals. . . . Moderates must either deliver terms tolerable to Radicals, or, if they cannot obtain such terms from Reformers, they must leave enough power in the hands of the apparatus of repression to intimidate Radicals" (Przeworski 1991, 68-69).

This detail suggests that rather than two analytically distinct types, the outcomes on the right-hand side of Table 5.1, "authoritarianism with concessions" and "democracy with guarantees," are better understood as marking the endpoints of a continuum of political pacts. The exact deal struck between moderates and reformers depends on the strength and implacability of the radical opposition. If radicals refuse to demobilize for anything short of a democracy without limits—that is, if they remain radical—the stronger their support, the more the pact must preserve the authoritarian regime to provide a repressive response. Karl (1990, 8-12) has argued that all pacted transitions circumscribe the political arena, leaving the democracy that initially results scarred with a "birth defect." The theoretical argument presented above predicts that the severity of this defect depends on the strength of those in the opposition who remain confrontational as the pact is negotiated.

Although actor-centered theory was first developed through a series of studies of one or a few countries on national-level transitions from authoritarianism, its implications for subnational politics in federal systems are readily apparent. National-level strategic

choices can be expected to constrain subnational actors: in all but the most decentralized systems, the power of the federal government will likely prevent local reformers and moderates from pursuing strategies incompatible with the national outcome. But if the outcome at the national level is a pact, it will likely have varying implications in different states. This theoretical framework suggests that differences in the need to protect reformers' interests from radicals' demands will mean that state governments facing stronger local radical oppositions will remain more authoritarian.

The Negotiated Transition in Mexico

This section applies the actor-centered perspective to Mexico at the critical moment of the presidential election of 1988. It identifies each of the four actors in the Mexican context: the radical opposition in the PRD's forerunners in the coalition for Cárdenas, the moderate opposition in the PAN, and the reformers and hardliners within the PRI. Finally, it describes how the moderate PAN chose to negotiate an agreement on transition with the PRI rather than back the radical *cardenistas* in their drive for a decisive break from the authoritarian regime.

In the late 1980s, the objectives and tactics of those who would form the PRD readily identified them as the radical opposition in Mexico. The party's principal roots were in the Democratic Current, a fraction within the PRI that opposed the ruling party's turn toward neoliberal economic policies, and the Mexican Socialist Party, a party of direct and recent descent from Mexico's Communist Party: economic nationalism was the PRD's founding principle. After the 1988 presidential elections, the groups that later formed the PRD proclaimed victory and demanded an immediate end to the PRI's

authoritarian rule. The party also made clear that its positions were nonnegotiable and that, although eschewing armed revolution, it was willing to make the country ungovernable to achieve its goals.

The PRD was formed in the aftermath of Mexico's 1988 presidential elections.[2] In 1986 and 1987, a group of prominent *priístas* who were in sharp disagreement with the decision of the PRI's leadership to continue and deepen neoliberal economic reforms formed the Democratic Current (*Corriente Democrática*, CD). The CD sought internal reforms of the party, particularly democratic selection of candidates, that would increase its ability to champion policies of economic nationalism. After a series of its efforts repeatedly raised the stakes and the PRI selected the neoliberal Carlos Salinas de Gortari as its candidate by the traditional *dedazo* (finger-tapping by the sitting president), the most confrontational CD members left the party (Bruhn 1997, 88-103). The CD's presumptive presidential candidate for its proposed internal primaries, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas—a former governor of the state of Michoacán and the son of Lázaro Cárdenas, one of Mexico's most revered presidents—became an opposition candidate supported not only by the disillusioned *priístas*, but also by a coalition of small parties on the Mexican left.

Amidst a wide array of evidence of massive fraud, including a shutdown of the electoral computers when they had been showing Cárdenas in the lead, the official election returns declared Salinas the winner.[3] Within days, Cárdenas announced that "the

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[2] The definitive account of the formation and early internal politics of the PRD is Kathleen Bruhn's (1997) *Taking on Goliath: The Emergence of a New Left Party and the Struggle for Democracy in Mexico*.

[3] The PRD's allegations and evidence of fraud are collected in Barberán, et al. (1988). First, many polling stations that went heavily to the PRI recorded votes at an

direct recovery of electoral figures and, above all, information that deserves full credibility, coming from inside the government, permit us to affirm that we have won the presidential election. . . . I will not recognize authorities that might come out of electoral fraud[, and] there will be no transactions with the popular vote."[4] As Bruhn (1997, 145) observed, "With this statement Cárdenas discarded as a matter of principal any negotiated settlement with the PRI that involved recognizing Salinas, and set the tone for future confrontations."

The PRD was formed from the most confrontational elements of the coalition that supported Cárdenas's presidential campaign: the Mexican Socialist Party (*Partido Mexicano Socialista*, PMS) and the ex-*priístas*. As noted above, only the most risk-tolerant and confrontational of those within the PRI who disagreed with the turn toward neoliberal policy left the party to support Cárdenas. The PMS provided its own legal registry to form the new party; unlike the other left-of-center parties in the coalition, it and its predecessors had consistently rejected any cooperation with the PRI. It was the only party of Cárdenas's coalition that refused to vote with the PRI in ratifying the

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unbelievable pace: at one station, the official tally indicated that one vote was cast every 12 seconds. Second, although by law required to report the votes cast in every polling station, the government ultimately released only slightly more than half of the station-by-station results. In heavily disputed areas, very few of these results were released. Further, the results of the stations that were released varied sharply from those that remained secret. Third, almost half of the vote for Salinas came from polling places where the PRI received 85% or more (and, in more than 1,700 stations, 100%) of the vote in a three-way race. Finally, the PRD's analysis of the revealed voting stations where the PRI won more than 60% of the vote showed that the final digit of the PRI's total—which should be expected to take on each of the values from zero to nine with equal frequency, that is, 10% of the time—actually was a zero 14% of the time. As this is extremely unlikely to occur by chance, it suggests that the PRI's vote-counters simply added an extra digit to the end of its total in many cases, just using a round zero too often.

[4] Quoted in Bruhn (1997, 145).

membership of the congress after the 1988 election, a necessary step toward the legal recognition of Salinas's official victory. Indeed, the PMS and those who had left the PRI to support Cárdenas had formally agreed before the election that in the event of defeat they would remain united, continue to struggle against the regime, and refuse any appointments in the government (Bruhn 1997, 161).[5] In the spring of 1989, the two groups formally merged to become the PRD.

The PAN, for its part, had become the moderate opposition by the late 1980s. The party's policy orientation matched with the PRI's turn to neoliberalism, it had preferred gradualism to confrontation for most of the five decades since its founding, and it ultimately favored negotiation with the PRI over handing the presidency to Cárdenas. The PAN was the obvious choice for those within the PRI who sought to broaden the regime's base of support.

Manuel Gómez Morin, a prominent lawyer and financier, founded the PAN in 1939 in reaction to President Lázaro Cárdenas's successful consolidation of the PRI as Mexico's "official" party and the economic nationalism that characterized his administration. Gómez Morin and other early *panistas* capitalized on the PRI's mobilization of workers and peasants, nationalization of the oil industry, and agrarian reform to draw some businessmen and professionals into the opposition, and the regime's revolutionary anti-clericalism to gain the support of many middle- and upper-class Catholic activists (Mabry 1973, 34; Shirk 2001, 100-102). Fiercely anticommunist since its inception, the PAN had always opposed state intervention in the economy, a position

[5] The other parties of the coalition had not joined in this agreement; indeed, they felt "some squeamishness about joining a party with the strident confrontational stance of the *cardenistas*" and ultimately chose instead to return to their traditional collaboration with the PRI (Bruhn 1997, 160-161).

that only hardened with the greater activism of the Mexican government during the 1970s and an influx of entrepreneurs and industrialists in the wake of the debt crisis and the nationalization of the country's banks in 1982 (Loaeza 1989, 360). The position of the PAN on economic policy, unlike that of Cárdenas and his supporters, was completely compatible with the ruling party's move to a neoliberal program.

Not only did the PAN seek less change in economic policy than those who would go on to form the PRD, it was also moderate in its goals for political change. As a former member of two of Mexico's revolutionary governments during the 1920s, Gómez Morin built the PAN to be a loyal, democratic opposition that would work within the Mexican political system to achieve change (Mabry 1973, 32-49). Although the party occasionally took a confrontational tack during its history, *panistas* more often sought marginal reforms of the political system while gradually building their own organizational capacity to contest elections across Mexico (Lujambio 2001). Signs of the PAN's growing regional strength in the north of the country—including scattered municipal triumphs in the early 1980s and an unrecognized victory in the race for the governor's office in Chihuahua in 1985—encouraged this incremental, patient outlook within the party. In terms of both policy orientation and political approach, the PAN clearly formed the moderate opposition in Mexico at the critical moment following the 1988 presidential election.

Developments within the ruling PRI also matched the expectations of the actor-centered theory of transitions presented above. Since the consolidation of the party during the administration of Lázaro Cárdenas in the 1930s, the PRI had based its political monopoly on its claim to represent all of the sectors of the revolutionary coalition: labor,

peasantry, and the state. Neoliberal policies, however, were incompatible with the continuation of policies that bought the support of the popular sectors. Even before Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and his followers left the PRI, neoliberal-minded *priístas* had argued that the party should rely less on what they saw as an outdated claim of "revolutionary legitimacy" and build a new, democratic legitimacy through an electoral opening to the opposition, of which at that time only the PAN was even potentially a threat at the polls (Collier 1992, 118-129). The traditional PRI—leaders of labor unions and peasant organizations—was willing to liberalize economically, provided some measures were taken to reduce hardships among their supporters, but was vehemently opposed to opening politically. Going into the 1988 elections, the PRI was thus divided into reformers and hardliners.

In the days following Salinas's declared victory, the PRI's continued rule was very much in doubt. Cárdenas repeatedly drew hundreds of thousands of enthusiastic supporters to protest rallies in the Zócalo, Mexico City's main plaza, and the PRI held only a slim, and perhaps unreliable, majority among the newly elected legislators who would vote to ratify the presidential election results. The PAN, for its part, called for a special election, arguing that fraud had been so widespread that there was no way to determine the winner of the original vote (Bruhn 1997, 145-146). The reformers within the PRI then made an attempt to persuade the PAN to drop its call for a return to the polls. One high-ranking PRI official recalled, "The PAN had nothing to gain in a special election. The election would go to the PRI or to Cárdenas. We had to convince the PAN that they would not gain anything. We pledged to reform the federal election law, and we

promised that Chihuahua would not be repeated—that all future electoral victories by the PAN would be recognized. That was our offer."[6]

To the moderate PAN, this offer was attractive indeed. The party preferred Salinas's neoliberal program—as outlined above, it had long advocated many such policies—to the economic nationalism of Cárdenas. The *panistas* had sought gradual political change for a half-century; they saw little reason to join a final push for a democracy without limits then when the principal beneficiaries would be their ideological opponents in the coalition for Cárdenas. The PAN's core constituency—entrepreneurs, professionals, and other members of Mexico's urban middle class—had no interest in the instability and violence likely to be involved in a prolonged struggle to oust Salinas. Moreover, as Salinas needed the PAN's continuing cooperation to muster the two-thirds legislative majority necessary to amend the constitution to allow his neoliberal program, the PAN had the leverage to hold the PRI to its promises. Less than two weeks after the election, the PAN stopped calling for a new round of voting, distanced itself from Cárdenas, and Manuel J. Clouthier, the PAN's presidential candidate, told reporters assembled at a press conference that "no one believes that [Cárdenas] won the election."[7] The PAN had chosen the regime over the radicals.[8]

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[6] Quoted in Lujambio (2001, 78). Indeed, the PAN was able to gain additional concessions for its cooperation. In 1991, the PRI acceded to a long-standing demand of the PAN to remove anti-clerical language from the constitution, including the provisions of Article 3 inserted by President Lázaro Cárdenas in 1943 that barred the Catholic Church from the educational sector (Castro 1994).

[7] Quoted in Bruhn (1997, 146).

[8] This is not to say that all of the PAN's members approved of the deal; several prominent *panistas* were sharply critical of the party's agreement with the PRI. However, the Democratic and Doctrinaire Forum, the group eventually formed by the

Implications of Mexico's Transition Pact on State-Level Democratic Quality

As discussed in the previous section, Mexico's national-level experience after the pivotal 1988 elections can be readily viewed through the lens provided by actor-centered theory. This section turns to the implications of this theoretical viewpoint for the state governments. The explanatory hypothesis that Mexican states with stronger PRD organizations democratized less because the PRD was a confrontational, radical opposition in a national-level transition negotiated between PRI reformers and the moderate PAN yields several predictions. First, the PRD should have been effectively repressed everywhere; stronger state organizations simply would have needed more repression to be kept in check. Second, the PAN should rarely if ever have been repressed. Third, any disputes arising between the PRI and PAN at the state level should have been settled by compromise imposed from above.

Eisenstadt's (1998) data on post-election conflicts in fourteen of the Mexican states provides evidence for an initial test of these predictions, as well as a confirmation of the opposition parties' radical and moderate positions. Consistent with its portrayal here as the radical opposition, the PRD mobilized after local elections held from 1989 to 1994 a total of 201 times, once in every four municipal races in which it placed second in the official results. Moreover, almost two-thirds of the PRD's protests escalated into takeovers of government buildings or other acts that disrupted the functioning of government. The moderate PAN was much less likely to protest at all when the official returns placed it second; it did so only one time in ten. When the PAN did mobilize, it

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most strident of these dissenters, was denied recognition within the party and its leaders were marginalized. Many Forum members left the party as a result (Wuhs 2001, 137).

typically staged only a single march or public meeting that did not affect the government's ability to function; this was the case in over 80% of its protests.

Table 5.2: Post-Election Conflicts by Party in Fourteen Mexican States, 1989-1994

	Total Mobilizations in Second-Place Finishes	Mobilizations That Disrupted Governability	Violent Responses to Disruptive Mobilizations
PAN	93 of 914 (10.2%)	16 of 93 (17.2%)	4 of 16 (25.0%)
PRD	201 of 749 (26.8%)	130 of 201 (64.7%)	71 of 130 (54.6%)

Adapted from Eisenstadt (1998).

The number of violent PRI responses to post-election conflict with each party supports the predictions spelled out above: the authorities injured or killed PRD protesters on seventy-one occasions, but the PAN met with such treatment only four times. Looking at the absolute number of instances of violence, however, may be deceiving; violence could simply have been the PRI's standard response to mobilizations that disrupted government functions, and the PRD was disruptive much more frequently. Examining the percentage of disruptive mobilizations that were met with violence provides a means of controlling for the PAN's moderation. These figures also support the predictions of actor-centered theory presented above. When faced with a disruption of government functions by the radical PRD, the PRI frequently resorted to violence: over half of the PRD's 130 disruptive mobilizations were met with force (and, in eighteen cases, deadly force). In the relatively rare instances in which the local branch of the moderate PAN strayed from the national pact and mounted a disruptive demonstration,

the PRI was more restrained, using violence only 25% of the time, a total of just four incidents.

A comparison of the experiences of Michoacán and Yucatán provides additional support for an actor-centered understanding of the negative relationship between the strength of the PRD and democratic quality. Michoacán was the home state of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and the PRD's strongest base of support, while the party barely existed in Yucatán. Yucatán, further, has more economic inequality and less legislative pluralism than Michoacán. Comparing these two states provides an especially strong test of the explanation offered above: the sharp difference in PRD strength generates a very certain prediction of higher democratic quality in Yucatán, and, because variation in inequality and legislative pluralism considered alone predict a higher quality of democracy in Michoacán, these predictions are unique (Van Evera 1997, 30-31).

In the years after the 1988 elections, Michoacán's PRD constituted a powerful and intractable foe to the ruling PRI. The PRD repeatedly demonstrated its ability to draw strong and committed support at the polls and in the streets statewide. Loath to give up important ground to its radical opponent, and with the PRD unwilling to accept less than a complete recognition of its victories, the ruling PRI resorted to violent repression to maintain its control of the state. Consistent with the predictions of actor-centered theory, the strength of the PRD in Michoacán proved too threatening for the democratic quality of the state government to be very high.

Michoacán was the site of the greatest successes of the coalition for Cárdenas in the 1988 elections. Cárdenas, as a member of the PRI, had served as the state's governor from 1980 to 1986; when he left the party, a large segment of the state organization

followed him into the opposition. With this strong base of support, Cárdenas won nearly two-thirds of the presidential vote in the state, according to the official totals, outpolling Salinas by a wide margin. His coalition also won Michoacán's two senate seats, as well as twelve of the state's thirteen single-member-districts for the lower house of the federal legislature (Zepeda Patterson 1991, 164; Bruhn and Yanner 1995, 115).

When Salinas was declared president-elect, Cárdenas supporters in Michoacán, as elsewhere, erupted into protest against what they considered the naked theft of the election. Marches and rallies were held almost daily in Morelia, the capital, and in other cities and towns the state. As weeks passed and it became clear that Salinas had gained the support in the federal congress that he needed to ratify his election, the protesters vented their outrage on local targets. Through the autumn of 1988, the mobilized *cardenistas* mounted massive demonstrations demanding his removal of Michoacán's *priísta* governor. In late November, the coalition's new federal legislators coordinated the seizure and occupation of more than fifty of the state's 113 town halls, forcing the governor's resignation a week later (Calderón Mólgora 1994, 100). The protests and occupations, however, did not cease: the *cardenistas* successfully forced the removal of twelve municipal presidents over the next few months. Demonstrations came to a halt only in the spring of 1989 when the Mexican army began to be deployed to areas of PRD strength.

Elections for the state legislature were held in July 1989. The PRI claimed to have won twelve of eighteen single-member districts, acknowledging PRD victories in the remaining six; five proportional-representation seats were divided among the PAN and two small parties. Independent surveys conducted before the election and at voting

stations on the day of the election had shown the PRD outpolling the PRI by a wide margin across the state, and with the announcement that the ruling party had maintained its majority in the legislature, PRD protests again roiled Michoacán (Zepeda Patterson 1991, 166-167). As one PRD politician involved in the demonstrations recalled, "there had been a political awakening among the people, but all roads to meaningful participation were closed by the government, so of course there was an explosion."[9] The PRD held protest marches, occupied the statehouse, and, with the assistance of party members from the neighboring states of Guerrero and México, blockaded the principal federal highways entering the state (González Compeán 2000, 568-569). PRD members took over sixty-six town halls, including eleven that had been occupied since 1988 (Calderón Mólgora 1994, 103).

With municipal elections to be held December 3, tensions remained high throughout the autumn. A local weekly reported the situation: "the posture of the *perredistas* who have control over the town halls is now more determined than a year ago. In some municipalities where the occupations of a year ago were evicted by request of the army or the state judicial police, now they are not disposed to abandon their trenches."[10] According to the official vote totals, the PRI won fifty-seven municipalities and the PRD fifty-two, including Morelia. Again, the PRD denounced the election results as fraudulent and demanded that the popular vote be respected. In twenty-two municipalities in which the PRI candidate was declared the victor, the PRD insisted on its candidate's triumph and maintained control of the town hall. When the official winners

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[9] Interview with Diputado Fabricio Apolo Gómez Souza (PRD, Michoacán), Morelia, February 14, 2002.

[10] *Guía*, August 27, 1989; quoted in Calderón Mólgora (1994, 103).

were sworn into office, the PRD held its own installation ceremonies and formed "popular" governments in these municipalities. The PRI's official governments were left to conduct business in homes, open plazas, and movie theaters (Calderón Mólgora 1994, 105).

In the cases of many disputed municipalities, Michoacán's *priísta* governor, Jaime Genovevo Figueroa, extended offers that left the PRI holding the municipal presidency but granted the PRD city council seats. These offers ended conflicts in nine municipalities where town halls were occupied in displays of solidarity, but were flatly rejected where popular governments had been formed; the PRD was unwilling to bargain away what it considered its victories (Beltrán del Río 1990a). Cristóbal Arias, one of the PRD's two federal senators from Michoacán who had met with Genovevo Figueroa in an aborted attempt to negotiate a settlement, declared: "The government is not making any serious proposals to resolve the conflicts. . . . Actually, the supposed conciliatory posture of the government is nothing more than a disguise. In its every act, it is generating tension."[11]

On April 4, 1990, at Genovevo Figueroa's request, the Mexican army began patrolling the streets of Apatzingán, the largest municipality where the PRD maintained a popular government, with tanks and troops equipped with antiriot gear. Just after midnight, the soldiers and tanks surrounded the town hall, and federal judicial police stormed the building and evicted the *perredistas* at gunpoint. The operation was repeated in fourteen other municipalities through the early morning hours. In some cases, the removed PRD leaders were stripped of their clothes and beaten; over one hundred party

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[11] Quoted in Beltrán del Río (1990b).

militants were arrested and many others detained. By April 6, the military action was complete: the PRD had abandoned the last of the town halls it held, twice after accepting offers of positions within PRI-led municipal governments (Beltrán del Río 1990b).

The experience of Morelia's city government after the 1989 elections further demonstrates the limits of democratic quality in Michoacán. The PRI-affiliated garbage workers' union went on strike soon after the PRD took office; as Bruhn and Yanner (1995, 126) noted, the quickly mounting garbage sent the message to local residents "that there are costs (or punishments) associated with voting for the opposition." A street-vendors union, also associated with the PRI, twice occupied Morelia's city hall, but the police, under the direct control of the governor in the capital city, did nothing. The *priístas*, one PRD leader recollected, "were trying to prove that the PRD lacked the capacity to govern."[12] Even local *panistas* agreed with this assessment: according to a PAN politician who served as a city councilman in Morelia at the time, "The governor did not treat our municipal governments very well, but because Morelia was ruled by the PRD, the relationship was especially tense."[13]

In July 1992, Michoacán held its first gubernatorial race in the state since the PRD's emergence; the PRI claimed victory with 52.8% of the vote to the PRD's 36.6%. The PRD alleged irregularities in nearly half of the state's voting stations and filed 28

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[12] Interview with Diputado/Coordinador Juan Iriarte Méndez (PRD, Michoacán), Morelia, February 4, 2002.

[13] Interview with Diputado Juan Rafael Castelazo Mendoza (PAN, Michoacán), February 12, 2002. The PAN generally stood on the sidelines throughout the political turmoil in Michoacán during the late 1980s and early 1990s: "We were afraid to send candidates to many parts of the state in the early 1990s because of the violence there," but *panistas* were only rarely directly involved in any conflicts, according to a current leader of the PAN in the state. Interview with Diputado/Coordinador Francisco Morelos Borja, (PAN, Michoacán), February 4, 2002.

complaints with the state's electoral tribunal, which summarily rejected all of them only three days later. *Perredistas* again held marches and demonstrations, blocked federal highways, occupied town halls, and seized the statehouse in protest (Castellanos and Correa 1992). When asked about the possibility of negotiating a compromise settlement of the political crisis, one party leader reiterated the PRD's position as the radical opposition: "This is the banner of all or nothing, and we are going for it all. We will accept no substitutes. The message is clear: In Michoacán, we will not take even one step backward."[14] The new *priísta* governor, Eduardo Villaseñor, was dogged at every public appearance by protesters who "prevented him from conducting normal government activities and gave him the look of a fugitive on the run" (Bruhn and Yanner 1995, 130). After just three weeks in office, Villaseñor resigned.

When the PRI claimed to have won seventy-three of the state's municipalities in the December 1992 elections, the PRD again mobilized, and, as in 1989, the PRI again responded with force. In the first five days after the election, one *perredista* was killed and forty wounded (Beltrán del Río and Castellanos 1992). At least seven more PRD politicians and militants were killed in the next month, and over one hundred were injured. Ultimately, the conflict would claim more lives than any post-electoral clash since the 1940s (Eisenstadt 1999b, 86).

As the PRD was Mexico's radical opposition during the country's negotiated transition to democracy, its strength in Michoacán led to more repressive and less democratic government in the state. To the regime, the PRD's demands that the vote be respected without conditions and its willingness to disrupt the functioning of the

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[14] Mártin Orozco, Coordinator of PRD Municipal Presidents, quoted in Castellanos and Correa (1992).

government to achieve its goals made the party too much of a threat to accommodate. In the words of one of Michoacán's current *perredista* leaders, "Under Salinas, the PRI tried to exterminate the PRD."[15]

The experiences of the PRD and the PAN in Yucatán similarly support the state-level predictions of actor-centered theory. Yucatán's PRD, internally divided and without significant popular support, nevertheless attracted repression before it disintegrated in 1991. The PAN of Yucatán was among the most confrontational in Mexico, but although the local PRI gave every indication of being willing and able to bring force to bear, there were no incidents of outright violence against the PAN. Instead, the national PRI imposed compromise results that granted real power to the moderate opposition and infuriated its own state organization. With the PRD only barely present in the state, the moderation of the PAN and its national pact with PRI reformers ensured that the regime in Yucatán would be less authoritarian than where the PRD was stronger.

The PRD was nearly nonexistent in Yucatán in the years after its founding. Cárdenas's 1988 campaign attracted less support in this state than in any other, winning approximately one percent of the official vote. The state organization was badly divided between former members of the PMS and ex-*priístas* and, in early 1991, it was decertified by the national party. By the 1991 federal elections, "all of the existing municipal committees in the state had abandoned the party, and with the withdrawal of many militants and sympathizers from all party activity, [the PRD in Yucatán] was little more than a letterhead" (Poot Capetillo and Espadas Ancona 1992, 21). In 1993, it ran

[15] Interview with Diputado/Coordinador Juan Iriarte Méndez (PRD, Michoacán), Morelia, February 4, 2002.

candidates in only three of Yucatán's 106 municipalities. No PRD candidate was elected to any state post until 1998, when the party managed to gain two seats in the twenty-five-member state congress.[16] Despite the PRD's weakness, Yucatán's PRI did not miss its opportunity to repress its radical opposition: when, in the course of an otherwise nonexistent campaign in the state elections of 1990, the PRD successfully organized a rally in the outskirts of the state capital, Mérida, the crowd was promptly attacked by the police (Poot Capetillo 1992, 20-21).

Yucatán's PAN, on the other hand, was extremely competitive. The PAN had been a significant presence in the state since 1940, it had won the municipal presidency of Mérida in 1967, and Manuel Clouthier, the party's presidential candidate in 1988, drew sufficient support in Mérida to sweep the previously unknown *panista* Ana Rosa Payán Cervera to victory in the federal congressional district centered on the city. The party was also willing to mobilize, mounting twenty-three protests of municipal returns after the elections of 1990 and 1993 (Eisenstadt 1998).[17] Despite the PAN's strength and relatively confrontational stance, tensions between the PRI and the PAN in Yucatán did not boil over into violence; instead, the national PRI repeatedly imposed compromise results on its resentful state party.

The moderation of the PAN contributed to the absence of violence in the state. Although confrontational in comparison to the PAN organizations of other states, Yucatán's PAN was nevertheless very moderate when compared to the PRD's combative

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[16] It then lost one of these seats in the 2001 elections. The PMS held one state congressional seat when the PRD was formed, so the party did have a brief early experience in office holding in Yucatán.

[17] Indeed, Yucatán's PAN alone accounted for almost one-fourth of all PAN protests in Eisenstadt's (1998) fourteen-state sample.

approach. The PAN limited itself almost completely to undisruptive rallies and marches, and when tensions rose, the PAN quickly drew back. When local party members occupied the town hall in the municipality of Valladolid the night of the 1990 elections, the action was seen as "an alarming increase in tensions" and was not repeated (Poot Capetillo 1992, 27). One *panista* leader recalled a demonstration in Umán, a municipality near Mérida, after the 1990 elections: "We held a protest outside the house of the local electoral commission's president—he was, of course, a prominent *priísta*. There were only about thirty of us, but the PRI brought in several truckloads of their supporters from the countryside. They surrounded us and started threatening us. There was some shoving, but we didn't want to fight, and they let us leave without it turning bloody. That was the closest we came to violence, and we did not demonstrate there like that again."[18]

Rather than erupting into violence, disputes between the two state parties were ended with the imposition of compromise outcomes by the national PRI. In the 1990 race for the municipal presidency of Mérida, the PAN organized a "victory rally" in the capital city's main plaza the evening of the day following the vote, preempting a PRI attempt to hold a similar demonstration in favor of its candidate. Before the situation deteriorated further, the national PRI's representative to the state, José Guadarrama Márquez, and the PRI governor, Victor Manzanilla Shaffer—an outsider to state politics whose long political career had been exclusively in the federal government—pressured Mérida's electoral commission into announcing that the PAN had won. To console the state PRI, all of the single-member congressional districts were awarded to the PRI,

[18] Interview with Sergio Adolfo Angulo, general secretary of Yucatán PAN, April 4, 2002.

although Mérida comprised seven of the fifteen districts and ticket splitting is virtually unknown in the state (Poot Capetillo 1992, 28-29). The national PRI successfully forced the state party to peacefully share power with the PAN for the first time in decades.[19]

The situation was repeated in the state elections of 1993. The state PRI was determined to regain its monopoly on power: in hopes of making federal intervention impossible, it announced victories in the governor's race, the municipal race in Mérida, and all congressional districts on the evening of election day and immediately held a victory rally in Mérida. The stunned state PAN conceded the governorship the following day, but quickly organized protests to advance its claim to Mérida. With the national PAN openly threatening to withdraw from its pact with the PRI, the national PRI ordered Yucatán's electoral court to reverse the official results in the capital city. Dulce María Sauri de Sierra, the state *priísta* who was finishing Manzanilla Shaffer's term, resigned in protest (Poot Capetillo and Paredes Guerrero 1994, 31). For its part, the state electoral court refused to comply, even after the national PRI flew its members to Mexico City to pressure them in person (Eisenstadt 1998). Both the governor and the court publicly and bitterly denounced the "decision of the center" to impose a PAN victory (Poot Capetillo and Paredes Guerrero 1994, 31). Ultimately, the national PRI induced the official winner to resign and the state congress to approve the handover of Mérida to the second-place *panista* (Poot Capetillo and Paredes Guerrero 1994, 33; Eisenstadt 1998). Although it

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[19] This imposition came at considerable cost: the state PRI publicly derided Manzanilla Shaffer as "the biggest *panista* in Yucatán" and soon forced him from office (Poot Capetillo 1992, 28). The party also began a campaign of regional chauvinism against the federal government—demanding that the "aztecas" and "huaches" (the latter a regional term perhaps best translated as "carpetbaggers from Mexico City") stay out of Yucatán's politics—that was maintained through the 2001 elections (Poot Capetillo 1992, 22; Frente Cívico Familiar 2001).

refused to concede defeat, the state PRI was again forced to grant the second most important elected position in the state to the opposition without tensions exploding into violence.

Conclusions

This chapter has argued that, in the context of a negotiated transition, stronger radical oppositions lead to lower quality democracies. But without radicals, the moderate opposition will have little leverage to negotiate a pact with the regime in the first place; that the state PRI in Yucatán, without a PRD opposition, acquiesced to a modest democratic opening to the PAN only under intense pressure from national authorities underscores this point.[20] The path to a higher quality of democracy, however, is not so narrow; as Adam Przeworski (1991, 73) noted, radicals may come to accept the limitations of a pacted democracy and thereby stop being radical. Such a change mitigates the threat to reformers, reduces the regime's perceived need for repression, and so allows improvements in democratic quality to take place.

This in fact occurred in Mexico after the 1994 presidential elections. Cárdenas and the PRD placed a poor third, with only 17.22% of the official vote; Ernesto Zedillo of the PRI was credited with 50.55%. Although the election was not free of irregularities, its result was beyond doubt: the PRD had lost its claim to the presidency and could no longer demand the immediate end of the PRI's rule. Moreover, Salinas had privatized

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[20] Further evidence of the importance of radical oppositions to regime transitions is provided by quantitative cross-national studies of sub-Saharan Africa. These studies found that the frequency of pre-transition protests had a robust association with the introduction of competitive elections as well as incumbents' subsequent compliance with election results (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Solt 2001).

more than 70% of the state's corporations in his first year in office and entered Mexico into the North American Free Trade Agreement, which raised neoliberalism to the status of treaty obligation. Even before the election, Cárdenas acknowledged that these policies were likely irreversible and announced that, if he became president in 1994, he would review them on "a pragmatic, not an ideological, basis."[21] The PRD had ceased to be radical.

As the PRD became less threatening, the regime's perceived need to repress the party evaporated. Zedillo "promised to all the parties, including of course the PRD, respectful treatment and recognition of their local-level victories" (Lujambio 1995, 91). The number of municipalities governed by the PRD rose sharply, from less than one hundred in 1994 to nearly three hundred in 1998, including Mexico's second most populous municipality—Nezahualcóyotl, in the state of México—in 1996. In 1997, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas won the first-ever elections for the leadership of Mexico City, giving the PRD control over the second most important elected office in the country.

States where the PRD was strong, however, were effectively six years behind in their process of democratization. In Michoacán, Governor Víctor Manuel Tinoco Rubí, a *priísta* who barely eked out victory in 1995 over a PRD candidate weakened in a bruising primary campaign, counted the restoration of political peace and stability in the state as the most important accomplishment of his administration: As his term drew to a close, government-sponsored billboards around Morelia cheered, "We finished it!" Most local observers considered the end of political violence to be virtually his only accomplishment (Monreal 2002). With time, the differences in democratic quality across states caused by

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[21] Quoted in Pastor (1990, 6).

the birth defects of Mexico's pacted transition can be expected to fade. Actors' transition strategies can have real effects on the quality of the democracies that result, but these effects likely last only as long as the strategies do.

CHAPTER SIX

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, AND DEMOCRATIC QUALITY

Pre-existing levels of economic inequality are the best predictors of the quality of new democracies, according to the quantitative analysis of the experiences of the Mexican states presented in Chapter 3. This chapter argues that economic inequality affects the character of political participation: in developing countries like Mexico, higher levels of economic inequality generate more vote buying and patronage politics and so less of the independent political participation that accurately conveys citizen preferences. Elections, therefore, are less effective mechanisms for holding government officials accountable where economic resources are distributed less evenly, and lower quality democracy is the result.

The chapter begins with a review of the theoretical considerations linking economic inequality to vote buying and so less representative and lower-quality democratic government. It then demonstrates how economic inequality drives patterns of vote buying and independent political participation by presenting a controlled comparison of Yucatán, a state with one of the most unequal distributions of economic resources in Mexico, and Baja California Sur, the state with the least economic inequality. The chapter then provides additional support for the explanation that greater economic inequality yields lower-quality democracy by facilitating patronage politics by examining

how economic inequality shapes the relationship between the Mexican states and the municipal governments within their borders.

Inequality, Participation, and Democratic Quality: Theoretical Considerations

In modern representative democracies, elections are the principal means by which citizens may hold government officials accountable for their performance (Schedler 1999). Politicians and parties that fail to behave in accordance with citizens' preferences risk being replaced at the polls. This prospect of losing office leads government officials to pursue policies responsive to the needs of the electorate.

The preferences of voters, however, may not accord with preferences of the entire public. In fact, as Arend Lijphart (1997) has observed, an extensive literature establishes that the preferences of electorates frequently fail to mirror those of the entire citizenry. Where some citizens fail to participate in elections, "the inequality of representation and influence are not randomly distributed but systematically biased in favor of more privileged citizens—those with higher incomes, greater wealth, and better education—and against less advantaged citizens" (Lijphart 1997, 1). Greater rates of electoral participation tend to reduce this bias by diminishing the potential discrepancy between the electorate and the public as a whole. As the distribution of preferences in the electorate better reflects that across the entire citizenry, elected governments can be expected to be more responsive to citizen needs, and the result of higher-quality democracies.

This straightforward positive relationship between electoral participation and democratic quality does not hold, however, if citizens do not express their own

preferences when they vote. Because a vote cast in exchange for particularistic benefits reflects the preferences of the patron rather than those of the voter, participation induced by patronage exacerbates rather than ameliorates the bias toward the most affluent in the electorate. Vote buying and patronage politics, in short, defeat the electoral mechanism for holding government accountable.

Economic inequality affects democratic quality, I contend, by shaping the extent to which patron-client politics distort elections. Economic resources may be used to influence others or to resist others' influence: economic resources are therefore political resources (Dahl 1971, 101-102). Where the distribution of economic resources is highly unequal, the wealthy few can relatively easily achieve any desired political result by buying the individual cooperation of a sufficient number of the many poor (Huber, Rueschemeyer, and Stephens 1997, 334; Solt 2003a, 294). Moreover, because this outcome is never in doubt, there is little reason for a poor individual to refuse to exchange a vote for a patronage benefit that can marginally improve his or her quality of life. Even though successful independent political action in favor of redistributive policies would result in a considerably greater improvement in quality of life, it poses a classic collective action problem, and uncertainty as to others' cooperation results in the acceptance of the offered patronage. The manifest inevitability of patronage-backed politicians' success dissuades those who are left outside patronage networks (such as middle-class citizens whose votes might be too expensive to buy) from participating in politics at all, further reducing the cost to the economic elite of buying the votes needed to ensure their continued political dominance.

More dispersed economic resources act to make such attempts to concentrate political power in the hands of the most affluent more difficult. As the poor gain a larger share of economic resources, they are better able to resist inducements to vote as directed, and the cost of buying votes goes up. Rates of vote buying therefore decline, the potential for competitive elections increases, and those citizens who are outside patronage networks become more likely to view voting as a viable means of conveying their preferences. Relatively egalitarian economic structures therefore both permit and encourage broad political participation outside of clientelistic relationships. Elections better reflect citizen preferences, and government officials respond to this increased accountability to voters by providing more responsive and effective democratic government.

Economic Inequality and Patronage Politics in Mexico's States

To demonstrate how economic inequality generates vote buying and so limits the ability of citizens to use elections to hold government accountable, this section presents a detailed comparison of the experiences of Yucatán and Baja California Sur. Yucatán had the fourth highest level of economic inequality among Mexico's states and, unlike the other states with very unequal distributions of economic resources, had a very weak PRD. This combination of characteristics allows the effects of economic inequality to be identified without being confused with those associated with strong radical oppositions. Baja California Sur, on the other hand, had the least economic inequality of any state. The relationship between economic inequality and vote buying is then further explored using the findings of an investigation of pre-electoral conditions in five states before the

2000 presidential elections conducted by the non-governmental organizations Global Exchange and Alianza Cívica.

Yucatán

Although, as detailed in the previous chapter, the quality of democracy in Yucatán benefited from the weakness of the local PRD and the resulting absence of violent political repression, economic inequality has limited democratic quality in the state. Great disparities in economic resources have led to the widespread use of patronage in state politics. In fact, as one leading activist observed, "The great amount of vote buying here and the wide variety of mechanisms used have made Yucatán a laboratory for techniques that have been then used in other parts of the country."[1]

Rampant vote buying in Yucatán originates in the state's high level of economic inequality. The combination of extremely concentrated wealth and widespread poverty allows those in the upper tier of Yucatecan society to mobilize considerable economic resources for political purposes and gives large segments of the population little means to resist their influence. "In all the little towns in the interior of this state," one Yucatecan politician pointed out, "there is someone whom people depend on economically all year long, and when that person tells them how to vote, that is how they vote."[2] That the causes of vote buying run deeper than the PRI's decades-long control of government became readily apparent after the party lost the presidency in 2000. One PAN party

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[1] Interview with Patricia McCarthy Caballero, Frente Cívico Familiar, Mérida, Yucatán, April 19, 2002.

[2] Interview with Diputado Alberto del Rio Leal (PAN, Yucatán), Mérida, Yucatán, April 10, 2002.

leader argued, "The PRI may not have as many resources to buy votes now, but the *priístas* still do."[3] Politicians and independent observers throughout the state agreed that "[i]n the interior, there is a great deal of poverty, and if they can get something for their vote, most people cannot look ahead to the consequences—three more years of corruption and mismanagement—they have to take what they can get now."[4]

Virtually every federal and state benefits program has been conditioned on the vote in Yucatán. Agricultural assistance programs were frequently abused for electoral purposes: in many parts of the state, farm animals, tools, seed, and fertilizer provided by state programs were distributed only in exchange for promises of continued support for the governing PRI at the polls (Frente Cívico Familiar 1995; 1998; 2000; 2001). The federal *Programa de Apoyos Directos al Campo* (Program for Direct Support of the Countryside, Procampo), which made subsidized loans available to the state's peasant farmers, was also converted into a political instrument. Disbursements were timed to coincide with elections rather than with the planting season as directed by the program guidelines, and the funds were made available only at PRI campaign rallies (Global Exchange 2000). As one PRI politician intimately involved with distribution of Procampo checks—the bus company he owned was used to collect the peasants and take them to the rally—explained, "The government provided the peasants with transportation to where they could pick up their checks, and then the checks were distributed. The

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[3] Interview with Sergio Adolfo Angulo, general secretary of Yucatán PAN, Mérida, Yucatán, April 4, 2002 and April 5, 2002.

[4] Interview with Diputado Alberto del Rio Leal (PAN, Yucatán), Mérida, Yucatán, April 10, 2002.

government *worked*, the program *worked*; of course the party took credit for that."[5] Another *priísta* underscored the direct involvement of the state's economic elite in the vote-buying process: "The [Procampo] money did not even pass through the state government; it came from the banks."[6] Yucatán's banks, like other large enterprises in the state, enjoy very close ties to the state PRI: prominent banker and industrialist Fernando Ponce García, for example, held several important posts in state government during the late 1980s and early 1990s, including the office of Secretary of Industrial Development (Sabido Méndez 1995, 234-235).

Along with other equipment and supplies—PRI candidates and their campaign workers gave out sewing machines, hand-cranked mills, bicycles, tools, and raw materials for various artesian products in exchange for promised votes—construction materials were another common form of patronage. A striking example, documented by the local poll-watching organization Frente Cívico Familiar, was the pouring of concrete floors for some of the many dirt-floored houses of the state. When activists approached the man operating a cement-mixing truck in the town of Ticul, south of Mérida, before the 1998 state elections, he mistook them for government representatives checking his progress. He explained that before laying any floor, he required the homeowners to provide him with their voting credentials and to promise to vote for the PRI. He then photocopied the credentials before returning them and providing the concrete. Once the floor was in place, he used a large stamp to emblazon a PRI insignia and the name of the

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[5] Interview with Diputado Joaquín Meléndez Herrera (PRI, Yucatán), Mérida, Yucatán, April 17, 2002.

[6] Interview with Diputado/Coordinador Cleominio Zoreda Novelo (PRI, Yucatán), Mérida, Yucatán, April 11, 2002.

governor just inside the front door, "to remind them of who had favored them" (Frente Cívico Familiar 1998).

Cash, groceries, and bottles of alcohol were also commonly exchanged for votes in the days before elections. Campaign rallies featured handouts of shirts, hats, and other gifts. Many PRI candidates in the state's interior also held election-day banquets with free food and drink near polling places, limiting admission to PRI voters. "For poor people in these areas, even a single good meal is a substantial incentive," local poll-watching activists found.[7]

For decades, the close relationship between Mexico's ruling party and Yucatán's economic elite made patronage synonymous with the PRI. As a PAN party leader observed, "The people in the countryside say, 'Why should I vote for the PAN? The PRI gave me this hat, gave me these clothes, gave me this bicycle. The PAN gives us nothing.' Many people in the countryside are very poor; the PRI can buy their votes for just a kilo of meat."[8] The PAN's frustration, however, has gradually given way to emulation. According to the Frente Cívico Familiar, "The problem is so entrenched—people clearly have needs, and they expect to get something in exchange for their vote—that all of the other parties, even the PAN, are doing it too."[9] PAN campaign rallies in some rural areas of the state have featured giveaways of food and clothing, and observers

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[7] Confidential interviews with Frente Cívico Familiar activists, April 21, 2002.

[8] Interview with Sergio Adolfo Angulo, general secretary of Yucatán PAN, Mérida, Yucatán, April 4, 2002 and April 5, 2002.

[9] Interview with Patricia McCarthy Caballero, Frente Cívico Familiar, Mérida, Yucatán, April 19, 2002.

report that the party's sympathizers are increasingly pressuring the state's poorest citizens.[10]

In Yucatán, one of the most unequal distributions of economic resources in Mexico has produced rampant vote buying by the state's economic elite. The state's governments through the 1990s, relying as they did on these networks of patronage as their basis of support, did little to protect basic democratic rights. In its nationwide observation of the 1994 presidential election, Alianza Cívica (1994) found violations of the right to vote in secret in nearly half of the state's polling stations, one of the five worst records across Mexico's states. Frente Cívico Familiar poll-watchers documented similar results in later elections, including the practice of government officials in some rural districts of declaring that the vote was "free," that is, that citizens were free to vote by marking their ballots on the table in full view of everyone present (Frente Cívico Familiar 1998). This open disregard of ballot secrecy ensured that wealthy patrons would continue to confirm that their poor clients cast votes as directed, and prevented elections from serving as a mechanism for holding government officials accountable for their performance. The quality of democracy in Yucatán has suffered accordingly.

Baja California Sur

In Baja California Sur, the most egalitarian distribution of economic resources of the Mexican states has led to very different patterns of political participation. Patronage and vote buying are virtually unknown, making elections more effective means of holding government officials accountable to citizens. Rather than exchanging their votes

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[10] Confidential interviews with Frente Cívico Familiar activists, April 21, 2002.

for immediate patronage benefits, the citizens of Baja California Sur have based their decisions in the polling booth upon the performance of the governing party, both punishing failures and rewarding successes in coping with the state's problems.

In marked contrast to the experience of Yucatán, vote buying has not played a role in the politics of Baja California Sur. Opposition leaders maintain that, although the governing PRI had an advantage in campaign resources over its challengers in the 1990s, this imbalance manifested itself in party advertising, not patronage.[11] The auditors of the state comptroller's office agreed. "We have not had a problem with the diversion of state resources for political purposes here. Political campaigns in this state have always been austere; the parties seem to spend the funding they get from the federal government and nothing more," one official confirmed.[12] Politicians of all stripes report that the preferred campaign instrument in the state is the bumper sticker, and the amply adorned vehicles of the capital La Paz testify to this fact.

This is not to say that accusations of vote buying are never heard in Baja California Sur. A high-ranking official of the state's electoral tribunal noted, "Allegations of vote buying are, unfortunately, part of the Mexican political language, and we are no exception in that sense."[13] Before the 2002 state elections, the PRI of Baja California Sur charged that both the PRD and the PAN were buying votes. The party

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[11] Interviews with Homero López Rentaría, president of the Baja California Sur PRD, La Paz, Baja California Sur, May 14, 2002, and Alfredo García Green, president of the Baja California Sur PAN, La Paz, Baja California Sur, May 15, 2002.

[12] Confidential interview, Office of the State Comptroller of Baja California Sur, La Paz, Baja California Sur, May 16, 2002.

[13] Confidential interview, State Electoral Tribunal of Baja California Sur, La Paz, Baja California Sur, May 6, 2002.

loudly dispatched dozens of teams with video cameras around the state in the weeks before the election to record proof of its claims, only to concede afterwards that its observers had found nothing (Becerril and Juarez Mejia 2002). "Vote buying is simply not a real problem here," the electoral official confirmed.[14] The Baja California Sur chapter of the national poll-watching organization Alianza Cívica disbanded soon after the 1994 federal elections; its members concluded that, given the scarcity of electoral abuses in the state, the group served little purpose.[15]

The absence of vote buying in Baja California Sur reflects the relatively egalitarian distribution of economic resources in the state. According to the chief justice of the state's electoral tribunal, "We confer with the tribunals of other states, and I know from them that our elections are extraordinarily clean, really exemplary, in comparison to those in other parts of the country. Here it is different; the people of this state are well educated, secure in their jobs. They have no reason to be subordinate."[16] Not susceptible to clientelistic inducements, the citizens of Baja California Sur instead use elections as mechanisms of vertical accountability: "People here are very interested in politics, and they pay close attention to what the state and municipal governments do. They hold the government responsible when they vote."[17]

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[14] Confidential interview, State Electoral Tribunal of Baja California Sur, La Paz, Baja California Sur, May 6, 2002.

[15] Confidential interview, Alianza Cívica, Mexico City, November 2001.

[16] Interview with Luis Manuel Amezcua Puga, presiding magistrate of the State Electoral Tribunal of Baja California Sur, La Paz, Baja California Sur, May 9, 2002.

[17] Interview with Jesús Alberto Moñeton Galaviz, State Electoral Institute of Baja California Sur, La Paz, Baja California Sur, May 3, 2002.

The trajectory of the Baja California Sur PAN in the 1990s illustrates the focus of the state's voters on performance in government. The PAN achieved a breakthrough in the 1993 elections, winning three of the state's five municipal presidencies, including the capital city La Paz. When the rapid devaluation of the peso in 1995 resulted in sharp reductions in federal transfers to state governments and, in turn, the municipalities, the party refused to budge from its platform of fiscal conservatism. Despite public outcry, PAN municipal presidents made deep cuts in public services to preserve surpluses in the municipalities' budgets. In the 1996 elections, the party paid dearly at the polls, losing the capital city and winning only one municipal race. The PAN's share of the vote dropped even further in the subsequent two elections. The president of the party's state organization and one of the three PAN municipal presidents elected in 1993, Alfredo García Green, remained convinced that the cutbacks were sound from a policy standpoint. "But from a political perspective," he concluded, "they were a disaster. The voters did not agree with us that the cuts were necessary, and they punished us. The party still has not recovered."[18] The collapse in electoral support for the PAN cannot be attributed to vote-buying or other forms of clientelism, but rather originated in the negative evaluation of the party's performance in government formed by the state's citizens.

The experiences of the PRD similarly support the view that the voters of Baja California Sur cast their ballots based on government performance, not on patronage. In late 1997, a hurricane struck the capital city La Paz, causing massive flooding. The floodwaters caused extensive damage and washed away most of the city's streets. When

[18] Interview with Alfredo García Green, president of the Baja California Sur PAN, La Paz, Baja California Sur, May 15, 2002.

the PRI state government was slow to respond, municipal president Leonel Cota Montaño split from the party and, as the PRD's candidate for governor, made the government's lackluster recovery efforts a central campaign issue of the 1999 elections. With nearly half of the vote, the PRD won easily and took the governorship and the largest share of the legislature.

The tables were turned when hurricane Juliette did extensive damage to the municipality of Los Cabos, at the southern tip of the Baja peninsula, in late September 2001. The wind and rain left the tourist zone, vital to the local economy, badly flooded, washed out nearly all of the highways linking the area to La Paz, and caused water and electricity outages to most residents (Aviles 2001). Cota Montaño quickly secured federal emergency relief funds, and state workers promptly cleaned and repaired the tourist zone, repaved washed-out highways, and restored utility services. The government's effective response helped the PRD sweep the state elections of February 2002.[19]

Because of its relatively egalitarian distribution of economic resources, Baja California Sur lacks both a large pool of impoverished potential clients and a wealthy elite possessing the means to buy the votes needed to win elections. Absent these requisites for patronage-based politics, the state's citizens have cast their votes based on their evaluations of the parties' performances in office. Held accountable by elections in this way, government officials in the state responded by providing responsive and effective government.

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[19] Interview with Homero López Rentaría, president of the Baja California Sur PRD, La Paz, Baja California Sur, May 14, 2002.

Inequality and Patronage in Other States

In the weeks before the 2000 presidential election, members of the poll-watching organization *Alianza Cívica* were joined by dozens of foreign observers coordinated by the U.S.-based nongovernmental organization Global Exchange to study preelection conditions in Yucatán and four other Mexican states (Global Exchange 2000; Global Exchange and Alianza Cívica 2000). Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Guerrero are the only states with greater economic inequality than Yucatán, and as in Yucatán, the visitors discovered that patronage and vote buying were pervasive in these three states. In Oaxaca, they observed that vote buying was "widespread" and "massive" (Global Exchange 2000, 14). The international observers found that benefits of state and federal programs were restricted to supporters of the ruling PRI in Chiapas as a matter of course. Vote buying was also "endemic" in Guerrero, they concluded, rooted in "extreme poverty that leads people to accept politically conditioned handouts" (Global Exchange and Alianza Cívica 2000, 19).[20]

The observers also visited Hidalgo, a state with more economic inequality than the states' average, but considerably less than the four most unequal states. Abuse of federal social programs for political purposes was evident in the poor, rural northern region of the state, and several community leaders there reported that materials for local projects were delivered with the message that additional supplies would not be

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[20] The observers also found disturbingly high levels of political violence and intimidation in these three states. As discussed in the previous chapter, political violence can best be explained in the context of a pacted transition as a strategic response to radical opposition groups. Not only were Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Guerrero well above the state average for PRD strength during the 1990s, all three have been home to armed revolutionary movements in recent years, with the Zapatistas of Chiapas only the best known.

forthcoming if the community did not vote for the PRI. Such examples of patronage politics were "problematic in the days before the elections;" nevertheless, the international visitors concluded that vote-buying activity in Hidalgo was "less marked than in certain other areas of Mexico" that the mission observed (Global Exchange and Alianza Cívica 2000, 32).

The findings of the international observers provide additional support for the conclusion reached by comparing Yucatán with Baja California Sur. The states with very high economic inequality were, like Yucatán, also plagued by widespread vote buying; in Hidalgo, where inequality was less severe, there was considerably less patronage-driven politics. Higher levels of economic inequality generate more of the vote buying that makes elections less effective means of holding governments accountable for their performance.

Consequences of Vote Buying on Government Performance

Municipal government performance provides a further example of the consequences of clientelism on the democratic quality of the states. As noted in Chapter 2, although formally autonomous and vested with exclusive responsibility for a variety of matters, municipal governments in fact are dominated by their respective state governments. Their performance, therefore, tends to reflect more of the character of state governments' role at the municipal level rather than particular aspects of the municipalities themselves. Where relative economic equality generates higher rates of political participation outside of clientelist networks, citizens hold their state government accountable for its performance, including its training and oversight of municipal

officials. Conversely, higher levels of economic inequality engender vote buying and apathy that permit state governments to use the municipalities' presidencies and resources as rewards for their local supporters.

In Yucatán, municipal governments have been an integral part of the state PRI's patron-client network, serving as a vital link in the distribution of state and federal resources exchanged for votes (Frente Cívico Familiar 1998, 4). Candidates for municipal presidencies frequently bring their own resources to contribute as well: as one frustrated *panista* explained, "In the rural municipios, the wealthy run as PRI candidates, buy the PRI the votes they need to win the municipal presidency, and then use the position to recover their costs and more. Public office is an investment for them."[21]

Just as state-government programs provided much of the vote-buying resources for municipal presidents to gain office without being accountable to citizens for their performance, the state government provided its blessing to rampant abuse of municipal office through lax oversight. In 2001, over two-thirds of Yucatán's 106 municipal governments were a year or more behind in their legal duty to submit their annual budgets and expenditures for approval by the state legislature, and nearly a third ultimately admitted having no financial records at all.[22] The state's blind eye created a neopatrimonial outlook at the municipal level, with government officials blurring any distinction between public and private property (cf. Hartlyn 1994; Bratton and van de Walle 1997). As one former *priísta* observed, "The small municipalities of the state have

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[21] Interview with Sergio Adolfo Angulo, general secretary of the Yucatán PAN, Mérida, Yucatán, April 5, 2002.

[22] Interview with Diputado Alberto del Rio Leal (PAN, Yucatán), Mérida, Yucatán, April 10, 2002.

been completely without financial administration or development plans—municipal presidents spend municipal budgets on whatever they want."[23] The chair of the legislature's Treasury Committee, charged with oversight of municipal spending, agreed: "There is a belief, a culture, among municipal presidents in rural parts of the state that they own the municipal budget, that they own the town hall, and that they can use them any way they want."[24] Not even the constitutional bar of immediate reelection serves as a check on the abuse of municipal government resources in Yucatán; many municipal presidencies have cycled among the members of a single prominent local family for many elections.[25]

In Baja California Sur, by contrast, the state government has been active in providing training and oversight to the municipalities since the early 1990s (Instituto de Administración Pública de Baja California Sur 1997). These arrangements were formalized in July 1995 in an accord between the state and municipal governments that created the Municipal System of Control and Evaluation. The accord obliges the state government to provide technical and legal assessments, technical support, and specialized training to improve municipal capacity in the "control and evaluation of public management and collaboration [with the state] in terms of administrative development," "the monitoring and evaluation of actions taken in the implementation of programs," "oversight, control, and evaluation of the use of municipal resources and state and federal

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[23] Interview with Manuel Avila Noh (Independent (elected as PRI candidate), Yucatán), Mérida, Yucatán, April 9, 2002.

[24] Interview with Diputado Alberto del Rio Leal (PAN, Yucatán), Mérida, Yucatán, April 10, 2002.

[25] Confidential interviews with Frente Cívico Familiar activists, April 21, 2002.

transfer payments," and "the promotion of citizen participation in monitoring the programs and actions of government;" the accord also makes the state government a permanent member of the municipalities' planning committees.[26] The state comptroller observed that the accord "establishes mechanisms of coordination for both spheres of government to participate in the realization of administrative development and modernization. In this way, the municipal governments, while respecting their own autonomy, created a permanent program of administrative development that permits them to elevate the efficiency of management and the honesty of public servants and officials" (Instituto de Administración Pública de Baja California Sur 1997, 197). The state government of Baja California Sur, in short, makes impossible the sort of corrupt municipal administrations that are commonplace in Yucatán.

This section has argued that higher levels of economic inequality generated more vote-buying and less independent political participation in Yucatán than Baja California Sur, leading to very different forms of involvement by the state government in the affairs of municipal governments: tight integration into clientelist networks in the former and abundant training and oversight in the latter. These differences generate clear expectations about the performance of municipal governments in both states. The provision of basic services including water, sewerage, and electricity to their citizens is a principal formal responsibility of the municipal governments. Basic-service provision has the additional benefit of being easily measured; the number of households in each municipality with these three services is counted in the national census conducted every ten years. A convenient index of the deficit in basic service provision is calculated by

[26] Boletín Oficial del Gobierno del Estado de Baja California Sur, Tomo XXII, No. 34, September 30, 1995.

averaging the percentages of households without water, without sewerage, and without electricity. In Yucatán, where municipal presidents were rewarded for delivering votes to their patrons in the state government with unfettered control over municipal finances, much less progress should have been made towards providing these basic services than in Baja California Sur, where the state government carefully trained and closely watched municipal officials.

Table 6.1: Basic Service Provision in Baja California Sur and Yucatán, 1990 to 2000

	Basic Service Deficit Index			
	1990	2000	**Decline**	**Decline Outside of the Capital**
Baja California Sur	21.02	12.37	**41.17%**	**43.37%**
Yucatán	31.17	18.87	**39.47%**	**13.20%**

The Basic Service Deficit Index equals the average of the percentages of households without water, without sewer, and without electricity.

At first glance, there appears to have been little difference between the municipalities of Baja California Sur and those of Yucatán in improving the provision of basic public services during the 1990s. As shown in Table 6.1, the basic-service deficit index declined in both states and by approximately the same percentage. The picture changes, however, once the two states' capital cities are removed from consideration. As discussed in Chapter 5, the federal government forced the PRI of Yucatán to accept PAN rule in the state capital, Mérida, effectively breaking the city from the state's network of patronage in a way that almost certainly would not have occurred absent federal intervention. Much of the improvement in Yucatán occurred in Mérida, where PAN

administrations were largely outside the state's patronage system. In Baja California Sur, by contrast, the improvement was evenly distributed between the capital and the remaining municipalities. As a result, the decline in the percentages of households without water, sewerage, and electricity beyond the capital was over three times greater in Baja California Sur than in Yucatán.

The insight that the context of economic inequality shaped the extent to which states trained and supervised municipal governments to ensure that they addressed citizen needs or, rather, incorporated them into statewide networks of patronage can be tested further using data from all of the states. To control for the possibility that improvement in basic service provision is a function simply of levels of economic development or the difficulties of reaching rural households, the measures of average income and rural population presented in Chapter 3 were included in the analysis.

Two approaches were employed to account for experiences such as that of Yucatán, where improvements in basic service provision in the capital were dramatically different from those that occurred elsewhere in the state. First, characteristics of the capitals were incorporated into the model. The citizens of all capitals may be more likely to have their demands for public services met due to their greater proximity to the seat of government (an observation made by Rodríguez (1997, 24) with respect to state capitals in Mexico; see also Bates (1981)). Therefore, differences in the improvement in basic-service provision across states may reflect differences in the proportion of citizens living in the capital. The relative size of capital cities varied dramatically during the 1990s: over 70% of the population of Aguascalientes lived in the state capital, while less than 3% of Guanajuato's citizens resided in the capital city. Further, as in Yucatán, the

opposition parties considered control of municipal government in capitals to be particularly suitable opportunities to prove their ability to govern effectively. The number of years that opposition parties governed the capital during the 1990s, when combined with the relative size of the capital, therefore may also be expected to have had an impact on the improvement in basic-service provision across states. Second, the analysis was repeated using as the dependent variable the decline in the basic-service deficit index for municipalities outside of the state capital.

An additional set of hypotheses is that the partisan composition of a state's municipal governments affected the provision of basic services. Beginning in the mid-1980s, the PAN campaigned on the claim that it would bring modern management practices to municipal government (Rodríguez and Ward 1992; 1994). On the other hand, as discussed in the previous chapter, PRD-led municipalities often faced the hostility of state and federal officials, perhaps making the extension of basic services particularly difficult where the PRD governed many municipalities. These hypotheses were tested using the average state share of households governed at the municipal level by the PAN and by the PRD during the 1990s.[27]

[27] These averages were also calculated excluding the households of the capital city for use in the analysis of the decline in the basic-services deficit index beyond the capital.

Table 6.2: Basic Service Provision in the Thirty-One Mexican States, 1990 to 2000

	Decline in BSDI (%)	Decline in BSDI Outside of Capital (%)
Economic Inequality, 1990	-2.944*	-4.832**
	(-0.375)	(-0.599)
Average Income, 1988	-0.008	-0.001
	(-0.284)	(-0.002)
Rural Population, 1990	-0.067#	-0.039
	(-0.142)	(-0.058)
Capital Population, 1990	0.332*	
	(0.656)	
Capital Pop. x Opposition Govt.	-0.042	
	(-0.631)	
PAN Municipal Government	0.122	0.144
	(0.300)	(0.258)
PRD Municipal Government	-0.052	-0.261
	(-0.046)	(-0.159)
Constant	45.623	40.661
R^2	0.540	0.437
Adj. R^2	0.399	0.325

# $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; one-tailed tests. Results contrary to hypothesis are italicized. Each cell reports the unstandardized coefficient on the top line, with the standardized coefficient below in parentheses. Significance levels determined by bootstrap regression with 5000 repetitions.

The results for both analyses are presented in Table 6.2. The first column displays the results regarding the statewide decline in the percentages of households that lack water, sewerage, and electricity service, and the second column lists the results when service provision in the capitals is excluded. Differences in levels of economic development as measured by average income do not demonstrate a consistent effect in either model. Improvements in statewide basic-service provision do appear to depend on the relative size of the difficult-to-reach rural population, but this effect disappears when only municipalities beyond the capital are considered. The proportion of the population

living in the seat of state government, the capital city, has a consistently positive relationship with improvements in service provision regardless of the party in control: the number of years the capital was governed by an opposition party actually tended to reduce the positive effect of capital-city size somewhat according to this analysis. Differences in the partisan composition of the states' municipal governments had effects in the expected direction for both opposition parties, positive for the PAN and negative for the PRD, but the effect of neither party was sufficiently consistent across states to reach statistical significance in either model.

Both analyses confirm the tentative conclusion drawn from the experiences of Baja California Sur and Yucatán regarding the effect of economic inequality on municipal provision of basic services. Economic inequality has a large and statistically significant coefficient in both models. The most unequal distribution of economic resources is predicted to have resulted in a decline in the statewide basic-service deficit index of almost eleven percentage points smaller than the least unequal distribution. The maximum effect of economic inequality is even greater, 17.9%, on the improvement in basic-service provision outside of the state capitals. Across states, like other aspects of the quality of democracy, whether municipal governments serve merely as links in statewide patron-client networks or rather are closely monitored by their state government to ensure that they efficiently discharge their responsibilities to their citizens depends largely on the context of economic inequality in the state.

Conclusion

Differences in the extent of economic inequality are the strongest predictors of the quality of new democracies: greater inequality yields lower democratic quality. This chapter has argued that the explanation for this relationship lies in the effect of economic inequality on political participation. Higher levels of economic inequality facilitate vote buying, and as more votes express the preferences of wealthy patrons rather than those of the voters, elections become less effective mechanisms for holding politicians accountable to the public for their conduct while in office. The quality of democracy is lower as a result. This understanding is well supported by the experiences of Yucatán and Baja California Sur as well as the analysis of the relationships between state and municipal governments across all states presented above.

Critics of explanations for democratization based on economic inequality and other structural factors have often argued that such causes are simply too remote from the individuals whose decisions and actions create politics in concrete situations (see, for example, O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Structural accounts, according to such criticisms, rely too heavily on assumptions about the behavior of social classes whose members may not in fact perceive a commonality of interests or have the capacity to act collectively to pursue these interests even if they do (Skocpol 1973; Mahoney and Snyder 1999).

This chapter has demonstrated, however, that the effect of economic inequality on the quality of new democracies can be explained without recourse to these potentially problematic assumptions. Disparities in economic resources constitute disparities in the ability to influence others' actions or, conversely, to resist such influence. Where such

disparities are greater, the affluent are able use these resources to buy the votes of the many poor to whom even a very modest benefit is too much to pass up. The aggregate effect of these individual actions is to increase the bias toward the most affluent in the preferences expressed in elections. Office-seeking politicians and parties respond by addressing only these preferences, and the quality of democracy is correspondingly lower than where elections more faithfully reproduce the preferences of the broader public.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

As in other new democracies, contested elections in Mexico's states did not invariably lead to the minimal institutional guarantees of civil and political rights or the responsive policy outcomes that are generally expected from democratic regimes. By examining the experiences of the state governments, this dissertation has identified which of the many hypothesized causes for these differences in the quality of new democracies actually have strong and consistent effects: legislative pluralism, the strength of the radical opposition, and economic inequality. Although simply distinguishing patterns of constant association is an important step forward in the study of democratic quality, this work has also traced the processes linking these causes to their effects on the performance of new democracies. In short, it has demonstrated the specific ways in which the strategies of political actors, institutional characteristics, and socioeconomic structure all have important effects on the quality of new democracies.

The abundant support for these findings is the product of the subnational comparative research design employed here. In contrast to works on one or a few countries, this dissertation allowed systematic and convincing tests of many alternate hypotheses, and the experiences of the Mexican states provided much higher quality data for the study of new democracies than available in cross-national research. Along with this combination of desirable attributes, however, the subnational comparative research

design is open to two criticisms; with respect to this dissertation, these potential criticisms are easily addressed. The first of these criticisms is that, because the units compared are within a single country, hypotheses regarding the effects of characteristics that vary only at the national level cannot be tested. Although true, this is not a serious defect: potential explanatory variables that are held constant across all observations do not bias results concerning other variables (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 140-141). Nevertheless, given my goal of understanding the origins of the quality of new democracies, I will briefly discuss the hypotheses that this study could not address below.

The second possible criticism of the subnational comparative research design is potentially more serious. Relationships revealed in subnational comparative work, like in other studies of only one or a few countries, may depend on antecedent conditions that are not present in other contexts (Snyder 2001, 103). Confidence in the generalizability of this dissertation's findings, and so the importance of its contribution to our knowledge regarding the causes of the quality of new democracies, depends on identifying these antecedent conditions and determining how common they are among newly democratic regimes. If the conclusions reached on the basis of the experiences of the Mexican states apply only in the presence of antecedent conditions that are rare elsewhere, the weaknesses of the subnational comparative research design will have outweighed its strengths. Fortunately for our understanding of the causes of democratic quality, this does not appear to be the case.

Untested Hypotheses

Although this dissertation has evaluated a broad range of hypothesized causes of differences in democratic quality, a number of often-suggested explanations are beyond its analytic scope because they suggest variables that do not, in fact, vary within a single country, at least not in Mexico. These untested explanations include those regarding international influences, macroeconomic policy responses to economic crises, prior experiences with democracy, and the relative advantages of parliamentary over presidential systems.

The influence of international actors have garnered increasing attention from scholars in recent years as a source of potential explanations for differences in the quality of new democracies, but it does not vary within a single country and therefore was not considered in this work. Reliance on foreign aid conditioned on, for example, improvements in respect for human rights may seem a plausible explanation for higher quality democracy; aid conditionality, however, has been notoriously ineffective in inducing policy change (see Collier 1999). Some observers have pointed to the ability of international non-governmental organizations to improve the quality of new democracies, but as they have been unable to account for the NGOs' decidedly mixed records, the potential positive effect of NGO involvement appears to have more normative than empirical support (cf. the evaluation of Transparency International's efforts by Galtung and Pope (1999)).

Vachudova (2003) offered a more promising potential international influence on the quality of newly democratic regimes: the prospect of membership in regional organizations with established democracies. The potential for accession to the European

Union, she argued, played an important role in improved democratic performance in Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria. These three countries had suffered from decidedly low democratic quality through the early 1990s, but by clearly elaborating the reforms needed to qualify for membership and its perceived benefits and by spotlighting the deficiencies of current government policies, the EU generated domestic political pressure for protecting the civil and political rights of threatened ethnic minorities as well as for greater government responsiveness. Ultimately, these pressures led to the election of reform-minded governments that improved democratic quality so as to allow their countries to continue the process of joining the EU. The prospect of EU membership has also been argued to account for the differences in democratic practice between the new democracies of southern Europe and those of Latin America (Linz and Stepan 1996, 219).

Prospective membership in a regional organization with established democracies might have had a similar, if somewhat weaker, effect on Mexico. The scrutiny of the Mexican regime during the negotiations that ultimately led to the North American Free Trade Agreement between Canada, the United States, and Mexico is sometimes cited as providing an impetus for the federal political reforms of the late 1980s and early 1990s, including devolution and subnational political liberalization. These reforms provided the evidence of democratization needed to forestall even greater criticism of the agreement in the U.S. Congress (cf. Bruhn 1997, 274-276).

The desire to meet the democratic expectations of regional organizations such as the EU and NAFTA creates pressure for higher quality democracy only at the national level: subnational units cannot independently join international organizations. Therefore,

the need to put forward a good face for skeptics in the U.S. Congress, to the extent that it had any effect, weighed equally on all of Mexico's states and could not be used to explain differences in their performance. But is the prospect of membership in regional organizations simply one example of a broader group of demonstration effects created by geographic proximity to established democracies? In that case, the Mexican states that border the United States should be expected to have enjoyed a higher quality of democracy due to their governments' emulation of their northern neighbors. Although, as noted in Chapter 2, the northern tier of states generally scored quite well on the index of democratic quality, the evidence does not support the geographic-proximity hypothesis. When a dummy variable coded one for the six border states is added to the final model of democratic quality presented in Chapter 3, its coefficient is not statistically significant and actually negative in sign; the coefficients for the other variables in the model are not substantively affected. The lack of support for a general effect of geographic proximity to established democracies on the quality of new democracies reinforces the conclusion that Vachodova's narrower hypothesis that the prospect of joining regional organizations can be a positive international influence on democratic quality is only properly considered at the national level.

Deeper economic crises inherited from the preceding authoritarian regime, particularly runaway inflation and unstable currencies, have also been suggested to reduce the quality of new democracies by tending to prompt chief executives to adopt "drastic and surprising economic stabilization 'packages'" while running roughshod over coordinate branches of government and citizen preferences (O'Donnell 1994, 63). These poorly considered and hastily enacted policies rarely succeed, and their failure creates the

economic conditions for another round of surprise reform; moreover, the way in which they were promulgated undercuts efforts to create the independent legislatures and judiciaries that might forestall similarly undemocratic policymaking in the future, and so the quality of democracy declines still further (Przeworski 1991, 180-187). The hypothesized negative relationship between economic crisis and the development of a democracy-enhancing division of powers is an important one, but, given that macroeconomic policy is the domain of national governments, it could not be meaningfully tested using the subnational comparative research design of this dissertation.

Prior experience with democratic institutions is another hypothesized cause of differences in the quality of new democracies that could not be tested given the subnational comparative research design of this study. O'Donnell (1994) argued that past episodes of democracy leave behind institutional templates that can be readopted with the revival of democratic government. The legislatures of Uruguay and Chile, he asserted, quickly became autonomous representative bodies able to check executive abuses of power because they relied on practices and traditions forged during those countries' long histories of democratic government prior to the military coups of the 1970s. This is an important institutional argument, but it could not be evaluated using the experiences of the Mexican states, none of which had any earlier episodes of democratic government.

Finally, this dissertation was unable to test one of the most debated hypotheses in the literature on democratic quality: that parliamentary systems are better suited than presidential systems for new democracies. Linz (1990; 1994) famously contended that the independent electoral mandates and fixed terms of office accorded presidents

exacerbate the political tensions of new democracies while simultaneously limiting institutional means of reconciling them; parliamentary systems, on the other hand, avoid both of these problems. Many scholars have disputed some or all of Linz's conclusions (see, for example, Shugart and Carey 1992; Mainwaring 1993; Jones 1995). More empirical evidence on differences in the quality of presidential and parliamentary democracies would be helpful for resolving this question, but all of Mexico's states, like the Mexican federal government, have presidential systems.

The results reached by this dissertation are not thrown into question by the lack of attention given these untested hypotheses. Mexico's states had identical values for the variables suggested by these hypotheses, and therefore the effects of these variables, if any, were controlled. Conversely, this dissertation can provide no evidence for or against these hypotheses. Whether the prospect of joining regional organizations with established democracies, crisis-induced macroeconomic reform, prior experiences with democracy, or parliamentary systems help to explain differences in the quality of newly democratic regimes remain questions for future research.

Antecedent Conditions

What this study does tell us about the causes of democratic quality, of course, is considerably more important than what it cannot. Whether the causal relationships found in the Mexican states explain the quality of other new democracies depends on their antecedent conditions. If the background phenomena that allow these causal relationships to hold in the Mexican states are rarely found in other contexts, then the findings of this dissertation will be of little use to understanding the origins of democratic

quality beyond Mexico. All three of the explanations for the quality of new democracies supported by the experiences of the states may be dependent on antecedent conditions present in Mexico. The evident antecedent conditions, however, are also quite common in other newly democratic countries, so the findings presented in this dissertation should travel very well.

Legislative Pluralism

Within the range of low to moderate pluralism observed across the Mexican states, I have found that increases in legislative pluralism generate higher quality democracy by facilitating the institutionalization of autonomous legislatures that are able to check executive abuses. The evidence from the Mexican states that supports this finding, however, comes only from presidential systems: all of the states directly elect their governors independently of their legislatures and for a fixed term of office. The positive effect of legislative pluralism might be considerably weaker in parliamentary systems; the requirement of parliamentary systems that the executive branch retain parliamentary confidence to remain in office may alone be sufficient to constrain arbitrary executive action. Linz (1990, 62), for example, has argued that a parliamentary prime minister, unlike an elected president, "can afford precious little in the way of detachment from parliamentary opinion" on these grounds.

The available evidence does suggest that more pluralistic parliaments are better able to maintain a balance of power with their executives. Lijphart (1999) found in a sample of thirty-one new and established parliamentary democracies that average cabinet duration was strongly negatively related to the effective number of parties in the

legislature; as shorter cabinet durations imply closer control of the executive by the legislature, this finding supports the view that legislative pluralism generates more balanced executive-legislative relations. Nevertheless, until supported by further research, the finding of this dissertation that, within the range of low to moderate legislative pluralism, more pluralism generates higher democratic quality should be applied to new parliamentary democracies only with some caution. On the other hand, presidents are fairly common among the new democracies of the last three decades—all of Latin America plus the Philippines have presidential systems. Among these countries, at least, legislative pluralism should be considered an important source of differences in the quality of newly democratic regimes.

The Strength of the Radical Opposition

The stronger the support for the radical opposition to the previous authoritarian regime, I have shown, the lower the quality of the resulting democracy. As explained in Chapter 5, this somewhat unintuitive result depends on the existence of a transition agreement between reformers within the authoritarian regime and the moderate opposition; the stronger the support for democracy without limits, the more the pact must preserve the authoritarian regime to provide a repressive response to the radicals. In the absence of a pact on transition, a very different relationship should hold.

In addition to pacted breaks from authoritarianism, transitions to democracy can result when moderate and radical opponents of the authoritarian regime remain united and take advantage of divisions within the regime to push through democracy without protections for the interests of the outgoing rulers. The democratic transitions in

Argentina, Czechoslovakia, and Greece are examples of such transitions without pacts; pacts were also rare in the transitions that took place in the early 1990s in sub-Saharan Africa. In such cases, the strength of the radical democratic opposition likely has a positive effect on the quality of the resulting democracy, rather than the negative effect found in democracies that originated in pacts. Consistent with the actor-centered theory of democratization, the effects of actors' decisions depend on the strategies adopted by the other actors.

Transitions that did not involve negotiated pacts, however, were the exception rather than the rule during the latest wave of democratizations; indeed, as Bratton and van de Walle (1997, 82) observed, "The recent literature on democratization in Europe and Latin America converges on a common account of regime transition," that is, transition by political pact between reformers within the regime and the moderate opposition. With the negotiated democratization of Spain after the death of Franco serving as a model for other countries (as well as for political scientists), pacts were the predominant method of transition in much of the world during the last quarter of the twentieth century (see, especially, Colomer 1991). For as long as the radical oppositions in these countries remain radical by refusing to agree to the terms of the pact that protects the interests of the outgoing authoritarian regime, their strength should be expected to have the inverse relationship with the quality of democracy observed across the Mexican states.

Economic Inequality

This dissertation has demonstrated that greater economic inequality produces more vote buying and so less responsive government in the new democracies of the

Mexican states. The basic relationship between economic inequality and democratic quality, other works have shown, holds even in long-established democracies. Knack (2002) found that income inequality was a powerful predictor of the performance of state governments in the United States; in other work, I observed that historical patterns of economic inequality explained much of the differences in the responsiveness and effectiveness of Italy's regional governments (Solt 2003a). The consistency of this result despite the innumerable differences among these three countries suggests that no antecedent conditions are necessary for the general relationship to hold.

The mechanism by which economic inequality acts to reduce democratic quality, however, does appear to vary across contexts. In richer countries, higher levels of economic inequality should not be expected to result in more vote buying; higher average incomes makes buying the votes of a meaningful fraction of the electorate simply too expensive. The imbalance of political resources implied by highly unequal distributions of income, wealth, and human capital nevertheless act to depress independent political participation by reducing citizen efficacy and increasing levels of apathy. In the United States, for example, I have found that differences in the level of income inequality across states have a powerful effect on the probability of citizens casting a vote in gubernatorial elections (Solt 2003b). Similarly, patterns of abstention in the wealthier regions of northern Italy match patterns of vote buying in the poorer south: both are closely related to historically rooted economic inequality (Solt 2003a). Whether citizens faced with higher levels of economic inequality sell their votes for a particularistic benefit, as in poorer countries, or simply see little point in going to the polls at all, as in richer ones, the result is the same: Elections become less effective at holding government officials

accountable for their performance, and the quality of democracy correspondingly declines. Like the other conclusions of this dissertation, the role of economic inequality expounded here is widely applicable to understanding the performance of new democracies beyond Mexico.

The study of the quality of newly democratic regimes is a young field of inquiry; it has not been many years since observers of the many transitions from authoritarian rule that occurred at the end of the twentieth century realized that there were considerable differences in the regimes that resulted from the advent of contested elections. Hypotheses to explain these differences nearly as numerous as the new democracies themselves quickly followed, but shortcomings in the most common research designs have prevented them from generating convincing tests of these rival explanations.

In this dissertation, I have overcome these shortcomings by employing a subnational comparative research design and examining the widely diverging experiences of the Mexican state governments. The fact that the states are part of a single country facilitated the collection of much higher quality data than are available for cross-national analysis, and the relatively large number of states allowed for the use of statistical techniques to evaluate rival hypotheses. As a result, this dissertation succeeds in providing convincing evidence of which of the many proposed causes actually account for differences in the quality of new democracies and, in addition, the mechanisms through which they have their effects.

The results of my cross-state analyses demonstrate that all three of the major theoretical approaches to the study of democracy make contributions to our

understanding of democratic quality. First, in line with predictions generated by close attention to the interaction of strategic decisions made by important political actors, the strength of the radical democratic opposition has a negative relationship with democratic quality where, as in Mexico, the transition to democracy was the result of negotiations between reformers within the regime and the moderate opposition. In such cases, as the contrast between the experiences of Michoacán and Yucatán demonstrated, greater support for democracy without limits means more of the authoritarian regime will be maintained to repress this radical opposition.

Second, institutional attributes also play an important role. When legislatures are characterized by higher levels of party pluralism, they are more likely to develop into institutionalized representative bodies strong enough to oversee the executive branch and check abuses of authority, thereby creating higher quality democracy. The rapid institutionalization of the state legislature in Michoacán following the sharp increase in pluralism among its members illustrated this effect.

Finally, socioeconomic structure has powerful effects on the quality of new democracies: across the Mexican states, economic inequality was the strongest predictor of democratic quality. More economic inequality facilitates vote buying, and votes cast in exchange for patronage reflect the policy preferences of the patron, not the voter. As a result, elections become less effective mechanisms for holding government officials accountable for their actions in office. The sharp differences in democratic quality between Yucatán and Baja California Sur, as well as evidence of the states' dealings with their municipal governments, served to confirm this relationship.

Contested elections do not alone ensure that governments will meet the widely held expectations of democracy. Many elected leaders violently repress their political enemies, refuse to recognize the rule of law and the democratic legitimacy of other elected representatives, and fail to pursue policies sought by their citizens. Although the governments headed by these leaders are ostensibly democratic, they are of low democratic quality at best. Unless we understand the causes of differences in the quality of new democracies, there can be little hope of advancement toward government that protects the rights and responds to the preferences of all citizens. In providing the best available evidence of these causes, this dissertation represents a first step toward this goal.

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