

**The London School of Economics and Political Science**

**Party Dynamics in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies:  
Power Networks and Committee Appointments**

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**A thesis submitted to the Department of Government of the  
London School of Economics for the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy, London, March 2013**

## **Declaration**

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## **Abstract**

Empirically, the aim of this thesis is to understand how national party dynamics determine legislative behaviour in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies. Through a case study of the 60th Congress (2006-2009), I sought to identify the informal rules that the parties have locked in for determining appointments to legislative committees and the Directive Board. The first part of the case study overviews the historical evolution of political parties in Mexico and shows how these have adopted the behaviours and strategies that affect their performance in Congress. This is complemented with an empirical description of the Chamber, its rules and the organisation of party groups in the 60th Congress, which presents a clear picture of how parties create informal rules and lock them in. The case study ends with a quantitative analysis of background information of 440 members of the 60th Congress, showing that parties have a tight control over political careers, facilitated by the existence of term limits and the political careerism that characterises the political elite. I conclude that the Mexican political system has been shaped by the three main parties to suit their interests, thereby undermining the quality of democracy. Following the theoretical precepts of historical institutionalism, this research claims that Mexican institutions emerge and change through collective agreements of actors, who are responsible for making institutional paths dependent. I argue that path dependency in Mexico is conditional, in that elites have been willing to make some institutional changes but not others, depending on the extent to which creating new rules has a negative impact on their power. An innovative view of path dependency, this finding is the main theoretical contribution of my work, complemented by contributions to party and legislative organisation theories with aims at explaining legislative parties' behaviour in imperfect institutional settings.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my co-supervisors, George Philip and Simon Hix, for their moral and intellectual support during my PhD research. Without their insightful comments and encouraging guidance my thesis would have been a very bumpy experience. This work would not have been possible either without the financial support from the Mexican Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología, CONACYT.

My interest in Mexican legislative politics began during the two exciting years I worked at Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación. To all of you who helped me learn more about our Chamber of Deputies and have helped with expert knowledge to this day, muchas gracias.

Many people have made helpful comments on my work over the last few years, making it better and clearer. Special thanks to those of you who patiently showed me the tricks of Stata and took an interest in the endless pages of outputs I produced.

The quantitative analysis within this research was perhaps the greatest challenge I faced during my PhD studies, yet the best skill I learnt. I would probably have given up before starting it if it had not been for Jack Cattell's brilliant advice on data processing. Thank you for being a loving, patient and supportive husband.

A thank you and a big cheer go to all my dear friends from H421, with whom I have shared the ups and downs of being a doctoral student at the LSE. Each and every one of you have been great.

And last but not least, I want to acknowledge the unconditional love and support of my family, particularly my parents: Javier Caballero and Victoria Sosa. You have been a true inspiration in many different ways and have transmitted your passion for academic research throughout my entire life. I know that your being proud of me was never conditional upon obtaining a doctoral degree, but you know better than anyone how hard and yet rewarding this experience can be. I hope you are even prouder of your daughter now.

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## **Introduction**

In comparison with any other country with a presidential system of government, even within Latin America, Mexico has a particularly interesting party and institutional design because one single party ruled and shaped it for decades. Unlike other Latin American countries, Mexico democratised without a comprehensive constitutional reform or a break from the old regime (Merino, 2003). Instead, it did so in a truly pragmatic manner, making partial reforms to the Constitution and other legal frameworks, such as electoral rules (Fuentes Reyes & García Muciño, 2010; Prud'home, 1998), only when they were absolutely necessary and convenient for the elite's interests. This approach to democratisation had unintended consequences which impacted on Mexican politics and policy-making for life. Namely, these consequences are: the substitution of the PRI-created over-powerful presidency, known as hyperpresidentialism, with a partidocracy, a system dominated by partisan interests; the existence of parties with excessive power that are far from representative of society; and constitutional term limits.

The National Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, abbreviated as PRI) monopolised power from 1929 until the end of the 1990s, creating an over-powerful executive which was closely linked to the party. The legislative branch functioned merely as a 'rubber-stamping' agency that approved anything the president – and therefore the party – submitted (Casar, 1999). This situation made Mexico 'hyperpresidentialist', which meant that the president was in full control of the country, without any checks or balances by another entity other than his own political party (Elizondo Mayer-Serra & Nacif, 2002).

Congress was also dominated by the PRI until 1997, when the two major opposition parties, the Democratic Revolution Party (Partido de la Revolucion Democrática, abbreviated as PRD) and the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, abbreviated as PAN) won enough seats for the PRI to lose its absolute majority. Hyperpresidentialism could then remain in place only if the president controlled the PRI's party group in the Chamber of Deputies, which in turn had to negotiate with the

opposition to scrutinise and approve bills in the most favourable way for the party's interest (Ibid).

However, the plural Congress that emerged from the 1997 election was only the beginning of the end of the PRI's absolute power. The party's agenda-setting became much more difficult to achieve as the PRD and the PAN acquired greater negotiating powers (Ibid). Three years later, the PRI lost the presidency to the PAN and it became clear that three forces instead of one now controlled the party system.

In the new political context, the PRD, the PAN and the PRI, in an attempt to secure the best position possible for decision-making and agenda-setting, shaped institutional rules in their favour. As organisations with the means to influence the institutional framework of the country, they shifted power from the presidency to the Congress – where they were all represented – and therefore substituted hyperpresidentialism with a partidocracy, where the president is weak and the three major parties are very powerful (Coppedge, 1993).

The scope and strength of Mexico's partidocracy has been increased by the preservation of term limits. The non-re-election clause, introduced in 1933 by the PRI to keep control of the members of its legislative party group, has been impossible to reverse. Instead of preventing particularistic behaviours and promoting the greater good, it has contributed to the increase in specific parties' power (Béjar Algazi & Waldman, 2004).

Non-re-election is used by party leaders to enable careful selection of those members who will represent the organisation's interest in an important forum such as the Chamber of Deputies. In addition, it has given the parties the power to reward loyal members and punish the mavericks and non-conformists, thereby having a tight control over political careers and creating a set of enduring informal rules and strategies for candidate selection and legislative appointments (Nacif, 1997).

Adopting the authoritarian and at times dubiously transparent attitudes of the PRI has been the only option for the PRD and the PAN in order to take part in the decision-making process (Wuhs, 2008). Consequently, they have developed their own sets of

strategies and rules, which have created an agency problem in the country; that is, parties are far from what society wants (see Table 3.3 in Section 3.1 for levels of trust in parties in Mexico). Instead of being the representatives of the electorate's interests in policy-making, they pursue particularistic issues and work mostly for their own benefit. Furthermore, all three parties are hierarchical and elitist, which makes them even less representative of their voters.

Therefore, this research focuses on how, since the 1990s, the three main forces have imposed their interests on institutions and set up structures, informal rules and behavioural patterns to better suit their needs. For instance, they have adapted processes for legislative committee appointments in the Chamber of Deputies and negotiated suitable working procedures to improve their agenda-setting opportunities in Congress (Caballero & Dávila, 2006). In theoretical terms, we shall see that this situation poses challenges to scholarly concepts of party behaviour. Through interviews with Dámaso Morales (parliamentary advisor to Dep. Alejandro Chanona, Convergencia), Susana Monreal (Deputy, PRD), Jesús Ramírez (Deputy, PAN), and Gerardo Sosa (Deputy, PRI), I learnt that party lines are decided upon centrally but influenced by factions, and legislative organisation, as seats in committees are not distributed just on the basis of seniority, but consider many other factors (Morales, interview, 2009; Monreal, interview, 2009; Ramírez, interview, 2009; Sosa, interview, 2009).

Empirically, the case herein discussed provides substantial evidence on the effects of term limits over electoral competition, political careers, institutional dynamics and the (unfinished) consolidation of democracy in the country. Overall, these issues show that Mexico has indeed moved from hyperpresidentialism to a weak presidency overpowered by a partidocracy, in which the PRI, the PAN and the PRD shape the country's system as they see fit (Wuhs, 2008).

Despite recent developments in electoral rules that improve transparency in political processes, mechanisms such as checks and balances, representation and accountability are yet to be fully implemented. These shortcomings are partly related to the institutional arrangements of the Mexican presidential system discussed above, but are also connected to contextual factors (Molinar Horcasitas, 1991).

That is, progress in democratic performance and stability depends on institutional arrangements inherent to each country which has adopted a presidential system, and not on the actual theoretical design of it (Cheibub, 2007). Policy-making, coalition building and other common matters of good and bad governments are affected by ‘the constitutional powers of the president, the degree of party discipline and the fragmentation of the party system’ (Mainwaring & Shugart, 1997, p. 463).

This explains why the presidential systems that were created in Latin America, although constitutionally inspired by the US model, are often unstable and inefficient –though the American model has, in recent years, also experienced gridlocks as a result of the divided government that was elected in 2008. Opposed to the North American ‘Madisonian’ constitutional liberalism, where checks and balances are adequately carried out, Latin America’s governments are largely authoritarian; presidents rely strongly on force and popularity, and they have even been labelled as ‘illiberal democracies’ (Zakaria, 1997) or ‘delegative democracies’ (O’Donnell, 1998). In its own particular way, Mexico fits within this description of regional governments because its parties act in an authoritarian and hierarchical way, and resort to the popularity and force of individuals during election time.

The political history of the country has shaped Mexico’s institutions in such a way that the rational choices of individual and collective actors are extremely influential for the stability and evolution of all governmental bodies (Wuhs, 2008). The clearest example of this is that democratisation took place without thorough legal reforms, and was instead based on pragmatic changes agreed by the elite. This is a classic example of how representation of legislative institutions in some Latin American presidential systems has been undermined. This has happened simply because they have evolved in ways which have heightened partisanship and political conflicts rather than reducing or institutionalising them (Philip, 2003).

Legislatures in these situations have a hard time performing their natural tasks, such as representing the electorate’s interests in policy-making. Theoretically, congresses or parliaments can play three different roles in the process of policy-making: ‘originative, by making and breaking executives, who then shoulder most of the policymaking burden; proactive, by initiating and passing their own legislative

proposals; and reactive, by amending and/or vetoing executive proposals' (Cox & Morgenstern, 2001, p. 171). Many Latin American legislatures, including Mexico until the PRI lost the majority in the mid-1990s, can be qualified as reactive (see for example Casar, 2002). This means that the necessary cooperation between elites to ensure equality and participation (Lijphart, 1977), often considered basic components of a democracy, is difficult to achieve. Hence, the overall quality of democracy is unsatisfactory.

The institutional design of the Mexican political system, characterised by parties with too much power, especially the PRI, suggests that these actors have blurred the boundaries between powers and purposes of institutions across the country. This situation, in turn, results from the inability of the political elites to change their attitudes in order to ensure that 'democracy is the only game in town' (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 5).

Good leadership principles are innate in public opinion in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America (as suggested by Peruzzotti, 2001) but, unfortunately, this has not generated changes in the elites. However, it should be clarified that, even if democracy could be far better than what it is now, the Mexican system works reasonably well, at least in comparison to the years when it was a single-party government.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, the inefficiency of Congress and the parties' behaviour has caused the Mexican electorate to be disenchanted with democracy itself. This is a common trend in the Latin American region, where several studies have revealed that the 'mass public today appear disaffected, disenchanted, and, at times, even available to support politicians whose democratic credentials are dubious at best' (Hagopian, 2005, p. 361). On the other hand, there is also some good news within this rather grey Latin American portrait: it is unlikely that democracy could give way to a return to authoritarianism any time soon.

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<sup>1</sup> Crespo (1991) argues that since opposition parties began to consolidate their presence in the country's political scene, opportunities for a long-term democratisation process were present and solid.

Political reforms approved in 1996 made Mexican voters and opposition parties believe in electoral processes with regard to their transparency and also led to the acceptance of the results by all political forces (Magaloni, 2005). However, parties are still regarded as elites that pursue their own interests instead of representing society when it comes to decision-making. Furthermore, the elites are known for transferring to institutions their poorly democratic practices, thereby making them inefficient (as suggested by Mora-Donatto, 2006).

As previously stated, this research observes and describes the complex puzzle derived from the close interrelation between actors and institutions, in which parties have used and shaped institutions as they have seen fit. Focusing on the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico, this thesis identifies the power networks within political parties, describes their nature and assesses the effect they have had on the Chamber's design and procedures. In other words, the main objective is to describe the origins and logic of Mexico's partidocracy, with particular focus on how it operates in the Chamber of Deputies.

## **1 Methodology**

A key issue for the success of this research consists of selecting and developing an adequate methodology to collect, process and present empirical evidence in order to give the reader a thorough explanation of how the power networks operate. Therefore, prior to briefly discussing the assumptions and expected results of this work, it is best to begin by describing the methodological approach which I took. Both strengths and weaknesses of the research design will be identified.

### **1a The variables**

This thesis seeks to unveil the effect of party behaviour on the Chamber of Deputies' design, which can be proven by analysing the processes for committee appointments, the distribution of seats in governing positions, and the negotiation of other procedural issues at the beginning of each legislature. These matters can be grouped under the term 'legislative behaviour'.

A complementary way of assessing the power of partidocracy over the Chamber would be to analyse processes of scrutiny and approval of bills in key ordinary committees. This would allow the identification of how factionalism and loyalties operate at the core of legislative decision-making, and thus to monitor how deputies' legislative performance can affect future career prospects. More specifically, analysing committee negotiations would reveal interesting information on how each party and its respective factions maintain discipline and could help identify who the main leading figures of each group are in reality. Thus, at the start of my research in 2008, I sought to understand the effects of party power through a combined analysis of committee appointments and negotiation of bills in the budget and gender equality committees.

Access to information on committee discussions and negotiations is generally not easily granted, at least not for very recently discussed pieces of legislation. I learnt this during the two years I worked at Fundar, an NGO in Mexico City focused on the improvement of transparency and accountability in the public sector. One of my main tasks was to monitor the approval of federal budgets in the Chamber of Deputies, in order to ensure that transparency and accountability mechanisms laid out in legislative and federal rules were followed. My job was to track as many budgetary negotiations as possible and there were only two ways of accessing the information directly: obtaining an invitation to a committee meeting, or requesting the transcripts or minutes of the meetings via the information request system of the Chamber. In my experience the former was easier to achieve than the latter, as minutes generally took longer to be distributed to other bodies of the Chamber outside the committees. Not being permanently in Mexico City during my doctoral research meant that attending a meeting was very difficult. Thus, the necessary information on bill scrutiny would be best sought through minutes or transcripts of meetings, and those concerning bills approved in 2007 were more likely to be available outside committees.

I therefore planned to focus on the scrutiny and approval processes around the 2007 federal budget and contrast these with the processes surrounding an important bill dealt with in the gender equality committee. Former colleagues of mine at Fundar were to advise me on which gender equality bill to select, so that I focused on a salient one for most parties. I would have, therefore, compared the dynamics of

discipline in similar 'high importance' agenda setting conditions. Before attempting a request of the necessary minutes through the information request system, I sought advice from former colleagues and contacts in the Chamber on the likelihood of my success. The overall consensus was that it would take months, if not years to get the documents I needed and there was no guarantee that I would get minutes from the relevant meetings where the most useful discussions for my research purposes took place. Through one of these contacts I was able to obtain an electronic version of a minute of one meeting in the early 2007 budgetary discussions but I found no evidence of party or factional discipline. My contact was unable to provide any more documents and I decided not to risk proceeding with a research design where key information was not guaranteed.

If I had analysed committee negotiations, I would have expected the approval of the federal budget to be more tightly controlled by party leaders than the negotiation of a bill on women's rights, as budgetary matters are generally more important for parties than gender issues. But I was also likely to observe diverging levels of discipline and commitment between deputies closely linked to grassroots movements and activist groups for gender rights and those who are more independent. Overall, the analysis of committee business would have provided substantial evidence on the complexity of party discipline and the dispersion of deputies' loyalties.

Having discarded one useful source of empirical data meant defining and portraying legislative behaviour exclusively through appointments to committees, governing bodies and procedural negotiations, and leaving out concrete examples of how parties and factions exert their power. My research design was admittedly weakened by this situation, although every attempt was made to compensate by including detailed information from interviews conducted to deputies and parliamentary staff.

Once I revised my design, the next research task was to lay out dependent and independent variables. I identify the dependent variable as the legislative behaviour of deputies. In turn, the independent or explanatory variables consist of party dynamics and the manifestation of the power of the parties, both within the Chamber and throughout the whole political system, including electoral politics and the party system. However, it will be seen that Mexican parties are extremely factionalised as a



result of their historical evolution and as a consequence of the formation and change of all the political institutions of the country. Consequently, intervening variables such as factionalism and relevant events in the country's political history and context must also be considered in the causal mechanism.

### **1b Analysing the variables through a case study**

The interaction between these variables will be observed through a case study. According to Ragin (1992), the term 'case' can acquire many different meanings and cases can be matched to appropriate theories or they can lead to theory creation. In short, the process of 'casing' can be seen as matching ideas with evidence.

Gerring (2009, p. 94), in turn, defines a case as 'a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time'. For example, cases can be nation states, regions, cities, or specific institutions. It follows that case studies can be defined as:

...the intensive study of a single case for the purpose of understanding a larger class of cases (a population). Within each case study there are a certain number of observations, which contain several dimensions known as variables. If the case study entails a proposition of causal effects or mechanisms, then the variables are classified into dependent (referring to an outcome) and independent (the causal factor which the outcome is dependent on). The majority of case studies involve synchronic observations, that is, they focus on observations of within-case changes at a single point in time (Ibid).

Furthermore, case studies are suitable for generating hypotheses and they can almost always guarantee internal validity, which means it is rather easy to establish how true causal relationships are within a case study, at least in comparison to cross-case studies. In addition, they are favourable for identifying causal mechanisms and generally produce deep analyses on a sample of heterogeneous populations, so as to explain the particularities of 'rare' or exclusive units. The causal mechanisms identified within case studies are strong, which means that the effect of the independent variable on the dependent one across a population of cases has high

levels of magnitude and consistency, portraying deterministic causal relations. Case studies are especially recommended where vast information is available on the topic of interest (Ibid).

The specific case study analysed in this research is the 60th Congress (2006-2009), chosen for the vast availability of information on it but also, and most importantly, because it is a 'rare variation'. That is, as will be explained below and at length in Chapter 4, the 60th Congress was inaugurated amid the political turbulence which followed the controversial presidential elections of July 2006, when the parties' dynamics and their quest for power and influence were particularly interesting.

Perhaps the reader should be warned that the scope of the study – especially in terms of the political party information collected and analysed within the quantitative analysis – was narrowed throughout the empirical section of the research in order to achieve comparability.<sup>2</sup> Thus, only the three largest parties were included in the dataset used for predicting committee appointments and also in the accounts of the historical evolution of party organisations. These are the only ones that have endured in the party system, as smaller parties fail to reach the 2 per cent threshold established in the electoral law for keeping their registration and with it the right to electoral competition.

### **1c Sources of information and data**

This research began in 2008, just before the 60th Congress ended. Therefore, access to primary sources of information such as publicly available official communications could be obtained easily. As a result, the main sources of information for the construction of the qualitative analysis of the case study were legal documents, *the Gaceta Legislativa* (Legislative Gazette; the official diary which reports the Chamber's activities in terms of bills received, discussed and approved, among other official events and matters), party manifestos and communications, as well as other

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<sup>2</sup> That is, I chose to include only the three largest parties, as they are the only comparable ones. The smaller parties lack the institutional capacity to affect the political system like the PRI, the PRD and the PAN, not only because their participation in elite decision-making is reduced, but also because it is frequent that they do not survive more than one term in congress, due to the failure to reach the 2 per cent electoral threshold to maintain registration.

supporting evidence gathered from the press and academic projects monitoring legislative issues.

The dataset used for the quantitative analyses carried out in Chapter 5 was constructed using information from Impacto Legislativo's website. Having originally started as an academic project at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), and then continued independently as an online platform for showcasing information and performance statistics of the members of Congress, Impacto Legislativo was a reliable and substantial source of information for this thesis.<sup>3</sup> Using their search engine, I was able to record the following for the members of the 60th Congress belonging to the PAN, PRD and PRI: age, level of education, type of seat, previous political offices held (both elected and appointed), previous party affiliation, positions held within the party structure and affiliation to party-related organisations.

Other databases were available around the time when I collected my quantitative and empirical data. For example, I considered using the University of Salamanca's longitudinal survey data on parliamentary elites in Latin America for retrieving information on deputies' views on party discipline. However, as in any survey, interviewees were anonymised and even records of party affiliation were eliminated where necessary in order to avoid information being traced back to respondents; what my research needed was qualitative, in-depth information from purposely selected interviewees. I therefore decided to rely exclusively on interviews, as discussed below.

Despite official documents being available (and consulted) for the qualitative approach to the case study, those sources left out important details regarding individuals' choices and unofficial information behind certain appointments or the decision-making process. Therefore, it was best to also resort to interviews to 'fill in the gaps' of the argument.

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<sup>3</sup> Background information on the members of the 60th Congress was also available on the Chamber of Deputies' official website. However, important details were missing for many individuals and so I decided to rely mainly on Impacto Legislativo's website and use the Chamber's data only as a back-up if needed.

Rathburn (2009, p. 686) rightly points out that interviews can be rich sources of information:

Interviewing, despite its flaws, is often the best tool for establishing how subjective factors influence political decision-making, the motivations of those involved, and the role of agency in events of interest. Behavioralism and rationalism alert us rightly to the importance of rigor in our analyses, but there are steps that can be taken to eliminate some of the concerns about reliability and validity. Scepticism should not be exaggerated.

Interviewing emphasises complexity and context, which allows the researcher to explore motivations and preferences of stakeholders, thereby looking into the topic she is approaching in-depth, way beyond official or written sources. This practice allows, therefore, the gathering of data on ‘human beings’ effort to intentionally transform their environment on the basis of cognition, reflection and learning’ (Ibid, p. 691).

There are, however, risks of subjectivity derived from interviewing. The researcher must be prepared to disregard certain parts of the interviewee’s statements based on an ideological approach established before the interview. In addition, particular biases, as per the interviewee’s position, whether political, bureaucratic or ideological, should be anticipated.

Before starting with the interview process, a thorough examination of publicly available primary and secondary sources should be made. This simplifies the preparation of questions and also allows for a better use of the information gathered from interviewees. In addition to this, Rathburn (Ibid) presents a series of recommendations for better and more reliable interviews, which include recording the conversation to ensure no information is left out; starting out by meeting with lower-ranking individuals and then working one’s way up the hierarchy; and preparing basic sets of questions which can be further developed throughout the interview.

For the case of this research, most of these recommendations were valid and were therefore followed. An extensive review of primary and secondary sources was done

as a starting point in order to identify the missing information. Important pieces of information were indeed missing, because informal mechanisms dominate in much of the legislative process, including committee appointments and allocation of seats across the governing bodies. Furthermore, since the causal mechanism being studied involves intervening variables such as party factionalism, it was important to try to trace its nature and effects through interviews.

Since the early stages of this research, I prepared questions for members of Congress, parliamentary staff and scholars specialising in Mexican legislative issues. Seeking representativeness of interviewees and ensuring collection of sufficient information on informal mechanisms, I contacted 27 deputies and former deputies from the PAN, PRD, PRI, *Convergencia*, Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (Partido Verde Ecologista de México, abbreviated as PVEM) and Social Democratic Alternative Party (Partido Alternativa Social Demócrata, abbreviated as PASD). Anticipating that some interviews with deputies would be unsuccessful,<sup>4</sup> I sought to maintain representativeness by approaching parliamentary advisors from all three parties and administrative staff from committees.<sup>5</sup> The full list of interviewees and questions used are included in Appendix 1.

In January and February 2009, just a few months before the end of the legislature, I interviewed 13 individuals: four members of Congress, six parliamentary advisors or other members of staff within the Chamber and three scholars. I carried out semi-structured interviews, which meant that although I had a set of standard questions to ask each individual, during the meeting I enquired about additional matters, or asked for further clarification on some of the issues discussed in the set questions. I chose not to record the interviews, as in my previous professional experience<sup>6</sup> I had interviewed members of Congress and had learnt that the information was considerably better and more abundant in the absence of a tape recorder. As a result, I was careful to take good notes during the interview and as soon as it was over I would

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<sup>4</sup> Members of the PRI were particularly difficult to interview.

<sup>5</sup> Advisors and parliamentary staff are normally quite close to deputies and their parties, and are actively involved in the deputies' activities within committees. Therefore, they are also valuable sources of information.

<sup>6</sup> Between 2005 and 2007 I worked as a researcher in a project monitoring the Chamber of Deputies' activities, carried out at Fundar, a Mexico City-based NGO.

type them on the computer and save the file to use with information drawn from my own memory.

The gathered data was used to put together an empirical description of the 60th Congress and specific material was quoted; most of the interviewees agreed to be quoted on most of the information they provided but when they requested me not to do so, I made a note of it and used the information cautiously and anonymously. This more accurate picture allowed for the empirical puzzles to be further identified and described, and therefore the rest of the research design was put together.

On a second fieldtrip to Mexico City throughout September 2009, I carried out 21 interviews with 14 members of Congress (both in the 60th and 61st Congresses<sup>7</sup>) and seven parliamentary staff members. The questions for these interviews were much more specific than the previous ones and dealt more with motivations and roles in the allocation of committee seats. It was easier to obtain honest and detailed responses because those belonging to the 60th Congress were no longer in active service and thus they did not feel unsafe in revealing politically sensitive information. Once again, those who chose to remain anonymous are not quoted throughout this research.

Both fieldtrips resulted in a valuable and comprehensive pool of qualitative data to use in the case study. For instance, I was able to see clear examples of the role that factions and leaders outside the Chamber play in appointments and I improved my understanding of how closed-door negotiations are orchestrated and what consequences they might have. For the particular case of the 60th Congress these issues were perhaps two of the most important sets of informal mechanisms that highlight the strong effects that partidocracy has had in the Chamber of Deputies.

One of the goals of this case study is to prove that political parties' power has increased through the existence of term limits and the predominance of informal rules. Within the Chamber, this is translated into the control of committee appointments, closely intertwined with controlling political careers.

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<sup>7</sup> Although this research concentrates on the 60th Congress, the testimonies of members of the 61st were very useful to trace general patterns of partisan procedures to allocate committee seats and positions across the group's organisation inside the Chamber.

As can be seen, the case study of the 60th Congress was carefully constructed, seeking enough evidence to reach the established goal. A combination of interviews and the review of written sources (official, academic and journalistic) enabled me to portray a comprehensive picture of the Chamber.

Having described and justified the methodology employed in this work, we can now begin a general overview of what this study attempts to prove. I shall also explain how these findings will contribute to the academic literature.

## **2 Research goals and expected findings**

### **2a Research objectives and theoretical contributions**

The main research question asks what agents trigger the legislative behaviour of Mexican deputies that affects the institutional operation and design of the Chamber and its committees. Legislative behaviour can therefore be identified as the allocation of committee seats and governing bodies' positions, along with the appointments to parties' coordination offices. In response to the question, I test the following hypothesis:

Distribution of committee seats and positions in the Directive Board of the Chamber of Deputies are made through informal mechanisms –as well as formal ones- which have been shaped and locked in by the parties, and therefore reflect their historical evolution, interests and internal power struggles.

In other words, the general purpose of this research is to delve into the causes, features and effects of Mexican partidocracy, and understand how the PRI, the PAN and the PRD have acquired the amount of power they now have, and, most importantly, the way in which they use it to control the political system. Thus, I shall map out the existing relationship between the effects of the national partisan dynamics, such as factionalism, territorialism and de-institutionalisation of parties, on the behaviour of Congress members and the institutional design of the Chamber of Deputies.

More specifically, in pursuing an inductive case study of this institution, I aim to identify the independent variables which bring about certain behavioural traits among deputies, which constitutes my dependent variable. In turn, this will shed light on what underlying factors or intervening variables trigger or constrain discipline and cohesion of party groups therein represented and will clarify the magnitude of the power of political parties, as they are responsible for the predominance of informal rules in the institution.

A suitable theoretical framework to guide the case study is institutionalism. Though it has some limitations in terms of long-term predictions and explanations of evolution and change (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Weyland, 2002), institutionalism can successfully guide the construction of an inductive case study in which the explanatory variables are found in establishments such as parties, the electoral system and the Chamber of Deputies.

A rather short and simple way to summarise the main principles is to say that institutions are regarded as constraints on actors' behaviour (Peters, 1999). They shape the actors' conduct and set patterns for actions to be carried out. Over the years, several variations of institutional perspectives have emerged (Hall & Taylor, 1996), two of which are particularly useful for this thesis: rational choice institutionalism and historical institutionalism.

An extensive discussion of the particularities of each approach is offered in Chapter 2 (or refer to Hall & Taylor, 1996; March & Olsen, 2008). For the time being, it is worth saying that the historical evolution of the Mexican political system has determined the immense power of the parties and the weakness of the formal rules supporting the governmental bodies as one of the unintended consequences of the pragmatic democratisation that took place in Mexico. This is very well explained by the historical institutional approach. In turn, the strategic calculation of the actors involved in the allocation of committee seats within the Chamber can be understood, even without the existence of perfect conditions, through the rational choice stream.



In addition, the concept of path dependency, used by the institutional perspective to address the issue of change and continuity in institutions, explains why parties have kept on imposing informal rules across the entire political system (Pierson, 2000).<sup>8</sup>

This research not only uses path dependency as a key explanation for parties' impact on the design of political institutions, but also contributes to the scholarly knowledge on its manifestation. I argue that the Mexican case is one where path dependency happens in a partial rather than a generalised way. In other words, path dependency is conditional because the political actors reach collective agreements to change the rules of behaviour, i.e. institutions, only if this suits their interests, making some historical events path dependent and not others.

For example, while significant changes were made to electoral rules in the 1990s to make elections fairer and cleaner, term limits and other outdated formal frameworks remain unchanged. As a result of the changes, opposition parties have grown stronger, causing the PRI to lose its absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies and finally its 70-year-long presidential rule. However, pluralism in Congress – i.e. minority government – is now difficult to manage, and informal and hierarchical agreements are the preferred tool for elites to negotiate the decision-making procedures. This argument will become clearer at the end of the empirical case study presented in Part II of the thesis.

Factionalism is another very important concept for this research. It will be seen that the three parties in Mexico have become internally divided and smaller groups (called factions, and whose leaderships operate through vertical, top-down mechanisms) seek the achievement of particular interests, or the manifestation of dissent has appeared and become embedded (Boucek, 2009). This poses difficulties for the parties' agenda-setting in Congress and raises the need for further informal rules to emerge in order to accommodate multiple agendas and interests in decision-making.

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<sup>8</sup> This has happened as per decision of the political elite, but responding to historical and contextual requirements set by the evolution of Mexico's democracy, which is why I approach the matter from the historical institutionalist point of view, rather than adopting an Elite Theory approach.

This work also aims at contributing to the existing literature on legislative and party theory. By understanding the dynamics leading the procedures of the Chamber of Deputies, I suggest that theoretical concepts regarding the purpose of committees (like those discussed by Kaeding, 2004) and other organisational issues such as party cohesion and discipline (such as in Krehbiel, 2000; Morgenstern, 2004; Stratmann & Baur, 2002) are not entirely suitable for addressing the Mexican context. New applications or conceptualisations are therefore proposed, stressing the role that loyalties to factional leaders or party figures who can facilitate further political posts play in party politics (Langston & Aparicio, 2009).

## **2b Preliminary assumptions**

A very general first statement towards solving the puzzle of this work is that it is obvious, and to some extent logical, to assume that legislative behaviour and the factors that drive it have their origin in party politics. Therefore, to answer its main question, my research must necessarily take a first step in understanding the logic and nature of parties in Mexico, which are powerful, hierarchical and very much interest-based as well as ideological. As suggested above, it is also important to look into power networks within them – greatly associated with factionalism – and the significance of guaranteeing decision-making posts for their survival.

I argue that parties are organisations whose performance and success in being elected to office have varied greatly throughout their historical cycles. This corresponds to Mexico's political history during the 20th century, where the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) monopolised government offices for decades. Opposition parties did not truly emerge until the 1970s and they did not place strong electoral pressure on the PRI until the 1990s. Consequently, concentration or loss of power of the PRI has changed the outreach of the Democratic Revolution Party's (PRD) and the National Action Party's (PAN) own electoral power over time. In turn, this has affected these parties' influence over institutions and also the operation of internal power networks.

In addition, over time, the country's political cycles have created geographical and sectoral strongholds for each of the actors where, very roughly speaking, the North of

the country, business and Catholic elites vote for the PAN; the West of the territory and the intellectual, liberal sectors of society vote for the PRD; and the South and the unions vote for the PRI (Reveles Vázquez, 2005b).

These geographical and sectoral strongholds have a twofold effect on the parties: on the one hand, they have been key for the achievement and maintenance of electoral victories, especially at initial stages of the opposition forces' participation in local elections. On the other hand, they have been catalysts of internal battles for power and distribution of offices between party members. This is also associated with the nature of the parties' formation and historical evolution, which has led to a rather dispersed leadership structure affecting decision-making and accountability in political institutions (for instance, see Becerra Chávez, 2005; Borjas Benavente, 2003; Hernández Vicencio, 2009; Mirón Lince, 2005; Reveles Vázquez, 2003a).

Moreover, the long-term dominance of the PRI over the country's life created an entrenched political culture where clientelism, loyalties and centralisation of executive decision-making in the ruling party have been the norm. Because modern political institutions were created and shaped by the PRI, the aforementioned political culture inevitably prevails. As a matter of fact, both the PAN and the PRD have been unable to escape the adoption of clientelistic practices themselves.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the most significant change that has occurred has been the increased decentralisation of party politics in favour of strong regional or sectoral forces (Díaz Rebolledo, 2005).

The Mexican case, therefore, is one where institutions have been shaped by the rules and policies of one party and the opposition has been infected by the same disease. Thus, it is not surprising that the interaction of parties within the political system is oriented towards effectively distributing the greater amount of power among the three most influential actors. It is interesting to observe that the institution of term limits has remained stable throughout the last decade, which might suggest that all three parties have allowed it to reach a state of equilibrium because it benefits their internal distribution of power.

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<sup>9</sup> It would probably be fair to say that the PAN and the PRD have not been too reluctant to adopt these 'ancient' practices and attitudes, as they provide an advantage with regards to legal protection and access to public funds. The funds are especially useful for funding media coverage during elections.

Consequently, over time, parties have shaped the rules of the system to ensure better opportunities enable them to remain key actors in the decision-making process, especially since the emergence of divided government in 1997 (Wuhs, 2008). This has involved both electoral rules and also internal procedures in institutions where organic laws are rather weak.

As in any presidential system, the only governing body which hosts all the existing political forces<sup>10</sup> in Mexico is the Chamber of Deputies, the Lower Chamber of the legislative power. In recent years, it has acquired much more power than the Executive and it gives all the parties represented in it the opportunity to influence public policies, along with ‘visibility’ among the electorate. However, its operational rules are outdated, leaving open doors for the parties to establish temporary procedural arrangements to deal with all matters from committee appointments to the revision and approval of bills.

### **2c Empirical considerations: party power and the Chamber**

Having portrayed the nature and logic of the parties’ power, the next step of this research is to observe how their dynamics affect the Chamber of Deputies in particular. As suggested in the previous section, the interaction of the PRI, the PAN and the PRD in the Chamber has reshaped the institutional design.

It is possible to identify three main ways in which they shape the institutional design of the Chamber: through the extrapolation of internal divisions in the parties to the Chamber’s organisation and operation; by exerting a tight control on candidate selection processes as a consequence of the manipulation of political careers; and the insertion and maintenance of a hierarchical decision-making process within the Chamber.

The first issue refers to the fact that important figures within the parties exert pressure to control the access to power. In practical terms, this means that governors, regional party leaders and members of the National Executive Committees will demand that

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<sup>10</sup> For a list of the parties represented in the 60th Congress and the number of seats they held, see Chapter 4.

the party leader in the Chamber places their protégées in certain committees or in the Directive Board (Langston & Aparicio, 2008; Díaz Rebolledo, 2005).

Moreover, the point will be made that the control of candidacies, along with opaque and hierarchical decision-making practices within the Chamber, are possible as a consequence of two factors. The first and most significant element for the entire political system is the existence of term limits, also referred to as constitutional prohibition of re-election. The second factor, and more inherent to the Chamber itself, is the predominance of informal rules which fill the gaps that the formal rules have left due to the lack of reforms to adapt the institution to a context of pluralism. Most provisions are adequate for a one-party majority but definitely not for a situation of divided government and large minorities (Mora-Donatto, 2006).

As suggested, the constitutional prohibition of re-election has important consequences for the entire political system (Carey, 1996). One of the most important issues is that it complicates the possibilities for politicians to build their own career with the support of their electorate, as is the case for members of Congress in the United States, for example. Instead, access to positions is generally possible only by having the right connections with someone in a party who has the authority or legitimacy to secure candidates' participation in an election. Therefore, the overall effect of term limits is counter-intuitive, because it strengthens parties' control over politicians rather than weakening it.

Once in office, congressmen and women, both at the federal and local levels, governors, mayors, councillors and bureaucrats must foster a good relationship with party figures if they want to remain in politics. After all, they are the ones in control of the movement of people between posts. This 'good relationship' most likely implies that deputies are expected to facilitate agenda-setting and the achievement of specific interests. The easiest way to do so is by taking part in relevant committees or in the Directive Board, which sets the legislative agenda for each plenary session, among other procedural tasks (Congreso, 1999).

It should be rather clear by now that the combination of increased party power and weak institutions such as the Chamber of Deputies gives way to the control of

political careers. In turn, this is a key factor for explaining appointments, as mentioned earlier in this introduction, as a manifestation of legislative behaviour and is therefore subject to further rigorous analysis in this thesis.

### **3 Case study: 60th Congress of the Chamber of Deputies**

The creation of legislative procedural rules, both formal and informal, which make the environment favourable for the parties' agenda-setting, along with the parties' control of political careers through candidate selection and appointments within the Chamber, explain how the institutional design and operation of the institution has been affected by party dynamics.

This interaction between parties and the Chamber, as stated earlier, is the main focus of this research. Thus, in order to test the statement made in the previous paragraph, the 60th Congress (2006-2009) is approached as a case study in two different yet complementary ways.

#### **3a The qualitative analysis**

The first section consists of a thorough empirical description of the Chamber, explaining organisational features and decision-making structures. It discusses the duties of each one of the governing bodies according to the legal frameworks but also shows how agreements, namely informal guidelines negotiated by the parties at the start of each congress, are in reality the ruling provisions.

It will be seen that opportunities for participation in decision-making are rather limited for rank-and-file members of Congress (Monreal, interview, 2009). Party leaders and committee presidents have the highest chances of setting rules and guidelines. Many of the most important negotiations and bill approvals take place behind closed doors, which will be exemplified and documented in Chapter 4.

The power of the leaders of the PAN, the PRI and the PRD in the 60th Congress was such that they increased the number of seats in the Budget and Finance Committees to secure at least two secretariats for each party (Caballero & Dávila, 2006). This undoubtedly had repercussions on the design of the Chamber for that three-year

period and also for crucial legislative approvals such as the Federal Budget and the Fiscal Reform.

Parallel to the analysis on how the Chamber works, a contextualisation of the legislature within the broader national political context is necessary. This is because the point has been made that party politics outside of Congress are determinants for what happens inside the legislative institutions, which is particularly true for the selected case study for this research, as it was elected alongside one of the most controversial presidential elections in the country's history. The result of the electoral process was a highly polarised society and, most importantly, a declared battle between the PAN and the PRD for power at every single opportunity that arose across federal and local governments (see for instance Caballero & Dávila, 2006; Reforma/Staff, 2006a, 2006b).

Therefore, long and tedious negotiations between party leaders were necessary to avoid gridlocks between 2006 and 2009 (Caballero & Dávila, 2006). That is, stability was achieved through elitist processes and, ironically, the existing partidocracy proved helpful for managing a critical situation which could have made polarisation and conflict even more acute.

Furthermore, in observing a general layout of the parties' organisations within the Chamber, it is possible, at least for the period in this study, to identify how political rationale could have been applied during the allocation of leadership offices. Their structure also suggests the way in which decision-making and monitoring of behaviour was carried out, which in turn sheds light on evaluation mechanisms for deciding on future political careers.

Due to the coexistence of formal and informal rules to guide legislative procedures in the Chamber, a thorough empirical description should draw from both official documents and first-hand insights. Therefore, as mentioned in the methodology section, this research relies heavily on semi-structured interviews with members of the 60th and 61st Congresses, parliamentary staff and advisors, as well as specialists on Mexican legislative topics. With such substantial information, a deep understanding of the rationale behind appointments, agreements and negotiations is achieved.

### **3b The quantitative study**

The second approach towards how it is that parties' power affects legislative behaviour and in turn has an impact on the the institutional design of the Chamber is of a quantitative nature. Using information retrieved from Impacto Legislativo's website, I constructed a database of the members of the PAN, the PRD and the PRI – a total of 440 individuals – in the 60th Congress. I used relevant background information of the deputies to find the best predictors for appointments to committee presidencies, the Directive Board and to 'priority' committees. An additional goal was to predict the factors which make a politician more likely to be appointed to a proportional representation (PR) seat.

The variables used in the statistical analysis were defined in relation to the statements made in the empirical description about party strategies to control careers. Hence, for each one of the observations an entry was made regarding records of previous political careers, either in elected offices or bureaucracies. Active involvement across party offices or within those sectors associated to the party's strongholds was also considered. Furthermore, education level, age and gender were recorded to be used as control variables.

First of all, basic summary statistics derived from the dataset showed that the vast majority of the Chamber's population had not been elected to public offices prior to the 60th Congress. Although the proportion of deputies who had been bureaucrats was not extremely high, it did suggest a slightly more significant proportion than the number of deputies who had been in elected office before.

In terms of age, gender and education levels, the dataset complemented the qualitative description of the Chamber. It portrayed the 60th Congress as unsurprisingly predominantly male, with an average age of 46, 49 and 52 years for the PAN, the PRD and the PRI respectively. Furthermore, it can be observed that more than half of the members of the Chamber have a university degree.

As was suggested, the rationale behind the collection of background information was to find predictors for appointments within the Chamber. These cannot be obtained



from just looking at the proportion of deputies with previous political careers. Only rigorous statistical analysis would provide reliable and valid results.

Therefore, the interest in appointments was translated into dependent and independent variables, based on the data collected for the population. Four dependent variables were identified: committee presidency; priority committee seat; senior position in priority committee; and senior position in Directive Board.

Although the arguments presented so far have discussed allocation of committee seats in general, only presidencies could be predicted with significant results; hence the specificity of the dependent variable ‘committee presidency’. Perhaps a clarification of ‘priority committees’ is also pertinent; it refers to those members of the Congress who had a seat in one of the eight committees dealing with delicate topics of national interest.<sup>11</sup> Predictions for both rank-and-file seats and senior positions in these committees were statistically significant.

The 13 independent variables consisted of: previous experience as a federal deputy, as a senator, as both of these officers, as a local deputy, as a governor, as a mayor, as a councillor, as both mayor and councillor, as a federal bureaucrat, as a bureaucrat at the state level, as a public servant in a municipality, active involvement in the party and affiliation to a sector associated to the party of representation. All these represent the various possibilities for the parties to intervene in a deputy’s political career.

In addition, three variables were added as controls: level of education, gender and age. Two models were run for each independent variable, the difference being an additional control for party of representation in one of them. That is, the second model for each case included six control variables: level of education, gender, age, PRI, PAN and PRD.

A detailed discussion of the analysis and its results can be found in Chapter 5. For the moment it is worth saying that committee presidencies, along with appointments to

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<sup>11</sup> Committees of Agriculture, Energy, the Interior, Finance, Budget, Constitutional Amendments, Oversight and Parliamentary Practices.

priority committees and to the Directive Board, are indeed more likely for those individuals who have been politically active in the past.

However, different career paths are an asset for each of the positions set as dependent variables. That is, past experience as a federal deputy can predict an allocation of a committee presidency. In turn, seats in priority committees are more likely to be obtained by someone who has been a public servant at the federal level, at both rank-and-file and senior positions. The best predictors for the Directive Board were careers at the municipal level, where those who had been mayors or councillors were at an advantage to be appointed to one of the few positions in the governing board of the Chamber.

Furthermore, since the overall purpose of this research is to understand how parties' power impacts on the Chamber through the control of political careers, it is also interesting to portray a profile of those who were elected to a proportional representation (PR) seat. It would be logical to assume that they would be long-term career politicians working much more for the party's interest than for the electorate. As a result, the quantitative approach of this research includes a logistic regression for 'PR seat' as a dependent variable, with the same independent and control variables as the previous analyses. The results show that those who had been a federal deputy, a senator or both, as well as those who had been federal bureaucrats, were more likely to be placed on the PR list. In contrast, whoever had been a local deputy was more likely to be nominated as a single-member district (SMD) candidate.<sup>12</sup>

### **3c Expected overall results of the case study**

Altogether, the qualitative and quantitative approaches (Chapters 4 and 5) briefly overviewed prove that being loyal or at least somewhat linked to the party and its leadership figures pays off for being considered for the key roles for decision-making. The specific way in which these dynamics affect the Chamber will be discussed in more detail throughout the following chapters.

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<sup>12</sup> Single-member district candidates are those elected by the public on open lists.

Overall, this research identifies the particularities of the Mexican political system that have developed from the country's contemporary evolution and uses these specificities as explanatory factors for the peculiar design and operation of the Chamber of Deputies.

It is worth saying that, in a broader picture, the reality portrayed in this work reflects the lack of political accountability in Mexico, defined as 'the responsiveness of governmental policies to the preferences of the electorate' (Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2006, p. 6). This type of accountability, and more precisely its vertical manifestation,<sup>13</sup> is not easily achieved due to the imperfect nature of the relationship of representation and the lack of the necessary conditions for controlling agencies to function adequately (Ibid).

This reflection supports the academic literature which stresses the importance of achieving representative institutions to enhance popular support for democracy. For instance, Hagopian (2005) states that 'where institutions of political representation are vibrant, and where parties are responsive and accountable to the preferences of citizens that can associate in the terrain of civil and political society, democracy is somewhat inoculated from setbacks' (Ibid, p. 321).

Despite the discontent of the Mexican electorate with their parties, informal rules and negotiation of power do take place within formal processes.

#### **4 Thesis structure**

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first one, encompassing Chapters 1 and 2, discusses general facts about Mexico's politics and institutions, justifying the relevance of the research topic in terms of empirical puzzles and the theoretical contributions that it could make.

More specifically, Chapter 1 provides the reader with a background on the Mexican political system, paying special attention to its legislative power. In addition to

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<sup>13</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell differentiates between vertical accountability, which consists of external checks, and horizontal accountability, referring to the operation of internal controls in the system (O'Donnell, cited in Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2006, p. 9).

familiarising the reader with the case study, it serves the purpose of giving a convincing explanation of why it is of particular interest. It also identifies the empirical and contextual queries to be addressed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Chapter 2 lays out the theoretical framework guiding the arguments presented herein. It discusses the suitability of historical institutionalism for this inductive case study and further explains the argument of conditional path dependency outlined in this research. In addition, it presents the research question, hypothesis and objectives, and shows how my work contributes to the broader literature on party behaviour, legislative organisation and the empirical effects of term limits.

In turn, Part II contains the two empirical chapters of this thesis, each one offering a thorough insight into one piece of the puzzle. They are preceded by a contextualisation of the origins of party behaviour, laid out in Chapter 3, where the focus is the emergence, factional nature, and hierarchical dynamics of the parties. Chapter 4 offers a rich description of the institutional design and operation of the Chamber, taking as an example the 60th Congress (2006-2009), as described by official documents but also through real-life experiences of congressmen and women, parliamentary staff and specialists on legislative matters in Mexico. Finally, Chapter 5 goes deeper into the issue of political careers and legislative offices by running logistic regressions to find predictors for committee presidencies, appointments to priority committees, the Directive Board and nominations for PR seats prior to the election of 2 July 2006.

A final conclusion revisits the research goals set out at the beginning of this work, assessing – through a summary of the empirical and theoretical arguments made in all five chapters – the level of success in answering the research question and contributing to the scholarly literature as originally planned. A brief mention of future research interests is also included.

**PART I. CONTEXTUALISATION AND THEORETICAL  
CONSIDERATIONS**

## **Chapter 1. The Mexican case: term limits, factionalism and electoral rules**

Mexico has some similarities with other non-consolidated democracies such as those in the Latin American region. In these places, informal rules are often stronger than legal frameworks and therefore leave room for clientelistic practices. Furthermore, leaders could accumulate more power than they are constitutionally supposed to have, because of a lack of effective checks and balances. Therefore, it is expected that some institutions might not perform efficiently or in accordance with accountable and transparent practices. Consequently, functions such as representation and participation might be underachieved.

Despite the Mexican constitutional design being very different from elsewhere in the region, it has a few similarities with other countries. Its evolution over time has mainly responded to pragmatic agreements between the members of the elite, making it even more *sui generis*. In addition, Mexico differs from most Latin American countries in that it has not experienced a military dictatorship and elections have almost always taken place since its independence. However, elections were dominated by a single party for many years, which meant that the role of Congress was not to represent the electorate's interest, but to 'rubber-stamp' the president's policies instead. Mexico's authoritarian past is thus not military but political.

These specific traits of the country's political system generate very interesting empirical puzzles regarding legislative dynamics and the extent of the power of the political parties. The most important query is related to the fact that, while their objective should be to increase representation and reduce parties' control over political positions, term limits have in fact empowered parties across all levels of government. Therefore, this chapter discusses why Mexico is a unique case of institutional design by looking into its presidential, electoral and party systems, and, most importantly, its legislative power.

This chapter provides a detailed overview of how scholars have studied the political actors and factors that have shaped the Mexican system into a partidocracy, where

parties tightly control political careers and institutional processes. In addition, the literature review and the identification of areas of contribution to the field offer the reader a useful background on the topic. Thus, by the end of this chapter it should be clear why Mexico has failed to clean institutions from old practices, even since the PRI lost full control of the country in 1997.

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, this chapter sheds light on the elements and dynamics that the academic literature has yet to address in order to complete the picture of power networks in the Mexican system. These will then be addressed in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

In the first section, I will briefly describe and assess the nature of Mexico's presidential regime, along with its party and electoral systems. The second section will be devoted to providing the reader with a general background on the country's legislative power, which will be done through an overview of the academic literature produced in the last few decades on the subject, highlighting the key issues of the institution's evolution which have shaped it to become what it is today. Finally, the third section highlights the puzzles to be addressed in the empirical chapters.

### **1.1 The Mexican political system**

Mexico adopted a presidential system after becoming independent from Spain in the 19th century, as did all the other countries throughout the Latin American region. Inspired by the American example, the writers of the first Mexican Constitution and the ones that followed foresaw a separation of powers, where the Executive would be checked and balanced by the legislature and the rule of law would be guaranteed by the judiciary. Nonetheless, as numerous scholars have argued (Hagopian, 2005; Linz & Stepan, 1996; O'Donnell, 1998; Zakaria, 1997), the Latin American version of presidentialism does not work as smoothly as the American model does: presidents have very strong powers and in most cases the Congress is institutionally unable to fully play its role of overseeing the Chief of the Executive. Furthermore, much has been said about the faulty law-enforcement mechanisms operating across the region.

However, the political complications of poor checks and balances, which result in a lack of transparency and low accountability (both vertical and horizontal),<sup>14</sup> do not necessarily stem from constitutional design *per se*. Rather, there are additional underlying causes such as the combination of informal rules, old political practices across the executive, the legislative and judiciary and a political culture which does not promote civil participation. Ultimately, this derives from a non-consolidated democracy, allowing faulty inter-branch relationships and electoral systems that favour elites instead of the electorate.

### **1.1.1 The country's democratisation process**

Guerrero (2004) recognises democracy as a system in which there are specific forms of accessing power and others for making use of it. The use of political power must guarantee the freedom of rights and also be shared in such a way that it leads to an adequate balance among the institutions holding the power. This, in turn, means that political actors must act responsibly, as they will be held accountable through electoral mechanisms by the citizens.

There are three conditions which favour the responsible use of power in a democratic regime: the existence of checks and balance mechanisms between actors and institutions; the capacity to guarantee public responsibility; and the possibility for the media to be independent in order for them to oversee political actors and denounce any form of corruption (Ibid, pp. 38-39, my translation).

The fact that the country was ruled by a single party for just over 70 years is a sufficient condition to assume that checks and balances were absent for decades. Furthermore, Congress was dominated by the presidency, which in turn was closely intertwined with party life and politics. The Executive was, for a long time, an overwhelmingly dominant body across the country. The PRI had very little interest in

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<sup>14</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell identifies two types of accountability: vertical (consisting of external checks) and horizontal (which is the operation of internal controls in the system) (O'Donnell, cited in Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2006, p. 9).



becoming internally democratic and the president had to maintain the association of numerous sectors while obviously keeping them happy. Each president had his own style, but most of them were authoritarian and imposed their politics and views within the party and on other governmental institutions.

Forms for accessing power and making use of it were all but specified; they were mainly dictated by informal rules as per the elite's interests. Hence, a general balance of the country's political performance would show that, at least during the PRI's reign, Mexico failed to comply with most of the conditions necessary for democracy to become embedded.

Magaloni (2005, pp. 121-122) discusses the logics and components of democratisation and she states that:

the democratization dynamics of one-party-dominant systems is different from other regime transitions. The goal of the opposition is to defeat the party associated with the authoritarian past through the ballot box. Defeating the ruling party is extremely hard. The electoral arena is biased for two reasons. First, there are significant incumbency advantages, of which the most important is the ruling party's unilateral control of the state apparatus and the vast sources of patronage it can employ to deter voters from embracing the opposition camp. Second, the ruling party controls both the legislatures and opposition or, if need be, manipulate the voter registration, election procedures and even the outcome of the elections.

It is difficult to draw the line or point in time and space to the democratic establishment in Mexico because it was not a matter of an individual dictator stepping down or the military going back to the barracks, as was the case elsewhere in Latin America. As mentioned in the introduction, Mexico's political overhaul was a case of authoritarianism being eliminated through the ballot. 'As elections become more competitive, the major political players tend to renegotiate the existing rules of the game so as to reflect the new balance of forces. A distinctive trait of this type of

transition is that democratization might take place even without the alternation of power in office' (Magaloni, 2005, p. 123).

The birth of democracy in Mexico can be traced to the point when elections became competitive and when the opposition accepted electoral institutions as legitimate. This was achieved through the approval of electoral reforms, which gradually allowed for increased political competition. Table 1.1 shows the main reforms at the federal level.

The reforms approved in 1989 paved the way for fairer elections, as the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE, its Spanish abbreviation) was created to oversee them. Salinas negotiated better elections with the opposition – mainly the PAN, as the PRD voted against the reform in the end – in exchange for support for the approval of NAFTA-related policies. This electoral reform also had the purpose of showing Canada and the United States that Mexico was democratic and reliable.

Further electoral reforms approved in 1996, along with institutional compromises at the elite level, were crucial for democratisation. Once the IFE was made fully independent from the PRI-controlled Executive, only a constitutional reform could reverse it and the PRI no longer had the absolute majority to pass it. Why the PRI allowed this democratisation pre-condition can be answered as an 'endogenous change [...It] ultimately depended on strategic choices made by the incumbent in response to its anticipation of electoral fortunes, and the expected reaction by opposition forces to the choice of retaining unilateral control of the elections, versus tying its hands not to commit fraud by delegating' (Magaloni, 2005, p. 145).

However, having free and fair electoral processes is not a guarantee for democratic consolidation or its endurance (Huber et al., 1997). In order for this to happen, democracy 'must be self-enforcing, meaning that all relevant political players must have an interest in abiding by the election results, even if they lose' (Magaloni, 2005, p. 146).

<b>Table 1.1 Electoral Reforms in Mexico</b>			
<b>1977</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2007</b>
<p>Opened legal possibilities for opposition movements to constitute as political parties and to compete in elections</p> <p>Introduced proportional representation seats in the Chamber of Deputies (which increased from 100 to 200 in 1987)</p>	<p>Creation of the IFE to 'guarantee' clean and fair elections</p>	<p>Promoted more participatory spaces and allowed the opposition to win legislative seats and other important federal and local offices</p> <p>Autonomy of the IFE</p> <p>Increased the number of seats in the Senate through proportional representation</p>	<p>Restrictions to campaign funding and the purchase of spots on the media</p>

Source: Author's creation  
 Acronyms correspond to: Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE)

Middlebrook (2004) also identifies as a key element for the democratisation agenda the de-concentration of authority and the alteration of the balance of political power in public institutions. He identifies several institutional obstacles for an accurate balance of power:

The most important of these is the constitutional prohibition (in effect since 1933) against the consecutive re-election of federal deputies and senators to positions in the same Chamber. There is considerable agreement among political analysts that the no re-election rule hinders the development of a more autonomous and influential legislative branch by limiting legislators' accountability to their constituents and by preventing them from accumulating experience or acquiring substantive expertise in specialized areas. Nevertheless, despite some support for a constitutional reform that would permit consecutive re-election (with term limits) to positions other than the presidency, none of Mexico's major parties made this issue a high priority for legislative action during the first half of the Fox administration (Ibid, pp. 15-26).

Public officials in Mexico must learn to establish the boundaries between public and private spheres. This is done by ensuring horizontal accountability and access to information. Most importantly, there should be an effort to end traditions of corruption and impunity and to strengthen the effective exercise of citizenship. Furthermore, it is very important to build strong party-civil society linkages, which are crucial for triggering democratic changes (mainly electoral ones) (Ibid).

Overall, the Mexican political evolution, especially during the ‘third wave of democratization’ (Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005) of the 1990s, has led the country to cleaner and fairer electoral processes, a consolidated party system<sup>15</sup> and a more active participation of Congress *vis-à-vis* the Executive. In fact, the electoral system is ‘one of the mechanisms of integrative control of the Mexican political system’ (Nohlen, 1993, p. 143, my translation).

However, I should stress the fact that the general balance of Mexico’s progress towards a much more stable and democratic regime is still rather negative. The political class has yet to improve its attitudes to draw the boundaries between private and public matters, and also to promote accountability.

Whitehead (2002) agrees with the fact that a regime change in the country would necessarily entail deep transformations:

In the Mexican case, the governmental institutions have not just been established for a long period of time and are thus well organised, but they are also deeply penetrated by the PRI’s authoritarian system of government. Therefore, an important change in the legitimation principles could simply not be contained within the neutral state institutions. It would entail a wide restructuring of those institutions to recover their initial functions or, at least,

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<sup>15</sup> Among other scholars, Wallis (2003) argues that the current Mexican party system is institutionalised, and justifies his statement based on the existence of the following factors: ‘domination of elections at all levels by the three main parties; an approximate left–centre–right ideological spectrum across the parties in that block; evidence of a willingness to negotiate electoral and legislative alliances; the generally savvy choices of the Mexican electorate; and the carefully constructed rules of the game, culminating in the 1996 reform, which creates conditions for serious competition – *within parameters*’ (Ibid, p. 33).

to reshape their current function modes in a durable manner (Ibid, pp. 126, my translation).

### **1.1.2 Political actors and rules**

Mexico was once known for having one of the most powerful executives in the Latin American region. Weldon (1997, p. 227) explains that there are four necessary conditions behind this situation: '1) a presidential system based in the constitution; 2) unified government, where the ruling party controls the presidency and both houses of congress; 3) discipline within the ruling party; and 4) a president who is the acknowledged leader of the ruling party.' He also states that if any of those four conditions change, then the *status quo* of '*presidencialismo*' (Mexican presidentialism) can become unstable and fall apart. Especially in the case that any of the three latter conditions 'no longer hold true, then the president of Mexico will possess only constitutional powers, and he will lose the meta-constitutional powers for which Mexican executives have been notorious' (Ibid, pp. 227-228).

Some of these conditions began to weaken during Salinas' presidency, mainly because he was not seen by all the sectors within the PRI as their true and strong leader. However, Zedillo's term saw the strongest period of decay of the Mexican '*presidencialismo*': in 1997 the PRI lost the majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies, which made Congress much more powerful. In turn, this brought a new relationship between the Executive and the legislature and with it, a constraint on the 'meta-constitutional' powers of the president and the end of Congress' role as a mere 'rubber-stamping' agency for the Executive's bills.

During Zedillo's presidency, the Executive began to appear much more vulnerable due to insufficient votes in the Chamber for approving constitutional reforms and the lack of formal presidential powers for performing legislative tasks; there were also visible cleavages, and even polarisation, within the PRI. Perhaps a clear example of how Zedillo's term was troubled due to difficult policy-making was the Tequila Crisis, a devaluation of the Mexican Peso often attributed to a political mishandling of the economic reforms approved in December 1994. In addition, the ministerial cabinet under Zedillo became unstable, evidencing a shift of the president from being 'a great

giving-referee' to having to pragmatically negotiate to build coalitions so as to escape from governmental deadlocks (Guerrero, 2004).

The prevalence of clientelistic practices has promoted the emergence of a political context in which local bosses work for themselves and interfere in the candidate selection process, as well as in certain procedures such as budget allocation:

New actors and groups, now with an increased capacity to make use of resources in different regions and spaces facing a disappearing state, not only continue ignoring formal rules as the mechanisms through which relations in public life ought to be guided, but are also the new heads of fragmented clientelism and those who impose the conditions under which the new informal rules must be followed (Ibid, , pp. 171, my translation).

Although informal rules have been always been present (and important) in Mexican politics, they have become even more salient in the last two decades, even replacing formal frameworks across different levels of government in the country:

The state has not been re-defined, rather just weakened and retracted, so it cannot even be understood as an agent capable of forcing the compliance of new rules of the game: the rules which prevail are still the informal ones, but now without a central agent capable of establishing the spaces for negotiation and exchange. When losing the capability to impose rules on the actors, the uncontrolled informality does not help strengthen political stability or governance and, of course, it does not favour the conditions to design a limited and responsible exercise of political power either (Ibid, pp. 126, my translation).

It is a fact that political elites in Mexico are mostly worried about their individual benefit and the maintenance of clientelistic loyalties, thereby further reducing responsibility and vertical accountability. Given that citizen involvement is limited, politicians have no restrictions on launching their own careers very early in the electoral campaign process. They do not even care if by running for office they may

cause a division or a fracture in their party and maybe even governmental paralysis (Ibid).

A lengthy overview of political parties, their historical evolution and their power strategies is given in Chapter 3. Nonetheless, within the contextualisation of the Mexican system being provided here, it is worth pointing out a couple of issues.

First of all, the party system has evolved since the 1990s from a hegemonic one to a more competitive one. This new scenario has affected policy-making and negotiations within the legislative power and also among the ministries. Guerrero (Ibid) identified it as one of the main causes of cabinet instability during the late 1990s, as the ministers, especially those dealing with budgets and social policies, had to negotiate with different players when seeking support for the Executive's bills.

In addition, the system has engaged wider sectors of society, especially those operating at the regional level, but in order to win elections at the national level all parties have been forced to become 'catch-all' organisations, 'and those party leaders or party nominees who have been most eclectic in campaign message and style have proved to be the most successful' (Klesner, 2004, p. 136).

Klesner (Ibid, pp. 128-129) provides a much synthesised picture of the Mexican party system after 2000, when the PAN won the presidency:

A three-party system at the national level, the party system has functioned as a pair of two-party systems outside the greater Mexico City area. The PAN became the PRI's main competitor in the North and the Center-west because of the PAN's pre-market ideology (attractive to northerners) and its embrace of Catholic social philosophy (appealing to the Catholic Bajío). The PRD became the PRI's opponent in the south because of its greater emphasis on distributive justice and its economic nationalism, important in a region with endemic poverty and inequality and especially threatened by the forces of economic globalisation. Yet the dynamics of two-party systems create incentives for those parties to operate as catch-all parties.

The main differences between the parties, and which eventually lead to polarisation between and within them, do not lie within ideological or religious matters, but rather in the means that politicians choose to link themselves with economic and political flows (Martínez, 1997). That is, clear and extreme placements along the left-right scale respond to associations with the means of production. Again though, it should be said that all three major political forces are predominantly catch-all parties.

As suggested earlier, Mexico's political system was shaped throughout the very long reign of the PRI. Therefore, every single institution had stable, albeit informal, codes of practice, mechanisms for rewards and punishments, and resources to distribute among loyal individuals.

The same thing applies to the parties. Opposition forces were obliged to compete under the electoral system implemented by the PRI, at least during the first years of their existence. In fact, the PRD itself was created and largely formed by individuals who split from the PRI. It was not until the electoral reform of 1996 that a more just and transparent competition could take place. However, because political institutions are not entirely clear from old practices and that attitudes and behaviours have not been fully changed, it is obvious that there is still plenty of room for corruption and excessive use of power by the governing elites.

In addition, the Mexican electoral system has evolved to be one of the most restrictive ones in the world in terms of the limitations it imposes on campaigns, for example the use of media and the content of campaigns, and yet the parties have still managed to keep a tight control on electoral resources and processes. Despite the creation and gradual empowerment of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), which makes sure that elections are free, fair and transparent, parties have still secured access to substantial public resources, including funding, not only for elections, but also for their overall subsistence. It is precisely because of these privileges that the parties have been able to hold the party system together and tightly control it in all aspects.

Based on the aforementioned context of political irresponsibility and lack of horizontal and vertical accountability, it is impossible to ignore the fact that there are legal and informal constraints on democratic consolidation. This research argues that



such a situation is easily identified in the legislative power. Therefore, the next section outlines the main challenges to democracy which emerge from or involve Congress.

## **1.2 The Congress**

Mexico has a bicameral federal Congress, where the upper Chamber is constitutionally obliged to represent the states of the federation and the lower one dictates and approves legislation in representation of the citizens. Hence, the latter has greater salience and political importance for parties as organisations that represent the electorate's interest, and is perhaps more important for policy-making. This research therefore focuses solely on the Chamber of Deputies, the Lower Chamber.

The legislative body under consideration is composed of 500 members, 300 of whom are elected in single-member districts (SMD). Each district has one deputy elected by the majority principle and the remaining 200 legislators are elected in five multi-member districts through closed and blocked lists. Thus, with one vote, constituents choose a majority deputy and also contribute to the likelihood of a party list to fill in proportional representation (PR) seats. The PR seats are allocated according to the percentage of the votes obtained by the political parties and certainly favours the candidates at the top of the list (Nohlen, 1993).

To coordinate such a large number of representatives, the Mexican Lower Chamber, also known as the 'Legislative Palace of San Lázaro', has developed an increasingly hierarchical organisation. In addition, there are 44 ordinary committees in charge of scrutinising policy proposals and also a highly politicised internal environment.

Furthermore, the Chamber is strongly influenced by the electoral system, due to its size and the use of mixed electoral methods to allocate the seats. The most important effects are: the increasing number of parties represented and yet the inability of any to constitute a majority; the obscurity of principal-agent relations due to a multiplicity of active interests towards building political careers; the empowerment of parties as suppliers of clientelistic incentives for loyal members; and the constant reshaping of the Chamber's institutional design by party elites to better satisfy their needs. All these matters will be addressed in later chapters.

The complexity of the institution and its undeniable importance for Mexican democracy has led many scholars to carry out lengthy analyses to understand how it works and the role it plays in politics, among many other aspects. Very valuable information has been produced and a brief overview of it will help the reader to build some background knowledge of the Chamber, so as to better understand the assumptions made in this research. As a preamble to the following chapter, which places this work within the broader literature, it will also serve the purpose of locating the work within the academic literature on the Mexican Congress and thus identify the theoretical contributions that it should make.

A simple way of presenting the scholarly work is to follow Ugalde's (2000) classification into four main thematic groups according to the main topic they focus on explaining:

1. Historical issues;
2. Legal matters;
3. Economic/budgetary powers of the institution;
4. Behavioural consequences of non-re-election (related to low accountability).

However, for this work's purposes, I shall make an adjustment and I will group the literature into two broad categories, the classical school and the public choice approaches.

1) A classical school approach focuses on describing the institution *per se* and the legal framework developed throughout history. Ugalde's historical and economic aspects are included in this category and the topics analysed include separation of powers (both vertically and horizontally) and the consequent cooperation between the governmental institutions in charge of exercising those powers, where bicameralism is a further relevant topic. Special attention is drawn to the executive-legislative relationship and to the legislative constitutional powers such as the power of the purse. There is also an overarching concept of all the legal issues: governance, based on constitutional provisions.

A common foundation to all of the works within this approach is the understanding of democracy as a representative form of government which guarantees civil liberties that are grounded in a constitution.

2) A public choice approach analyses the behaviour of members of Congress triggered by different principals or factors. The most common explanation is that term limits and the partisan powers of the presidency, which was stronger before 1997, are determinant on how deputies and senators function. A considerable amount of work has been written about the changes of congressional behaviour as an institution after the presidential elections of 2000.

Furthermore, scholars discuss how the impossibility of building uninterrupted legislative careers leads to low vertical accountability. Especially in the PRI's case, the parties' influence on deputies' acts is paramount. Nonetheless, very little has been said regarding the other parties and on the relationship between the opposition's increasing access to governorships and the greater pressure this could bring to legislative approval of the budget.

The following pages give an overview of the literature belonging to both approaches in order to place this research within the adequate body of knowledge. This shall clarify the discourse I will use, and also pinpoint possible fields of contribution.

### **1.2.1 The classical school**

As a general starting point, the legal approach (the main element of the classical school) includes considerations on whether the Mexican presidential system has certain characteristics which make it resemble a parliamentary system (see for example Valdés Robledo, 2006). However, scholars such as Carpizo (2003) give proof against such claims. To begin with, Article 49 of the Constitution lays out the separation of powers and clarifies that no power can be concentrated in just one person, except in extreme situations.

The legislative powers of the president have led to a *sui generis* executive-legislative relationship, which affects policies and politics in Mexico. As a result, numerous

studies have sought to research the origins of such powers, and they have found that they are laid out by the Constitution in Articles 71, 72b and 74.

Article 71 gives the head of the Executive the power to initiate legislation. Before 1997, when the PRI had a majority in Congress, this meant that the Chamber of Deputies only rubber-stamped presidential initiatives and the majority of the approved bills were put forward by the president. If they were left to fade away without further scrutiny, it was because the Executive had lost interest in them (Carpizo, 2003). As numerical proof for this argument, Carpizo (Ibid, p. 84) gives examples on how ‘in 1935, 1937 and 1941 all the bills sent by the Executive were approved unanimously in the Chamber of Deputies. In 1943, 92 per cent of the bills were unanimously approved; in 1947, 74 per cent; in 1949, 77 per cent; in 1953, 59 per cent; in 1955, 62 per cent and in 1959, 95 per cent.’

Furthermore, Article 72b of the Constitution gives the president the power to veto a congressional decision, which suggests that undesired outcomes could be prevented from becoming law.<sup>16</sup> Article 89 of the Constitution establishes that laws are to be executed by the president, and thus the practical, and perhaps more important and complicated process of policy-making is concentrated in the Executive’s hands (Ibid).

According to Carpizo (Ibid), there are several situations regarding the Executive’s powers that could suggest that the President has opportunities to overstep constitutional boundaries to abuse power. However, the Mexican Constitution of 1917 includes elements such as the appeal for legal protection on the grounds of violation of rights and liberties (*juicio de amparo*). Furthermore, the judiciary has the right to punish the Executive if it overuses its power. For instance, the president could be sent to court for not publishing an approved bill in the official diary.

Despite the legal constraints, in practice, and as has been previously mentioned, informal rules guiding the decision-making process allowed the president to keep Congress subordinated. Before divided government emerged in 1997, the main reasons for this were (Ibid, pp. 115-116, my translation):

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<sup>16</sup> In Mexico, a bill only becomes law if it is published in the official diary (*Diario Oficial de la Federación*) by the President.

1. The majority of the deputies belonged to the PRI party led by the president. Through party discipline, all the president's bills were approved;
2. If they rebelled, they were most likely ending their political career, since the president is the greatest provider of the main offices and posts in public administration, in the state-company sector, within popular elected offices and in the judicial power;
3. As gratitude, since they knew they owed their seat to the president;
4. In addition to the salary, there are other economic benefits which depend on the head of political control; and
5. Acceptance that the legislative power followed the instructions of the Executive, which was the most comfortable attitude and the one requiring the least effort...
6. [Another reason is that] deputies cannot pursue legislative careers on their own because they cannot be re-elected for the immediate period.'

It should be said, however, that after 1997, when the PRI lost its majority in the Chamber, and even more after the PAN won the presidency in 2000, many of the aforementioned reasons were no longer valid. Congress, and the Lower Chamber specifically, have recovered much of their constitutional power for decision-making, but the main claims supporting this change in the patterns of the executive-legislative relationship are better explained by the public choice approach and therefore will not be addressed at this moment.

Within the classic, legal view, constitutional powers granted to Congress in order to control the Executive's abuse of power are also recognised. Carpizo lists the following: 'a) the power of the purse, b) the ratification of specific acts, c) political responsibility trial, d) extraordinary sessions and e) implicit faculties' (Ibid, pp. 215, my translation). The most important of them is, by far, the financial power or power of the purse.

Article 74 of the Constitution gives the Executive the exclusive right to present a proposal for public income, which is scrutinised and discussed in both Chambers and thus it could be assumed that the Executive must present a reasonable or moderate proposal in order for it to be easily approved.

Perhaps the legislative Chamber with the greatest economic power to oversee the Executive is the Chamber of Deputies, since budget approval, namely the expenses to be made by the federal government each fiscal year, is not discussed by the Senate. This has given way to a continuous quest for the fulfilment of particular political interests in the form of pressure towards deputies and the establishment of channels of influence of important political figures. Since the state of public finances is also solely scrutinised by the deputies, corruption denouncement and the guarantee of transparency are the responsibility of the Lower Chamber.

Overall, the legal view then focuses on analysing the reasons why the constitutional provisions are not followed in practice, even though the legal instruments are there. As has already been said, after divided government emerged in 1997 and even more after the victory of the PAN's Vicente Fox in 2000, numerous political changes have taken place. These changes are also important for the classic approach to Mexican government; Carpizo (Ibid, pp. 263, my translation) concludes the latest edition of his book on the country's presidentialism with the following statements:

...c) Political change at the presidential level and the composition of the federal Congress – in which no party has an absolute majority in any Chamber – opens the possibility, although it is not guaranteed, that the political power process be carried out through constitutional channels.

d) It is not convenient for anyone to have a weak federal executive power that cannot fulfil its legal responsibilities. A weak federal executive would be disastrous for the country. What is desirable is the disappearance of the lingering elements and scars of presidentialism, in order for a true presidential system to operate with the limitations, delimitations and equilibriums established by our Constitution.

e) There are favourable political and social conditions in order to move from a system of concentrated power to one of balanced power...

In addition to the constitutional attributes of both powers, the legal approach raises the importance that bicameralism has regarding executive-legislative relations. Covián (2004) argues that bicameralism favours presidential power and undermines popular representation. This is especially true when we consider that a presidential veto has to

be blocked by two Chambers instead of just one. Furthermore, a bill must be approved by two Chambers before it can be sent back to the Executive for its publication and implementation, which also makes the legislative process slower and subject to political blockages in any of the two Chambers.

It should also be mentioned that the existence of governability, which is directly related to constitutional provisions, is key for an adequate balance of power and the emergence of an active citizenship (Valadés, 2005). This also means that adequate checks and balances must not only guarantee a horizontal division and cooperation of powers, but also the control of alternative sources of power in order to ensure democracy, which is important in order to avoid the substitution of the public interest's representatives by private interests or forces (Carbonell, 2006).

Therefore, Carbonell (Ibid, p. 68) argues that 'the viability of constitutional democracy, especially regarding the goals which support it and make it sensible, depends on the fact that such substitution does not happen and that the powers – public and private – are able to find the legal and institutional limits that will allow liberties to breathe.'

Along similar lines, and based on the fact that the separation of powers in a democracy implies the creation of mechanisms for checks and balances, Mora-Donatto (2006) analyses the concept of parliamentary control and concludes that it is carried out in many ways and by all actors. That is, not only do minorities or opposition groups control the Executive in order to point out unaccomplished tasks or mistakes, but they are also vigilant of the majorities.

In the concrete case of the Mexican political system, both Chambers exert parliamentary control, but they do so in different ways. According to Mora-Donatto (Ibid), the basic mechanism used is the legislative process, because the minorities take part in the preparation and approval process of bills and also because it is a public event. These two features of the legislative process guarantee that Congress fulfils its main task and *raison d'être*: the representation of society's interests. Other parliamentary activities which serve as a control of the Executive are the investigation

committees, although they have inherent weaknesses and flaws, and the addresses that the secretaries of state give to Congress.

In addition, Mora-Donatto (Ibid) suggests that the annual presidential address should be used as an effective channel of communication between the Executive and the legislative. Above all, she argues that a key element for accurate parliamentary control over the Executive is the existence of complete information. Unfortunately, information is scarce among legislators, especially when it comes to budget approval, because the presentation of the annual budget proposal is quite complicated and the Ministry of Finance does not give out full information on the calculations used (see Caballero & Dávila, 2006).

Furthermore, for Mora-Donatto (2006), Congress plays the leading role in a parliamentary democracy, both in presidential and parliamentary systems. Its main function is to represent the plurality of interests and to ensure that legislation is made responsibly; it is quality rather than quantity that should drive the legislation-making process. Hence, an updated parliamentary legal framework becomes crucial for an adequate legislative process.

As for the Mexican case, Mora-Donatto (Ibid, pp. 8, my translation) identifies the following key challenges faced by Congress:

1. to redefine the organic structure and dimension of the Chambers;
2. to consolidate the bodies of technical support;
3. to leave fully behind the predominance of the Executive in the planning and design of the legislative action of Congress;
4. to turn the committees into adequate scenarios for processing parliamentary work;
5. to break with the trend of ‘massive bill approval’, which has repercussions for the quality of the parliamentary production and for the loss of legislative quality;



6. to overcome the predominant role of the parties in Congress' work through the parliamentary groups and to reinforce the, until now, secondary role of the individual legislator;<sup>17</sup>
7. to face, through innovative procedures, the omnipresence of the media which, due to the slow internal functioning of Congress, has progressively become the authentic forum of political confrontation and the ideal place for discussions between political alternatives.

Furthermore, she claims that:

as a consequence of these omissions which have placed the Mexican Congress in a delicate situation, it is possible to understand the erosion of its image among the society, which is not capable of expressing any feeling of appreciation or popular identification with the institution that legitimately represents it, as reflected among the varied opinion polls (Ibid, pp. 8-9, my translation).

It is undeniable that political parties play a crucial role in Congress, especially for the tasks of parliamentary control and representation. This has been even truer since the 2000 election, a key event for understanding the contemporary Mexican Congress. Along these lines, Valdés Robledo (2006) also recognises the importance of political control of the Executive by Congress, especially under divided government, where more minorities have the opportunity and possibility to participate in policy-making.

Mora-Donatto (2006) points to the importance of two decision-making bodies: the Political Coordination Board (JUCOPO, its Spanish abbreviation), which is formed by the congressional party leaders and reaches agreements by absolute majority; and the Directive Board (*Mesa Directiva*), which makes decisions based on consensus and absolute majority voting. Due to their hierarchical importance and attributions, but mainly because of the fact that within them the most controversial political interests sit down at the same table to reach agreements, both bodies must be observed closely in order to understand the logic of important outcomes and bill approvals.

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<sup>17</sup> This suggests highlighting the need for electoral connection, a concept which will be stressed throughout my research.

Unfortunately, full information on how they operate and why they decide the way they do is not available (see Caballero & Dávila, 2006).

A newer stream of the legal approach claims for constitutional reforms that could improve checks and balances. Interestingly, it stresses the need to connect the legislator with citizens' preferences and promote cooperation between powers rather than concentrating on reducing the Executive's legislative powers (Negretto, 2006).

It should also be mentioned that within the legal approach, several scholars have written about the need to insist on the approval of the pending state reform. Most of them consider that immediate re-election should be allowed. However, Camp (2007, pp. 187-188) argues that,

although the deputies themselves have raised the issue of eliminating the prohibition on immediate re-election, the Mexican public is definitely opposed to such a reform. In a comprehensive poll in 2005, more than two-thirds of Mexicans were against the immediate re-election of federal deputies and senators ... The only structural change in the Chamber of deputies the public appears to favour is reducing its size (60 per cent favour 100 or 200 deputies instead of 300), suggesting, in part, the low esteem in which the legislative branch is held.

Overall, this approach and the one to be overviewed next should both be understood in parallel with the broader literature on the US Congress, since it is considered a sort of role model on which plenty of theoretical work has been written and which is extrapolated to other countries. Within the scholarly literature on the United States' legislative institution, Ugalde (2000) identifies two main periods: in the first half of the 20th century academics focused on seniority issues and on the strength of the committee system, which he defines as 'textbook literature'; the stream thus fits in some way into a classical or legal approach.

Starting from the 1970s, however, the focus was instead on legislative behaviour and authors such as Mayhew (1974) and Ogul (1976) started seeing legislators as rational individuals who respond to institutional incentives. However, the strength and

centrality of the committee system is still relevant for this stream. Congressional theory on how other countries' congresses work and the one I intend to apply to the Mexican case evolved from this second stream. Let us now review the literature on the rationality of Mexican legislators.

### **1.2.2 The public choice approach**

This approach was chosen to analyse Congress assuming that legislators are rational individuals who make decisions based on their individual interests and other political commitments, such as party lines or career goals. Although power is exercised by institutions, these are created by and comprised of individuals and thus particular interests play an important role in everyday practices and structural design.<sup>18</sup>

By the end of the 1990s, Nacif (1997) drew attention to the importance of the PR formula launched in 1960, which, he argues, is useful to allow opposition to gain territory in the Lower Chamber and to some extent suppressed the negative effects of term limits. However, term limits do not allow for the professionalisation of the opposition and thus the positive effect of the opposition's competition is neutralised.

Nacif (2005b, p. 14) also discusses the new role Congress plays within the context of the divided government that emerged in Mexico after the PRI lost the majority in the Lower Chamber in the midterm elections of 1997, and concludes that the new relationship between the Executive and the legislative involves 'two key factors: the preferences of the actors – political parties – and the institutions that set the rules for the policymaking process'. Within this new relationship between the two powers, Congress plays as the agenda-setter and the Executive is some sort of veto player, where negotiations between the parties must take place in Congress in order for a bill to be approved. He finds that the 'theory of the median voter' is the most suitable for explaining the scrutiny of bills and the approval process within the Chamber. One of the negative effects Nacif observes in the policy-making process under divided government is that responsibility becomes dispersed and when undesired effects take place, actors blame each other for it.

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<sup>18</sup> This goes along with the new institutionalism's argument that the choices of those who design institutions and their underlying context matter (Thelen & Steinmo, 1992).

Casar (2000) differentiates between party cohesion and party discipline. She also claims that the electronic voting system installed in 1998, which displays on a large screen the vote of each deputy and keeps a historical record of votes, will help scholars better understand the behaviour of the deputies. She concludes that negotiation and consensus will be a constant in a divided government, especially between the PRI and the PAN, since their programmatic structure is similar. She acknowledges the gaps within legislative studies and the lack of information to improve academic work on the topic.

Jiménez Badillo (2006) agrees with the fact that cooperation between parties is very likely in a divided government. As for the 57th and 58th legislatures, cooperation and negotiation were key for the opposition's opportunity to increase participation in policy-making. Jiménez Badillo also differentiates between discipline and cohesion and proves that between 1997 and 2003 party discipline decreased. Further, she argues that internal party cohesion also decreases as votes are tighter on certain issues.

In Mexico, party discipline responds to a scheme of stimulus and rewards. In the case of the three largest parties in the 58th Congress, party discipline decreased for the PRI as it lost the presidency and thus the possibility for rewarding its members. Interestingly, Jiménez Badillo (Ibid) found that the PAN, even though in control of the Presidency, faced reductions in party discipline when having to make government decisions. The PRD was also less cohesive in the 58th Congress in comparison to the 57th.

In turn, Ugalde (2000) analyses motivational goals as a more effective determinant of legislative oversight than institutional design. He constructs a model of Congress based on the American example, taking into consideration term limits and other structural differences between the Mexican and the American model. He then presents four hypotheses to explain the relationship between individual goals as an explanatory variable and legislative oversight as a dependent variable (Ibid, pp. 12-13):

1. The impact of legal authority is considered secondary as compared to deputies' motivations and goals.

2. Term limits decrease legislative oversight because they reduce legislators' experience and alter their goals, mainly because PRI deputies depended on the president in order to advance their career after leaving Congress.
3. The partisan powers of the president influenced PRI deputies' behaviour because the only way to ensure a career was to toe the party lines, which in turn were marked by the presidency.
4. The frequency of oversight is directly related to the size of the opposition in the Chamber: the greater the size of the latter, the more oversight takes place.

Based on in-depth interviews and surveys, Ugalde concludes that motivations are not the only determinants of the inefficient legislative oversight:

The gap between motivations and capabilities must be closed, or the Mexican Congress will have a strong voice but not enough power and expertise to influence public policy and to control the actions of government effectively. If Congress does not enact further reforms, the shift in power may turn out to be disappointing in terms of creating a true system of checks and balances (Ibid, p. 166).

Along the same lines of a more rational approach to legislative decision-making in Mexico, Díaz Cayeros & Magaloni (1998) argue along Ugalde's (2000) lines that legislative oversight does not necessarily turn out weak because of legal constraints or capability issues, but rather because of motivations. They support their claim with budget approval data and public account reviews in which even PRI deputies vote based on their interests within committees instead of toeing party lines. Thus, the PRI is proven to be fragmented when it comes to certain topics.

Also among this stream, authors focus on the effects of candidate selection processes for Congress seats, especially since the opposition has gained more political importance. For example, Langston (1998) gives evidence on how the candidate selection process within the PRI, after divided government emerged in 1997, has substantially changed. Nowadays, the governors and other local actors play an important role.

Another way to explain how parties influence Congress is to observe political careers. Langston & Aparicio (2009) look at the political careers of members of the 57th, 58th and 59th Congresses and conclude that term limits and federalism strongly influenced their performances in office. They argue that the electoral system for the Chamber of Deputies and the fact that states' budgets fundamentally come from the federal government make governors very powerful when it comes to selecting candidates. This is because governors nominate deputies who will ensure more resources will be approved by the latter during budget negotiations. Governors are important party figures at the state level and have the capacity to exert a great deal of pressure on the central party offices and the legislative agenda.

Langston & Aparicio (Ibid, p. 9) argue that:

since the downfall of PRI hegemony, state governors have become crucial actors in distributing state bureaucracy jobs and nominations for elected positions for municipal, state and even some federal posts, like the Chamber of Deputies. The state executives also control millions of dollars in funds which they can distribute as they see fit, making them important patrons. Because of this control over resources in a federal system with no consecutive re-election, many politicians now base their political careers in state and local politics.

The above findings are closely related to the background that incoming deputies have and the career path followed after leaving office. Thus, the authors claim that:

based on estimates of multinomial regression models, our results indicate that experience in local or national positions correspondingly leads to future positions in the same political arenas. Partisan affinity with state governors affects the likelihood of winning a local post, whereas local election calendars affect the future level only for the PAN deputies. Because so many of the party politicians who win a post in the national assembly come from municipal or state posts, this also means that many of the leaving deputies return to their localities to continue their political careers (Ibid, p. 25).

Last but by no means least among the most recent work on legislative behaviour of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, Díaz Rebolledo (2005) analyses deputies' behaviour with an interest rather similar to that put forward in this research. Seeking to explain deviations in parliamentary voting so as to confidently predict the emergence of legislative paralysis, he presents the following main hypothesis:

Deputies maximise the probability of obtaining a higher popular election office. That is, while they are in office, deputies decide the direction of their vote on bills, seeking to increase the probability of winning in the future a seat in the Senate or a governorship and, because of that, they mirror in their voting the preferences of the electorate. Thus, the main contribution of their focus lies in retrieving the *electoral connection* that previous research has rejected as a factor within the legislative game (Ibid, pp. 314, my translation).

Díaz Rebolledo argues that term limits do not cancel the electoral connection, but rather transfer it from the district to the state level. 'When voting on bills, a deputy will try to satisfy the majority of the constituents of her state and, as the district's preferences come close to the state's preferences on different topics, deputies – even accidentally – will be responsible towards the voters who chose her' (Ibid, p. 317).

Díaz Rebolledo runs several models to prove the correlation of the electoral connection with variables such as the election origin of the deputy, her participation in committees and the party she belongs to. He finds that 'the election principle does not have a significant statistical difference in the voting behaviour of Congress members' (Ibid, p. 323), because all are worried about pursuing a political career. Furthermore, regarding the performance of deputies in committees, he claims that 'since legislators in committees should be located in the median voter line and reproduce their party's line in all decisions, we should expect that they are also less tempted than the rest of the legislators to ignore their party once they are on the floor for voting on the bill' (Ibid, p. 325).

Finally, Díaz Rebolledo concludes that, based on the fact that there is no significant difference between voting behaviour of deputies from the PRI and the PRD regarding a presidential bill, 'the progressive ambition theory is strengthened by proving that it

is not the preferences of the deputies *per se*, but rather those of the state electorate, the ones which intervene in the decisions of the former. The result itself eliminates the possibility of *ad hoc* explanations' (Ibid, p. 327).

### **1.2.3 Where does this research stand?**

The preceding pages summarised the main arguments and theories on the Mexican Congress, some based on the application of broader models and analytical frameworks used around the world. A general conclusion on the trend of the literature available is that, in the past few years, even legal studies on Mexican Congress have begun to consider the importance of political mechanisms in the shaping of the normative framework. Thus, provided that political processes are intrinsic to all legislative components, the legal view cannot exclude the political side of the decision-making process. This is especially true if we consider that informal rules play an important part in Mexican politics and they will remain informal if the necessary consensus, pacts and negotiations for making them formal depend on political interests (Philip, 2003).

This research therefore provides further evidence on how particular interests deeply affect legislative institutional processes and practices. Using an institutional approach, it adds to the literature grouped under the public choice approach by finding empirical evidence on the link between term limits and the control of political careers.

On a more empirical note, it is also possible to conclude that the Chamber of Deputies is indeed vulnerable to the effects of the electoral and party systems and to the strongly entrenched trend of non-democratic political attitudes. Hence, its role as a representative institution that serves the democratic consolidation process cannot be fulfilled. Issues such as the strategic distribution of positions throughout the Chamber between parties and then among party factions, or the excessive concentration and use of power in the parties, provoke empirical puzzles and defiance towards the applicability of theoretical frameworks to the institution discussed herein. The next section highlights these puzzles as a preamble to the following chapters.



### 1.3 Remaining empirical puzzles

As has been repeatedly stated, the Mexican system is one where informal rules have been guiding almost all political processes. This is a product of the historical evolution of the country, led by elites unwilling to sacrifice the successful achievement of their interests.

Consequently, this research can be seen as an inductive case study seeking to understand why legislative behaviour happens the way it does. A first step in identifying the particularities or ‘empirical puzzles’ of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies in terms of the interaction among parties across different processes, such as the allocation of seats in committees or governing bodies, is to briefly resort to the use of counterfactuals. This will allow us to identify what the outcome could have been if the conditions had been different, and thereby confirm that the determinants of legislative behaviour are indeed the ones assumed so far.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, it is possible to claim that if the country had not been governed by the PRI for so long, the evolution of the party system and governmental institutions would have resulted in more plurality. The legislative power would have been better equipped as a representative body in charge of checking and balancing the Executive, instead of just rubber-stamping presidential bills.

Furthermore, real opposition parties could have been born earlier and therefore become established sooner than they were. This would have resulted in more active participation in the design of the institutional framework and therefore in the adoption of legal frameworks for Congress that would have supported plural interactions. Ultimately, this would have allowed fairer competition among the parties for decision-making within the Chamber and therefore restraints on their power could have been implemented.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Counterfactuals are useful when addressing arguments which rely on path dependency to identify empirical puzzles (Levy, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> However, the case of Venezuela shows that having strong and stable parties from an early stage does not guarantee a long-lasting or stable democracy, as Coppedge (1994) argues.

However, none of the above is true; Mexico is indeed a unique case with a particular institutional design and therefore it raises a series of questions with regard to conventional theories of legislative procedures and party behaviour.

The empirical distinctiveness stems from four main issues: the mixed electoral formula for the Chamber, the constitutional prohibition of re-election, the predominance –and nature- of informal rules in the Chamber of Deputies, and the factionalism of the parties. Factionalism leads to the existence of multiple leaders or moral authorities.

The constitutional prohibition of re-election has several consequences. First, it impedes the professionalisation of politicians and also the continuity and effectiveness of public policies. Second, it complicates the construction of career paths in politics.

Parties control access to every elected office throughout the country. Thus, those who wish to continue a political career once their tenure is over must be selected as candidates by a party, generally the same one that elected them to office in the first place.<sup>21</sup>

Parties are organisations with fixed, collective interests that designate senior members to act as leaders and maintain party cohesion. They are also entitled to punish or reward members for their loyalty and compliance with the party's lines and expectations. Therefore, parties have a great amount of control over ambitious politicians seeking to maintain a career in the public life.

Within the Chamber, this means that deputies will try their best to toe the party lines but at the same time pursue their own interests. Thus, they are likely to request allocation to those committees which are most appropriate or relevant to their professional experience/background and also where they can better serve their interests.

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<sup>21</sup> However, some switch parties before an election if they are likely to obtain a good position. This occurrence will be explained in Chapter 5.

However, loyalty to Mexican parties, at least in the case of the three largest organisations, is not so simple. There is more than one leader to keep pleased, as parties have evolved into organisations composed of factions and where multiple figures have the power to place an individual on a candidate selection list.

Just like the Brazilian system, federalism builds the nature of legislative representation. That is, legislators feel more obliged to represent their state in Congress, because their career prospects are affected by state-level actors and dynamics, as governors have wide-ranging powers (Samuels, 2003). However, career prospects in Mexico are even more complicated, as they are controlled not only by governors or municipal authorities, but also by faction leaders within the party and other influential individuals.

Furthermore, the combination of SMD candidates and PR seats results in an even greater leeway for party figures to place ‘their people’ high enough on the closed list to guarantee their election. PR also means that there are spaces for ‘career politicians’, in the sense of those who move from one public or elected office to the next, without necessarily serving the electorate’s interests, to secure a long-term tenure, as long as they maintain a good relationship with the party officials.

As the reader might have realised, although there is a constitutional prohibition for re-election, this is only to prevent consecutive tenures. Once their term is over, deputies have to wait only one legislative period before they can be elected into the same office again. It will be seen for the case of the 60th Congress that only a few follow this path, but those who do are generally placed as candidates on closed lists and are likely to be appointed as presidents of committees as they can be trusted by party officials.

The Chamber of Deputies has a set of legal frameworks which were created for ruling procedural matters such as the distribution of committee presidencies among the parties. However, because the committee presidents have promises to keep and loyalties to reward across factions, and also to the issue of ensuring effective agenda-setting, negotiations at the beginning of each legislature are far from transparent or in accordance with the written rules. Instead, a set of informal rules known as

‘agreements’ (*acuerdos*) or fast-track modifications to small parts of the text on the formal rules are used as procedural guides.

Therefore, it is evident that the historical evolution of the political institutions, along with the maintenance of the *status quo* for the parties’ convenience, has led to a *sui generis* situation in Mexico.

Within the literature on the Mexican Congress, most authors have focused on explaining legislative behaviour solely along the lines of roll-call voting, which involves measuring party cohesion according to floor votes. Nonetheless, the empirical puzzles herein described suggest that legislative behaviour, at least if conceived as allocation to committee seats or governing positions, stems from the possibility to override term limits and the consequential power advantage that this brings to the parties.

This proposed explanation of legislative behaviour can therefore shed light on previously untouched aspects of congressional studies with a focus on Mexico. The findings shall hopefully serve to contribute towards the body of studies classified under the public choice approach discussed in the previous section.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

This chapter’s purpose was twofold: first, it sought to explain why Mexico is unique in its institutional design, with a particular focus on its legislative power. Second, it accomplished the key research task of identifying the contributions that my work could bring to the academic literature on Mexican politics and to legislative theory testing outside the American Congress (i.e. in ‘imperfect’ cases).

With regard to the singularity of Mexican institutions, I stated that the country democratised in a pragmatic way, without a thorough constitutional reform. Despite positive changes since the late 1990s, when electoral competition challenged the power of the PRI, the prevalence of old practices such as corruption and clientelism, and the weakness of political institutions has made democratic consolidation complicated and unfinished. The electoral reform of 1996 gave way to better electoral

processes and a year later to a minority government. This gave the legislative body a more prominent role in the country's decision-making. However, it has been very difficult to change political attitudes and behaviours, crystallised during the long reign of the PRI and deeply embedded across the whole political system. This is especially evident in the institution I will focus on: the Chamber of Deputies, which is a body formed by numerous individuals fighting for power and the fulfilment of their interests. Chapters 4 and 5 will discuss the matter in detail.

In turn, the review of the academic literature on the Mexican Congress, mostly focused on the Chamber of Deputies, shows that a considerable and valuable amount of work has been done to understand why it is such a complex institution. All schools of thought have agreed on the fact that the practices observed in the Chamber have affected public policy-making and the balance of power among parties in and outside Congress. However, there is still room for more detailed observations on the interaction of three very important factors: electoral rules, party politics and the creation of informal rules that empower important figures within parties. My contribution, which seeks to understand how these interactions affect processes for candidate selection and the distribution of committee and governing bodies seats, aims at narrowing this gap.

Finally, this thesis not only seeks to contribute to the specific literature on Mexican politics and institutions, but can also provide added value and theory-testing opportunities to broader frameworks such as historical institutionalism, as well as party and legislative organisation theories. Thus, the next chapter explains how this research fits within broader theoretical frameworks.

## **Chapter 2. Broader theoretical frameworks and contributions**

The previous chapter explained the particularities of the Mexican case which make it interesting to study. It also identified the possible areas of contribution to the literature on Mexican politics, principally the field which seeks to understand the dynamics and procedures taking place within the Chamber of Deputies. The empirical puzzles identified as the leading concerns of this research were associated with the effects of term limits on the power of the parties, and with the historical formation of institutions that has led to the predominance of informal rules.

Furthermore, I have said that the Chamber is perhaps the body which most reflects the context of the Mexican system, such as the increasing effects of parties' power on institutional designs, triggered by term limits. This has led to a situation where informal rules dictate regular processes, overriding or substituting formal codes. Overall, the Chamber's operation is a clear example of how the Mexican system follows its own path.

More specifically, the control of political careers through committee appointments, as well as the negotiations among parties and their internal factions to control certain decision-making offices, entail the use of 'old school' practices such as clientelism. Term limits make the manifestation of loyalties to different party figures more complex and often lead to severe conflicts among factions.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this research not only seeks to contribute to the specific literature on Mexico and its institutions, but also offers good empirical evidence for theory testing of broader frameworks. Therefore, this chapter offers the reader a much deeper analysis of the theoretical puzzles that the Mexican Chamber of Deputies presents, now from the general perspective of party and legislative organisation theories. It will also address the overarching theoretical paradigm, the 'historical institutionalism', which is the most appropriate theory for this research as it values the contribution that each of the political actors makes to the overall operation of the system.

In addition, in this chapter I explain the construction of the empirical case study on the Mexican Chamber of Deputies and what the expected results might be. It is, therefore, a necessary prelude to the second part of the thesis, which presents the case study. The first section discusses the theoretical challenges that the Chamber's legislative organisation presents to committee distribution theories. In turn, the second section explains the main traits of the historical stream of institutionalism and justifies its suitability as the guiding framework of this work. The chapter goes on to explain in detail how this work contributes to the wider body of theoretical academic studies on political parties and the effect of term limits on representation and democracy.

## **2.1 Theoretical puzzles: patterns of legislative organisation**

Because very particular historical processes of institutional formation have shaped the Chamber, it is difficult for it to employ mechanisms for legislative procedures used elsewhere. Thus, it is not easy to apply theories of legislative organisation towards the understanding of committee purposes and similar issues. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss how this matter presents itself as an interesting theoretical puzzle, which will be addressed throughout this research.

Much scholarly literature has been produced on Congress' very important role in policy-making within any type of system, as suggested in the previous chapter for the Mexican case. Different approaches have been taken towards its study, such as legal views, political approaches (such as behavioural or partisan studies), and procedural ones. However, here I shall discuss only legislative theories trying to explain the function of committees and the logic which drives members' appointments. I will also refer to scholarly assumptions on legislative party cohesion.

### **2.1.1 Legislative organisation theories and the role of committees**

Theories on legislative organisation stem from analyses on the US Congress. Although the Mexican case does not fit tightly into any of the categories considered by committee or cohesion theories, these do explain to some extent certain behavioural patterns in the Chamber of Deputies.

In most congresses, committees are the main bodies in charge of scrutinising bills and making any necessary adjustments before they are voted for in a plenary meeting, or ‘on the floor’. Furthermore, they can be seen as ‘jurisdiction-specific subunits of their parent Chamber’ (Shepsle, 1978, p. 4). Hence, it is logical that both parties and individual members will distribute committee seats very carefully, with aims at producing the best possible policy outcomes.

The distribution of committee seats is done under two different premises: a distributive perspective or an informational one. The distributive view assumes that ‘committees allow members of parliament to trade influence with one another, gaining power in the policy area they care most about, while sacrificing the ability to determine policy in areas less salient to them’ (Kaeding, 2004, p. 357). Members of committees somehow select themselves because they can fulfil their own interests by sitting there. Consequently,

committees tend to consist of policy outliers – members with a high demand for the policies in their jurisdiction – and congressional rules and procedures give such committees dominance over policymaking within their domain. The belief is that members homogeneously demand high levels of benefits from policies that fall within their committee’s jurisdictions (Ibid).

In turn, the informative approach rejects such a ‘rational choice’ concept of the purpose of committees. It states that, as the main bodies of action within Congress, committees should have the goal of allowing members to develop policy expertise in an area of their interest and/or capabilities (Krehbiel, 1991).

Committees are not autonomous entities. They are agents of the institution as a collective entity, supplying information that reduces individual legislators’ uncertainty about the consequences that are representative of its own policy preferences ... Non committee members can have the greatest confidence in signals they receive only when there are two informed opinions, especially when the informants are ‘natural’ adversaries. From this perspective, legislative choices in salient policy domains are median choices (Ibid, p. 358).



Most legislatures function based on a combination of both approaches, as policy-making is indeed driven by political interests, whether personal or partisan, but at the same time it requires in-depth knowledge of the subjects within each committee's jurisdiction.

The Mexican Chamber of Deputies has 44 ordinary committees which scrutinise bills within their area of focus, and a fluctuating number of special committees that are set up to investigate very specific issues. Quite logically, the selection of committee members relies heavily on political interests. However, in addition to the normal and somewhat expected battle among parties to control committees, the Mexican scene is further complicated by internal struggles between factions and the diverse interests that deputies might have, such as loyalty to sectoral organisations and faction leaders.

Nevertheless, despite the clashes of interests, the seat allocation process does manage, to a certain extent, to accommodate party members who know the subjects well enough to set agendas effectively. This balance is especially true for the most important committees that deal with the federal budget, taxes or social programmes. Supporting evidence gathered through semi-structured interviews for this claim will be discussed in Chapter 4. Based on all of the above, I would say that it is not clear to what extent the informative approach can be effective for understanding committee purposes in the Mexican case. It seems that distributional logic is much easier to identify.

### **2.1.2 Party cohesion**

The second set of theoretical assumptions on legislative organisation to be discussed here assesses the importance of maintaining party cohesion within Congress. It relates to the ability of parties to exert veto powers and/or set their agenda, and also to their control on the behaviour of individual members. This control can affect political careers and the 'electoral connection'. Thus, the best way to identify and measure party cohesion in cases like the Mexican one will be discussed here.

According to Morgenstern (2004), when voters make their choices in an election they will retrospectively identify a group of legislators who can be held responsible for the

*status quo* of public policies. That is, voters ‘can identify the collective intention and will of legislative groups when the members of those groups act in concert – repeatedly and predictably’ (Ibid, p. 4). However, individual behaviours of some legislators can be identified either as harmful or beneficial for the group’s objective.

Voting unity and the behaviour of a group as a collective entity explain many inherent elements of power, such as pacts between legislators and leaders for appointments, as well as personal ideology and electoral goals, among other issues.

There are many different ways to measure party cohesion. One of the most popular methods is known as ‘roll call voting analysis’ and has been employed for studies of small and large magnitudes. Morgenstern (Ibid, p. 4) claims that

publicly available roll call votes provide a concrete gauge for the degree to which groups of legislators act in harmony. Patterns of roll call voting thus indicate whether voters can reasonably attribute successes or failures to a group (such as a party or faction) or whether individual legislators should be the focus of the voters’ attention.

From the point of view of a researcher, roll call voting data can point out ‘which groups form coalitions, resolve whether parties are unified or fractionalized, and determine the issues on which groups divide’ (Ibid, p. 20). Sophisticated statistical methods using advanced computing software have been developed –particularly among experts studying the American congress- in order to model and predict patterns in roll call voting (Roberts, 2007).

However, other scholars have argued against using this method on its own to assess party discipline, cohesion and strength (Krehbiel, 2000; Stratmann & Baur, 2002). For instance, Krehbiel (2000, p. 225) claims that it is ‘incapable of discriminating between non-partisan and partisan behaviour ... [It fails] to appreciate individual preferences of legislators.’ In addition, aggregate roll call data collected from plenary voting fail to take into consideration the effect that informal and ‘seemingly obscure’ (Roberts, 2007, p. 342) institutional rules have on voting patterns. That is, roll call voting analyses risk portraying an incomplete picture.

My research focuses on those ‘seemingly obscure’ rules, interactions and dynamics that precede plenary votes and therefore reach beyond roll call voting data. My assumption is that pre-floor-voting negotiations like those carried out in committees or in secretive meetings, and even the distribution of committee seats at the beginning of each legislature, are key -and perhaps even more useful- for understanding legislative procedures and outcomes. Therefore, for the purposes of this research, the non-cohesiveness of the PRD, the PAN, and the PRI, and my labelling them as ‘divided’, derives from the analysis of their behaviours and interactions during negotiations and processes prior to floor votes. As will be discussed at a later stage, the level of cohesion in Mexican parties can be appreciated by observing the logic of committee appointments, negotiations between factions and influential figures, and, very importantly, the effect of other elements of the political system, such as electoral rules.

This section explores the suitability of theories of legislative organisation and party cohesion to explain behavioural patterns in the Chamber of Deputies. As has been suggested, the fact that informal rules predominate in legislative procedures, such as committee appointments, allows the parties to exert a great amount of power within the institution. This results in the ‘invasion’ of partisan conflicts and dynamics over the Chamber, where they have ample room to control political careers and set their agendas in the best possible way. Committee allocations and the performance of these bodies’ daily tasks are set up under strong influence of those dynamics.

Therefore, theories built to explain ‘model’ cases of legislative bodies, such as the American one, are too rigid to encompass informal dynamics, although it seems hard to believe that Mexico is the only outlier of theoretical arguments on committee purposes and party cohesion. Hence, this research can engage in adapting the aforementioned frameworks to differing cases. This will not only address the theoretical challenges or ‘puzzles’ just identified, but will also contribute to the relevant scholarly literature.

So far, it would seem that Mexico’s institutions and parties are so *sui generis* that no theoretical framework can fully explain political behaviour within the Chamber of Deputies. However, this is not true. Although very specific issues cannot be addressed

through some existing theories, for example party cohesion and legislative organisation, there is a broader framework that can be used to understand the origin of the country's 'particularities', and therefore identify how to assess legislative behaviour in Mexico. The following section presents historical institutionalism as the underlying theory of this work.

## **2.2 The theoretical foundations of the research: historical institutionalism**

Any research aiming for validity must use a theoretical framework in order to follow a clear path towards the achievement of its initial objectives. That is, an existing body of knowledge can provide insights on how to approach certain aspects of reality. For this study, it is important to have theoretical insights into how informal rules have been locked in, namely, how the system has evolved over time.

The best explanation is the one provided by the broader theoretical framework known as 'new institutionalism', and specifically a combination of two of its variants: historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism. Historical institutionalism is suitable because it looks into how institutions fit into a particular context and its historical evolution. This enables us to trace the origin of informal rules, which have been able to predominate largely because the Mexican Constitution has not been replaced with a new one that matches the contemporary political reality of the country established over the last 30 years. In turn, the rational choice institutionalism explains the calculations behind the elite's decision to implement those informal rules, and the logic behind their choice to keep them in place over time.

Before looking concretely into historical and rational choice institutionalisms, it is useful to see a broader picture of how new institutionalism emerged and what it presupposes.

### **2.2.1 New institutionalism**

Since the early stages of scholarly literature on political science, the questions posed were related to 'the nature of the governing institutions that could structure the behaviour of individuals – both the governing and the governed – toward better ends'

(Peters, 1999, p. 3). Both European and American scholars started building an institutional school of thought, which has evolved over the years into a rather solid and comprehensive theoretical framework.

The main assumptions of the 'old institutionalism' are the following (summarised from Ibid):

- It was concerned with law and the key role it plays in governing, as it sets the framework of the public sector and affects the way in which the government interferes in the life of citizens.
- Structure matters and it determines behaviour. Therefore, old institutionalists analysed the different structures of presidential and parliamentary systems, as they were laid out in constitutions and formal texts. However, 'there was no attempt to develop concepts that might capture other structural aspects of a system' (Ibid, p.3).
- Efforts of comparative analysis were made, where only whole systems were studied in parallel, and were seen as complex with embedded components.
- History was seen as a crucial factor in the development of institutions.
- Analyses were extremely normative, in that scholars focused their work on what good governments would look like.

The original 'old' approach failed to consider the importance of specific actors within a polity and focused only on institutional designs as they are dictated by constitutions. These have been perceived as shortcomings, and have been dealt with to create a more comprehensive framework. Hence, this 'old' school of thought has been advanced into a 'new' institutionalism, which has (as will be seen below) kept some of the assumptions laid out by the early institutionalists.

The new institutionalism:

emphasizes the endogenous nature and social construction of political institutions ... The translation of structures into political action and action into institutional continuity and change, are generated by comprehensible and

routine processes ... A challenge for students of institutions is to explain how such processes are stabilized or destabilized, and which factors sustain or interrupt ongoing processes (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 5).

Three main approaches emerged between the 1980s and 1990s 'in reaction to the behavioural perspectives that were influential during the 1960s and 1970s and all seek to elucidate the role that institutions play in the determination of social and political outcomes' (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 936). All three approaches called themselves the 'new institutionalism' but address the relationship between behaviour and institutions and the factors of institutional change in different ways. However, before discussing the distinctive views of each strand, it is useful to broadly define what an institution is.

Unsurprisingly, a precise definition of what an institution is depends on what variant of institutionalism is being used; however, there are core elements of the term shared by all approaches. Peters (1999) identifies four key features of an institution: 1) they can be either formal or informal groups of individuals which interact among themselves in patterned ways that can be predicted; 2) institutions are stable throughout time; 3) they affect individual behaviour by constraining it in some way; and 4) values and meanings should be shared by the members of an institution.

According to North (1990, p. 3), institutions are 'the rules of the game in a society'. They shape interaction between humans and constrain behaviours. March and Olsen (2008, p. 3) provide a similar definition to the ones of North and Peters:

An institution is a relatively enduring collection of rules and organized practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances ... Institutions empower and constrain actors differently and make them more or less capable of acting according to prescriptive rules of appropriateness.

North (1990) points out the importance of establishing a distinction between institutions and organisations. Although closely related, the latter are merely ‘groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives’ (Ibid, p. 5). They are able to influence institutional frameworks: ‘organisations are created with purposive intent in consequence of the opportunity set resulting from the existing set of constraints ... and in the course of attempts to accomplish their objectives are a major agent of institutional change’ (Ibid, p. 5). I define political parties as organisations that aim at influencing institutional frameworks.

Now, following Hall and Taylor (1996), I shall describe the main assumptions of the three streams of new institutionalism. First, I shall briefly address sociological institutionalism, followed by a lengthier discussion of the rational choice stream. Historical institutionalism shall be discussed in a separate subsection, as it is much more relevant for this research and thus deserves a bit more attention.

Sociological institutionalism emerged within organisation theories in opposition to the notion prevalent in the 1970s about the differences in organisations. According to sociological institutionalists, organisations result from ‘the inherent rationality or efficiency of such forms for performing these tasks. Culture was seen as something altogether different’ (Ibid, p. 946). It conceives institutions in a much broader way than the other two approaches, to include ‘symbol systems, cognitive scripts and moral templates that provide the “frames of meaning” guiding human action’ (Ibid, p. 947). Thus, culture is considered an institution. Furthermore, institutions influence behaviour by constraining actions and by helping individuals picture what they could do in a certain context. Thus, the ‘self-images and identities of social actors are said to be constituted from the institutional forms, images and signs provided by social life’ (Ibid, p. 948).

With regard to the origin of institutions, sociological institutionalists argue that these adopt ‘specific forms or practices because they are widely valued within a broader cultural environment’ (Ibid, p. 949).

In turn, rational choice institutionalists assume that actors have set preferences and therefore ‘behave instrumentally so as to maximize the attainment of these

preferences, and in a highly strategic manner that presumes extensive calculation' (Ibid, p. 945). This stream emerged among scholars studying behaviour within the American Congress. During the 1970s some of these academics sought better ways to explain discrepancies in congressional outcomes, and found that 'institutions solve many of the collective action problems that legislatures habitually confront' (Ibid, p. 943).

Politics is seen as a group of dilemmas of collective action and if no decisions are made towards the better good for everyone it is because there are no institutional arrangements in place to ensure others do their share of collective action. The behaviour of actors is triggered by their calculation of how others will act. Institutions structure interactions between actors by limiting the available choices and also by facilitating information and imposing enforcement mechanisms with aims at reducing uncertainty regarding the behaviour of others.

In terms of how they explain institutional genesis and change, they state that 'the process of institutional creation usually revolves around voluntary agreement by the relevant actors; and, if the institution is subject to a process of competitive selection, it survives primarily because it provides more benefits to the relevant actors than alternate institutional forms' (Ibid, p. 945).

In between the purely rational choice stream and the historical one, there is a group of scholars whose work deals mainly with economic institutionalism. They see decisions and behaviours led by opportunity maximisation but they also believe that history is very important for explaining institutions' *status quo* and development.

Within this school, North (1990, p. 7) explains institutional change as follows:

Institutions, together with the standard constraints of economic theory, determine the opportunities in a society. Organisations are created to take advantage of those opportunities and, as the organisations evolve, they alter the institutions. The resultant path of institutional change is shaped by (1) the lock-in that comes from the symbiotic relationship between institutions and the organisations that have evolved as a consequence of the incentive structure



provided by those institutions and (2) the feedback process by which human beings perceive and react to changes in the opportunity set.

A mixture of informal norms, rules and enforcement characteristics define the set of choices and the resulting outcomes. Although formal rules such as constitutions or legal frameworks can be modified quickly through the approval of changes in legislative bodies or other formal instances, informal institutions (such as traditions, customs and codes of conduct) or constraints are always embodied in them and they are very difficult to change overnight. Therefore, institutions are believed to change incrementally (Ibid).

### **2.2.2 Historical institutionalism**

The third approach of the new institutional paradigm to be described, the historical one, is the main framework used for this research. It can be linked to the group theories of politics and the structural-functionalism framework that became relevant in the 1960s and 1970s. From the group theories, they adopted the notion that a crucial element of politics is conflict among rivals over the control of scarce resources. From structural functionalists, historical institutionalism extracted the concept of politics as a complex system with interacting parts. Nonetheless, this new paradigm improved both explanations (Hall & Taylor, 1996).

This school defines the relationship between behaviour and institutions in broader terms than the two previously discussed. It combines concepts from a 'calculus' and a 'cultural' view, which results in an assumption that 'the strategies induced by a given institutional setting may ossify over time into world views, which are propagated by formal organisations and ultimately shape even the self-images and basic preferences of the actors involved in them' (Ibid, p. 940).

Furthermore, it argues that institutions create an uneven distribution of power among individuals, and there will always be winners and losers. They find institutions closely linked to ideas and beliefs. Institutions are not designed based on a conscious choice of actors, but rather guided by the political context at the time. Policy choices are seen as a political matter, instead of a rational choice (Peters, 1999).

One of the most important arguments for historical institutionalists is related to the development of institutions over time:

History matters. It matters not just because we can learn from the past, but because the present and the future are connected to the past by the continuity of a society's institutions. Today and tomorrow's choices are shaped by the past. And the past can only be made intelligible as a story of institutional evolution (North, 1990, p. vii).

'Once governments make their initial policy and institutional choices in a policy area the patterns created will persist, unless there is some force sufficient to overcome the inertia created at the inception of the program' (Peters, 1999, p. 64). This is known as path dependency.

In recent years, explanations and principles of economics have been applied to political science in order to analyse complex settings more accurately, as suggested in the previous section. One of these efforts of theoretical extrapolation has been the application of increasing returns and therefore path dependency. Both are relevant concepts for historical institutionalism, as they assess the causes of institutional change and stability.

The concept of path dependency supports the notion of historical importance for institutions and for the adequate analysis of political events in general. It 'refers to the causal relevance of preceding stages in a temporal sequence ... Previous events in a sequence influence outcomes and trajectories but not necessarily by inducing further movement in the same direction' (Pierson, 2000, p. 252).

In politics, there are four elements which lead to increasing returns: the central role of collective action, the high density of institutions, the use of political authority to alleviate power asymmetries and its complexity and lack of transparency (Ibid). Furthermore, political institutions have 'a strong *status quo* bias generally built into them' (Ibid, p. 257).

Even though there is a great amount of change taking place over time, 'self-reinforcing dynamics associated with collective action processes mean that organisations have a strong tendency to persist once they are institutionalized' (Ibid, p. 259). Furthermore, since all the actors' behaviours are constrained by current institutions, operating outside of these boundaries would be very costly.

It is possible to identify a setting where path dependency or increasing returns are at work because the following four circumstances are evident: initial conditions can produce a wide range of outcomes; if small events happen at the right time, they can have considerable consequences which prevail over time; timing of events is crucial and earlier events matter more than later ones; and the equilibrium reached will be resistant to change (Ibid). Historical institutionalists tend to argue that the flow of events is 'punctuated by critical junctures' (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 942).

Using path dependency implies the following argument: 'previously viable options may be foreclosed in the aftermath of a sustained period of positive feedback, and cumulative commitments on the existing path will often make change difficult and will condition the form in which new branching will occur' (Pierson, 2000, p. 265).

In fact, historical institutionalism is not very efficient when it comes to explaining and predicting institutional change. 'There appear to be no *a priori* criteria for determining when there is sufficient political or environmental "pressure" to generate a change' (Peters, 1999, p. 69).

However, change is possible, as Weyland (2008) suggests with his new version of historical institutionalism. He states that when actors are aware when events happen at the right moment, they can lead to enduring consequences, whether good or bad, and they could be open to change if it would prevent an undesirable situation. March and Olsen agree on the fact that institutions are not static. However, change cannot be made arbitrarily, because they 'are defended by insiders and validated by outsiders, and because their histories are encoded into rules and routines' (March & Olsen, 2008, p. 7).

Based on the main precepts of the historical institutionalism just presented, it is quite logical that the *status quo* of the Chamber of Deputies and the political parties can be best understood if they are associated with the evolution of the Mexican political system in the 20th and 21st centuries. Ideas, beliefs and political matters are extremely important within the Chamber and, as will be seen in Chapter 4, the national political context prevalent at the time of the inauguration of each legislature is also extremely influential. The eclectic perception of cultural and calculus behaviours assumed by historical institutionalists within institutions will be clearly observed throughout the case study of the 60th Congress addressed in this research.

Furthermore, as a complement to specific theories of party organisation and behaviour to be discussed in the following section, the rational choice approach is a good framework to explain the parties' actions and strategies in the Chamber. It is particularly helpful for understanding how different levels of 'selective path dependency' apply across parties, where they PRI has had much more to gain from allowing changes to be made to certain frameworks in a context of divided government. Maximisation of opportunities within an institutional environment that allows better information of what others are able to do is key for parties' behaviour in the Chamber. Guy Peters (1999) claims that some eclecticism is useful when using institutionalism, so there is no harm in using these two approaches.

The preceding paragraphs have explained in a very general manner the main assumptions of the new institutional approaches. It can be observed that they are quite different from one another, which has been one of the main criticisms but also an important strength of the approach. Thus, a few words on the matter are worthwhile.

Even when the institutional paradigm has evolved and attempted new paths of explanations to fit the modern world's institutions, it still has shortcomings. Hall and Taylor (1996, p. 936) point out that 'it does not constitute a unified body of thought ... [the three approaches] paint quite different pictures of the political world.' Each one of the three institutionalisms has its own problems.

Furthermore, Weyland (2002) highlights the inability of the institutional approaches to capture phenomena such as waves, which have been useful explanations of political

change or democratisation throughout the world. He therefore adds the notion of contagion effects from one country to another, by borrowing insights from cognitive psychology to understand ‘the shift in people’s propensity for assuming risk [...], crucial for explaining striking turnarounds that end long periods of deterioration’ (Weyland, 2008, p. 314).

Among other critiques to institutional approaches, Weyland’s (2002) argument on the inaccuracy of rational choice institutionalism to adequately study Latin American politics is worth mentioning. He states that this paradigm ‘puts excessive emphasis on formal rules in a region that is notorious for bending or evading such rules’ (Ibid, p. 66). It ignores embedded informal practices such as clientelism and personalism, as well as the important role that ideas and models play in the region’s politics. Furthermore, it produces biased analysis ‘by overestimating the influence of elections and parliaments while downplaying the role of the state and interest groups’ (Ibid, p. 78).

However, alongside its shortcomings, it is undeniable that new institutionalism also has significant strengths for approaching analysis of political phenomena. Empirical evidence provided in the following three chapters will confirm this argument.

## **2.3 Contributions to scholarly literature**

The preceding sections and subsections have mentioned that one of the objectives of this research is to contribute to the scholarly literature. With the use of historical institutionalism to understand the context-specific Mexican system, important contributions can be made to the literature on political parties and on the effects of term limits over parties and institutions. The following pages address this issue.

### **2.3.1 Political parties**

Scholarly work on parties is vast and it would be extremely ambitious to assume that this work could contribute to all the topics it entails. Hence, it is necessary to identify the main streams in which this research fits. I shall first define what a political party is for the purposes of this research and thesis and then look into parties within society.

According to Sartori (in Mainwaring & Scully, 1995, p. 2), a party is ‘any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office’. In addition, following the historical institutionalism’s precepts, and for the purposes of this thesis, I define parties as organisations capable of influencing institutional designs.

A party’s main roles can be seen in two different scenarios: as an actor within society, and in legislative bodies. The latter, although close to my research interests, is a vast area of study and is beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, only a few clarifications will be made below. In contrast, this research can make key contributions to the literature on the role of parties in societies and so we shall look at this topic in more depth.

In essence, legislative party theories seek to explain how parties maintain discipline and cohesiveness within Congress. In other words, they ‘draw attention to the social-choice problem of majority rule instability: a party-free legislature would be chaotic, meaning that individual legislators would be unable to get anything done. Legislators thus have strong incentives to band together into durable legislative coalitions’ (Samuels & Shugart, 2010, p. 34). The body of studies, most of which were developed to study the United States’ House of Representatives, can be grouped into four main categories depending on how they explain the main strategy and purpose of parties in Congress:

1. Division of labour organisations: represented by Aldrich’s (1995) view of parties as solutions to collective action problems, where party members are divided into party leaders and ‘backbenchers’, otherwise known as rank-and-file members, to ensure the party’s interests are adequately pursued.
2. Ideological self-selection: assumes that politicians approach parties with similar policy preferences. Therefore, these organisations are likely to be ideologically homogeneous. Represented by authors like Krehbiel (1993).
3. Conditional party government: represented by Aldrich & Rohde (2004), who argue that parties do not always have the same level of cohesion. They can move from high to low levels depending on how costly it is to maintain homogeneity of the party.

4. Agenda cartel: represented by Cox & McCubbins (2005), who argue that parties are organisations that serve division of labour purposes, granting leaders the right to restrict the agenda through institutional ways such as committee appointments and holding a majority of seats.

### ***2.3.1.1 Parties in society***

Over time, both public opinion and scholarly literature have assessed the nature of parties and their effect on politics as both negative and positive. On the one hand, it has been said that they favour the private interests of ambitious politicians instead of the electorate. On the other, they are also seen as an effective solution for the representation of the interests of a specific sector of the electorate in government, which can be done in an easier and more orderly way through collective actors. Currently, there is an agreement on the fact that parties are very important for democracies in many different ways. ‘The nature of parties and party systems shapes the prospects that stable democracy will emerge, whether it will be accorded legitimacy, and whether effective policymaking will result’ (Mainwaring & Scully, 1995, p. 2).

One scholarly view conceives parties as organisations that solve problems of collective action by providing goods for their members, along with a ‘brand name’ associated with a reputation to be used while campaigning. Therefore, it could be said that they respond to the rational choices made by benefit and office seekers. Overall, they help actors in the political scene to deal with problems regarding electoral victories and governance once they are in office, which is helpful for maintaining long-term success (Aldrich, 1995).

Furthermore, ‘they are the main agents of political representation and are virtually the only actors with access to elected positions in democratic politics’ (Mainwaring & Scully, 1995, p. 2). Parties reduce the information costs of voting for the electorate. ‘Politicians form parties because they come to regard a collective good, their party’s public reputation or “brand name”, as critical to their individual success’ (Samuels & Shugart, 2010, pp. 34-35). However, there is normally a tension between politicians’ individual interests and collective incentives, as ‘individual politicians face the

dilemma of whether to pursue their individual interests or to devote resources to maintaining the party's collective reputation' (Ibid).

Consequently, parties enforce institutional mechanisms that make politicians commit to the party's collective goals and aims. Normally, this means that party leaders are trusted by rank-and-file members with the task of reducing collective action problems and costs, in some sort of 'delegation' principle (Ibid). Shared preferences are key for party formation, resulting in groups of individuals who are likely to collectively impact on governmental institutions once they have been elected to them. Parties have a large amount of power to shape institutions over time, through both formal and informal rules. Furthermore, they shape the environment in which they exist.

Parties operate and interact with each other within constructs known as party systems, which can be defined as 'the set of patterned interactions in the competition among parties. This notion suggests that some rules and regularities in how parties compete are widely observed – if not uniformly accepted – even if these rules and regularities are contested and undergo change. A system also implies continuity in its component parts' (Mainwaring & Scully, 1995, p. 4).

When there is certain stability in party systems they are said to be 'institutionalised'. Four conditions must be present in party systems for them to be considered as such (Ibid, p. 5). First, there must be stability in the rules and the ways in which inter-party competition takes place. Second, the most important parties ought to be rooted in society, so they can structure political preferences and achieve regularity in how people vote over time. Third, parties expect elections to be the sole path into government, and the major political actors see both parties and electoral processes as legitimate. Fourth, parties are autonomous from movements and organisations from which they may have emerged; thus, they should also be free from the interests and control of ambitious leaders.

Institutionalising a party system is important because it implies that parties are:

key actors that structure the political process; where it is less institutionalised, parties are not so dominant, they do not structure the political process as much



and politics tends to be less institutionalised and therefore more unpredictable. Democratic politics is more erratic, establishing legitimacy is more difficult, and governing is more complicated. Powerful economic elites tend to have privileged access to policy makers ... [Thus], a very low level of institutionalisation produces problems (Ibid, p. 22).

As was just suggested, institutionalisation facilitates governing and governability, because the links between the Executive, legislators and party leaders are stronger (Ibid). Undisciplined parties and a weakly institutionalised party system hinder the functioning of legislatures. Nonetheless, even if institutionalised party systems push parties towards being organisations that are free from particular interests of influential leaders, in practice it is often difficult to achieve. Every criterion of institutionalisation can go in any direction, whether forwards or, at some point, even backwards. For example, it is common to see parties develop certain levels of indiscipline and even fragmentation, which leads politicians to pursue particular goals in addition to or in replacement of the party's ambitions.

Cantú and Desposato (2009) state that intra-party conflicts are likely to emerge within federal systems of government, as elected officers at subnational levels tend to promote regionalism. Furthermore, 'the characteristics and situations of parties are relevant to the levels of intra-party ideological cohesion. Parties in government may include more heterogeneous social and political groups, and will tend to position themselves in centrist positions. Access to government will allow them to stay united without emphasizing ideological cohesion' (Freidenberg et al., 2008, p. 163).

When intra-party divisions become more entrenched, it can be said that they have evolved into a concept known as factionalism. It will be seen in subsequent chapters that this is an important determinant for Mexican politics.

Boucek (2009, p. 468) defines factionalism as 'the partitioning of a political party (or other organisation and group) into subunits which are more or less institutionalized and who engage in collective action in order to achieve their members' particular objectives ... Depending on their specific design, institutions have the potential to contain factionalism or to encourage its growth.'

Leaders of these groups 'distribute combinations of incentives to maintain their organisational activity. Faction leaders can be thought of as political entrepreneurs who organize and mobilize politicians. By supplying selective and/or collective incentives, they induce politicians to join them and support their leadership' (Bettcher, 2005, p. 341).

As expressions of social and political behaviours and interests, factions are in constant change and consequently the effect they have on parties and on a political system also evolves. Therefore, Boucek (2009, p. 456) suggests that 'factionalism can acquire different faces at different times under specific conditions'. Three main faces of factionalism are identified: cooperative, competitive and degenerative.

Cooperative factionalism is related to the building of consensus and is considered beneficial because it promotes cooperation between party members. On the contrary, competitive factionalism is represented by splits of intra-party groups as a consequence of dissent, polarisation and fragmentation. Although it can have positive consequences, for example widening voter choice and promoting democratic practices within parties, if it is not controlled it can lead to a complete destabilisation of parties. Finally, the degenerative face of factionalism consists of an excessive number of subgroups, each of which pursues their particular interests above the party's, incurring patronage distributions (Ibid). Based on the general theories and arguments herein discussed on what parties should do and be, it is possible to see that Mexico fits within some but not so much in others.

Overall, Mexican parties are factionalised, though all at different stages, and fit into the definition of organisations set up to solve problems of collective actions. To a certain extent, they represent the interests of one or more groups of society and they are also the sole 'providers' of public officials. Furthermore, parties are dominant and structure political processes, which would suggest that the system is institutionalised.

However, the truth is that not all of the conditions that Mainwaring & Scully (1995) claim as required for a system's institutionalisation are met. The Mexican system does have stability in its rules and in the ways in which parties compete for power, especially since new electoral rules gave elections more transparency from 1996

onwards. This in turn proves that parties see elections as the only legitimate way to be in power and they see each other as legitimate rivals. Institutions like the Chamber also have their own rules which regulate interactions and negotiations within them. Furthermore, parties are rooted in society as, at least the three largest ones, have managed to prevail for two to seven decades.

The unfulfilled requirement, and thus the essence of the problem with Mexico fitting the conditions of institutionalism, is the autonomy from founding groups. Mexican parties are anything but independent from the movements and organisations from which they emerged. This means that ambitious leaders are everywhere in parties' structures and manage to create 'alternative' ways of institutionalising political processes and rules (see evidence presented in Chapter 4, drawn, for example, from Díaz & González, interview, 2009; Monreal, interview, 2009, Servín, interview, 2009).

Therefore, based on all of the above, we can infer that by looking into the small details of party institutionalisation and the effect it has on Mexico's democracy, a relevant contribution to the discussion on the causes and effects of the stability of party systems is possible to achieve. Furthermore, there are potential important contributions to the debate on issues related to party systems, such as term limits and informal politics, which will be discussed in the following section.

So far I have defined political parties and described their importance for a democratic regime. I have mentioned that their stability is crucial for adequate coordination between the Executive, the legislative and party leaders. This, in turn, leads to better policy-making and a better performance of parties' representative function.

The representative function is fundamentally performed in Congress (Luna & Zeichmeister, 2005), and it gives way to interesting interactions and behavioural traits among parties. A considerable amount of scholarly literature has been produced with aims at better understanding party organisation and performance in legislative bodies around the world. It is obvious that legislative party theories are relevant for this research and I will therefore give a brief overview of them.

Once again, the theoretical puzzle derived from this research concerns the difficulty of applying ‘model’ theories to such a *sui generis* case. Instead of seeing this as a failure of theoretical frameworks, it is believed that their improvement or adjustment can be achieved, based on empirical cases like the Mexican one.

In addition to the theoretical contributions suggested in this section, the singularities of the case analysed in this research also lead towards empirical evidence that can contribute to the wider literature on term limits, parties and institutions. The following subsection discusses this matter further.

### **2.3.2 The effect of term limits on parties and institutions**

The theoretical debate on term limits has sought to identify the pros and cons in terms of how they affect the representative function of parties and legislative institutions. Those in favour argue that they eliminate particularistic behaviours and thus improve representation. On the other hand, those against argue that they do not eliminate ‘bad habits’, rather they create new ones. At the core of the debate is also the key issue of what effect term limits have on party power.

Carey et al. (1998) identify three main ways in which term limits can affect legislative institutions. The first one is the effect they might have on its composition; the second is Congress members’ behaviour when in office; and the third consists of effects on the institution itself. ‘The first has to do with the types of individuals who seek and win office; the second with their priorities and activities in office; the third with the manner in which power is distributed within legislatures and between legislatures and other policymakers’ (Ibid, p. 273).

In an effort to predict the effect of term limits on local congresses in the United States, Carey (1996) analyses a few cases around the world with constitutional prohibition for re-election. Lessons from Venezuela and Costa Rica show that term limits *per se* do not eliminate purely re-election-oriented behaviour. This is because the quest for fulfilling particular interests is not just a personal behaviour; it can also be generated by parties, which could aim to increase the electoral connection and the maintenance of voters’ support if legislators respond to the demands of certain groups of society.

Overall, Carey's (1996; Carey et al., 1998) main conclusion on whether the composition of legislatures, legislators' behaviour and institutions are affected by term limits is that the type of people who get elected does not vary with prohibition of re-election. Rather, the effects are much more noticeable in behaviour and institutional dynamics. Term limits do not fully inhibit 'utilitarian' views of legislative seats, i.e. seeing them as a tool for careerism. All in all, 'legislators generally are responsive to those who control their political future' (Carey, 1996, p. 25), whether that is inside or outside Congress. However, it is important to have in mind that variations occur from one political system to the next.

Behaviour and institutions are affected by non-re-election mainly through party power and behaviour, and party discipline and political particularism can increase or decrease as a result of term limits, depending on the electoral rules in place and the availability of post-assembly careers (Ibid). For instance, their existence has been thought to solve problems of party cohesion, precisely because term limits should discourage particularistic behaviour and purely re-election-oriented actions. Legislators are expected to work for the broader collective good instead of just focusing on the needs of their district. However, in reality they do not eliminate divisions or prevent the emergence of factions, as most individuals will try to ensure a future position when they leave Congress.

Carey's (1998) analysis of the effect of term limits on the United States' local legislatures shows that non-re-election reduces majority party leaders' control over their groups, because representatives defend causes other than the party's general ones. As they are looking for future careers, they seem obliged to defend their district's causes. Governors, councillors and local interest groups seem to have a considerable amount of power over state deputies. Furthermore, intra-party divisions and instability of party leaderships, common in Latin America, can lead to divisions due to the uncertainty of who will control future political careers (Carey, 1996).

Mexico has had term limits since 1933. However, it was not included in Carey's (1996) comparative study mainly because at the time the study was done, the country did not comply with the minimum conditions of democracy, namely true electoral competition and presidencies held by parties other than the PRI. Only one party had

been in power for decades and opposition forces were barely emerging. Hence, term limits in Mexico were seen by Carey as imposed by the PRI in order to control their own members and prevent them from founding competing opposition parties. It was ‘a self-conscious effort to control by national party bosses to centralise political power’ (Carey, 1996, p. 16).

However, in 2000, the PAN won the presidential elections and again in 2006. This forced the PRI, as well as other parties, to experience differently the effect of term limits on their power. During Vicente Fox’s presidency no serious attempts were made to change the Constitution to allow immediate re-election, contrary to the expectations of many. It was not until during Felipe Calderón’s presidencies that a bill was drafted and discussed, aiming for the abolition of term limits. However, the members of the PRI in the 61st Congress voted against allowing immediate re-election during the approval of political reform in October 2011.

This research attempts to understand the underlying logic of legislative behaviour in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies. The starting point for any assumption made is precisely the constitutional prohibition of re-election, and the many ways in which parties and individual politicians have found routes around term limits to build political careers. Therefore, the results of the analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 on how parties control these careers will suggest useful insights into the operation and effects of term limits in Mexico.

For instance, the previous subsection suggested that parties are not independent from the groups and movements from which they emerged. Therefore, leaders of those movements have solidified their power across all structures. The existence of term limits allows them to ensure that in every election, sympathisers of their cause can be placed on the party list for different offices. Consequently, particularistic interests are likely to be sought, even challenging party cohesion within, for example, the Chamber of Deputies.

It will be seen that within the Chamber, just as in many of the cases observed by Carey (1996; Carey et al., 1998), party leaders’ power is reduced due to the strong influence that other figures have on deputies. Factions play a very important role, and

many times they can cause deputies to adopt particularistic behaviours in terms of securing deals and better results for municipalities, states or sectors.

Furthermore, the collection of background information of members of the PAN, the PRD and the PRI during the 60th Congress shows that term limits do not obstruct politicians from returning to the Chamber after three years of completing their previous tenure. Not only does this mean that limits to re-election are overridden, but also that particularistic behaviours are still in place. This argument will be proven in Chapter 5, showing how those occupying a proportional representation (PR) seat have previously been deputies or senators and once elected to the 60th Congress, they were more likely to be appointed to committee presidencies. This could suggest that they are trusted by party figures, whoever they might be, to set the agenda and/or they have been rewarded for a good performance in the past.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The first and main goal of this chapter was to justify why historical institutionalism is an appropriate theoretical framework to guide my research, while also identifying the contributions that I could make to the paradigm. I argued the suitability of historical institutionalism based on its assumption of institutions as a conjunction of ideas or beliefs that solidify over time. In Mexico, the existence of term limits and the predominance of informal rules, combined with specific historical and contextual phenomena have made parties very powerful. They have not negotiated a thorough reform of the old authoritarian regime of the PRI, and have maintained clientelistic and elitist practices at work. Over time, these attitudes and behaviours of Mexican elites have become institutionalised, thus making it more difficult to achieve positive changes towards a better democracy in the country.

Based on the above, my contribution to historical institutionalism lies in the fact that Mexico is an excellent case for observing the logic of path dependency, because the parties have not found the necessary incentives to create a new set of informal or formal rules to regulate political processes. They are actors with unchanged attitudes who are unlikely to be willing to renounce the benefits derived from operating under informal rules, undoubtedly negotiated to secure key party interests.

Moreover, I argue that path dependency in Mexico is clearly conditional. This is because actors have realised that some changes are good for everyone's sake, but others are not. The PRI has perhaps been in a better position than the PAN and the PRD to realise the benefits and the possibility of changing some frameworks and not others. Had it refused to allow spaces for political competition in the 1990s, its legitimacy and survival would have been jeopardised. Critical junctures, therefore, have led to electoral reforms, which in turn have allowed for a more representative Congress and, ultimately, for the PRI's presidential defeat. However, these moments when collective decisions about change are made have been absent for other crucial aspects of democracy, such as the elimination of term limits and the re-writing of legislative frameworks and other important pieces of legislation.

A second goal of this chapter was to show how the singularity of Mexican institutions and political behaviour pose interesting challenges to legislative and party theories, and to assumptions on the effects of term limits. I specifically sought to prove that legislative theories based on the American congressional model cannot be applied to other cases in a straightforward way. In Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, I argued that the historical evolution of party leadership structures has complicated the pursuit and maintenance of political careers; the existence of multiple leaders and factions within parties has made party cohesion and discipline a complicated venture – unlike in other political systems.

Term limits also have a strong effect on legislative behaviour. In this chapter, I confirmed the initial assumption made in Chapter 1 about how they reinforce party power, rather than limit it. For as long as conditional path dependency prevails in Mexico, particularistic behaviours associated with term limits will continue. Term limits and weak party discipline result in the inability of the Chamber to adequately perform its representative function.

The reader might realise that I have made good progress in fulfilling the goals set at the beginning of this chapter, in terms of placing my research within theoretical frameworks that are broader than Mexican-focused ones. However, without further contextual information and empirical data it is difficult to argue convincingly how my



work contributes to legislative and party theories. It is thus necessary to give way to the empirical section of the thesis.

#### **2.4.1 What will the empirical chapters prove?**

In order to provide the evidence for sustaining the theoretical claims mentioned above, an empirical case study of the 60th Congress of the Chamber of Deputies will be presented. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, primary, secondary and first-hand information gathered through interviews will be processed using qualitative and quantitative analyses. Hence, Part II of this thesis shall lay out the empirical case study. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 will provide the reader with empirical evidence on how the conditional lock in of institutions took place. This will involve a contextualisation of how the birth and development of the PRI, the PRD and the PAN (Chapter 3) shaped their behaviour as the three main parties in Mexico and the ones responsible for adapting institutions and processes to their convenience and needs.

The empirical description of the 60th Congress (Chapter 4) and statistical analyses on background information of 440 of its members (Chapter 5) prove how parties rely on their power to set informal rules. These rules allow a more convenient distribution of committee seats between parties, and later on the negotiation among intra-party factions for giving access to agenda-setting positions to all groups. Through this detailed overview of legislative dynamics in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, the contributions to the literature on term limits, political parties and historical institutionalism should be fully achieved.

## **PART II. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### **Chapter 3. Dissecting the nature and power of the Mexican parties**

Throughout the previous chapters, the reader has learnt that the Mexican case is one where institutional formation during the authoritarian reign of the PRI has resulted in a political system mainly regulated by informal rules. Even when party competition has increased in the last two decades and both the PRD and the PAN have secured electoral victories, the current party and electoral systems have yet to be fully renovated and cleaned of some of the old practices. Formal rules still matter less than informal ones.

I have also said that the main purpose of this research is to contribute to the literature on the Mexican Congress and to theoretical frameworks on parties and legislative organisation. These contributions stem from an empirical case study of the 60th Congress of the Chamber of Deputies, which seeks to identify and analyse the underlying dynamics of legislative behaviour, related to committee distribution in the Chamber. In the second part of this thesis, I shall develop this empirical explanation, but first, it is necessary to understand the evolution and institutionalisation of the three main parties, and their role as architects of the Mexican system.

In this chapter, I present the key contextual foundations upon which I shall build the empirical case study. It presents the reader with a historical account of how the three main parties in Mexico were born and evolved over the past few decades into powerful, hierarchical and interest-based organisations in addition to operating on ideological principles. This chapter is only a prelude to the empirical case study, a description that, based on the premises of historical institutionalism, aims to show how parties, their clientelistic networks, and electoral and legislative institutions have developed over time. This justifies the use of recent and older literature, where both are equally helpful for describing historical events that mattered for Mexico's institutional design; this is particularly true for Section 3.4, a descriptive section that does not intend to make any empirical claims.

The contribution of this chapter to the overall thesis emerges from two main approaches: a textured assessment of the role, attitudes and behaviour of Mexican parties, and the conceptualisation of path dependency as a ‘selective’ process. It is worth briefly discussing them before delving into the chapter.

### **3.1 Roles, attitudes and behaviour of Mexican parties**

Political parties are, for many reasons, key actors for modern democracies. In theoretical terms, they perform institutional and representational roles, as they are supposed to be a link between society and the state (Méndez de Hoyos, 2007; Peschard-Sverdrup & Rioff, 2005). The first role is related to the fact that parties are in charge of recruiting political leaders and organising government. In turn, the representational role consists of the aggregation and articulation of interests as well as the formulation of public policies.

For some, shared preferences are key for party formation (Aldrich, 1995). They help ambitious politicians solve problems associated with winning elections and with governance itself, and ensure their long-term success. This is because parties solve problems of collective action by providing goods for their members, along with a ‘brand name’ associated with a reputation to be used while campaigning. Therefore, they emerge as organisations responding to the rational choices made by gains and office seekers.

Provided that the Chamber of Deputies’ members are representatives of political parties, it is logical to assume that their behaviour responds to, as well as reflects, the specific agenda and goals of the party they belong to (Díaz Rebolledo, 2005; Weldon, 2004). Therefore, legislators are, as the theory suggests, agents working for the benefit of the party, as this is the only path to a political career; ‘they play a crucial role in democratic political systems, both as legislators and as prominent members of their parties’ (Alcántara Sáez, 2008, p. 266). This is especially true when there is a constitutional prohibition for re-election, which has proved impossible to remove even under divided government. However, only the largest and therefore most influential parties are likely to have a say in the institutional design.

The Mexican party system is mostly dominated by three main forces, the PRI, the PAN and the PRD, in order of appearance in the political arena. A series of smaller parties have been founded throughout the years. Some of them have either failed to obtain a minimum of 2 per cent of the votes in an election to comply with the Federal Electoral Institute's (IFE) requirement to maintain registration (Lujambio, 1998; Nacif, 2005a), or have been unable to increase their participation in the legislative or Executive branches and thus failed to become a real competitor. Table 3.1 presents the parties that have taken part in federal elections between 1997 and 2009 and the vote shares they obtained for the Chamber of Deputies.

1997		2000		2003		2006		2009	
Party	Seat Share %	Party	Seat Share %	Party	Seat Share %	Party	Seat Share %	Party	Seat Share %
PAN	24.2	PAN	42.6	PAN	30.2	PAN	41.2	PAN	28.6
PRI	47.8	PVEM	2.2	PRI	44.8	PVEM	3.8	PRI	47.4
PRD	25	PRD	10.2	PRD	19.4	PRI	20.8	PRD	14.2
PC	0	PT	1.2	PT	1.2	PRD	25.2	PVEM	4.2
PT	1.4	PRI	42.2	PVEM	3.4	PT	3.2	PT	2.6
PVEM	1.6	Conv.	0.6	Conv.	1	Conv.	3.2	Conv.	1.2
PPS	0	PARM	0	PSN	0	PANAL	1.8	PANAL	1.8
PDM	0	PSN		PAS	0	PASD	0.8	PSD	0
				MP	0			PM	0
				PLM	0			SM	0
				FC	0				

Source: Author's creation with information from IFE, 2008.

Acronyms correspond to the following: Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), Partido Cardenista (PC), Partido del Trabajo (PT), Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM), Partido Popular Socialista (PPS), Partido Demócrata Mexicano (PDM), Convergencia (Conv.), Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana (PARM), Partido de la Sociedad Nacionalista (PSN), Partido Alianza Social (PAS), México Posible (MP), Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), Fuerza Ciudadana (FC), Partido Nueva Alianza (PANAL), Partido Alternativa Socialdemócrata y Campesina (PASD), Partido Social Demócrata (PSD), Primero México (PM).

Broadly speaking, the behaviour of opposition parties changed as a consequence of the gradual loss of power of the PRI, first in Congress in 1997 (what is known as the emergence of divided government) and three years later when it lost the presidency. This is particularly true for the case of the PRD and the PAN.

During the 1990s, the country experienced an intensive period of democratisation of its legislative and electoral institutions, which is best exemplified by the PRI's loss of its congressional majority in 1997. Furthermore, the PAN, and later on the PRD, began winning over local governments, thereby having the opportunity to prove to the electorate that they were a viable option. The political role of the collective actors under discussion has been modified during democratisation; however, 'the identity of the parties has changed only somewhat' (Philip, 2002, p. 132).

The once-hegemonic PRI has always been institutionalised: 'full of grey officers but also includes charismatic personalities; it has a bulky bureaucracy dependent on favours and political renovations; it is a station for improvisation and an incubator of specialists; a blanket for the ousted yet home for new leaders; a widely centralised federation' (Zagal & Trelles, 2005, p. 209, my translation). Operational rules – at least up to 2000 – were created by party leaders and presidents, and mostly unwritten and customary (Reynoso, 2005) – the clearest example of this was the practice of '*dedazo*', through which presidents chose their successor.

The PAN, born in the opposition, has had a written and formal framework, and has always needed it to represent a challenge to the PRI (Ibid). For instance, the PAN has been able to overcome internal crises concerning its strategies for electoral competition purely because of the statutory order that forces dissidents out of the party; dissidents' positions were normally voted against in the party's multiple conventions or statutory assemblies (Alarcón Olguín & Freidenberg, 2007).

In turn, the PRD does not have either one of the above, and has rather depended on charismatic leaders to decide which way to go and what to do next (Reynoso, 2005). Because of its evolution process – as will be explained in Section 3.4.2 – the PRD has been shaped by factionalism, charismatic leaderships, and the lack of formal internal procedures. This is accompanied by an informal organisational culture that, on the one

hand facilitates access to decision-making posts, and on the other, keeps the party alive under the premise of a shared interest to maintain the PRD running (Martínez González, 2005a).

This chapter will also provide the foundations for grasping the arguments laid out in Chapter 4 regarding legislative party groups' operation. At least since 1997, legislative parties in Mexico have operated through a leadership structure that is not like anywhere else in the world. Strategies, party lines and discipline measures come from outside of Congress, rather than from the party leader. The existence of constitutional term limits, along with the factional nature of parties, allows regional or sectoral leaders to exert their power on deputies (Díaz Rebolledo, 2005; Langston, 1998; Langston & Aparicio, 2008). This is possible due to the predominance of informal rules in the Chamber, which enables the use of congressional seats and concrete appointments to committees or governing bodies to control political careers and ensure loyalties (Langston & Aparicio, 2009).

The key to the situation described above is to understand that the Mexican parties have evolved in a country where oligarchies have certain political fixtures that reflect deeper elements of Mexican politics, such as clientelism and the prevalence of regional power created by the same elites. In this chapter, we shall see that factions play a very important role in driving party behaviour and that the emergence of factionalism and its perennial status affects the balance of power within parties and inevitably reflects on their performance in government, such as Congress.

### **3.2 The lock-in of informal rules: 'selective' path dependency**

Parties have, over time, developed internal fragmentations that result in the quest for achieving multiple agendas and goals set forward by different leaders (as suggested by Díaz Rebolledo, 2005 and Langston, 1998). Therefore, the performance of legislative party groups is complex, and achieved most likely and easily through informal rules, as everything else in the Mexican political system (Camp, 2010).

This argument fits neatly within a theoretical explanation of path dependency, which I stated in the previous chapter as a key element of historical institutionalism, the

guiding framework for this research. That is, in order to understand why committee appointments in the Chamber are made the way they are, it is necessary to analyse how and why informal rules and general party behaviours have been locked in throughout the years. ‘Neoinstitutional approaches may demand further exploration of the specific historical conditions that allow formal rules to shape the political process’ (Pérez Liñán, 2005, p. 73).

Consequently, this chapter reintroduces path dependency and explains how the PRI, the PRD and the PAN have built and maintained institutional processes which ensure that their agendas and goals can be fulfilled in Congress.

We shall see that Mexican parties are organisations that have accumulated an outstanding amount of power because of the PRI’s gradual loss of its monopoly, and the consequential development of the PAN and the PRD. These three dominant actors have selectively replaced parts of an authoritarian institutional path with a plural yet elite one dominated solely by them, which allows them to adapt to changing political circumstances in order to survive. The PRD and the PAN, born as opposition forces to the PRI, have shaped and adjusted their structures and strategies to successfully compete with the PRI, within a political system created by the PRI itself (Hernández Rodríguez, 1998; Mizrahi, 1995 and 1998; Bruhn 1998).

The three parties are very similar, if not the same, from an organisational point of view. For instance, all three of them have candidate selection processes designed to work around term limits while increasing the party’s control of political careers and all three parties also have internalised discipline and cohesion mechanisms to deal with factions and multiple particularistic interests (Nacif, 2002). Furthermore, they have ensured a steady flow of public funds to finance their activities, especially during elections (De Swaan et al., 1998).

The formula for proportional representation was adjusted in 1996 to establish a cap on the number of seats that the largest party could obtain through PR. This was a strategy of the PRD and the PAN to curtail the PRI’s power in Congress, and at the same time, a relatively good deal for all three forces – even the for the PRI – to secure more seats given the support they were likely to have in the 1997 elections (Lujambio, 1998).



Thus, the current system is composed of parties who are concerned with fulfilling their own interests and might not prioritise the electorate's needs (Fuentes Reyes & García Muciño, 2010).

In order to lay out the path-dependent argument of this chapter and explain the origin of the parties' complex behaviour in Congress, it is organised as follows. Section 3.3 explores the nature and effect of factionalism on the expansion and entrenchment of the parties' power networks across the political system. It also elaborates on the evolution and power of the Mexican oligarchies through their control over key elements of the political system of the country, and therefore the impact they have had on the country's democratisation process. This analysis will be a necessary starting point for Chapter 4, which looks at how the parties exert their power on the Chamber of Deputies. In turn, Section 3.4 presents a brief timeline of the evolution of the PRI, the PAN and the PRD; this will help the reader understand how the power networks discussed in Section 3.3 were developed.

### **3.3 Power networks and clientelism: shaping governmental institutions under divided leaderships and factionalism**

Since their increased access to power, Mexican parties, especially the opposition, have faced electoral victories but also defeats. Among other things, adapting to an increased competition during elections has meant that the PRI, the PAN and the PRD have sought electoral success both through representing the citizens' will, but also by establishing clientelistic networks to secure mobilisation and support (see Bruhn, 1998; Mirón Lince, 2005; Mizrahi, 1998). Therefore, the survival of the PRI, the PAN and the PRD can be attributed to their ability to profit from the benefits made available by the political and electoral system such as material resources, the prevalence of informal rules and the weakness of political institutions (Esparza Martínez, 1999; Wuhs, 2008).

These benefits are what I consider to be the key path-dependent features of the Mexican system, and the reason why party behaviour is crucial – because the parties know how important they are for their political goals and have thus made sure not to lose them (as Wuhs, 2008 also suggests). That is, there is a collective agreement that

the electoral reforms, which have been approved by the three parties, should benefit them all, as they allow control of a considerable number of seats in Congress. Having shared power of the Chamber for over ten years means that the three actors have institutionalised both its formal and informal operational processes, for example the distribution of decision-making positions, and have, in turn, adapted their internal party policies and strategies to continue operating within the electoral and party institutions in place (Ibid). Let us remember that ‘self-reinforcing dynamics associated with collective action processes mean that organizations have a strong tendency to persist once they are institutionalized’ (Pierson, 2000, p. 259).

The Mexican electorate has expressed dissatisfaction with the parties over the past few years and has lost trust in them (see Aziz Nassif & Alonso, 2009; Luna & Zechmeister, 2005; Méndez de Hoyos, 2007; UNDP, 2002). Using data from the 2011 Latinobarómetro survey, Table 3.2 shows that Mexicans are 18 points below the Latin American average of preferring a democratic regime to an authoritarian one, and twice more indifferent to democracy over authoritarian governments. Only Guatemala scored lower than Mexico in the regional survey, which highlights the lack of trust in democracy that Mexican voters have.

<b>Table 3.2 Support for democracy in Mexico</b>			
	Democracy is preferable to any other type of government	In some cases an authoritarian government could be preferred over a democratic one	People like me are indifferent to an authoritarian or a democratic regime
Latin American regional average	58	17	18
Mexico	40	14	36

Source: Author’s creation with information from Latinobarómetro, 2011.

Table 3.3 uses data from the World Values Survey and clearly shows that the proportion of respondents who had no trust at all in parties had a 4.7 per cent increase by 2005, in comparison with the average of data collected for 1990, 1996 and 2000. The gap between those who do not trust parties at all and those who trust them ‘a great deal’ also became 2.5 per cent wider in 2005.

<b>Table 3.3 Confidence in Political Parties</b>		
	<b>Year</b>	<b>Year</b>
	Average for 1990, 1996, 2000	2005
A great deal	5.30%	3.50%
Quite a lot	25.40%	20.50%
Not very much	34.30%	36.30%
None at all	35.10%	39.80%
Total	5336 (100%)	1530 (100%)

Source: Author's creation with data from the World Values Survey

Results from the Mexican survey of the Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP) for 2006 show that, just a few days before the presidential and legislative elections, 76 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement 'political parties only serve the purpose of dividing people'; but at the same time, 71 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement 'democracy cannot exist without political parties'. This is an indicator that, while the Mexican electorate is not fully satisfied with the parties' performance, they recognise the very important role they play in the country's democracy (Moreno, 2010).

Voters are particularly sceptical of parties' internal democratic development and therefore of their contribution towards the country's better political practices.<sup>22</sup> For instance, parties project a negative image because factions compete fiercely for power and candidate selection processes are solved through informal mechanisms or negotiations between party elites (see Chapter 4 for testimonies from parliamentary staff and members of Congress). These two issues reflect the lock-in of rules, which has taken place in the last couple of decades and are, therefore, central to understanding party behaviour. I shall discuss them further in this section.

Given the fact that Mexico was governed by the PRI for 70 years, many of the modern political institutions in the country were created by the party, though were later

<sup>22</sup> Peschard-Sverdrup & Rioff (2005) suggest this is an international trend that parties must address if they wish to positively influence political systems.

modified to a certain extent due to electoral reforms and the creation of institutions such as the IFE (Meyer, 1995; Mizrahi, 1995; Philip, 2002). Thus, the ideals and practices inherent to hegemonic parties<sup>23</sup> like the PRI can be found in the entire system through clientelism, elitism, and distribution of goods among party affiliates to maintain loyalties. Though the PAN and the PRD were born as opposition forces to the PRI and were driven by democratic goals, they have been unable to escape being influenced by these ‘common practices’ of Mexican politics (Wuhs, 2008).

As will be seen in Section 3.4, the PAN’s and the PRD’s first electoral victories took place at the local level. Therefore, they ‘concentrated on developing party organizations through local and state-level electoral competition’ (Klesner, 2004, p. 105). Over the years, secured victories in certain municipalities or states gave way to higher numbers of congressional seats, which meant a greater participation in federal decision-making, and the availability of increased opportunities for party members to have a political career (see Bruhn, 1998; Mizrahi, 1998). Nonetheless, local power, such as governorships and mayoralities, is still the most important political arena for the parties, and therefore the principal generator of divided leaderships.

Hence, the PRI, the PAN and the PRD have created an electoral system in which territorial strongholds or sectoral support can secure relative stability for electoral gains. As a consequence, public offices become ‘goodies’ or prizes to distribute among those party members who, in some way, prove to be worthy of them. In turn, this affects the candidate selection process within each party, along with leadership structures and other important strategies (see Langston, 1998; Magar, 2012; Wuhs 2008).

The strategic selection of those members who are to represent the party’s interests throughout the executive and legislative offices is triggered by the fact that these government institutions are so weak that parties can shape and reshape them as they

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<sup>23</sup> Magaloni (2006) defines hegemonic parties as oversized governing coalitions that are largely sustained through the distribution of government spoils and patronage. The pillar of a hegemonic party regime is its monopoly of mass support, which in turns allows the regime to deter elite divisions and to manipulate institutions by unilaterally controlling constitutional change. Furthermore, it employs elections as key instruments for obtaining information about the extent of the party’s mass support and its geographical distribution. The hegemonic party creates a market for political loyalty and makes citizens vest their interests in the survival of the regime.

see fit. Therefore, interest groups, sectors and any influential leaders within them will attempt to place 'one of them' at the decision-making table.

Wuhs (Ibid) argues that candidate selection processes have evolved within the PAN and the PRD over the last ten years, as part of the parties' process of institutionalisation and their quest for electoral success:

[Party] leaders are confronted with the choice of giving priority to some party goals and not to others. Mexico's mixed electoral system allowed party leaders to achieve opposing goals simultaneously by adopting heterogeneous selection mechanisms for different candidate posts. To serve party electoral goals (and achieve 'democratic' ends), they could open the field for executive contests and benefit from statewide and nationwide primary competition. They could also preserve the unity of partisan elites, and help build cohesive parties that might aid democratic consolidation, through the distribution of PR seats among key party leaders and factions. Preserving control of those candidacies also buttressed the power of the party leaders themselves. And, most evident in the PAN, party leaders placated activists, who otherwise might oppose open rules and elite decision making, by using processes that were closed to the party rank and file [...] (Ibid, p. 61).

Divided leaderships have emerged over the years because of the increased opportunities for governors, moral leaders and important figures in Mexican political life to intervene in federal decision-making (see Camp, 2010; Díaz Rebolledo, 2005; Langston, 1995 and 1998). They do so with the purpose of maintaining and increasing their own power, whether in line with a particular party goal, or directly related to their personal interest.

The existence of multiple leaders within the parties results in a situation of dispersion of loyalties of those elected to public office towards several principals. This is especially evident among members of Congress, who often do not prioritise the national party's agenda, but seek to please their governor or regional party leader instead (as suggested by Díaz Rebolledo, 2005). Alternatively, some deputies choose to obey a moral leader, who can be any important figure within the party, instead of

their parliamentary group's leader in the Chamber. This was the case of the members of Convergencia in the 60th Congress, since some of them preferred to take guidelines and orders from Dante Delgado, the national party leader, rather than from Alejandro Chanona, chosen as head of the legislative party group (Morales, interview, 2009). In an interview with Francisco Palomino, an experienced parliamentary advisor, I learnt that the divisions in the PRI's group in the 60th Congress were the following<sup>24</sup>:

The PRI's factions in Congress mirror the divisions at the national level. One group follows Manlio Fabio Beltrones, leader of the PRI in the Senate. The other group is loyal to Enrique Peña Nieto, governor of the State of Mexico and who is seen as the strongest candidate for the 2012 presidential elections. The third group is headed by Beatriz Paredes, current leader of the PRI at the national level. She is the most moderate *priista* leader and one of her main operators within Congress is [Dep.] Javier Guerrero. The current PRI leader in the Lower Chamber, Emilio Gamboa, is somewhere between Peña Nieto and Paredes, and learnt to negotiate with both groups, which is why he manages to maintain a certain cohesiveness in the group (Palomino, interview, 2009).

All three forces' evolutionary processes since the late 1990s have given way for more faction-like internal disputes for power, though the amount and depth of the divisions vary across them. The PAN has seemed to be the one that has controlled them better, perhaps due to its reliance on formal rules. The PRD is the most fragmented party,<sup>25</sup> and its congressional group faithfully reflects this trait (Baena Paz & Saavedra Andrade, 2004). The PRI perhaps did not see the real problem that internal groups represent until it no longer had the power it once had, and therefore didn't have the resources to keep everyone happy (Langston, 2007).

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<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, factions across the whole party structure also revolve around trade unions and other interest groups. Two prominent examples worth pointing out are: 1) the Teachers' Union, led by Elba Esther Gordillo, a strong figure within the PRI capable of influencing voting results both on the Legislative floor and at the polls; and 2) the union of PEMEX workers, who have over the years lobbied for or against energy bills in Congress.

<sup>25</sup> This is because, as the reader will learn in Section 3.4, the PRD was formed by very different ideological groups, such as a populist one, a radical and Marxist one, and a group of former *priistas*. Thus, particular interests and demands are very likely to impede a general party consensus.

What has been discussed in this section reveals a possible contradiction between the repeatedly suggested image of strong, centralised parties who run the country, and another one of divided organisations composed of smaller groups with differing views of how to lead the party to political success. However, in reality, centralised decision-making and factionalism are complementary within Mexican parties to the point of being symbiotic.

Centralisation of decision-making is necessary to deal with administrative and financial matters of the organisation, including the coordination of electoral campaigns and the negotiation with other parties, for coalitions or allocation of committee presidencies in Congress for example. Without centralisation, it would be very difficult for party factions to reach agreements in order to distribute candidacies, committee seats in the Chamber of Deputies and decision-making posts within the party structure. Without factionalism, though, parties would be unable to accommodate the interests of several sectoral or territorial groups, and would fail to expand their influence to strongholds which were not included in the party's core at its time of birth (see chapter 5 of Wuhs, 2008).

Hence, factions have not only persisted despite the gradual centralisation of parties over the years, but have also become deeply entrenched and have a strong effect on party behaviour. Quite obviously, factionalism has an impact on parties' actions when in office, as will be seen in Chapter 4.

### **3.3.1 The nature of factionalism**

In Chapter 2, factions were defined as subunits of a political party, when the party is partitioned so particular interests of some members can be met (Boucek, 2009). They can also be seen as channels for expressing dissent and for releasing internal pressures generated by parties (Bettcher, 2005).

The logic of factions can be associated with ideological and interest-based incentives (Ibid). 'Despite the historic role of state goods and services for building support in Latin America, the region's parties have been regularly plagued by internal disputes [...] The logic of building political careers leads party colleagues to compete over

patronage needed to build support, leading to divisive factional disputes' (Benton, 2007, pp. 56-57).

In Mexico, the most common figures to generate intra-party conflicts – aside from sectoral groups – are governors, subnational party organisations and certain groups within the electorate (Díaz Rebolledo, 2005; Hernández Rodríguez, 1998). The quote I included on page 110 of this thesis from my interview with Francisco Palomino on how the divisions in the PRI's group in the 60th Congress mirrored the party's national factions helps to prove this point. The factions were organised around a governor, a powerful senator and the national party leader (Palomino, interview, 2009). However, trade unions and other interest groups are also known for being active as factions within Congress, and though perhaps in a limited way, interview material presented in Chapter 4 portrays the diversity of these groups.

Carlos Lazard and Miguel Ángel Sánchez, who have been parliamentary advisors to deputies from both the PRI and the PRD over the past few years, revealed in my interviews with them that territorial bases are also important for Mexican factions, particularly for the PRI and the PRD, and this is mirrored in power struggles within Congress. In addition to having thematic organisation processes, deputies of the PRI are grouped by states of representation, and these are used by governors to put pressure on policy-making, particularly for budgetary matters (Lazard, interview, 2009; Sánchez, interview, 2009). In the PRD's case, factions representing the party's territorial strongholds, particularly Michoacán and Mexico City are important and have rights over key committee seats. Erick López Barriga, member of the 60th Congress, was the coordinator for the group of deputies representing Michoacán; he was appointed to a secretariat of the Budget Committee precisely because of his position as coordinator of that very important state representation (López Barriga, interview, 2009).

Historically, the PRD has been the most divided party, and its subgroups respond much more to leadership figures (Baena Paz & Saavedra Andrade, 2004) rather than geographical or sectoral flags, which is in contrast to the PRI. However, regional strongholds and relationships with unions do matter to a certain extent. Hilgers (2008, p. 124) argues that:



The emergence of one predominant leader, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, and the primacy of his political strategy set the party on a path of personalistic factions, and centralised power, despite the best intentions not to replicate these characteristics of the PRI. As a result of Cárdenas' desire to oust the PRI from power, to do so in the electoral arena, and to do it as soon as possible, the PRD focused resources on elections. The resources, including time, that would have been necessary for institutionalising party rules and regulations to ensure internal cohesion and democratic procedures were not available. As a result, leadership and alliances were personalised, and factions battled for power. When the PRD began to win local and state governments, these tendencies spilled into its administration and played out as clientelistic relationships with citizens.

In turn, the PAN's factions can be broadly divided into newcomers and traditional party members. Analysing the PAN's internal candidate selection process towards the presidential elections of 2005, Alarcón Olguín & Freidenberg (2007) suggest that the development of new (and perhaps more democratic) internal procedures has responded to multiple factors. One of them is the increase in factionalism within the party over the last decades, which 'generated more demands for mobility and calls for further inclusion in the PAN's process' (Ibid, p. 734, my translation). The party needed to control and maximise its electoral objectives and prepare for achieving an internal cohesion that could help approve bills in a divided Chamber of Deputies (Ibid).

A general categorisation of factions, following Boucek's (2009) typologies of dynamics,<sup>26</sup> would place the PRD's factions within the competitive, even falling into degenerative, as will be seen for the case of the 60th Congress in the next chapter. In turn, the PAN's subgroups are much more cooperative than the other two parties.

Within these typologies, the PRI could be classified as having a combination of cooperative and competitive factions, especially for the 60th Congress. Langston (1995, pp. 244-245, my translation) describes the PRI's factions as follows:

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<sup>26</sup> As explained in Chapter 2.

The intra-regime political factions can be seen as cooperative hierarchies whose members and leaders work together towards the achievement of both common and personal goals. Therefore, we witness the classical tension of collective arrangements: if all individuals see to their personal goals and do not cooperate, then the group's aims will be threatened and each actor will end up worse off than if they had cooperated. However, for fear that others may take advantage, many individuals do not stick to the agreement and, in doing so, receive even worse blows in return. Mexican political factions oblige and allow for cooperation of all individuals, which brings more benefits in the future.

Despite the severity of conflict and tension between factions, reasonable party cohesion is normally reached towards presidential elections (as suggested by Alarcón Olguín & Freidenberg, 2007 and Langston, 1995). Joint efforts and force are needed to win in a context of increasingly high electoral competition. But when the election is over, the factions resume their conflict, especially regarding the adoption of rules and procedures.

Outside of election time, regional or faction leaders are much more important than national leaders. This proves that loyalty-based, sector or region-specific systems for party organisation and the execution, as well as the maintenance of their power, has an effect on the parties' participation in government. 'The historic importance of pork and patronage for building party organisations and cultivating support in Latin America has also meant that politicians have concentrated on strategising over how to maximise access to the benefits of office, rather than on constructing coherent policy platforms or providing programmatic goods to constituents' (Benton, 2007). For the Mexican case, this means that the power and influence of multiple party leaders also affects procedural dynamics of institutions such as the Chamber of Deputies, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Factions are groups seeking votes, offices and policies (Benton, 2007; Bettcher, 2005). Overall, even if some of them are disorganised, factions in Mexican political parties have effective systems for the distribution of incentives, which mainly rely on public offices at different geographical and structural levels (as suggested by Alarcón

Olguín & Freidenberg, 2007; Baena Paz & Saavedra Andrade, 2004; Langston, 1995). Congressional seats are one of the most common prizes, and they are certainly important parts of political career-building, as stated by Miguel Ángel Jiménez, who was the party leader of the PANAL in the 60<sup>th</sup> Congress (Jiménez, interview, 2010). Chapters 4 and 5 will analyse this particular matter in depth.

The following section explores another important matter regarding the parties' influence on the political system of the country: the electoral reforms of the late 20th century. It also points out the unlikelihood of a change towards a reduced scope of the parties at all levels of public life in Mexico.

### **3.3.2 Mexican party oligarchies: origin and survival of the PRI, the PAN and the PRD**

The parties' historical cycles, to be described in the second section of this chapter, along with the commodity-like use of public offices explained throughout this section, are examples of the parties' capacity to adjust and reinvent themselves to keep, control and expand their power, thereby consolidating the replacement of a former hyperpresidentialist system with a partidocracy.

Democratisation in Mexico during the 1990s, contrary to other countries of the region, resulted in stronger rather than weaker parties (Philip, 2002). Once the PRI lost the presidency in 2000, 'a hegemonic party system was replaced by a hegemonic system of parties' (Aziz Nassif & Alonso, 2009, p. 293).

Since their birth, both the PAN and the PRD had the vision of making the country's political system much more democratic. 'Leaders were conscious of the parties' shared commitment to democracy as well as the distinctions between their conceptions of it' (Wuhs, 2008, p. 28).

Given that parties are responsible for appointing members of government, their internal procedures for candidate selection, as well as their member's views and behaviour inevitably affect the process of democratic consolidation (Valdés Zurita, 2005). Thus, through a decades-long interaction with the PRI, and from both the

traditional left and the Catholic right (Philip, 2002), they managed to imprint some of their dynamics on the electoral system and public institutions (mainly the Chamber of Deputies).

Loeza (1999) labels the PAN as ‘a loyal opposition’, in that it was always careful to remain loyal to constitutional formalities in order to pursue its driving objective: bring about change through the electoral cause. She argues that:

Throughout its history, and at least until the beginning of the 1980s, the National Action party always lived under aggravating conditions due to the tension derived from the ambiguity affecting any opposition party, and which is presented as the dilemma between co-governing and opposing the government, and in the problem of contributing to the operation of the institutional arrangement to which it belongs; this means supporting the governing functions of its adversary in power, or blocking its government and perhaps the institutional process as a way to overturn its adversary. However, for the case of the PAN this ambiguity was highlighted by the characteristics of the authoritarian environment, because although the constitutional regime allowed the articulation and representation of particular interests, the operation of the political system was adverse to party competition and, of course, to the alternation of power (Ibid, p. 29, my translation).

Over time, and particularly during the 1990s, the PAN developed better candidate selection practices, to respond to its rapid electoral success at the local level (see Section 3.4.3 for further detail). It was also a key negotiating force in the Chamber of Deputies, particularly during the presidencies of Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo, when it pushed for electoral reforms that took the country a step forward in democratic developments. ‘Justice and the rule of law were primary components of contemporary conceptualisations of democracy evident in its doctrine at the party’s foundation’ (Wuhs, 2008, p. 28)

In turn, although much younger than the PAN, the PRD has also had an impact on the country’s transition from a hegemonic party system to a more competitive one. It was formed by the fusion of the Democratic Current, a group of dissidents of the PRI led

by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, with satellite left-wing parties, and therefore has put pressure on the PRI's electoral performance since the presidential election of 1988 (Valdés Zurita, 2005).

Wuhs (2008, p. 27) clearly sums up the PRD's role in challenging the PRI's regime:

The PRD is a self-proclaimed left party. The party was founded on the promise of achieving the goals of the Mexican Revolution (especially economic and social justice) that had once been espoused by the PRI but, in the view of *perredistas*, had been abandoned with the regime's turn to neoliberalism in the 1980s [...] Therein were the party's two foremost political objectives: a turn away from the neoliberal orthodoxy of PRI presidents since the 1980s and the removal of the PRI from the presidency.

Together, the PAN and the PRD mobilised different sectors of society, which were already rather dissatisfied with the PRI's approach in the hard economic times of the 1980s (see Meyer, 1995; Philip, 2002; Whitehead, 1998). Nevertheless, as they began to see electoral success, they were forced to rethink their internal strategies for maintaining and growing electoral strongholds, and this at times represented a dilemma in terms of abiding to their original conceptions of how a democratic party should behave (Wuhs, 2008). Selection of candidates and distribution of party leadership offices became difficult tasks, as we shall see in Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3, perhaps even more so for the PRD; inevitably, both parties had to resort to clientelism and patronage and were thus under pressure to create favourable political conditions outside the party to keep internal power networks in operation (Ibid).

In reality, however, the PRD and the PAN did not create the tripartite system by themselves. The PRI also played an important role; after all, the most important electoral reforms were approved when it still sat in the presidential chair. Philip (2002) argues that the breakthrough into transition politics in Mexico took place between 1986 and 1989, and one of the most important moments was the 1988 elections, which were 'a near-disaster for the PRI', but from which the party recovered. He argues that:

It is evident that the vote against the PRI in 1988 was in part a protest vote against a very poor economic performance and in part a personal vote for Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. The votes lost by the PRI in 1988 were not irrecoverable. It was therefore feasible for the incoming government of Carlos Salinas to democratize Mexico without necessarily consigning the PRI to defeat. Salinas and his technocratic allies understood that, in the end, formal democratization would be unavoidable if Mexico was to enjoy good relations with the US. Without this it was hard to see Mexico enjoying an economic recovery (Ibid, pp. 139-140).

We shall see in Section 3.4.1 that Salinas' plan to democratise the country also involved changes in the way the president related to the party. Salinas believed that the 'PRI required an organizational shaking up in order to make it fit for democratization' (Ibid, p. 140). However, perhaps the most significant reorganisation processes of the party did not occur until 2000, when it lost the presidential seat to the PAN. Political competition increased even more then and with it opportunities to reshape the rules of the political game.

Therefore, over time, the PRI, the PAN and the PRD have set in motion a process of democratisation which has gradually given them all a more equal access to power and therefore the opportunity to pursue their main political goals. One of their main accomplishments as architects of Mexico's current political system has been the design of new institutions. 'Institutional design has played a major role in shaping and consolidating the Mexican hegemonic party system. Even if most commonly accepted definitions of the Mexican regime insist upon the importance of informal rules in its day-to-day operations, it was through the framework of law that the conditions necessary for the implementation of political informality and arbitrariness were created' (Prud'home, 1998, p. 139).

Perhaps the parties' main influence can be appreciated in the electoral reforms approved by Congress in 1996 and 2007.<sup>27</sup> Among other things, these reforms made

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<sup>27</sup> For an overview of these electoral reforms please refer to Chapter 2. Sections 3.4.1 through 3.4.3 also provide details on the significance that these reforms had for the parties, particularly for the case of the PRI and the PAN.

more money available for campaigns, which increased and consolidated the power and outreach of parties (De Swaan et al., 1998). I argue that, ultimately, this also proves the deep entrenchment of oligarchies in Mexico, as we shall see in the final sections of this chapter.

The electoral laws that have ruled elections since 1996 have been negotiated within the tripartite system. The main purpose of the electoral reform of 1996 was to legitimise elections, making them trustworthy and fair by granting autonomy to the IFE (Aziz Nassif & Alonso, 2009; Colomer, 2003; Lujambio, 1998).

Overall, the 1996 reforms were a turning point for the country's formal democracy, but still had serious shortcomings because the parties kept electoral competition limited to the most powerful forces only.

Only the PRI, the PAN and the PRD have survived for decades, while smaller parties appear and disappear at almost every election due to their inability to reach the 2 per cent electoral threshold established. This suggests that perhaps the way the PAN, the PRI and the PRD have shaped the electoral system has made it impossible for other parties to build and maintain a cohort and a pool of candidates with a career in politics, and with the experience of playing alongside the existing political rules. New and smaller political parties result in groups of one-term-political-career individuals who, although operating on the fringes of legislative decision-making, benefit from the privileges of being in power. Only those smaller parties that form coalitions with the larger parties have been able to prevail.

Colomer (2003, p. 13, my translation) discusses the limitations of the 1996 reforms in terms of making electoral competition an exclusive game:

Within the democratisation process of political elections in Mexico, negotiations between the government officials of the PRI and the opposition prioritised the establishment of an independent electoral authority, capable of combating fraud and of applying criteria for parties and candidates to access public finances and mass media in an equal manner. In exchange for competition and honesty in elections, the opposition agreed to accept complex

electoral rules, designed to fit the electoral strength and expectations of all parties at every stage, and which were relatively exclusive and far from proportional.

The adjustments worked fine in the midterm elections of 1997 and 2003, as well as in the presidential ones of 2000. However, since 2000, and more evidently in 2006, the positive virtues of the 1996 reforms (De Swaan et al., 1998) diminished when parties' budgets were mainly spent on media campaigns; the use of mass media was crucial for the 2006 elections but media coverage was not done in the most transparent way (Aziz Nassif & Alonso, 2009).

Therefore, in 2007 consensus was reached among the three largest parties in order to modify the model for using the media for campaigns. Serra (2009, p. 412, my translation) argues that:

Implicitly or explicitly, discussing the rules that would guide elections in the future had two objectives: to begin healing the wounds and divisions that the 2006 election left behind and to produce a new legal framework that would avoid future conflicts of that nature. The first of these goals seems to have been achieved to a certain extent, as the three main parties stood behind the reform. The second objective, however, was far from resolved, since a careful reading of the framework reveals several faults.

The owners of TV and radio channels protested against the proposed modifications and the result was not a fully 'cleansing' reform that limited the power of the media. The nature of coalitions was also discussed in the reform, and even when the attempt was made to free the smaller parties from the 2 per cent clause if they ran in a coalition, the Supreme Court ruled that they still have to reach the threshold to keep registration (Aziz Nassif & Alonso, 2009). Consequently, the power of the three large parties was once again proved in the re-shaping of the electoral system.

Even when formal electoral rules that affect the party system and the composition of Congress have been cleaned and made more accountable (Lujambio, 1998), informal



practices are still quite relevant. This is especially true for the Chamber of Deputies, as will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

It is very unlikely that the current *status quo* of powerful parties will change in any way. The existing context shows that the four elements of path dependency<sup>28</sup> in political events are present: 1) multiple equilibrium; 2) contingency, which means that if events occur at the right moment, they can have enduring consequences; 3) a critical role for timing and sequencing of events; and 4) inertia, that is, the equilibrium reached by the development of a sequence of events will be resistant to change.

The Mexican partidocracy is, in Crespo's (2007, p. 95, my translation) words:

an oligarchy that manages formal power from the parties without needing to be accountable to citizens, at least not when defending common interests. To modify this distortion, and quantitatively and qualitatively increase political representation, it is necessary to modify the normative framework of the party and electoral system. The parties have the faculty to modify this institutional arrangement, but because that could threaten their interests (sometimes common, sometimes of one of them with sufficient force to impede reforms), then we face a vicious circle...

The parties have made changes to their internal rules accordingly with their increasing participation in the decision-making process (Wuhs, 2008). The increased role in decision-making, in turn, has allowed them to shape the political system to ensure that they remain at the centre of policy-making. Thus, we could say that the stability of the system, accompanied by its de-institutionalisation, is the product of a tension between informal and formal rules (as suggested by Prud'home, 1998). In the following section I shall guide the reader through a brief account of the history of the PRI, the PRD and the PAN, with aims at further understanding how, when and why these actors have adopted the behaviours and practices which have shaped the country's political institutions.

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<sup>28</sup> Let us remember that path dependency claims that: 'previously viable options may be foreclosed in the aftermath of a sustained period of positive feedback, and cumulative commitments on the existing path will often make change difficult and will condition the form in which new branching will occur' (Pierson, 2000, p. 265).

### **3.4 Shaping the political system**

As stated earlier, a key element for answering the main research question of this thesis is to understand why parties are hierarchical, powerful and operate through interest-based networks. The foundations of such behaviours lie in historical moments such as their origin; the adoption and later adjustments of electoral strategies; the establishment of internal structures and the consequential emergence of internal groups or factions; and the development of stronger ties with interest groups, in addition to ideological ones. Hence, it is worth highlighting what I consider the key moments of the existence of the PRI, the PAN and the PRD.

#### **3.4.1 The PRI**

Initially named the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) in 1929 and representing leaders in specific regions of the country, it then became the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM) in 1938, a party of masses and collective organisations, representing organised groups. The dominant party in Mexico changed its name in 1946 to Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) (González Olguin, 2006).

For nearly 50 years, it was subordinated to the presidential chair, and therefore adjusted its ideology and links to its electorate based on the policies implemented by the Mexican Chief Executive (Pozas-Horcasitas, 2008), who in turn was expected to follow the party's traditions. The PRI has always had a considerably large electoral and administrative apparatus, standing upon a dual structure: territorial and sectoral.<sup>29</sup>

As the dominant, largest, and most established party in the country, the PRI governed almost without any organised opposition for many years. Its power network was so overarching that it apparently met the needs and interests of a large percentage of the population. It resorted to long-term corporatism as a link to society and the fulfilment of representation of interests (Hernández Rodríguez, 1998).

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<sup>29</sup> The former works vertically and the latter is composed of three main sectors: labour, peasants and working-class organisations. The sectors served the purpose of mobilisation for support towards the government and also guaranteed good government conditions through agreements with employers (Zagal & Trelles, 2005).

Nonetheless, its dependence on unions and organised movements related to natural resources and other key economic activities left the middle class unrepresented. The middle class began to grow and emerging opposition parties such as the PAN became the viable institutional channel to turn to for electing a government capable of fulfilling their demands (Lujambio, 2006). In addition, a new elite began to emerge within the PRI itself in the 1970s and 1980s seeking innovative approaches towards policy-making.

As with any other political actor, the PRI went through important changes throughout the 20th century (Alcocer, 1993), but these were related far more to national policy-making than for other parties. Mexican politics during the PRI's reign resemble Venezuela's during Acción Democrática's dominance, in that the president and the head of the National Executive Committee were the 'two nodes of power in the policy party' (Coppedge, 1994, p. 66). Coppedge claims that 'the relationship between these two power nodes structures the politics of the policy party. Mutual dependence gives both an incentive to get along [...] Nevertheless, there are times when agreement is impossible, and in those situations, each actor has enough authority to act alone in certain spheres of policy-making' (Ibid, p. 66-67).

In addition, struggles between leaders also triggered conflicts and changes, which fuelled shifts in its position within the party system (as described by Camp, 2007; Mizrahi, 1995; Tirado Rasso, 2000; Zagal & Trelles, 2005). I shall attempt to provide a brief yet clear summary of the most important ones below.

#### ***3.4.1.1 Key historical events***

First of all, in 1965, Carlos A. Madrazo, who a year before had been appointed as leader of the party, tried to internally consolidate democracy in the PRI. He made it clear that he planned on restructuring the party by acknowledging the importance of affiliates and mobilisation, along with the elimination of old and dishonest practices towards winning more votes during elections (González Olguin, 2006).

The key part of his reform consisted of democratising processes for candidate selection and for electing local leaders. Candidates supported by a majority vote

would be admitted without necessarily having to be promoted by sectoral organisations. This meant that the sectoral structure would be weakened, giving way to a stronger link between the party and society (Ibid); increasing the power of the president of the National Executive Committee of the party was the only way to succeed (Pozas-Horcasitas, 2008). This would have been an obstruction to the power of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, then president of the country, and known for leading one of Mexico's most authoritarian regimes, marked by the violent attack on student protests in October 1968.

In addition, Madrazo's reform reduced the influence that governors could have within the decision-making process; this was the main detonator of a huge opposition across the party, led by Governor Leopoldo Sánchez Celis, from the state of Sinaloa. Officers and public servants from all levels of government, led by governors and leaders of corporatist organisations with allies in the National Executive Committee of the party together made sure that Madrazo's reform was set aside (Ibid). In the end Madrazo was forced to resign from the national leadership of the PRI (González Olguín, 2006).

New organisational changes were attempted in 1973, shortly after Jesús Reyes Heróles became president of the PRI. Known as 'one of the most relevant ideologues of the regime, who was determined to ease the mechanisms for vertical control and allow greater participation of support groups in the party' (Pereyra, 1988), Reyes Heróles wanted to provide the party with better foundations by leaving the unionised sectors out of the game (Reveles Vázquez, 2003a).<sup>30</sup>

This took place during Luis Echeverría's presidency (1970-1976), which was accompanied by organisational changes within the party, where younger politicians with less partisan careers than most leaders of the PRI were the closest collaborators to the president. In addition, the president held fewer processes of consultation with the party for national policies and for party-related matters (Ibid).

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<sup>30</sup> Although it should be said anecdotally that most of these organisational changes were implemented as part of Luis Echeverría's personal disputes with Fidel Velázquez, leader of the CTM, the largest labour union of the country.

Echeverría intended his regime to be a new era for Mexican politics, where there could be more room for political competition, a necessary characteristic of democracy. His goal was ‘to rescue and strengthen the support bases of the state and rehabilitate the presidential authority and prestige. To do so, Echeverría made as much contact as possible with various sectors of society, including groups within the opposition’ (Pereyra, 1988, p. 10, my translation).

But the imminent economic crisis that led to the devaluation of the peso in 1976 and the adoption of harsh austerity measures forced Echeverría to reconsider the presidency’s relationship with the party’s unionised sectors. This was a clear obstacle to any modernisation plans, which would have failed anyway because of tensions between Reyes Heróles and Echeverría. The former ‘applied’ to be a presidential candidate without any designation from the latter. In a presidential system like the traditional PRI model, where the head of the federal executive power was also at the top of her party’s hierarchy (and is therefore the chief controller of political careers), Reyes Heróles’ move broke the golden rule of obeying the president. He was therefore fired from the leadership of the PRI.

After Madrazo’s and Reyes Heróles’ failed attempts to modernise the PRI, a successful one finally came in 1977 during the presidency of Jose López Portillo (González Olguín, 2006). As previous modernisation projects, the one pursued by López Portillo and his advisors sought to minimise the effects of internal divisions and the declining capacity of voters’ mobilisation on the party’s electoral success in the future (Klesner, 1993; Lomelí, 2000; Pereyra, 1988).

‘The political reform initiated in 1977 is the most prominent example of attempts at adaptation in this one-party or hegemonic party system, at modifying the rules of the political game so that the political elite does not have to fear losing power either constitutionally or extraconstitutionally’ (Klesner, 1993, p. 191). The purpose of the reform was to encourage the recent protest and opposition movements that had emerged from the student demonstration of 1968 to become opposition parties and compete in elections (Ibid). López Portillo and his advisors hoped that left-wing dissidents would channel their political discontent through institutional means and thus end the violent protests of the previous years (González Olguín, 2006).

However, the left was unable to capitalise on this opportunity for several reasons, including the lack of internal organisation and the existence of restrictive political structures for opposition parties to survive (Preston & Dillon, 2004). A real opposition to the PRI did not emerge and function adequately until decades later.

As mentioned above, the 1980s was the period when the most important events for the PRI's political future took place. When President Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) came into power and implemented a conservative economic policy, the party found itself in a very delicate, contradictory situation. On the one hand, it sought to portray itself as ideologically nationalistic and thus its programme defended the working class; on the other hand, however, it unconditionally supported a series of restrictive governmental measures which economically affected the majority of the society (González Olguin, 2006). For example, the nationalisation of banks in 1982 led the country to an economic crisis, which was worsened after the tragic earthquake of September 1985 (Lomelí, 2000).

Klesner wrote in 1993: 'Mexico's extended economic crisis has both strained the credibility of the governing elite and produced resentment among those who have suffered as a result of the economic depression and restructuring that Presidents de la Madrid and Carlos Salinas have pursued as the solution to that crisis' (Klesner, 1993, p. 209).

The 1980s is widely known as the 'lost decade' for Latin American countries because most of them experienced severe economic crises; Mexico was not the exception. Although the standard of living in the country had risen in previous decades, by 1982 the scenario was one of a 'multidimensional crisis' (lasting until the mid-1990s) (Whitehead, 1998). On the economic dimension, the country's foreign debt was extremely high; the banking system was in crisis; oil prices plummeted; and foreign lending was cut off (Smith, 1990). Moreover, on the political dimension, as has been suggested, there was a demand for a democratisation process of the PRI (and consequently of presidential politics). Given the severity of the crisis, it was impossible to deal with both economic and political changes at the same time.

‘With the debt crisis, as access to state resources diminished because of state streamlining and sharp reductions in state expenditure, the worker and peasant organisations that had backed the PRI began to withdraw support’ (Teichman, 2009, p. 73).

Discontent among the social bases of the party led to the birth of a democratisation movement within the PRI, which would later on transform into the PRD, Mexico’s main left-wing party. The inadequate response of de la Madrid’s government to face the destruction caused by the earthquake saw the emergence of organised civil society movements and also new leaders within the PRI (Preston & Dillon, 2004; Teichman, 2009).

In 1987, the PRI’s leaders attempted to change the procedure for presenting presidential candidates, partly because of splits within the party, but also responding to a scandal on electoral fraud in the local elections in Chihuahua a year earlier. ‘There is little doubt that widespread fraud took place in the 1985 and 1986 elections’ (Rodríguez, 1998 p. 166).

Jorge de la Vega, the national leader of the party at the time, announced that the six preliminary candidates for the 1988 election would address the various sectors of the PRI to obtain approval. Several weeks later, however, de la Vega announced to the party affiliates that Carlos Salinas would run for the presidency; the outgoing president, Miguel de la Madrid, had returned to the tradition of choosing his successor, automatically cancelling any new internal procedures for candidate selection (Preston & Dillon, 2004).

Carlos Salinas, elected as president in 1988, was an unpopular candidate in that electoral process and was unable to mobilise either his party or the sectors affiliated to it. ‘During the 1988 presidential campaign and election Mexico witnessed a withering of the PRI’s electoral clout, and an intense feud over the legitimacy of Salinas’ victory’ (Dresser, 1991, p. 3). During his campaign, he recruited technocrats and left out those leaders who could easily mobilise labour and peasant movements; this resulted in a very low turnout for the PRI – he won because the Minister of the Interior used electoral fraud (Lujambio, 1998; Preston & Dillon, 2004; Prud’home,

1998).<sup>31</sup> Once in power, many of his actions continued to undermine the interests and power of the unions; for example he apprehended the leader of Pemex's Union, known as 'La Quina', and later on replaced the leader of the teachers' union with Elba Esther Gordillo (Preston & Dillon, 2004).<sup>32</sup>

As Dresser (1991, p. 3) argues: 'the Salinas administration came to power in a context defined by a decomposition of the traditional forms of political control, divisions in the state apparatus, fractures within the one-party system and weakened presidential authority'.

Salinas' strategy was to concentrate all the power in the presidency. 'Under Carlos Salinas' reign, and decided by no one else but him, the presidency weakened its traditional foundations: the party of the state, the official labour movement, the peasant organisations, and those of the 'popular sector'. Through new internal alliances, strong external support and spectacular stunts, the president became powerful. However, it was a false power' (Meyer, 1995, p. 340, my translation). He also ignored his party's and its leaders' recommendations of candidates to several elections. As Preston & Dillon (2004, pp. 134, my translation) state, he 'really subjected the PRI to the strength of the principle of loyalty to the president'.

However, an important caveat to add here is that Salinas' authoritarianism took place only within the PRI. We shall see later on in this section that, being conscious of the near-electoral disaster of 1998 and knowing that a similar situation should not happen again, he made sure to introduce legitimacy to the political context during his term. This was achieved through legitimate negotiations with the PAN, which gained political salience and power as *the* opposition party. Salinas' presidency therefore opened new paths for democratisation of the party system and the country in general, which were later on furthered by Ernesto Zedillo.

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<sup>31</sup> The computer system designed to count the votes and provide live results throughout the night of the election day was tampered with by the PRI-led federal government, increasing the number of votes for Salinas in order to make him win.

<sup>32</sup> We shall see later on that Gordillo has played a key role in Mexican politics, having an immense amount of power as the leader of the teachers' union.



Carlos Salinas' priority was to lead the country to modernity, thereby assembling his cabinet with technocrats like himself. Nonetheless, he also appointed old-school politicians known as dinosaurs as his advisors and heads of some ministries. Camp (1990, p. 104) analyses Salinas' appointments to his cabinet and concludes that he 'has created a hybrid cabinet of technocrats in charge of economic agencies, combined with traditional politicians directing political departments'. Overall, Camp explains Salinas' choices of collaborators in two ways:

First, Salinas can be seen as coming into office as a weak president, having only a small personal camarilla, requiring, for political reasons, support from major political groups, including those of his three predecessors. A second interpretation suggests that Salinas made a decisive political move to strengthen his camarilla and gain broad elite support for his government after a divisive internal struggle for the nomination and difficulties during the presidential campaign. Salinas has not confined camarilla representation in his cabinet (Ibid, p. 102).

He was determined to present Mexico to the world as a modern, democratic country, especially to the United States and Canada and thus succeed in negotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Meyer (1995) argues that this was part of his personal strategy to pursue a career in international politics after stepping down from the presidential chair; he wanted to be president of the World Trade Organization.

As part of his construction of a democratic image for the country, he accepted the opposition's demand for electoral reforms. Though the PRI could gather enough votes to approve a reform that protected the party's interests, Salinas 'surrendered to the PAN, not because he needed votes, but rather due to the lack of something much more important: credibility' (Meyer, 1995, p. 158, my translation). The PAN had the international credibility that the PRI needed (Ibid), and so Salinas had a 'marriage of convenience' with the PAN (Whitehead, 1998), which led in 1989 to the creation of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE). Years later, the IFE would allow for better elections, which in the end resulted in the PRI being voted out of power.

During Carlos Salinas' presidency, the social programme named Pronasol (also known as Solidaridad) became the most important pillar of his government. It helped him to become gradually independent from local power groups and to build a new social base for the government by working in local communities. In the longer term, Pronasol also produced local political leaderships that would have enough influence to promote the PRI's reform (González Olguin, 2006).

Denise Dresser wrote in 1991 that:

Pronasol can be viewed as an organisation and a strategy that is contributing to restructure and strengthen the pro-Salinas factions within the PRI by providing them with renewed sources of patronage [...] Solidarity's noble exhortations may be serving to legitimise PRI behaviour that tinkers with social reform as a way of entrenching the status quo without having to engage in structural political reform (Dresser, 1991, p. 5).

Overall, Salinas tried to democratise Mexico in his own way, mainly under the premise that electoral efficiency, achieved through guaranteed support for the party – cultivated during his presidency – would prevent the PRI from reliving the disastrous electoral process of 1988. The president of the PRI at the time, Luis Donaldo Colosio, agreed with him on this matter and thus Salinas' strategy was accompanied by Colosio's own modernisation project (Hernández Rodríguez, 1998).

Colosio, who would later on be the presidential candidate for the 1994 elections, focused on strengthening the territorial organisation of the party, giving the urban and individual voter greater opportunities to participate in elections. 'The idea was to win over the poorest urban sectors, previously led by organisations with no formal commitment to any political party but always ready to negotiate their support at election time' (Ibid, p. 81). In Colosio's view, the party would be better off if it were organised on a territorial basis, revitalising sectors to increase their presence within society (González Olguin, 2006).

The reforms between 1988 and 1994 were an attempt to avoid as much opposition as possible to Salinas' policies (Hernández Rodríguez, 1998). In addition, they sought to

embed the reforms within the party's manifesto, making sure it matched the political conditions of the time. Ultimately, it was an effort to rearrange the party's social base in order to refresh local leaderships with aims to win elections. As mentioned earlier, the PRI could not afford another electoral disaster like the one that happened in 1988, and timely adjustments were needed so the party could win elections honestly. Nonetheless, adverse situations such as the murder of Colosio during his presidential campaign, the economic crisis of 1994 and the Zapatista insurgency, impeded the consolidation of the Colosio-Salinas reforms within the party manifesto – though the foundations for the country's democratisation in terms of legitimate political competition had begun to be laid out.

Even when the modernisation project within the PRI was put aside, a few groups within the party kept the spirit of reform alive. This was the case of the 'Renovating Stream' (*Corriente Renovadora* or CD) of the PRI, who pushed for 'the party's autonomy from any source of power [such as the president, governors, mayors, interest groups, etc.], along with internal democracy, which, obviously, means the effective participation of the *priistas* in the adoption of the great decisions which concern the party: leaders, candidates, projects and programmes' (García Ramírez, 2001, my translation).

Turbulent internal elections and the prevalence of vertical imposition with regard to candidate selection triggered 'the departure of old PRI members with lengthy careers within the party and their migration to either the PRD or the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)' (Hernández Rodríguez, 1998).

#### ***3.4.1.2 The beginning of the end of the PRI's authoritarianism***

Salinas' democratisation strategy (which was aimed at avoiding the repetition of 1988 and presenting a new Mexico to the NAFTA partners) not only set patterns of negotiation between the PRI and the opposition (mainly with the PAN). It also made the point of forcing his party to make an effort in being electorally competitive. A clear example of this was the PAN's defeat of the PRI in the gubernatorial elections in Baja California Norte in 1989, the first significant victory of the PAN. Margarita Ortega Villa, the candidate put forward by the PRI was unpopular in the state and

Salinas made it clear that the presidency would not intervene in her favour. This marked a new era of candidate selection for gubernatorial races, where those who are selected tend to have a state and municipal career rather than be part of a clientelistic network controlled from Mexico City (Díaz, 2005; Langston, 2000). The PRI was challenged as a party in Baja California Norte, and its hegemony was clearly contested.

The economic crisis of 1994-1995 represented another risk to the PRI's hegemony. It came at the very start of Ernesto Zedillo's term, because of an uncoordinated sequence of events. Meyer argued in 1995: 'the economic, political and moral collapse of the *salinismo* has impeded Ernesto Zedillo, the successor that Salinas himself appointed, from taking and using power effectively' (Meyer, 1995, pp. 241-242, my translation). In addition, his tenure also witnessed the party's loss of its majority of seats in the Lower Chamber in 1997 and, three years later, the presidential chair. Overall, Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000), whose electoral victory was more legitimate than Salinas' (Ibid; Philip, 2002), managed to keep 'a safe distance' from the PRI.

Zedillo was an outsider to the party who did not believe in the PRI's traditional politics (Hernández Rodríguez, 1998). He was convinced that democracy was needed in the country in order to promote the consolidation of stable markets; he had to set a democratisation process in motion. The Zedillo-PRI cleavage can be explained using Coppedge's (1994) argument on how the presidency and the Executive Committee of the party have enough authority to fulfil their results if no agreement can be reached towards a common goal. He was determined to democratise the country in order for economic stability to prevail, and made use of all his constitutional powers to do so, even if this would distance him even more from his party. This situation shifted the balance of power within the PRI, and also within the national context.

Hence, during his administration there was an active campaign for democratic candidate selection principles. He made it clear that his role was to run the country, not the party, and his detachment from internal PRI politics gave room for the group of old-school politicians (like Roberto Madrazo) to keep the party as a strong electoral force by using their networks and power.

A clear example of how the old-style, corrupt and authoritarian PRI fought to keep the party alive, in clear opposition to Zedillo's style, was when the latter attempted to force Roberto Madrazo to step down from the gubernatorial seat in Tabasco, for which he had held a non-transparent campaign and had dubiously won. Madrazo refused to obey and thus made it evident that '*caciques*' (local bosses) still had (and still do today) a considerable amount of power; this situation also made it obvious that Zedillo had little authority over the traditional elite of the PRI (Preston & Dillon, 2004). Furthermore, this incident led to the creation of a group within the party seeking to defend its traditions and *status quo*.

The incident in Tabasco and the fact that Zedillo was seen by many groups as an outsider to the PRI, and unwilling to follow the party's tradition of choosing his own successor, led to the approval of an internal reform known as '*candados*' (locks) during the 17th National Assembly, which took place in September 1996. It impeded access to power for the technocrats, who were seen as individuals who 'did not represent the convictions, feelings, style, and proposals of the Institutional Revolutionary Party. It was a revolt of politics against technocracy, a wall built against the government' (García Ramírez, 2001).

Zedillo had publicly declared early in his presidency that he would not choose his successor. This had already reduced his bargaining power *vis-à-vis* the party's, so there was not much he could do about the *candados*. Perhaps this event could be seen as the first time a president lost control of the PRI (Hernández Rodríguez, 1998). With the *candados* came the end of the *dedazo* era (when presidents chose their successor), and with it power shifted away from the president to the party, thereby reversing the effects of the reform that Madrazo had put forward in 1965. Oligarchic practices, typical of the PRI, would prove to be extremely useful for the party's survival in the coming years, when political competition formally began after the 1996 electoral reforms.

Zedillo's administration hosted an even more important electoral reform than the one approved under Salinas. 'In addition to dealing with the gross over-representation, corruption, and other factors, the 1996 reform provided very generous campaign funds and extensive free media time to the parties, thereby allowing the opposition to run

professional campaigns for the first time' (Brinegan et al., 2006, p.78). It also involved the independence of the IFE from the government.

Paradoxically, the reform led just one year later to the PRI's loss of the legislative majority in the Federal Chamber of Deputies. Free and fair elections also meant that governors could be legitimate leaders, instead of mere presidential appointees as they had been in the past (Hernández Rodríguez, 2003).

In addition, Zedillo broke the tradition of loyalty to former presidents by allowing Carlos Salinas' brother, Raul, to be prosecuted for corruption and the murder of his former brother-in-law, Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu (Preston & Dillon, 2004). One of his last revolutionary measures was to introduce primaries towards the 2000 presidential election, in which Francisco Labastida defeated Roberto Madrazo.

#### ***3.4.1.3 Internal fractures***

In addition to differences in perceptions of how the relationship between the party and the president should be led, and of how the party and the country should be democratised and modernised, the gradual division of the party and confrontation among its groups respond to changes in the typology of the elite in terms of their background, skills and goals (Camp, 2007, 2010). We could say that the last three presidents from the PRI, Miguel de la Madrid, Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo, had a different approach to politics from those who governed before 1982, who were seen as 'old-school politicians'. In turn, de la Madrid, Salinas and Zedillo belonged to the new generation of technocrats.

Politicians sought to preserve the system in order to maintain economic growth and ensure that the benefits for supporters kept flowing. In addition, the old elite believed in its capacity to make all sectors of society express themselves through the PRI. 'In consequence, the particular projects that each president carried out during his six-year-term seldom affected the system itself. That is why no president considered it necessary to subject the PRI to structural changes ...' (Hernández Rodríguez, 1998).

In turn, the new elite adopted a different approach to policy-making and linkage with the electorate. Inexperienced in public service, they believed that knowledge itself would bring viable solutions. The technocrats had high academic qualifications, generally in technologically sophisticated fields and they were part of the national bureaucracy but had little or no experience at all in elective offices (Camp, 2007). They focused on determining the ‘indispensable means to achieve an end’, without considering subjective and political aspects (Hernández Rodríguez, 1998).

Furthermore, the emergence of several internal groups since the 1990s and even more in the 2000s can be associated with the urge to win space for influence in the PRI where a power vacuum has gradually emerged. In previous decades, internal divisions were linked to loyalties towards recognised leaders to develop specific projects and whose internal competence was the means to renewing the governing political elite.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, ever since the party’s electoral battle became more difficult to win, new divisions have emerged with the main goal of promoting personal projects, rather than more collective ones. In other words, when winning an election, it is far more important for the PRI to resort to personal popularity and this shift has led to a similar instability to that of 1968, 1976, 1982 and 1994 (Hernández Rodríguez, 2005).

A clear example of how the promotion of a personal project was put forward through a party office was when Elba Esther Gordillo became the legislative party leader in the 59th Congress (2003-2006) (Preston & Dillon, 2004). The head of the teacher’s union, she saw the opportunity to realise her own goals in Congress, even if that involved reaching ‘too many’ agreements with the PAN (Langston, 2007; Delgado, 2007). She was removed from office early in her tenure and her protégées were also blocked from important decision-making offices in the legislature. In the end, Gordillo left the PRI and now backs Nueva Alianza, a party that she created in 2006, although this party supported PRI candidates in later elections, so no definitive break-up or separation occurred.

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<sup>33</sup> A useful tool for the PRI’s control over bureaucratic appointments was the so-called ‘camarillas’, a ‘group of people who have political interests in common and rely on one another to improve their chances within the political leadership’ (Camp, 2007, p. 123). In resorting to some sort of mentor-disciple relationship, they determined who was appointed to public office, and how far their political career could get.

Another example of the pursuance of personal projects is Roberto Madrazo. He was appointed the national party leader in 2002 and was key to keeping the party lively after the defeat of 2000 (Ibid); he used his post to pull as many strings as possible to become the presidential candidate for 2006. He succeeded, but gained many enemies within a group of governors (Pampillo Baliño, 2008).

#### ***3.4.1.4 A strategy for survival***

Both old and new generations of *priistas* were challenged when their party historically lost the absolute majority of legislative seats in the Lower Chamber in 1997, and even more when the PAN won the presidency in 2000 (Mirón Lince, 2005). The technocrats had the most to lose with the party's defeat, mainly because the *candados* introduced during Zedillo's presidency shifted power to the traditional PRI elites (known as the dinosaurs). Rather than embarking on any modernisation project, the dinosaurs followed the path of traditional PRI practices, where clientelism, loyalties and networks are the best tools for keeping the party alive. An example of this was the years-long operation that the dinosaurs launched before the mid-term elections of 2009, to pave the way for Enrique Peña Nieto to run for the presidency in 2012 (Palomino, interview, 2009).

The PRI had to make a transition from being the ruling party to a party like any other, with no easy access to public resources for funding its operations, and thus needed to come up with alternative sources of income. Furthermore, like any other party, it now has to truly compete in elections, and although it still controls many state and municipal positions, its 'stock' of prizes and punishments for members has been significantly reduced. In fact, in 2006 the IFE imposed a fine of 38.6 million pesos on the PRI for not reporting over 54,000 campaign spots on TV and radio during the 2006 presidential elections (Redacción, 2008). This situation had two important implications: on the one hand, it proved that the party is no longer 'untouchable' and that the IFE is a fully independent body fulfilling its tasks (Woldenberg, 2005); and on the other hand, it put the PRI in serious financial difficulties.

Having become an opposition party, the PRI set itself the clear objective of winning back the presidential chair. In order to achieve this, the party had to renew from



within (Mirón Lince, 2005), to appear as a political alternative to the panista governments of Vicente Fox and Felipe Calderón.

The PRI's reform that started under Salinas was even more forcefully attempted in 2000, but is still far from complete. This is particularly evident if we consider the fact that the dinosaurs and their corrupt practices have kept the party alive since 1997. In explaining the PRI's defeat in the 2006 presidential election, Joy Langston (2007) shows that it is internally – perhaps irreconcilably – split, and it has been unable to shake off old practices associated with corruption while also being incapable of producing a cohesive national leadership.

Madrazo helped destroy the PRI's chances of retaking Los Pinos by using his leadership position in the National Executive Committee to force the party to give him the presidential nomination. His public image with both voters and his own party members of a corrupt and fraudulent politician with no substantive policy proposals proved impossible to change. The Mexican electorate did not appear to believe his promises, nor did they care that he was the most experienced politician in the race. Many of his party's governors refused to support him because they calculated they had more to fear from him than from an opposition president.

Finally, the salient issue in the 2006 campaign was economic, and Madrazo was unable to make credible promises or even present a reasonable alternative to the two front runners. It remains to be seen whether the PRI, a party that was once all things to all political groups, can remake itself into a party that does not represent only corruption, fraud, and 'overweening pragmatism' (Ibid, p. 24).

Overall, Reveles Vázquez sees the following as basic requirements for the party's reform to succeed (2003b):

1. A dominant coalition able to survive without having the president as its leader, building internal mechanisms for consensus and cohesion in order to sell the party group's vote to the best bidder in Congress, in exchange for the security of its key interests. In other words, the PRI must establish new working

relationships between factions, the legislative party group and national party leaders.

2. A new equilibrium between leaders, officials and deputies and a fiscal decentralisation. This is quite difficult to achieve since the governors have acquired a considerable amount of power within the PRI; they can mobilise local constituencies and put pressure on federal government officials and party leaders. On this issue it is also pertinent to mention the positive fact that the PRI has learnt to negotiate with other political forces in Congress and, most importantly, among its internal factions, rather than resorting to confrontation.
3. The restructure should be based on territorial interests rather than sectoral bases. This will necessarily influence the candidate selection process, which affects the power of the internal groups and the electoral connection.
4. A new ideology, appropriate for an opposition party to work in a public sphere led by a right-wing government. In reality, the PRI has not found it so difficult, as many of the institutional rules and designs were put into place during the long period it was in power. However, what has been troublesome is the fact that it cannot be the left-wing revolutionary party which stands in opposition to the PAN, since that position is taken by the PRD. Thus, the PRI has had to learn how to behave as a more centrist party, which can easily side with the PRD but also with the PAN.
5. New sources of income in order to keep the party structure alive and working to regain political power. In addition, the PRI will also need to pay the IFE's fine from 2006 and be prepared to face financial challenges similar to this one in the future.

Towards the 2006 presidential election, the PRI reformed its 'Basic Documents' (which contain the party's platform and principles), reaffirming its intent to promote social justice through social democracy. Furthermore, a thorough reform was pursued in order to modify the procedures for the election of leaders and the designation of candidates. The structure of the National Political Council was also adjusted (Pampillo Baliño, 2008).

However, Langston (2007, p. 24) argues that:

Much of its strength and cohesion after the 2000 presidential defeat resulted because most party members accepted Madrazo as party leader and believed he stood a good chance of storming Los Pinos in 2006. Even if they did not personally agree with him or his policies, they believed that they individually would be better off if he (and the PRI) won in 2006.

The PRI has lived a period of crisis as a result of its gradual loss of power. Following Reveles Vázquez (2003b, my translation) the pre-crisis PRI can be defined as follows: a) a subordinate relation *vis-à-vis* the Executive, with the consequential dependence of the leadership to the latter; b) a sectoral structure; c) an ambiguous ideology, identified as revolutionary and nationalist; d) a predominance of those in office over the party and parliamentary leaders; e) a broad and secure source of income; f) a hegemonic condition of the party in the system.

After the re-foundation began, its essential traits seem to be the following (Ibid, my translation): ‘a) a dominant coalition without any dependence towards the presidential institution; b) a territorial structure which is growing stronger against the sectoral one; c) a presumably social-democratic ideology; d) an unstable equilibrium among party leaders; e) limited funding; f) a condition of unstable dominion within the party system.’

Finally, and as suggested by Langston (2007), the most important problem which the PRI has had to solve is the absence of a true party leader, one that can be trusted by all the factions as the figure in charge of coordinating all the efforts to win back government. Such a figure should also come up with a successful campaign to regain the electorate’s trust, and portray the PRI as a viable opposition party to solve all the promises which have not yet been kept by the PAN since it won the presidency in 2000.

The PRI survived the democratisation process that began in 1997 and has continued throughout the first decades of the 2000s because of its power networks and clientelistic practices. It is, on the one hand, a corrupt party, but on the other, it is still very popular. Data from the fifth wave of the World Values Survey (2005-2008) show that the PRI was the first party choice for 27 per cent of respondents, just 1.6 per

cent less than those who stated that the PAN was their first choice. Despite the fact that it represents a system dominated by corruption and elitism, it has managed to keep control over most of its geographical and sectoral strongholds, showing that it is an established actor within the Mexican party system.

### **3.4.2 The PRD**

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of Lázaro Cárdenas – one of Mexico’s most prominent figures within the revolutionary and nationalistic ideology of the 20th century and one of the founders of the PRI – deserted the PRI in 1988 and ran against Carlos Salinas in that year’s presidential election. As mentioned in the previous section, there is a widespread feeling among Mexican society and opposition parties that the results of the election were tampered with (Lujambio, 1998; Meyer, 1995; Preston & Dillon, 2004). Although the PRI’s candidate, Salinas, was declared the winner, it may have been Cárdenas who won the majority of the votes (Baena Paz & Saavedra Andrade, 2004).<sup>34</sup>

After the elections, Cárdenas founded the PRD, an umbrella party which brought together dissenting movements on the left side of the political spectrum, such as former communists, socialists and independent popular movements (Reveles Vázquez, 2004). Prior to the PRD, the Left in Mexico did not exist within the party system, mainly because it chose to remain non-institutionalised (Baena Paz & Saavedra Andrade, 2004), and because the PRI remained united. However, Cárdenas brought with him, and many more joined over time, a large group of *ex-priistas* with a very different mindset from the left-wing dissidents, which has complicated the consolidation and performance of the Left (Martínez González, 2005a).

#### **3.4.2.1 The roots of the PRD**

The PRD’s ideology has been, since its birth, composed of two streams. The first one was imprinted by the fusion of former left-wing satellite movements with the PRI dissidents led by Cárdenas, and consists of an anti-neoliberal discourse based on

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<sup>34</sup> Particularly for the PRD, the electoral fraud left Cárdenas without the opportunity to be president and, being a key figure of the party, his followers supported him as their presidential candidate on repeated occasions, thereby contributing to internal conflicts and divisions, as will be seen.

Marxism (Martínez González, 2005b). The second, also associated with the *priista* past of many members of the PRD, is a populist narrative rooted in the principles of the Mexican Revolution as promoted by Lázaro Cárdenas. Both Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (leader of the PRD in 1996, mayor of Mexico City in 2000 and presidential candidate in 2006) are clear examples of the PRD's populist leadership style and discourse (Bruhn, 2012).

Loaeza (2007, p. 422) argues that:

The *lopezobradorista* movement [in 2006] shows a striking continuity in the historical relationship of the left and populism: the former was subordinated to the latter on the basis of an appeal to the traditions of the Mexican Revolution, many of which are nondemocratic. These included its ideology – revolutionary nationalism – its paternalism and its patron/client forms of organization. However, it is López Obrador's merit to have recognized in the insufficiency of the infrastructural power of the state – the central weakness of Mexican democracy.

Once the Cold War ended and the international communist trend came to an end, most countries around the world embraced market-oriented economies. Mexico was no exception, as seen under de la Madrid's and especially Salinas' administrations, for example with the negotiation of NAFTA (Preston & Dillon, 2004). The PRD argued in the 1990s that Mexico's adoption of a free market economy was not carefully negotiated, and that the process was imposed by the PRI's elite without broad social consultation. However, the PRD lacked a clear and institutionalised party structure in order to come up with 'a credible, alternative economic program' (Craig & Cornelius, 1995, p. 279).

The PRD was formed through the amalgamation of social movements, unions, fronts or clandestine cells that had begun to consolidate after the student protests of 1968. They were groups of strong militants that operated outside institutional frameworks and were truly opposed to the PRI. Though at first reluctant to form a political party, over time they would attempt to stand for elections. They were close to social

movements and their strength came from entrenched sectors and their connections (Ibid).

When expelled from the PRI in 1987, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and all those who had formed the ‘Democratic Stream’ (CD, its Spanish abbreviation) held negotiations with the newly created PSM (Mexican Socialist Party, its Spanish abbreviation; it was formed by six movements and small parties). They created the National Democratic Front (FDN, its Spanish abbreviation) and made Cárdenas their presidential candidate for the elections of July 1988 (Reveles Vázquez, 2004). As mentioned, though, the PRD would not become a formal party until the following year.

#### ***3.4.2.2 Inherent weaknesses***

Its genesis as a party has imprinted a permanent mark on it in two ways. First, among the three largest political organisations in Mexico, the PRD is perhaps the one which most depends on charismatic leaders to guide it through all the enterprises in which a political party engages (Bruhn, 1998; Loaeza, 2007; Martínez González, 2005b; Reveles Vázquez, 2004).

That role has been played primarily by Cuauhtémoc himself<sup>35</sup> (though other figures have emerged over time, e.g. Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and Andres Manuel López Obrador) and it has, perhaps unfortunately, undermined the institutionalisation process of the party (Bruhn, 1998). He once had the power to distribute resources among the factions (appointments within the internal party structure or candidacies to public office), which triggered struggles among them; he is even said to have ‘turned the leadership-formation processes into violent ones to promote artificial leaderships’ (Martínez González, 2005a, p. 372). However, in the early 2000s he lost that power and yet refused to renounce his influence, thereby generating instability across the party.

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<sup>35</sup> During the first ten years of the PRD’s existence, the most powerful of the ideological groups was the one which followed Cárdenas. Even when his leadership was undermined in the 2000s and other leaders have emerged as important heads of the National Council or as candidates to significant offices, he still has power and influence. Each one of the new leaders has proved to have their own strength to attract followers: mobilisation capacity, negotiation skills or simply charisma.

Examples of Cárdenas' influence on the party are numerous. For instance, the PRD's first goal was Cárdenas' personal one: to be a strong opposition to Salinas' government. Later on, towards the 1994 presidential election, a more institutional objective was sought: 'the consolidation of a party of social struggle, acting within the boundaries of legality and violence' (Reveles Vázquez, 2004, p.13, my translation). However, between 1994 and 1997, 'the PRD seems to have been more prepared for post-electoral mobilisation to denounce fraud rather than to win an election' (Gomez López, 2003, p. 251, my translation).

Nonetheless, the PRI's defeat in the midterm elections of 1997 and the PRD's improved results,<sup>36</sup> along with their participation in the electoral reforms of 1996, suggest that the PRD had reasons to trust the Mexican electoral system a lot more. In the 2000 elections it also seemed reconciled with the system, even when their votes decreased (Ibid).

Furthermore, the fact that many small groups with their own agenda gathered under one umbrella generated irreconcilable differences between the factions. It is nearly impossible to homogenise and coordinate the group as a bulk, especially when it comes to selecting national leaders and coming up with formal rules. Consequently, this has given way to differing party structures across the states and, at least during the party's early years, those who came from the PRI occupied the most important positions (Reveles Vázquez, 2004).

The disputes among groups are especially visible and violent during the PRD's periodical congresses, which serve the main purpose of electing national leaders and redefining statutory procedures for other types of decision-making. The reason for this is that factions control the dynamics of appointments. However, factions have been unable to become institutionalised and design a careful plan of action; instead they operate through pragmatic cooperative decisions which can fall through in the future (Martínez González, 2005b).

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<sup>36</sup> In 1997, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo led the PRD to an unprecedented victory in the midterm elections where the PRI lost the majority in the Lower Chamber. Their victory in the first election of Mexico City's mayor was also a significant defeat of the PRI. The capital city's electorate had been unhappy with the PRI since de la Madrid's bad performance after the 1985 earthquake.

For instance, the Second Congress, held in July 1993, was rather contentious from the moment its preparation began. The groups had experienced internal re-composition, responding to political events rather than ideologies. As a consequence, the method for dividing power among all the groups had to be adjusted in order to avoid schisms: each stream would get a number of appointments based on the percentage of votes it had obtained (Ibid). During this Congress, many of the candidates for the national leadership of the party presented their vision of what the party should become and therefore proposed their desired collaborators as part of the strategy to achieve it; however, inter-faction frictions overruled ideological proposals (Corona Armenta, 2004).

Andres Manuel López Obrador's (known as AMLO) tenure as the national leader of the PRD between 1996 and 1999 was the result of peaceful internal elections (Ibid). Therefore, all the streams were happy to take part in the party's professionalisation. New bodies were created in order for the party to have official entities dealing with conflicts and offering solutions for them. New secretariats were set up within the National Council's structure and an additional body composed of powerful figures was created; its purpose was to keep charisma and institutional consolidation on track (Martínez González, 2005b).

Furthermore, despite the fact that AMLO had been linked to the group that always proved loyal to Cárdenas (Bruhn, 1998), he pointed out the party's main problems and shortcomings, with the sole intention of overcoming them and winning the presidential election of July 2000. Overall, AMLO believed that the PRD had to clearly define the alliances with other political forces of the country, and consider the possibility of allowing external candidacies. There also had to be a solid structure across the country, a professionalisation of the cadres, the achievement of efficiency in government and the adoption of a clear position on what was occurring in the state of Chiapas.<sup>37</sup> López Obrador's strategy for succeeding was to use dialogue and the adoption of moderate positions across all the internal factions. Indeed, his perception

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<sup>37</sup> The reader might recall that in 1994 the Zapatista movement began its armed battle to defend the rights of the numerous indigenous communities in the state of Chiapas. Among the many demands of the movement, the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) sought to include articles in the Constitution to grant the indigenous people control over their land and to legally recognise their language and traditions.



about what the party should do was correct (Corona Armenta, 2004; Martínez González, 2005b; Reveles Vázquez, 2004).

However, the internal elections of 1999 were full of irregularities and therefore brought about a severe crisis. 'Detached from official rules, the election resorted to informal agreements' (Martínez González, 2005b, p.80, my translation). Thus, the groups had far more control over the procedure than the national leadership. In the end they managed to negotiate among themselves and Amalia García was elected as the president of the party for the period 1999-2002 (Reveles Vázquez, 2004). Unfortunately, she had a difficult time keeping stability and equilibrium among the factions.

After the 2000 presidential election results Cárdenas lost a considerable amount of internal support having competed as the party's candidate for the third consecutive time (Villegas Dávalos, 2001). This led to heated intra-party discussions stemming from ideological differences regarding the type of relations that should be established with the government of Vicente Fox, the role of Cárdenas in the party and the conceptualisation of the party itself (Baena Paz & Saavedra Andrade, 2004; Martínez González, 2005b). Thus, the 2000s could be seen as the greatest effort to institutionalise the path and nature of the PRD so as to win more offices and perform efficiently in those it already holds (Villegas Dávalos, 2001).

In the spring of 2002, the PRD elected a new leader. Accusations of the process being undemocratic were only one of the bad public images it projected towards the electorate at that time. The two main contending groups, one led by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and which had Rosario Robles as its candidate, and the other led by Jesús Ortega and supported by Amalia García, came to have irreconcilable differences, which undermined the party's efforts to win a higher number of seats in the midterm elections of 2003 (Corona Armenta, 2004).

Within the PRD, procedural rules are created while dealing with the constant struggles between the groups and minimising the destabilising effect they have on the party's institutionalisation and electoral results (Martínez González, 2005a). The nature and applicability are normally dependent on the ability of the national leader in office to

make the rest of the militants adhere to them. Furthermore, they involve clientelistic practices and manipulation of votes (as discussed by Corona Armenta, 2004 and Loaeza, 2007).

Even if recognised by the PRI and by the Mexican electorate as an opposition party capable of defeating the PRI both at local and national levels, the PRD has also been seen as disorganised and unwilling to negotiate for the benefit of constituencies. On several occasions, the PRD has adopted mobilisation as its strategy for putting forward its political demands, rather than dialogue, agreement or negotiation with other political forces (Bruhn, 1998; Gomez López, 2003). As will be seen for the particular case of the party in the 60th Congress, adopting extreme positions during important negotiations left the PRD standing alone against the PRI and the PAN.

#### ***3.4.2.3 The PRD in the eyes of the electorate and political rivals***

In the 2000s, the party's internal struggles have grown much more radical. Some of the critical streams of the party, for instance, began to claim that it has 'reproduced nearly all the vices and deformations of the Mexican political system and the old Left, although in a much more reduced quantitative and qualitative dimension' (Villegas Dávalos, 2001, p. 81, my translation). Overall, though the PRD has a large number of qualified political leaders who emerged from old social movements, it lacks ideological leaders who are capable of uniting all the internal groups. The party is rather a 'pragmatically oriented one' (Ibid) which, over the years, has developed a large elite-based and clientelistic bureaucracy. Since the party is comprised of many former members of the PRI, at times it seems as though the PRD has the same attitudes of the PRI and cannot easily break free from that reputation (Loaeza, 2007). Nonetheless, the PRD has managed to put pressure on the PRI towards changing its strategy to attract voters and candidates, which is proof that it is an opposition force with opportunities to catch the electorate's attention. The PRI became so concerned with losing votes and party members to the PRD that between 1989 and 1994, the latter was a 'victim of a documented violence' (Martínez González, 2005a), which was much more cruel in the states than in Mexico City. The PRI had the strategy of isolating the Left to reduce its risks of serious competition.

Once the PRI lost power in 1997 – both within the Chamber of Deputies but also in states and municipalities – the PRD saw more opportunities to access decision-making posts, and tried to increase its electoral victories by representing the sector of the electorate placed on the left-of-centre of the political spectrum. As leader of the party (1996-1999), López Obrador was determined to combine the defence of party principles with effective mobilisation of its militancy in order to win more elections (Bruhn, 1998). His strategy seemed to have paid off:

In the first four local elections under López Obrador, the PRD increased the number of *municipios* it governed by thirty-four – fourteen more in the State of Mexico (for a total of nineteen), thirteen in Guerrero (for a total of nineteen), and six in Hidalgo (for a total of seven). And in 1997, the PRD actually replaced the PAN as the second-largest party in Congress (Ibid, p. 135).

Overall, the PRD has been able to build geographical areas of domination over time, where Michoacán and Mexico City are the most stable and important ones. The former has historically been the most important place for the party as it is the home state of Cárdenas and other important figures (López Barriga, interview, 2009).

In turn, Mexico City has proved to be important since 1997, when the mayor was publicly elected for the first time, instead of being appointed by the president – yet another tradition of the PRI hegemonic government. In that first election, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was the winner and López Obrador succeeded him three years later. Furthermore, Andres Manuel López Obrador's popularity towards the presidential election of 2006, which resulted in a national political crisis between the PRD and the PAN, stemmed from the PRD's firm control of the mayoralty of Mexico City (Loeza, 2007).

Even when the party won some public offices lost by the PRI, it still had many weaknesses which stemmed from its initial birth as a formal organisation: it does not have stable factions, but rather groups (also known as tribes) and permanent divisions (Ibid). The groups do not confront each other on ideological grounds; they do so only to win appointments, thereby producing political cadres who do not necessarily have a

long and experienced career suitable for good government performance. They most likely belong to a faction that is capable of distributing positions to its members (Martínez González, 2005b).

### **3.4.3 The PAN**

If the PAN's history were to be told in one sentence, perhaps the best way to describe it would be to say that it went from being a closed circle, elitist group, to an actual opposition party (and then a governing party) that realised it had to open up so as to be electorally competitive (Mizrahi, 1998). Its own internal dynamics forced it to adapt to the national political context and to expand its territorial reach beyond the centre of the country (Loeza, 1999).

#### ***3.4.3.1 The origins***

The National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, known as PAN) was founded in 1939 with a clear Catholic ideology and firm principles which were not to be renounced for any election (Hernández Vicencio, 2011). However, once it began accessing power in the 1990s, ideology alone was not enough to maintain its electoral connection and broaden its domain (Loeza, 1999). The party was too small to cope with all the demands that an opposition party must meet and so new members had to be sought, even if this meant sacrificing the strict application of its ideology. Such a practical dilemma has been named by Mizrahi (1998) as the 'cost of electoral success'.

Once newcomers were allowed into the party to compete for offices and to join the groups of officers for public administration, the PAN began to face what all political parties must deal with: internal struggles for candidate selection, the emergence of internal groups and leaders, and the increasing difficulty of imposing rules for the regularisation of procedures. Those who became party leaders during the last two decades of the 20th century and the early 21st were forced to adopt a reformist position in order to ensure the completion of the institutionalisation process of the PAN (Hernández Vicencio, 2005).

### 3.4.3.2 *Historical evolution*

Hernández Vicencio (2009) divides the party's historical evolution into four stages: the first one consists of the ideological background of its foundation, which can be seen as the birth of a movement promoted by sectors of the society who were affected by the economic, political and social model of the so-called 'modern state'. It was also an attempt of the Catholic Right to participate in politics.

The second goes from the 1940s until the end of the 1960s. During those three decades, the PAN had a hard time dealing with internal pressures to build a party that had real chances of becoming a political alternative. The issue of the relation between the state and the Church was an important matter, along with the agreement on how to face capitalism and socialism. Furthermore, during this period the PRI was resorting to electoral fraud wherever they felt any pressure, which made it even more difficult for the PAN to consolidate itself.

The third stage goes from the mid-1970s until the late 1980s, when there was a reorganisation of political actors in the whole country. Two fundamental issues had to be solved by the PAN: the acknowledgement that it was imperative to adopt a 'hands-on' electoral attitude in order to win offices; and the party leaders' dilemma on keeping essentially elitist networks as the core of its political activity or, instead, begin building agreements with key actors to guarantee electoral success (Reynoso, 2005 also agrees on the importance of this period for the PAN's institutionalisation).

In the 1980s, many 'political activists' switched to be supporters of the PAN after the peso crisis of 1982. 'Such newcomers were in many ways the inheritors of ideas and strategies advanced by Jose Angel Conchello, the upstart PAN leader who moved away from the more religious orientation that had emerged in the party in the 1960s and adopted an aggressively anti-regime stance in the 1970s' (Shirk, 2006, p. 98).

Further, since the late 1980s a faction called '*neopanistas*' dominated the party, imprinting a pragmatic view of politics communicated through entrepreneurial language. They also transformed the party's structure through an investment of considerable economic resources, the innovation of campaign procedures, such as the

use of the media, and the commitment to defend their votes in local elections through the selection of popular or charismatic candidates (Wuhs, 2008).

Manuel Clouthier, who ran against Cárdenas and Salinas in the 1988 presidential election, belonged to this new group of *panistas* (Hernández Vicencio, 2009). Luis H. Alvarez, who led the party between 1987 and 1990, was also part of the ‘reformist’ generation. *Neopanistas* were one of the three internal factions of the party in the late 1980s. The other two groups were the liberal Catholics and the conservative Catholics.

Finally, a fourth period goes from the early 1990s and ends in 2000, when Vicente Fox won the election. This stage was also the decade when the PAN obtained several electoral victories at the local level, ‘accumulating over 600 municipal governments, four times the number of local victories it had won in the previous 50 years’ (Shirk, 2006, p. 107). At this point, political figures of the extreme Right deployed a strategy to fight for the leadership of the PAN so as to realise their long-term project.

In addition, during Salinas’ presidency, a series of constitutional reforms benefited the Catholic elite groups of the PAN. Religious institutions gained legal status and thus the Right had an amicable relationship with the government, along with opportunities for dialogue (see Metz, 1992).

During the 1990s, the PAN worked on improving its institutional structure by: a) extending and strengthening its apparatus throughout the country; b) an alliance with business organisations, groups related to the Catholic Church and conservative civil organisations; c) building upon alternative citizen structures which emerged during elections; and d) the use of mass media for publicity (Hernández Vicencio, 2009).

The adjustments seemed to work. Towards the end of the 1990s the PAN controlled eight zones across the country: two states in the North West, two in the North East, three in the central region, one state towards the Centre-north, one state in the West, some areas in the so-called ‘Metropolitan area’ of Mexico City, the State of Mexico and Morelos, and three states towards the South East of the country (Hernández Vicencio, 2009).

### ***3.4.3.3 Increased presence in public institutions: strategies and performance***

While the PAN was an opposition party, one of its most important concerns was how to react and relate to the government of the PRI. During the Salinas and Zedillo administrations, the PAN took advantage of the modernising and reforming context to make visible its own interests and strategies (Gomez López, 2003; Shirk, 2006). This approach was obvious within the federal Congress, arranging a ‘marriage of convenience’ with the PRI (Oranday Dávila, 2002).

Furthermore, when Salinas’ victory in the 1988 presidential elections outraged the entire country, the PAN’s Executive Committee cleverly negotiated its recognition of his government in exchange for the PRI’s acceptance of the PAN’s electoral victories in some states (Ibid). In turn, Salinas was sympathetic with the PAN, as he agreed on their view of economic policy and thus saw a good opportunity to favour a two-party system where the PRI and the PAN could co-exist rather easily.

This cooperation with the government, however, was not well regarded by all the elites, especially not the most conservative ones. A movement known as the ‘Democratic and Doctrinaire Forum’ was launched by around 60 members. In the early 1990s, a few of them left the PAN to either join other parties or found their own alternatives (Hernández Vicencio, 2009).

Thus, Carlos Castillo Peraza (1993-1996) used his presidency of the PAN to reinforce ‘a line of action which in practice privileged the relationship with the government and which in discourse highlighted the party’s original principles’ (Ibid, p. 186).

Even at the end of the first decade of the 2000s, when it has held the presidency for two periods in a row and has increased its number of seats in Congress, there is an agreement among several scholars (Hernández Vicencio, 2005; Mizrahi, 1998; Reveles Vázquez, 2005a and 2005b; Reynoso, 2005) that although the PAN has succeeded in attracting the attention of more voters during elections, there are still several challenges that must be overcome. The most important one is to keep the party alive and vibrant, and linked to constituencies between elections. In brief, playing good government is not enough to maintain electoral connection.

Moreover, once in government, the PAN has reproduced a few of the PRI's old practices which at some point they had criticised. First, based on statements from a couple of members who were known to be good candidates for the National Leadership, Álvaro Delgado (2007) points out that President Felipe Calderón was falling into the PRI's tradition of the president being head of his party, deciding on internal matters such as the candidates for presiding over the National Executive Committee. Second, some of Calderón's close collaborators in the federal government have been thought to intervene in the elections for state councils, as well as in party assemblies in charge of selecting candidates to public offices.

There is currently an ongoing crisis of the institutional structure, in which the PAN is incapable of fulfilling the needs that the party has in its governmental duties, such as public policy-making and reaching agreements with other forces, while at the same time resuming the slow, internal transformation needed to keep a link with society (Reynoso, 2005). For instance, Vicente Fox's presidency, the PAN's first important electoral victory, has been repeatedly labelled as having served mainly the business community in Mexico and represented the interests of the bourgeoisie. The party itself was not necessarily represented during his government; there was a weak relationship between the President and his party group in the Federal Congress and he faced the crucial challenge of building state-society relations (as the PRI had done through corporatism) (Shirk, 2006).

Though he had been governor of his home state, Guanajuato, Fox was not fully a militant of the PAN. He received a great deal of support for his campaign from an association he created, called 'Friends of Fox' (Reveles Vázquez, 2005a); the National Executive Committee of the Party did not provide much help. As a result, a candidate-centred type of politics emerged and negative consequences for the PAN's institutional development came along. First, most of the party affiliates who supported Fox were 'his', whereby some voters just wanted the PRI out of the presidency and did not necessarily agree with the PAN, and so the PAN missed out on the opportunity to increase its membership base. This also meant that large sectors of Mexican society voted only for the PAN's presidential candidate but remained loyal to their preferences for Congress, which made policy-making difficult to achieve due to the split Chamber. Most importantly, however, this whole situation reflected 'the



short-sighted, centralized decisions of an aloof and insulated central leadership. This internal centralism generated frustration at the subnational level' (Shirk, 2006, p. 28).

Furthermore, both Fox and Calderón showed their party's lack of professional or experienced members when filling positions within the public administration (Reveles Vázquez, 2005a). Their government proposals did not seem easily feasible in the short run, and accountability was difficult to achieve. In covering these shortcomings, the party elites sought to become much more pragmatic and less ideological, even exploring the possibility of external candidacies for Congress, so long as any person seeking to run for a legislative seat through the PAN passed some kind of test (Hernández Vicencio, 2009).

Since the mid-1990s, the PAN has recruited a considerable number of former *priistas*, many of whom are close to Elba Esther Gordillo. Some of them have been included in the lists for congressional seats despite the fact that their records as public servants are not at all clean from corruption (Delgado, 2007).

In the last decade, the party has faced one more difficulty, common to all three important players in the Mexican political arena: the emergence of internal divisions or factions. As has been mentioned throughout the brief layout of the party's historical evolution, the consequences that divisions have brought about for the party's everyday activities have not always been simple. Just to mention one of them, the election of the national leader by more democratic and open means is nearly impossible, and therefore the PAN's national leader has historically been elected behind closed doors, exclusively by the National Council,<sup>38</sup> formed by the aristocracy of the party (Reynoso, 2005).

Overall, the selection mechanisms for the members of the National Executive Committee, where the party's president had a great amount of power to decide on nominees, guaranteed the continuity of central control, thereby limiting considerable changes in the direction of the organisation (Shirk, 2006).

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<sup>38</sup> In fact, the party's elite is formed mainly by members of business organisations, Catholic groups and civil associations with conservative ideologies (Hernández Vicencio, 2009).

Agreements become difficult to reach as the party grows. According to Hernández Vicencio (2005), within the internal elite of the PAN, contradictions and consensus can be understood through two processes involving the elite:

1) Openness, in terms of opening the party structure to new forms of linkage to society. This is derived from the first experiences in government, starting with local victories and then strengthened with Fox's presidency.

2) Re-composition of the elite, based on political factions and their preference for addressing certain topics before others. This means the way the factions express themselves varies across the country, since they are directly linked to the inherent characteristics of each state leadership.

One way in which the groups maintain their power and influence over militants is through the use of peripheral or alternative associations. That is, even when they are not in control of the national leadership, local branches of the party can still mobilise their constituencies towards fulfilling their agenda (Muñoz Patraca, 2005). However, and unlike the PRD, not all the internal groups of the PAN overstep the institutional boundaries, even when they are fighting each other over controlling and exerting power. In addition, the use of peripheral groups allows certain *panistas* (militants of the PAN) to remain close to local constituencies, a very important weapon that the party must learn to use and maintain if it wishes to remain in power (Mizrahi, 1998).

Overall, the elite that governs the PAN and which has held important offices throughout the entire country seems to have a constant brand to sell to constituents. Reveles Vázquez (2005a, p. 228, my translation) portrays it as follows:

An elite which was extracted from the business world, sympathetic to neoliberalism, convinced of the values of neo-conservatism and adhering to centre-democracy. An elite in favour of the United States, market oriented, defending private property and undoubtedly promoting private investment no matter what. It respects the law, is in favour of the indirect representation of individual interests and truly opposed to old authoritarianism. At the same

time, it is prone to presidentialism, functional corporatism and pragmatic and oligarchic negotiation promoting its own project.

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This section highlights the key issues, processes and events of each of the three parties' evolution that shaped their behaviour and strategies to advance their political power and significance throughout Mexico. Before losing congressional majority and years later the presidency, the PRI was strongly linked to the Chief Executive as well as sectoral and territorial bases for power. Towards the beginning of the 21st century, though, it was forced to reinvent itself within the political structure it had created since the 1930s. However, its influence and presence is still undeniably important. It remains a key actor in the Mexican scenario, mainly because the entire system was created by it in accordance with its particular needs and desires. Thus, the modern political history of the country, albeit with some recent modifications to reflect a greater pluralism, has the party's mark.

In turn, both the PRD and the PAN were born as opposition parties to the PRI and thus their main aim was to gradually win local elections and congressional seats. In order to achieve this, they went through several stages in the process of developing a self-identity, a sound strategy and adapting to changes in the political environment at the local and national levels. When the hegemonic party was voted out of full power towards the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, the PRD and the PAN were forced to adopt the actions and positions of parties with a certain amount of decision-making power. They also had to learn how to negotiate between them while maintaining the balance of their own internal forces.

The historical account within this section provided supporting evidence for claims made in previous sections of this chapter about how all three parties have created networks to win power, which have been extended or improved in order to maintain all gains. Thus, the operation and internal politics of all parties have changed substantially since the late 1990s, as they have sought to maintain their positions at the decision-making table. This strategy for survival has locked in collective rules of behaviour which have endured long enough to shape the Mexican political system at the parties' will.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

As a prelude to the empirical case study, this chapter's main goal was to show how and why parties in Mexico have evolved into hierarchical and powerful organisations that operate through interest-based networks. A second goal, closely related to the first one, was to explain how the parties' nature and behaviour have affected the formation and consolidation of democratic institutions over the last few decades.

The answer to the first question is that there is a national political context where oligarchies have political fixtures that reflect deep elements of Mexican politics, simply because these powerful groups have set out the rules of the game. Such a situation explains why the three largest parties are nowadays powerful, hierarchical and interest-based. I identified and discussed three salient elements for the evolution of the party system: factionalism; decentralisation, which results in strong power networks at the local level; and the existence of divided leaderships.

Parties have divided leaderships as a result of factionalism and the pressure from influential local figures. These various leaders are in need of public or party offices to distribute among their followers to maintain and expand their influence. By resorting to networks in and out of governmental bodies, they are likely to obtain resources to reward the loyal and punish the disloyal.

In combination with constitutional term limits, factionalism, decentralisation and divided leaderships have marked the origin, growth and survival of the PRI, the PAN and the PRD. The sectors of the oligarchy associated with each party have managed to adapt to the changing political context of democratisation that began in the 1990s and has continued during the 2000s.

This leads me to discuss how I have answered the second question guiding this chapter, i.e. how the parties have shaped the outcome of Mexico's democratisation process and institutional formation. The answer is complex and stems from the fact that the hegemonic party system was replaced by a hegemonic system of parties, also known as a partidocracy. Altogether, the three dominant forces – the PRI, the PAN, and the PRD – eventually met in Congress, where they have fiercely competed for a

higher numbers of seats since 1997. In addition to governorships and mayoralties, seats in the Chamber of Deputies have become important for the parties and, logically, for politicians.

Overall, in order to maintain and increase participation in federal as well as local decision-making, the parties have embedded the elite, hierarchical *status quo* of political processes such as electoral rules and candidate selection to prevent any unfavourable changes to their power. They have been successful due to their capacity to condition the lock-in or renewal of existing rules of behaviour depending on the convenience to forge collective agreements for change.

More specifically, I argue that the inherent characteristics of the Mexican political system in general have been selectively shaped by the parties to fulfil their interests; no significant changes are likely to occur in the near future.

At the time when the PRI was a hegemonic party, the opposition emerged not only as an alternative for representation of the electorate which was dissatisfied with the PRI, but also as a channel for the excluded elites to attempt to access power. As the PRI gradually lost momentum, the PRD and the PAN experienced electoral victories at the state and municipal levels, which in turn set the foundations of their own territorial and sectoral strongholds.

Though debilitated, the PRI still operates through its clientelistic networks and well-established sectoral and geographical operators. Under the leadership of the dinosaurs, it has managed to survive democratisation. It has remained as an important voice in collective agreements with the PAN and the PRD to change the rules in order to maintain the best possible position in a plural decision-making environment. Its elites have learnt how to use all their geographical and sectoral power to curtail the other parties' electoral victories and thus remain in the political game.

Altogether, the parties have managed to create and maintain a political system which operates under the principles of clientelism, control of political careers and constant negotiations to try to maintain the favourable *status quo* for as long as possible. This involves exerting power over rules and public policy, which in turn results in them

influencing procedures and even the institutional design of actors such as the Chamber of Deputies.

Until a critical juncture is reached, during which the elites will take the risk of changing the rules of the game – which so far have been left unchanged – such as eliminating term limits, or formalising rules for candidate selection, the Mexican system will continue to empower the parties to control every single political process. Conditional path dependency in Mexico's institutions was caused by the parties' interactions and negotiations in a scenario originally created by the PRI and later on modified to fit the two leading opposition parties, the PAN and the PRD. These interactions were, in turn, shaped by each party's historical formation and evolution and thus are unlikely to be radically changed in the near future.

### **3.5.1 A final note in preparation for the empirical case study**

If the answers to this chapter's guiding questions were to be true, then the empirical evidence provided in Chapters 4 and 5 should show that the parties extrapolate their internal divisions and dynamics to the Chamber of Deputies, which influence the negotiations they make with other parties on procedural issues. It should become evident that parties have full control of political careers; every single decision they make with regard to committee appointments and candidate selections should be strategic and in the party's best interest. In turn, each member of the PAN, the PRD and the PRI in the Chamber should be expected to prove loyalty to their party and, most likely, to a particular faction or group within the party.

Therefore, the following two chapters could be seen as the laboratories in which the assumptions made in this chapter about party behaviour ought to be proved or disproved. Elements of conditional path dependency, especially concerning the deliberately preserved informal rules and closed-door negotiations should be easily identified in the empirical description of the 60th Congress of the Chamber of Deputies offered in Chapter 4. We should expect to see, for example, that the decision behind the party elites' approval of a reform to the Chamber's rules on committee sizes and board positions in September 2006 (but not to other procedural mechanisms)

responds to the achievement of collective agreements that benefited everyone the most.

In turn, within the results of the quantitative analysis presented in Chapter 5, it should be possible to observe how the parties control political careers and find a way to use constitutional term limits in their favour. Through data on candidate selection for PR seats, as well as previous political experience of committee presidents and members of the Directive Board, the reader will observe that the parties have developed strategies to select individuals with leadership skills to the Directive Board, while preferring loyal and knowledgeable ones for senior positions in committees. We shall also see that party switching and defecting is a common practice, especially from the PRI to the PAN and the PRD, which suggests that common codes of practice and behaviour established across parties make it easier for politicians to pursue a career in the party that offers the best position. Let us now move on to the empirical chapters of the case study.

## **Chapter 4. Assessing the parties' power in Congress: controlled dynamics within the Chamber of Deputies**

The previous chapter suggested that the parties have locked in formal and informal rules throughout the entire political system, which have allowed them to maintain the networks and resources to guarantee their existence and participation in government. I stated that if this assumption were to be true, then an empirical analysis of institutions such as the Chamber of Deputies would find clear examples of the extent of the parties' power. This should show that the institutional design of the Mexican political system is highly influenced by the interaction between the three largest parties, the PRI, the PAN and the PRD.

Given that Mexico democratised pragmatically (Merino, 2003), that is, without a thorough constitutional reform to reshape institutions and lay out all the formal frameworks needed to regulate the interaction of multiple competitive parties, only partial reforms were made by the three main parties over the last two decades. These were mainly electoral reforms aimed at securing their own survival and access to power; operations within most institutions, however, are regulated by informal rules put in place by the parties over time.

This chapter provides the first part of the empirical evidence towards testing the aforementioned assumption. It lays out a descriptive case study of the 60th Congress of the Chamber of Deputies, focusing on procedural rules used by the parties to distribute committee seats and positions in other decision-making bodies. In essence, it aims at answering the question of how it is that parties' power impacts on the Chamber of Deputies in particular.

Thus, in accordance with what I discussed in Chapter 3 concerning why and how the parties have shaped institutions, this thesis identifies three main ways in which these actors influence the institutional design of Congress. One is the extrapolation of internal divisions, visible through the concentration of power of the parties in a sensible leader, the need for functional organisational structures within the Chamber



and through the use of agenda-setting offices to maintain discipline (Díaz Rebolledo, 2005; Langston & Aparicio, 2009). Another one is the existence of a hierarchical decision-making process (Caballero & Dávila, 2006) and the third element consists of the strong effect that term limits have on political careers and the candidate selection process (Carey, 1996).

Therefore, this part of my research illustrates the ways in which congressional processes are highly politicised as a reflection of partisan dynamics in the national context. The extrapolation of parties' attitudes and behaviours towards Congress brings about the dominance of informal rules of practice over formal or legal frameworks, and also triggers tight party controls over very concrete operational tasks such as committee appointments and the distribution of intra-party organisation and coordination posts (see for example Langston & Aparicio, 2008, 2009; Nacif, 2002; Díaz Rebolledo, 2005; Weldon, 2004). That is, parties control the making of the procedural rules for nearly everything that happens inside the Chamber, and they also have the means and desire to maintain discipline and cohesiveness within their group (Nacif, 2002).

Through interviews carried out with members of the 60th and 61st Congresses and their advisors, I obtained first-hand information on party dynamics. From the *panista* Senator and former Deputy, Adriana González, I learned that the PAN is generally perceived as a cohesive party, even more so while sitting in the presidential seat and so all its members knew that block votes were the only weapon to push the party's agenda forward (González, interview, 2009). On the other hand, according to Luis Sánchez Jiménez, a PRD deputy, his party is all but disciplined, and sometimes even faction leaders have trouble keeping their members in control (Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009). The PRI is centrally controlled from the National Executive Committee, and although state coordinators have enough power and room for manoeuvre to set their particular agendas, cohesion is generally achieved.

Overall, I would say that the greatest source of power for Mexican parties in Congress originates from the existence of term limits and the imperfect checks and balances. Both remained in place after the country democratised, because the party elites that shaped the system when partidocracy replaced a hegemonic party system chose to

keep them in place, and adapted their internal dynamics to operate in that context. Non-re-election gives way to the control of political careers, through the distribution of decision-making offices within the party group, and across committees and governing bodies of the Chamber.

Francisco Palomino and Susana Servín, have been parliamentary advisors to deputies from the PRD and the PRI during their careers, and agreed on the fact that factions, as elite groups that operate top-down, are extremely important when it comes to parties modelling the Chamber's procedures (Palomino, interview, 2009; Servín, interview, 2009). As seen in the previous chapter, the historical evolution of all three major parties has been marked by constant internal struggles for power. Hence, the parties' organisational structures result in vertical leadership networks which function on either geographical or sectoral sources of power with particular interests and seek to place their own players at the centre of the decision-making arena. For example, the coordinators of Impacto Legislativo<sup>39</sup> are convinced that the unions put an incredible amount of pressure on the party groups of the 61st Congress, because they served as moral or 'out-of-congress' leaders for some deputies, and therefore contributed to creating internal divisions (Díaz & González, interview, 2009).

This chapter makes both theoretical and empirical contributions to the understanding of the power of party dynamics in the Chamber. It is divided into four sections: the first one is of a theoretical nature, analysing the effects of factionalism on the distribution of offices across party groups; it also discusses the legacy of party control on the purpose of committees. Hence, this section reaffirms what was mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2 with regard to the fact that it is impossible to neatly apply theories of legislative organisation and party behaviour to the Mexican case.

In turn, the second section will look into the actual manifestation of the effects of party power on every day practices of the Chamber, providing empirical evidence of the institutional lock-in that has been repeatedly stressed in previous pages. It focuses on the predominance of informal rules and the hierarchical way of making decisions.

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<sup>39</sup> The reader might remember from the Introduction that Impacto Legislativo is a project that has collected background information on deputies and senators since the 59th Congress. It also records their productivity while in Congress and provides all this information to the public free of charge on their website.

Furthermore, it includes a subsection on how parties control political careers, as it is a very important source of power for all members of the party elites and also a reason why informal rules are so important.

A third section follows the theoretical and empirical answers to the question, consisting of a case study on the 60th Congress. It exemplifies the arguments laid out in the first two sections to provide the reader with empirical data to fully understand how the parties control the legislative dynamics of the Chamber. Concluding remarks are presented in the fourth section.

#### **4.1 Congress and political parties**

The electorate and national party leaderships expect legislative party groups to perform their representative role within Congress (Méndez de Hoyos, 2007). In doing so, it is anticipated that they will defend their views, policies and interests while negotiating the approval of public policies (what Marenghi & García, 2008 refer to as the focus dimension of the legislator's representative role). Therefore, they will want to appoint members to the legislative committees, which will enable them to influence their policies of preference.

Committees are the bodies in charge of scrutinising and sending bills for approval in plenary sessions, which means that parties will respect them as the most important spaces for agenda-setting and vetoing (Kaeding, 2004; Krehbiel, 1991; Langston & Aparicio, 2009). The appointments party leaders make to certain committees will reflect political strategies for decision-making and also for rewarding loyalties, which will be discussed later on as key elements of a party's control over political careers.

Loyalties are not only rewarded directly by party leaders, but also through negotiations or clashes between them and other important political figures such as governors or faction leaders outside Congress. For instance, during the 59th Congress, the leader of the PRI, Elba Esther Gordillo, made committee appointments in principle based on an electronic system which took into consideration the professional background and explicit requests of the party's deputies. However, final decisions were made by the leader and her desire to please, control and even deliberately punish

important figures of the PRI, as I learned from Miguel Ángel Jiménez, leader of the New Alliance Party's (Partido Nueva Alianza, abbreviated as PANAL) group in the 60th Congress and advisor to Gordillo in the 59th Congress (Jiménez, interview, 2010).

The strategic use of legislative committees by parties has been explained by theories of legislative organisation. Although in many cases widely applied theories to other countries cannot be used to assess politics in Mexico accurately, they do suggest how parties' power can shape the design of the Chamber of Deputies. Hence, I shall briefly refer to legislative organisation theories, complemented with an overview of theoretical explanations on the emergence of factions in political parties. A broader reference to these bodies of knowledge can be found in Chapter 2.

As has been said, legislative organisation theories identify two main logics guiding the purpose of committees (Kaeding, 2004; Krehbiel, 1991). The first one, known as 'demanding' or distributive, means that members of parliament will choose to belong to a committee related to their main policy interest and therefore sacrifice the possibility to influence decision-making in another area. Committees are seen as powerful, independent collective agents within the Chamber. In turn, the informative concept implies that committees are not independent agents, but rather parts of the whole legislative institution. They provide trustworthy information on bills to non-committee members hoping to reduce amendments on bills once they reach the floor.

Applying both concepts to the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, as is the case in other legislative institutions (as Kaeding, 2004 argues about the European Parliament), it can be said that ordinary committees serve both distributive and informational purposes.

Three individuals who sat on the Directive Board (Xavier López Adame, 60th Congress, PVEM; Teresa Ochoa, 61st Congress, Convergencia; Luis Sánchez Jiménez, 60th Congress, PRD), said during my interviews with them that members of that body are carefully selected to ensure that the parties' agenda is reflected in bill approvals, based on their area of expertise but also on their negotiation skills (López Adame, interview, 2009; Ochoa, interview, 2009; Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009).

The rank-and-file members, in turn, work on the details of bills, trying to provide their peers with reliable information before a plenary vote. For example, Elsa Conde, Martha Tagle and David Sánchez Camacho (members of the 60th Congress from the Partido Alternativa Social Demócrata or PASD, Convergencia and the PRD respectively) and Ignacio González Rebolledo (a PRI member of the 48th and 56th Congresses), stated that their job as experts in their subject was to take active part in the scrutiny of bills and report any relevant information to their peers through their party's official communication channel (Conde, interview, 2009; González Rebolledo, interview, 2009; Sánchez Camacho, interview, 2009; Tagle, interview, 2009).

This means that parties will have the means to have control over certain committees, most likely those related to the budget, taxes, energy and constitutional reform (Caballero & Dávila, 2006; Palomino, interview, 2009). According to Jesús Ramírez (PAN, 61st Congress), it also implies that notable figures among parties will place strategic players in those committees (Ramírez, interview, 2009). The predominant use of informal rules and elitist negotiations allow parties to shape the operational procedures of committees to better suit their interests. According to Francisco Palomino, the three golden rules for an effective agenda-setting in the Chamber are: 1) negotiate outside the Chamber; 2) operate within committees; and 3) implement your strategies on the floor (Palomino, interview, 2009).

#### **4.1.1 The effects of factionalism on legislative behaviour**

It would be logical to assume that the leaders of the party groups in Congress would be the most obvious ones to decide on committee appointments. However, as seen in the previous chapter, Mexican parties are highly divided and, as a consequence, there are several 'moral' leaders influencing decision-making in the Chamber, as confirmed by the team at Impacto Legislativo, Dámaso Morales (advisor to the leader of Convergencia in the 60th Congress), and Francisco Palomino (Díaz & González, interview, 2009; Morales, interview, 2009; Palomino, interview, 2009). In order to understand fully how competing authorities exert their power over legislators and the Chamber in general, a brief reference to factionalism theory is useful.

As explained in Chapters 2 and 3, factionalism is ‘the partitioning of a political party (or other organisation and group) into subunits which are more or less institutionalised and who engage in collective action in order to achieve their members’ particular objectives ... Depending on their specific design, institutions have the potential to contain factionalism or to encourage its growth’ (Boucek, 2009, p. 468). Furthermore, factions could also be defined as groups seeking votes, offices and policies, and their leaders will do everything within their power in order to succeed. This responds to the importance that motivation and organisation has for them (Bettcher, 2005).

Overall, even if some of them are disorganised, factions in Mexican political parties have effective systems for the distribution of incentives, which mainly rely on public offices at different geographical and structural levels, as territorial bases are important for Mexican factions. Congressional seats are one of the most common prizes, and they are certainly important parts of political career-building (Jiménez, interview, 2010; Palomino, interview, 2009). Chapter 5 will analyse this matter in depth.

Therefore, we can infer that faction leaders develop organisational skills in order to expand their power to legislative instances, where they can facilitate or truncate careers for members of their networks. In the Mexican case, they are likely to manifest in clientelism, patronage and in using other types of incentives to maintain their leadership. Faction leaders are able to do so because of the vertical, top-down nature of their groups; in the Lower Chamber, power is exerted through committee distributions and intra-party organisational structures. Faction leaders make their best efforts to place their players in strategic positions to ensure survival, expansion and policy impact, as declared by Erick López Barriga (60th Congress, PRD), Humberto López Lena (60th Congress, independent deputy) and Luis Sánchez Jiménez (López Barriga, interview, 2009; López Lena, interview, 2009; Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009).

The fact that some legislators have gained a seat or a particular appointment within the Chamber means that they might follow moral or ‘factual’ leaders rather than the actual party leader of the group in Congress or the National Executive Committee (as confirmed during interviews carried out in 2009 with members of the PRD and PAN, and with parliamentary advisors). This is triggered by the fact that the Mexican

political elite, especially the one associated with the PRI, works as a ‘*camarilla*’ network.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, it is associated with the lack of democratic internal decision-making in parties, where informal rules for candidate selection and decision-making are highly dependent on the allocation of resources and the distribution of benefits. Thus, if obeying a factual leader is more important for a future or even the current career than following the party leader’s plan, either in Congress or at a broader national level (as discussed in Langston & Aparicio, 2009), then a legislator will not think twice when choosing what to do.

Factions working towards the achievement of their goals shape the informal rules governing the Chamber. Also, and most importantly, they are constantly evolving and struggling for power, which makes institutionalisation of formal legislative practices more difficult to achieve.<sup>41</sup>

In Susana Monreal’s (PRD) experience during the 60th Congress, the party group adopted a very sectarian attitude. Each faction had its own practices and rules, and in order to interact with each one of them, she had to learn to play by their specific rules; this was the only way she could fulfil her role as secretary of the budget committee and make sure she was not left out of relevant negotiations (Monreal, interview, 2009).

#### **4.1.2 The parties’ obligations according to the Chamber’s rules**

The construction and maintenance of parties’ structures and strategies has been enabled by the vague concept that the legal framework of the Chamber has of the nature and purpose of the parties.

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<sup>40</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3, *camarillas* are groups for the distribution of power and offices through a mentor-disciple relationship, thereby ensuring that certain guidelines or principles are kept when making or applying policies.

<sup>41</sup> Let us remember that, as stated in an earlier chapter, despite the severity of conflict and tension between groups, a reasonable party cohesion is normally reached towards presidential elections. Joint efforts and force are needed to win in a context of increasingly high electoral competition. But when the election is over, factions resume conflict, especially regarding the adoption of rules and procedures. Outside of election time, regional or faction leaders are much more important than the national leaders. The result is a situation of dispersion of loyalties of those elected to public office towards several principals within parties. This is especially evident among members of Congress, who often do not prioritise the national party’s agenda, but rather seek to please their governor, regional party leader or the head of the interest group they belong to instead.

The rules say that, within the Chamber, each party constitutes an independent faction or group, provided that they comply with the minimum requirement of five members laid out in Article 26 of the Organic Law (Congreso, 1999). According to Article 28 of the same framework, ‘for the exercise of the constitutional tasks of its members, party groups provide information, advice, and prepare the necessary elements to articulate the formers’ parliamentary work’ (Ibid, my translation).<sup>42</sup>

The operational obligations of party groups as laid out in the Organic Law are as follows. First of all, at the inaugural session, parties are forced to give the General Secretariat of the Chamber the following details: the name of the leader; the internal organisational rules and structure; the names of the group members; the document which states the formation of the party group; and the work agenda for each legislative period (Congreso, 1999, Art. 26).

Aside from the obligations and rights outlined in the previous paragraph, there are no other limitations to parties’ behaviour in San Lázaro. Only a few duties are specified for the party leader in Article 27 of the Organic Law, such as the obligation to notify the Board of any changes in the composition of the group (Congreso, 1999). Also, it is clear that the coordinator speaks for the group and as such has a seat in the Council and the Conference, which grants formal power to the leader. The Council has the power to govern the Chamber as it sees fit, which leads to informal rules being set.

The brief theoretical overview of parties’ operation in the Chamber provided in this section is helpful for understanding how the parties take advantage of the institution’s design to ensure their interests are fulfilled. I suggested that not only whole parties, but also their internal factions, have an agenda to fulfil. This leads to a highly politicised environment and the constant reshaping of operational rules to keep everyone happy. Having given the reader some theoretical foundations, it is now time to look into the empirical manifestations of the parties’ power.

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<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, parties also serve organisational purposes, since they make negotiations more efficient by grouping similar interests and agendas (Aldrich, 1995; Cox, 1987; Cox & McCubbins, 2005).



## **4.2 Shaping the institution: who sets the rules and makes the decisions?**

Informal rules for the Chamber are set out at the beginning of each Congress. Strongly influenced by the national political context, negotiations are carried out by leaders and the parties with the most seats obtain greater freedom (Jiménez, interview, 2010). Until a new set of informal rules is laid out, the political agreements from the previous legislature are taken as valid (Caballero & Dávila, 2006).

In turn, each group has its own internal battles regarding who has the power to make decisions on procedural matters and day-to-day issues. This is a consequence of factionalism, clientelism and the existence of multiple loyalties, all inherent features of the Mexican political system.

Therefore, this section will empirically explore the nature of parties' control over the Chamber of Deputies, highlighting the existence of hierarchical decision-making and elitism, which are enabled as a result of the informal rules.

In practice, power networks are concentrated in two main sets of decision-making offices that are closely related to one another: top levels of parties' leadership offices in Congress and the two main governing bodies of the Chamber. This became clear to me through interviews with members of Congress carried out as part of my PhD fieldwork and previously during my work as a researcher at a civil society organisation in Mexico monitoring legislative performance. It is clear that both sets of offices are at the forefront of legislative agenda-setting. Thus, factions and any other figure seeking to influence decision-making will most likely do whatever they can to participate in setting the rules through any of those two channels (Ramírez, interview, 2009; Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009; López Barriga, interview, 2009). Committee appointments are also important.

Quite obviously, party leaders have the greatest amount of responsibility for setting the agenda and appointing members of committees. They are also the orchestrators of their party's strategy across the governing bodies.

Being constituted by factions and having fragmented leadership, the parties have to select a leader who is able to pave the way for success in terms of bill approval in accordance with the party's agenda (Palomino, interview, 2009). In addition, they must also have the ability to foster consensus and cooperation among all the factions of the party at the national level. Moreover, it is normally the party leader who has the authority and responsibility to appoint members to committees and the Directive Board of the Chamber. In being the head of the party group, the leader sits in the Political Coordination Board (JUCOPO, its Spanish abbreviation) and therefore has the opportunity to participate in the re-shaping of the procedural rules of the Chamber that takes place every three years.<sup>43</sup>

The party leaders should attempt to adopt a conciliatory position among all the party factions when making committee appointments, and they have pressure from the national councils to make sure the best results possible are achieved (Morales, interview, 2009). To succeed, it is likely for party leaders to ensure that the procedural rules allow them plenty of space to operate, and thus they will carefully set out the informal rules to be followed during the three years of their tenure.

In addition, internal hierarchical organisations for each party group are important for controlling the performance of party members within committees. Appointments to them are made by party leaders with agenda-setting purposes, but also as a strategy to keep all the internal groups happy. For example, when distributing the vice coordination roles within the PAN for the 61st Congress, most of the appointments involved members from different groups within the party at the national level, as stated by Jesús Ramírez, member of the 61st Congress (Ramírez, interview, 2009).

Closely related to the party leaders' goal of maintaining cohesion is the effect that the fragmentation and competition levels of the party system have on negotiations for majorities towards floor votes. This has become especially important since the emergence of divided government in 1997. Since then, the PAN has been more

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<sup>43</sup> Miguel Ángel Jiménez (interview, 2010), as the party leader of Nueva Alianza in the 60th Congress and thus a member of the JUCOPO for that period, describes his work in the Chamber as 'a cabinet and negotiation job' due to the constant battles for power among the leaders.

willing to establish alliances with the PRI, in contrast to the PRD, which has preferred to resort to confrontation, mobilisation and radicalism (Moreno, 1999).

The fragmentation of the political system and the opposing positions of the Left and the Right have been reflected in Congress. Longer, more wearisome negotiations are carried out between the three leading parties. In addition, in order to facilitate agreements, governing bodies of the Chamber operate without accountability or transparency when discussing important matters. On some occasions meetings are held outside of Congress, thereby reducing the democratic quality of congressional practices. The result is a decidedly hierarchical decision-making system, which leaves smaller forces more or less incapacitated and having no say.

Susana Monreal (interview, 2009), secretary of the Budget Committee in the 60th Congress and member of the PRD, recalls that important meetings towards budget negotiations were carried out at the Ministry of the Interior, late at night and without summoning everyone who should have been present (she was left out a few times). In fact, particularistic interests were so powerful in the 60th Congress that even Alejandro Padilla, the president of the committee, was overpowered by other political figures, within and outside Congress. In order not to damage his future political career, he chose to remain disciplined by adopting a silent, discreet position, letting others run the committee behind the scenes (Ibid).

Smaller parties are sometimes unlikely to win a considerable number of seats in Congress unless they form an electoral coalition with one of the three largest. Once in the Chamber, each party group follows its own agenda and lays out individual strategies for influencing policy outcomes, as expressed by Martha Tagle (Convergencia) and Carlos Puente (PVEM) (Tagle, interview, 2009; Puente, interview, 2009). This explains why the large parties might not give a preference to their coalition partners when setting out rules within the governing bodies.

However, when sensitive bills are being considered, smaller parties suddenly become useful to the three largest. Miguel Ángel Jiménez (interview, 2010), was repeatedly approached by the largest parties to secure his party's support before votes that were likely to be very close.

As in all the legislatures after the second half of the 1990s, the 60th Congress had no single majority governing the Chamber. This meant that the only way to approve bills was to secure votes from more than one party group. In 2006, there was an addition to Article 26 of the Organic Law in this regard, stating that those parties which shared common ideological views would be able to sign agreements in order to achieve parliamentary majorities (Congreso, 1999).

For example, at the beginning of the 60th Congress, when the distribution of the committees was being discussed in the JUCOPO, the PRD wanted to preside over either Budget or Finance, but both the PAN and the PRI wanted one of them as well. Therefore, to secure enough votes to give the Budget Committee to the PAN and the finance one to the PRI, the leader of the former was willing to offer access to a secretariat in a committee to each member of Nueva Alianza and a seat on the Directive Board. This is the reason why the Organic Law was modified to increase the number of seats in the latter body (Jiménez, interview, 2010).

It would be logical to think that coalitions would be difficult to achieve or perhaps even regarded as inefficient in a context of internal fragmentation or parties, as it could lead to a reduced number of seats available for their distribution among the groups and party figures. However, this is not always true. Having allies across all levels of government helps the realisation of political promises through the achievement of public policies.

For instance, when deputies make an electoral connection in their states, they tend to address specific concerns, which generally relate to material benefits such as roads, schools, economic support or employment. If their party does not control access to resources in order to keep a promise, deputies need to find allies among those who manage the goods or services required (Puente, interview, 2009).

One way to make things easier is to resort to a public official belonging to a party of the same coalition. For instance, this mechanism facilitated vertical accountability for Carlos Puente, a PVEM deputy from Zacatecas whose main goal was to improve rural communications in the state. The state is governed by the PRD but several municipalities are held by the PRI. Therefore, he was able to lobby for rural

communications with mayors, who could in turn submit budget proposals for the projects (Ibid). This does not mean that cooperation is straightforward and always successful, but it does show the usefulness of coalitions for Congress members.

Legislators are expected to make use of any formal or informal mechanisms in and outside of the Chamber to keep electoral promises and remain accountable to their electorate. When belonging to smaller parties, making use of networks derived from electoral coalitions is a clever strategy. However, the fact that deputies do what they can to deliver specific outcomes does not necessarily mean that they are being accountable to constituencies. Alberto Olvera (interview, 2009), an expert on civil society at the Universidad Veracruzana, is convinced that deputies are more likely to be loyal to governors or other important political figures. Thus, their legislative work may just be aimed at fulfilling the agenda of a leader or figure to whom they are accountable, and who has the power to decide upon their future career.

The following subsection will focus on how political careers are controlled by parties, with the purpose of proving that it is perhaps the key source of power that the politicians exploit to influence the dynamics in the Chamber of Deputies. Empirical data obtained through interviews with members of the 60th Congress will be presented as supporting evidence.

#### **4.2.1 The control of political careers**

I have repeatedly said that one of the greatest sources of parties' power within the Chamber of Deputies is related to the fact that non-re-election (a mechanism originally designed by the PRI to prevent *caudillos* like Porfirio Díaz from accessing and monopolising power) allows them to control political careers. In turn, this is enabled by the predominance of informal processes for parties' internal issues, such as candidate selection and the dynamics for agreements among factions, managing demands of both territorial and sectoral leadership figures. Furthermore, the fact that the Chamber functions mainly by informal rules and procedures, which change every three years with an incoming legislature, easily allows for career patronage to take place.

#### ***4.2.1.1 Candidate selection***

Regarding the candidate selection process as a battle between the internal groups of a party, I discussed in Chapter 3 that as the electoral power of the PAN and the PRD grew, they had to make the right choices in order not to lose what they had earned, and also to widen their scope of control. As for the PRI, the divide between the politicians and the technocrats, along with the fierce competition between the sectors to maintain benefits extracted from controlling government positions, made it difficult to agree on a more democratic candidate selection process, or at least on a way to select those who could secure enough votes among the disappointed electorate, who were voting for the opposition instead.

It is a fact that the candidate selection process in the three parties is not fully democratic and clearly associated with clientelistic and elitist practices. Furthermore, the reluctance of many internal elites of the PAN and the PRD to allow for external candidates favours controlling whose name is put on the electoral list (see Chapter 3). Whenever there is a shortage of long-term party members to be parachuted into Congress to pursue a particular agenda, the PRD resorts to its network of grassroots organisations and movements to fill a seat.

This is how an individual like David Sánchez Camacho, a gay rights activist, was elected to the local congress of Mexico City and then moved on to a PR seat in the 60th Congress, where he was appointed as secretary of the Committee of Vulnerable Groups. His name was put at the top of the electoral list for the federal Congress because he had the support of all but one of the PRD's factions, as he had proved good performance as a local deputy (Sánchez Camacho, interview, 2009).

The logic of such a cautious selection process is associated with ensuring an electoral victory in an increasingly competitive environment. This is a common practice around the world; Galasso & Nannicini (2009) found that in Italy, parties compete in the most contested districts with those candidates that can not only win the party's regular votes, but also non-aligned voters.

In Mexico, the PRI selects candidates for relative majority seats who are closer to communities, and leaves the PR seats to more experience, party-loyal individuals, as I

learned from Gerardo Sosa, a PRI deputy in the 60th Congress (Sosa, interview, 2009). Langston (1998) has found evidence of how, after divided government emerged in 1997, candidate selection in the PRI is much more influenced by governors and local actors than before. Overall, candidate selection is also related to controlling policy-making and maintaining ideologies and interests safe from external influences or unwanted changes.<sup>44</sup>

The PAN has similar strategies to the PRD and the PRI. I was told by Federico Ling, parliamentary advisor to the *panista* Gerardo Buganza (60th Congress, president of the committee of Foreign Affairs), that Dep. Buganza secured a top position on the list and also his committee presidency as a recognition or prize for his defeat during the election for governor in the state of Veracruz in 2004 (Ling, interview, 2009). He also had ample political experience both at the local and federal level prior to 2006.

#### ***4.2.1.2 Rewarding loyalists and punishing mavericks***

Different figures across party structures are in charge of monitoring the performance of Congress members, with aims at determining future allocations of public offices. Therefore, the performance of Mexican deputies, in terms of keeping discipline and showing loyalty to the party's leadership figures, are strongly influenced by their post-assembly career ambitions (see, for example, Langston & Aparicio, 2009).

Each party has its own mechanisms for giving out carrots and sticks, as well as for keeping their members working for the benefit of the party,<sup>45</sup> even if it is only a faction who they are loyal to.<sup>46</sup> Parliamentary advisors Francisco Palomino, Federico Ling and Miguel Ángel Sánchez, said to me that state coordinators in the PRI, area coordinators in the PRD and vice coordinators (known as members of 'the bubble') in

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<sup>44</sup> Wuhs (2008) presents a complete analysis of how the candidate selection processes have evolved in all three parties as the two opposition ones began to win more elections in the 1990s and 2000s.

<sup>45</sup> This is measured by the achievement of goals, such as the approval of bills in committees (especially when it comes to budget allocations) or the negotiation of procedures in favour of the leader (as some sort of direct benefits for patrons).

<sup>46</sup> Fully documented throughout the academic literature on the Mexican Congress (Camp, 2007; Carey, 1996, 2003; Casar, 2000; Díaz Rebolledo, 2005; Langston, 1998; Langston & Aparicio, 2009; Nacif, 1997, 2002) is the issue of maintaining party cohesion and discipline in the Chamber. Although clear whip-like figures have not necessarily been pointed out, most authors claim that it is a fact that discipline and cohesion can be measured through the analysis of floor votes, especially after the implementation of the electronic voting system.

the PAN could be seen as ‘career operators’ or even ‘head-hunters’ for future political careers. Moisés Alcalde (60th Congress, PAN), confirmed this statement (Palomino, interview, 2009; Alcalde, interview, 2009; Ling, interview, 2009; Sánchez, interview, 2009).

Those who have misbehaved are unlikely to be considered for future political posts, especially when involving electoral processes.<sup>47</sup> In the meantime, during the three-year legislature the parties learn how to deal with mavericks and the negative effects of their indiscipline. One way of punishing mavericks is to deprive them of financial support for scrutinising bills appropriately, such as not allocating a deputy with funds for enough parliamentary assistants; this is a common practice in the PRI, according to Carlos Lazard, who has been parliamentary advisor to deputies from the PRI, PRD and Convergencia (Lazard, interview, 2009). Trips and participation in international parliamentary events are also ways to punish or reward deputies (Jiménez, interview, 2010). Julio Castañeda Pech, Secretary of Public Relations of the PAN in the 61st Congress, revealed that, in some cases, ‘problematic’ deputies who refuse to toe the party line are sent away when a crucial vote will be carried out, avoiding any risk to the agenda (Castañeda Pech, interview, 2009).

In most cases, informal rules give plenty of options both to parties or specific factions for giving out carrots and sticks. For instance, the distribution of committee seats, the key power positions, is negotiated first among the party leaders and then among party members. In order to be appointed to a committee presidency or secretariat, or to any other agenda-setting office, a deputy must be regarded as a suitable choice. If they fail to meet the party’s expectations once in office, they may be reallocated.

For example, despite having a mechanism of consultation and review of résumés or CVs for appointing committee members, the PAN still goes through considerable internal political pressure to decide who gets what office. In order to keep the important party figures happy, it first names members of ‘the bubble’ (the vice coordinators) to reduce pressure and then looks into committee seats (Ramírez, interview, 2009). Generally speaking, to be appointed to an important position,

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<sup>47</sup> The PAN throws disloyal members out of the party. In turn, the PRD does not seem to punish them (Lazard, interview, 2009).



wanting to sit in it is not enough: ‘experience and political sensibility are also needed, along with an appropriate background, and political importance within the party’s hierarchy. Throughout the committee appointment process, there is considerable pressure to allocate seats, for example, from the National Executive Committee and the governors. Therefore, the distribution of seats is a multifactor process, as confirmed by Obdulio Ávila, a *panista* deputy in the 60th Congress’ (Ávila, interview, 2009).

In turn, under a rather unclear mechanism or agreement, the PRD’s factions distribute among themselves the seats available in committees and governing bodies of the Chamber. Within factions, the prizes are carefully allocated based on regional leaderships or focused requirements (López Barriga, interview, 2009; Monreal, interview, 2009; Sánchez Camacho, interview, 2009; Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009).

For instance, the party was entitled to three secretariats in the Budget Committee for the 60th Congress, one of which had to be allocated to a deputy from the state of Zacatecas, which was governed by the PRD. The first option was Javier Calzada, but since he became the vice coordinator of the party, the seat was then given to Susana Monreal, who had been working in the team of Governor Amalia García and who also had the professional background to sit in the committee, as she is an accountant (Monreal, interview, 2009).

One of the remaining two seats was given to Erick López Barriga, who, despite not being affiliated to any faction, was the coordinator of the deputies from Michoacan. This was the largest state representation within the party, and historically the PRD’s most important geographical base, which explains why that group was entitled to the seat (López Barriga, interview, 2009). The third seat was given to Carlos Altamirano Toledo, who has ample experience in budget-related matters within the federal bureaucracy.

The PRI’s strategy for committee appointments is generally decided outside the Chamber. Information collected through interviews suggests that the National Executive Committee pre-negotiates seat allocations with governors, sectoral and

factional leaders and long-time members of the party (Lazard, interview, 2009; Sánchez, interview, 2009; Servín, interview, 2009). More politically experienced members (i.e. those who have held public offices in the past) are more likely to be appointed to committee presidencies, and are normally loyal to an important party figure (Sosa, interview, 2009).

#### ***4.2.1.3 Distribution of intra-party offices***

In addition to committee appointments (to be discussed in more detail in the next chapter), career-building and maintenance within the institutional design of San Lázaro can also be found in the integration of intra-party organisational structures.

Ignazio González Rebolledo, for example, was a PRI deputy twice, once in the 48th Congress and again in the 56th Congress. The first time he campaigned in the state of Veracruz and won a relative majority seat, the second time his name was placed at a high enough position to become a proportional representation deputy. Though not extremely active in the party before sitting in Congress for the first time, and not even at present after holding several other public offices, his leadership in the magisterial movement of the 1960s, his career as a lawyer, an academic and his efficiency during the first months of his first tenure, made his party leader take him along when he became mayor of Mexico City. Thus, good connections with party figures, but also professional skills and results can ensure long-term political careers (González Rebolledo, interview, 2009).

In addition, state coordinators in the PRI have a great amount of power.<sup>48</sup> They are the direct link with the governors and are therefore vulnerable to lobbying during budget negotiations (Lazard, interview, 2009). Their appointment as coordinators is decided by the vote of their peers, and both professional background and negotiating skills are very much taken into account. Gerardo Sosa, coordinator of the deputies from Hidalgo, for example, was the Dean of the University of the State of Hidalgo, which

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<sup>48</sup> For both the PRI and the PRD, the size of the states' representation is of great importance. 'Influential deputies are those who represent a state with many seats in the Chamber. A larger number of them also means that the governor can exert a stronger political control over them' (Jiménez, interview, 2010).

undoubtedly contributed to building a strong enough name to lead his fellow deputies (Sosa, interview, 2009).

In turn, Deputy Luis Sánchez (PRD) was appointed to the vice presidency of the Directive Board in 2007 because of his experience as the party's spokesman when the legislature began. He was proposed by his faction, ADN (National Democratic Alternative, ADN is its Spanish abbreviation), at the time the largest group within the party in Congress. Negotiations were difficult, as the position is important for the party and also for the faction in particular and therefore it was necessary to appoint a trustworthy, loyal deputy, not extremely neutral but yet able to keep peace among groups (Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009). He did not finish his tenure in San Lázaro, as he was convinced by his group to take over the presidency of the Council of the State of Mexico.

#### ***4.2.1.4 So how do parties control political careers?***

As seen in the previous examples, the pursuance of further political careers after occupying a legislative seat can respond either to party or individual incentives. Whether a deputy has the opportunity to be in a decision-making position across the intra-party legislative hierarchy or to sit in a standing committee depends on the faction of affiliation, the type of seat, and the district or circumscription of representation.

Deputies who get into Congress through a closed list (proportional representation seats or PR) are more likely to have better opportunities for influencing decision-making. This is mainly because those seats are filled by more experienced, or at least more party-loyal and/or faction-loyal individuals. Gerardo Sosa (PRI, 60th Congress) and Javier Zambrano (60th Congress, PAN), confirmed that a PR deputy's name is put on the list by one of the high-ranking figures to whom they have proved capacity and willingness to promote certain interests (Sosa, interview, 2009; Zambrano, interview, 2009).

Each party has its own criteria and dynamics for putting together closed lists. For instance, the PAN leaves the decision to the state councils and the National Executive

Council does not intervene unless disagreements cannot be solved locally (Ramírez, interview, 2009). In turn, the PRI uses a great number of its PR seats to ensure that certain influential, i.e. sectorial, groups have representation in the Chamber (Sánchez, interview, 2009). It is through this mechanism that controversial figures such as Elba Esther Gordillo have made it to one or more legislatures.<sup>49</sup>

The arguments just laid out suggest, therefore, that the promotion or constraint of a political career is a process which sometimes begins many years before being elected to Congress. Sitting in the Chamber of Deputies can be a trampoline for other and perhaps better posts, such as mayoralties, governorships or access to the Senate. So in order to secure access, those aspiring to get there should begin working for it as early as possible. In fact, as Miguel Ángel Jiménez (interview, 2010, my translation) states: ‘the Chamber of Deputies is a required step to be taken by anyone who is pursuing a political career. It provides resources and media exposure.’

Francisco Palomino, parliamentary advisor, confirms Jiménez’ statement: ‘the Chamber is formed by three types of individuals: 1) those who can aspire to a legislative seat as their highest achievement; 2) those who use their legislative seat as a stepping stone to a better position; and 3) those who are on their way down from higher grounds’ (Palomino, interview, 2009, my translation).

Furthermore, the fact that parties’ power (the PRI’s more than the PRD’s and the PAN’s) reaches all levels of government (see Chapter 3) means that their control of political careers can be much tighter. For the particular case of the Congress, it also means that factions can ensure the prevalence of their legacy in the institution despite the constitutional term limits.

That is, even when a legislator’s tenure lasts only three years, factions have the power to make sure they appoint some of their members to the Chamber, as interviews with Susana Monreal and Erick López Barriga have suggested (Monreal, interview, 2009; López Barriga, interview, 2009). Factions will also make the greatest effort to ensure that they participate in decision-making bodies or relevant committees. These are part

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<sup>49</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 3, she is the leader of the teacher’s union, a former member of the PRI and a very controversial figure in Mexican politics.

of the set of important positions in politics that will allow the groups to set their agendas, and therefore their control will always be their priority (as suggested by Martínez González, 2005a, 2005b).

The purpose of this section was to highlight the main tools that parties have in the Chamber in order to ensure their power is preserved. It was said that the way they operate in Congress is a reflection of the hierarchical and elitist decision-making system which prevails across all levels of the entire party structure. The legislative power and other governmental institutions are sources of 'goodies' to distribute among loyal members, and also arenas for agenda-setting. Therefore, those making appointments to committees and governing bodies of the Chamber make sure that the rules remain favourable to them. All the dynamics discussed in this section and the previous ones will now be exemplified with a case study.

### **4.3 Party power in the 60th Congress**

The previous sections explored, in theoretical and empirical terms, the way in which the parties' power is reflected in the Chamber of Deputies. Though some empirical supporting data has been given on the control of political careers, further references to reality are needed to provide a complete and clear picture of how the dynamics work.

This section will present the case of the 60th Congress, which was elected in parallel to President Felipe Calderón in July 2006. This electoral process was one of the most controversial ones in Mexico's history, perhaps generating even more conflict and polarisation than the one which took place in 1988 when Carlos Salinas dubiously defeated Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (Aziz Nassif & Alonso, 2009). The defeat of the PRD's candidate, Andres Manuel López Obrador, not only polarised society and the party system (Loaeza, 2007), but also accentuated divisions within both the PRD and the PAN.

Furthermore, alongside the presidential elections, and within the first three months of the 60th Congress' life, several states and municipalities renewed local congresses and city councils. The majority of the elections and processes took place smoothly and peacefully. However, the PRI's victory in the election for governor in Tabasco,

home state of López Obrador and stronghold of the PRD, led to the PRD being an even more radicalised party and to some social unrest (Magar & Romero, 2007).

Overall, local and federal elections led to multi-party representation across the country, which would increase pressure on the deputies from all parties to work with local governments of their same affiliation to keep campaign promises. The greatest amount of pressure for many deputies comes from governors; those from the PRI are approached through the state coordinations; members of the PAN are lobbied through the general coordination of the party and the foundations; the PRD deputies, in turn, are approached directly by governors and their staff (Lazard, interview, 2009). In fact, it could be said that local elections have a strong impact on national legislative dynamics, as the congressional agenda is used in negotiations and as a tool for blackmailing in local electoral processes (Jiménez interview, 2010).

Provided that particularistic interests and contexts have a strong impact on congressional politics, as has been suggested, then conflict, disorganisation and constant obstacles to effective decision-making were expected to appear in the Chamber between 2006 and 2009. The parties thus had to make additional efforts to keep things running calmly and smoothly among their congressional faction. Luis Sánchez and Xavier López Adame recall that sitting on the Directive Board entailed a great responsibility in that particular Congress, because they had to make sure that sufficient and timely information about other parties' positions was communicated to their peers in time to make important decisions. They were also responsible for steering legislative issues in favour of their party's interests, which was a very difficult task in the 60th Congress (López Adame, interview, 2009; Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009).

In keeping control over parties' agendas and opportunities, both formal and informal rules needed to be adjusted and strategies for such a task ought to have been adequately planned. The eight leaders in the 60th Congress would have to prove

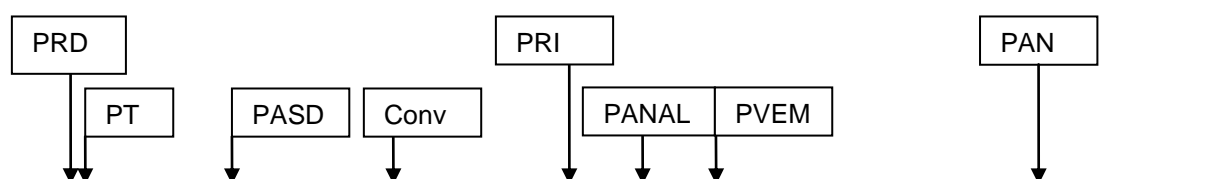
excellent negotiation skills in order to sit around the same table and prevent gridlocks within their groups<sup>50</sup> and also in the general Chamber.

Having set out this brief background of the inauguration of the Congress under study, I shall now discuss the organisation and details of each one of the party groups for the period 2006-2009.

### 4.3.1 Party groups, coalitions and political placements

To begin analysing the eight party groups' practical approaches to the difficult post-electoral context and each one's organisational and procedural details, it is useful to show a picture of the left-right political scale which prevailed between 2006 and 2009 in the Lower Chamber.

Figure 4.1 Political Location of Parties at the 60th Congress



Author's creation with data from Wiesehomeier & Benoit, 2007

Acronyms correspond to the following: Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), Partido del Trabajo (PT), Partido Alternativa Social Demócrata (PASD), Convergencia (Conv), Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Partido Nueva Alianza (PANAL), Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM), Partido Acción Nacional (PAN).

As can be seen in Figure 4.1, the two forces in severe confrontation throughout the legislature, the PRD and the PAN, are at completely opposite ends of the political scale. In turn, the PRI, who governed the country for over 70 years, is currently placed at the centre of the spectrum.<sup>51</sup> Table 4.1 shows the party composition of the legislative body under study.

<sup>50</sup> Although the Mexican economy was relatively stable in 2006, the gap between the rich and the poor, along with the job market were not at their best level. The outreach of social programmes needed to be expanded and other forms of support for the poorest were in demand. All the parties could expect demands for policies favourable to many different sectors and organisations, especially during the negotiation of the annual budget, as has happened over the years.

<sup>51</sup> The location of the parties displayed in Figure 4.1 was made based on an unpublished database of expert surveys conducted in 2006, which allows an accurate measure of the parties' ideologies around the period of the 60th Congress' inauguration. A considerable number of the statements made in the following pages will seem more understandable or logical if this is kept in mind.

<b>Party</b>	<b>Total number of seats</b>	<b>%</b>
PAN	207	41.4
PRD	126	25.2
PRI	106	21.2
CONV	18	3.6
PVEM	17	3.4
PT	11	2.2
NA	9	1.8
PASD	5	1
Independent members (SP)	1	0.2
Total	500	100

Source: LX Legislatura Cámara de Diputados, 2006a

Acronyms correspond to the following: Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), Partido del Trabajo (PT), Partido Alternativa Social Demócrata (PASD), Convergencia (Conv), Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Partido Nueva Alianza (PANAL), Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM), Partido Acción Nacional (PAN).

Furthermore, two coalitions were formed to compete in the 2006 legislative elections: the Alliance for Mexico (PRI/PVEM) and the Alliance for Everyone's Well-being (PRD/PT/Convergencia).<sup>53</sup>

Even though Convergencia, the PT and the PVEM gained seats in San Lázaro through a coalition, and their political agendas for the legislative period were pretty much in tune with the PRD's or the PRI's, they operated as an independent political force once settled in the Chamber. In fact, the alliance between the PRI and the PVEM in practice was only marginal; the latter was mainly an ally to the PRI in its role as a pivotal party when it came to important votes such as budget-related matters (López Adame, interview, 2009).

In turn, although the alliance with the PRD was certainly useful for Convergencia to increase its number of seats, it did not always feel obliged to take part in the former's protests. 'Convergencia is a social democratic party and many times it differs from the PRD in terms of the forms they tend to use to express themselves' (Tagle, interview, 2009, my translation).

<sup>52</sup> In turn, the Senate was formed by 52 members of the PAN, 33 of the PRI, 26 of the PRD, six of the PVEM, five of Convergencia, five of the PT and one independent member (Senado de la Republica, 2006).

<sup>53</sup> This coalition formation proves that the PVEM, PT and newly emerged parties such as Convergencia cannot see themselves as relevant opposition players and thus run independently to make their own way into decision-making positions.



Regarding cooperation between parties in the 60th Congress, the PRI made it explicit in its legislative programme for 2006-2009 that negotiation and dialogue with other political parties was the only way for policies to become real (PRI, 2006a). The smaller parties, whether they entered Congress through coalitions or on their own, also made it clear that they were open to negotiation.

For example, as secretary of the Finance Committee, Deputy Carlos Puente (PVEM) was in charge of defending the party's position and interests regarding the tax reform in 2007. He was driven by the spirit of achieving 'whatever could be possible based on agreements with other parties. The party had the philosophy during the 60th Congress of being part of the solution rather than being part of the conflict' (Puente, interview, 2009).

Moreover, the PRI was clever enough to exploit its historically unprecedented status of a third minority, standing in the middle of two confronting forces: the PAN and the PRD. It voted with the former, but also with the latter, depending on who offered the best 'deal'. During the 60th Congress it was not easy to intuitively predict governing majorities or coalitions, even when the origin and development of the three great forces kept them more or less on the same spot along the political scale (Caballero & Dávila, 2006).

The organisational features of the party groups were a very useful tool for party leaders to achieve cohesion. In general terms, as the size of the group increases, its internal organisation is expected to become more complex. The criteria for divisions of labour vary across all eight forces, but most of them follow thematic divisions, which relate both to the committee structure of the Chamber and to the party's programme.<sup>54</sup> In the following pages I briefly overview the organisation of the eight forces during the 60th Congress.

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<sup>54</sup> Detailed organisational figures and tables on the electoral agendas can be found in Appendix 2. A greater emphasis will be made on the three largest parties, due to their complexity and importance as the leading actors in the Chamber and the Mexican political system in general.

### 4.3.2 PAN

The PAN was divided into nine vice coordinations, which in turn were subdivided into internal councils in charge of monitoring several committees.<sup>55</sup> The group formed by the general coordinator and the vice coordinators was known as the Coordination Board, or by its colloquial title, ‘the bubble’ (Ramírez, interview, 2009; Zambrano, interview, 2009; Ávila, interview, 2009).

#### 4.3.2.1 *Choosing the leader*

The leader, Hector Larios, was proposed by the National Council of the PAN and approved by the majority vote of the group members.<sup>56</sup> Aside from his legislative experience as a senator, a federal and local deputy for nearly a decade, he has been affiliated to the party since 1990 and very active at the highest levels. For instance, in 2005 he was vice president of the election commission for presidential candidates of the PAN and during the late 1990s he occupied important positions in the party delegation in the state of Sonora (Impacto Legislativo, 2008).

However, the congressional leader of the party in government not only needed to have an outstanding political career; the ability to ensure discipline and support of presidential initiatives was equally crucial. According to an administrative staff member of the party group in San Lázaro, the PAN proved to be a cohesive party in the 60th Congress and probably part of it was due to Larios being careful to combine sensibility and interpersonal skills to fulfil his duties as coordinator (Castañeda Pech, interview, 2009). Despite an overall cohesion within the party group, there were particularistic interests working behind the scenes, such as the Church and the business elite (Zambrano, interview, 2009), so Larios needed to ensure that policy-making ran smoothly.

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<sup>55</sup> The vice coordinators dealing with legal, social and economic affairs (which oversee the highest number of committees) would be the most likely to work towards the fulfilment of the most salient issues of the legislative agenda.

<sup>56</sup> Though in reality he is believed to have been imposed by the National Council of the Party, in contrast to the leader of the PRI, who was, indeed, elected by his peers (Jiménez, interview, 2010).

#### ***4.3.2.2 Organisational strategy for the party in power***

Being the party holding the Executive chair, it is obvious that the PAN required effective channels of communication and control in order to ensure the approval of presidential bills. They saw themselves ‘as the parliamentary group of the party in government and in consequence [their] commitment was to promote the matters that led towards a better government and to prepare budgets which observe the priorities of the Executive’ (Diputados PAN, 2007, pp. 16, my translation).

President Calderón has had a partisan political career, and was therefore much more concerned than his predecessor about making sure his initiatives were internalised by deputies from the PAN (Ramírez, interview, 2009; González, interview, 2009). Hence, the layout of the original documents presenting the political agenda showed the party group’s proposals as part of the general 2006-2012 programme, which encompassed the presidency, the Senate, and the 60th and 61st Congresses. Therefore, the deputies’ goals were clearly linked with the Executive’s.

Furthermore, the legislative party group held several meetings with President Calderón as a constant and close dialogue mechanism. Gatherings with other members of the federal administration relevant to the party’s legislative agenda were also organised throughout the Congress (Diputados PAN, 2007).

The role, motivations and behaviour of the PAN in Congress have changed since it stopped being the opposition and reached the presidency. The relation of the legislative party group with the Executive has varied according to the president: Fox kept surveillance only on ‘his’ topics and ‘his’ initiatives, while Calderón demanded to be briefed about everything that was going on in the Chamber (González, interview, 2009). Therefore, the general belief of the PAN’s Congress members, but especially of those holding an office within the party structure, was to ‘back the Executive, support him. If it is not done with the purpose of following the party’s history, then it must be done to defend the state’s interests’ (Ibid, my translation).

#### ***4.3.2.3 Maintaining cohesion***

The complex operational structure adopted suggests that periodical reports on salient scrutiny and approval tasks within committees could easily be requested by the vice coordinators. Heads of councils put those reports together based on communications with committee members, and then handed them over to their superiors. In addition, it also facilitated top-down controls and instructions on votes.

An interview held with a former deputy of the PAN confirmed these assumptions. When asked about the party's mechanisms to build consensus and thus ensure cohesiveness, Senator Adriana González stated that in the Lower Chamber there is hardly any debate, rather, there is a pre-negotiated/agreed position between the heads of the different hierarchies. That is, internal communications are bottom-up: the committee presidents report to the internal council, which in turn brings the issue to the area coordinator. It is the area coordinator who then brings the matter forward to the party leader, who is accountable to the national party council (González, interview, 2009).

In fact, prior to the inauguration of a congress, the outgoing deputies meet with the incoming ones and together they review milestones and next steps (Castañeda Pech, interview, 2009). The party's agenda is carefully and centrally crafted and its implementation is also closely followed by party figures within Congress, like advisors and the foundations. Thus, there is hardly any freedom to succeed in policy-making in ways different from the party's official procedures (Alcalde, interview, 2009; Ávila, interview, 2009).

Periodical meetings between the coordination and the other entities within the party's structure ensure effective communication towards the fulfilment of the group's goals. There were four types of meetings, of which the most important one for setting the agenda was the one held with the council presidents (Diputados PAN, 2006b).

In turn, during the plenary meetings, the party leader and the vice coordinators presented to the rest of the members the list of issues on the agenda for floor votes, along with the party's position on them. It is at this point where rebels were expected to come forward and explain why they did not agree with the decision (Castañeda

Pech, interview, 2009). Generally speaking, the main reason for not toeing the party line in the Chamber was due to possible negative impacts of legislation for the municipality to which a deputy might be associated (Ibid).

Members of the PAN considered their party to be cohesive. The ‘golden rule’ in the PAN is that collective decisions oblige everyone simply because block-voting is much more powerful (González, interview, 2009). However, they also believed they have the right to defect, and when they did so, it is said that they used a ‘conscience vote’ or that they performed a ‘conscientious objection’. Federico Ling, a well-known figure within the party for his broad experience in legislative matters, came up with three simple recommendations for legislators to exert their conscientious objection: 1) try to convince the group on your standing point; 2) let others convince you that you are wrong; 3) if you are still not willing to vote along with the party, then use your speaking time on the floor to give your arguments (Rodríguez Prats et al., 2008). This maxim has become traditional in the party’s legislative practices and is complemented with César Jáuregui’s<sup>57</sup> arguments on defection: a defecting deputy must ensure their argument is 1) authentic; 2) possible to communicate; and 3) not harmful to the party (Ibid).

In addition to plenary meetings, problematic situations were more likely to be spotted and acted upon at the committee level. This was expected to be done by the PAN’s members sitting as presidents or secretaries and thus in contact with their peers in the congressional organs. The next responsible officers for settling disagreements and possible defections were the heads of the consultative councils which oversaw the committees (Ling, interview, 2009).

According to official party documents, the councils were ‘spaces for reflection, analysis, deliberation and decision-making which allow [ed] one to determine or define where the PAN’s parliamentary group stood on different legislative matters’ (Diputados PAN, 2007, pp. 14, my translation). Therefore, committee and council presidents could be considered as whips within the PAN (Ling, interview, 2009).

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<sup>57</sup> César Jáuregui was Senator during the 60th Congress and is also considered one of the PAN’s most experienced legislators.

Alternatively, the maintenance of discipline was also achieved through the foundations, which have traditionally been institutionalised advisory bodies for the PAN within the Chamber. Aside from generating reports and information on salient issues of policy-making, they are the first filter for any bill proposal that a *panista* deputy wishes to put forward. They will either let the bill go through to the next level of approval (to a group of deputies who are experts on the topic), advise the proponent to revise and re-submit the bill or simply block the proposal from going through.<sup>58</sup> Foundations were in constant communication with ‘the bubble’, and thus also gave notice of defections (Zambrano, interview, 2009; Ávila, interview, 2009).

Another issue, closely related to maintaining party lines, is the improvement of legislative and political skills of the party members (Alcalde, interview, 2009). As has been said, the PAN is still under an ongoing institutionalisation process, where newcomers are welcome but expected to follow the party’s ideology. This ‘controlled professionalisation’ of cadres is applicable to using speaking time.

Though controlled by the party leader, it seems that interventions during floor votes could be easily scheduled (Diputados PAN, 2007, pp. 12, my translation):

With the purpose of putting together a team of better qualified and more professional deputies who can respond to society’s needs, the parliamentary group of the PAN in the 60th Congress seeks to work as a team and wishes to be the space for the development of all its members, therefore: it seeks equal opportunities for everyone; it does not want to have a group of expert speakers, everybody has to use speaking time; the group offers support to all the members for skill-improvement either at the master or doctoral level or for any other educational programme.

This argument of equal opportunities for public speeches is supported by information published by the party (Diputados PAN, 2006c);<sup>59</sup> it therefore seems that speaking

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<sup>58</sup> If a bill proposal is banned by the foundations, its proponent can still attempt to push it through during a plenary meeting of the party. This is when the author of the bill is expected to resort to the maxims laid out in the previous paragraphs.

<sup>59</sup> The web page does not specify date of last update, but based on the date of access, the data could cover up to the first ordinary period of sessions of the third year of the 60th Congress.

time was often granted, since the number of speeches range from one to 78 per deputy. The content of the addresses to the plenary, however, is unknown.

### **4.3.3 PRD**

As the second largest party in the Chamber, and both an ideologically and contextually open rival of the PAN, the PRD needed an appropriate organisational structure to exert its legislative power. That was its sole opportunity to have an impact on national public policy after its defeat in the 2006 presidential election. Thus, cohesiveness, discipline and efficiency would have to be achieved in order to block votes and gain strong party positions.

#### ***4.3.3.1 Organisational and leadership structure***

The PRD had a simpler organisation than the PAN. Though it was also based on thematic divisions of labour, with area coordinators overseeing a certain number of committees, there were no councils mediating between the vice coordinators and the committee board members. The Directive Board of the PRD consisted of 14 thematic coordinations,<sup>60</sup> eight offices in charge of monitoring administrative and procedural matters of the group, the two members of the Chamber's Board and one vice coordinator (PRD, 2006a). They all reported to Javier González Garza, the party leader.

González Garza joined the PRD in 1989, and has held important positions in the party's national council, especially throughout the 1990s. He was a federal deputy in the 56th Congress (1994-1997) and between then and 2006 he was either head or deputy director of governmental agencies in Mexico City (Impacto Legislativo, 2008). As a result, he was well connected to important party figures at the national level. He also had the negotiating skills to face the challenges of leading one of the most divided groups in the Chamber, and which was in open confrontation with the party in government. But despite his conciliatory approach among the PRD's factions, González Garza had his own political interests and did not hesitate to pursue them, even if not all the factions agreed with him. An example of this was when he

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<sup>60</sup> Although the procedural rules for the party establish twelve area coordinations, the information available on the website shows two more.

contributed to a fast track approval of the electoral reform negotiated in late 2007, which put unnecessary pressure on the council of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) to elect a new leadership and apply a series of complicated reforms to its structure and legal framework (Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009).

Both the coordinator and the vice coordinator were elected by the totality of the party members in Congress. They proposed the names of the heads of the rest of the offices within the Directive Board and the final approval was given by the majority vote of the party group. If the proposal failed to be approved and a second one had also been rejected, then each head of coordination would have had to be elected separately (PRD, 2006c, Art. 15).

It is the party's tradition that all members of the Directive Board are ratified (or replaced) at the beginning of each year of the legislature, which makes party officers accountable for the developments and setbacks that may occur within their area of supervision (Ibid, Art. 17). However, since their appointment depended on negotiations between the factions then their performance was linked more with their group's interests. Furthermore, accountability was expected to be established towards their faction rather than to the whole party group (Sánchez, interview, 2009; López Barriga, interview, 2009; Monreal, interview, 2009).

#### ***4.3.3.2 Communication processes under conflictive factionalism***

As with the PAN, both bottom-up and top-down communication processes could be established. In bottom-up processes, members of the party who sat on committee boards would discuss any relevant matters with the area coordinator. However, whether such communication brought about successful policy-making outcomes for the party would depend on the faction flag which each deputy held. That is, fruitful dialogue between committee board members and their coordinator within the PRD could be impossible to achieve if faction rivalries were present (López Barriga, interview, 2009).

For example, as Secretary of the Committee of Vulnerable Groups, Deputy David Sánchez Camacho was responsible for communicating to his area coordinator any



important situation, such as committee opinions on which the PRD as a whole should take a certain position. Furthermore, as the ‘speaker’ of his party in the committee, he had to submit a periodical report of his achievements and those of his peers within the legislative body. In general, he held regular meetings with Holly Matus, head of the area of social equality, to ensure that the party’s agenda was being fulfilled regarding vulnerable groups. However, he had a considerable amount of freedom to represent his party within the legislative body he sat in. As Secretary, he consulted his fellow party members before making a decision as a board officer of the committee (Sánchez Camacho, interview, 2009).

According to the standard internal procedural rules of the PRD for its legislative group in the Lower Chamber, rank-and-file members must have the approval of their area coordinator before releasing a proposition on behalf of the whole party. In addition, they are able to present an annual report to their constituencies and consult them whenever they feel a bill may affect them. Mass media and other discussion forums could be used for the dissemination of a report (PRD, 2006c, Art. 6).

On the other hand, top-down communication was traditionally held during the party’s monthly plenary meetings. Nonetheless, they appear to have been rather disorganised and not taken seriously by the deputies. Therefore, many members of the party group decided to stop attending them and rather negotiate informally for support on certain bills (Monreal, interview, 2009; López Barriga, interview, 2009; Servín, interview, 2009; Sánchez, interview, 2009).

In addition, each area coordinator was obliged to discuss with the deputies in their field all the initiatives to be presented and committee opinions to be signed by members of the party at least once a month. During the committees, the coordinator of debates notified the group of the daily agenda and gave the opportunity for the members to express their thoughts for up to three minutes if they wished to. This would appear to be the right moment for dissent to have been expressed; however, in practice, any argument against the party position was instead made via speaking time on the floor, or even through the media (Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009). Mavericks were hardly ever punished by the party (López Barriga, interview, 2009; Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009).

#### *4.3.3.3 Establishing party lines*

The criteria for allocation of speaking time are unclear and it would be interesting to know how dissenting party members negotiated with their leader in order to have the opportunity to speak up. The internal rules of the parliamentary group of the PRD state only that all members had the right to ‘participate in the debates of the Chamber and also in the decisions of the party’ (PRD, 2006c, Art. 5).

According to members of the PRD’s party group, there was freedom of speech, at least compared to other parties (Monreal, interview, 2009; Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009). In addition, party lines were practically non-existent, not only because of the presence of multiple factions, which complicated general agreement, but also because of more individual positions among the members on specific topics (Monreal, interview, 2009; Sánchez Camacho, interview, 2009). Even if freedom was the norm in the party group, though, there were controls to make sure no one made statements as if they had been agreed upon by the whole party. When necessary, the party’s spokesman had the obligation to come out and clarify that a certain statement had been given by a deputy as a personal opinion (Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009).

In accordance with the party’s recent history, the PRD was the most fragmented one in the 60th Congress. Such lack of cohesiveness was directly related to the electoral results of July 2006, but at the same time it stemmed from old internal divisions within the National Council in the context of the general leadership elections of previous years.<sup>61</sup>

Susana Monreal (interview, 2009) claims that the control of legislative positions and spaces for agenda-setting is often achieved through bribes to fellow party members, particularly across factions. This practice has had important consequences in the PRD’s factionalism, locking-in what she calls a ‘chronic system of sects’. Party leaders cannot break this equilibrium and rather opt for trying to keep everyone happy.

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<sup>61</sup> A detailed explanation of the internal groups within the PRD can be found in Garduño (2008), Baena Paz & Saavedra Andrade (2004) and in Borjas Benavente (2003).

These internal divisions resulted in increased difficulties for achieving block votes. This situation was capitalised on by the PAN and the PRI and most likely also affected public opinion and the electoral results for 2009, where the PRD dropped down from the second to the third largest party in Congress. Nonetheless, the party leader of the PRD made his best efforts to negotiate with the PAN and the PRI to preside over key committees for the group's agenda.

Overall, the PRD's internal division was an enemy of the organisational structure's efficiency. Over the last two years of the 60th Congress, there was a lack of willingness of party members to observe what the Directive Board recommended on concrete pieces of legislation. They sometimes even voted against bills which would benefit their own factions (Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009). Therefore, even if the formal structure was designed to ensure efficiency, cohesiveness and discipline, the reality turned out to be rather different.

#### **4.3.4 PRI**

As explained earlier, since the PRI lost the majority of seats in the midterm elections of 1997, it has been forced to learn how to negotiate with other political forces in order to gain majorities for floor votes. In addition, for the last three Congresses, it has had to learn how to behave as an opposition party, and without an obvious 'orthodox type of politics' present; that is, there is no longer a president to maintain discipline and cohesiveness in Congress (Sosa, interview, 2009). Both in the 58th (2000-2003) and 59th (2003-2006) Congresses, it was the largest minority, with 208 and 222 seats respectively; however, in the 60th Congress it won only 106 seats making it the third largest party (LIX Legislatura Cámara de Diputados, 2003; LX Legislatura Cámara de Diputados, 2006b).

The PRI was well aware of its importance to the PAN and the PRD for playing the system. Therefore, it learnt to sell its group vote to the highest bidder, which was generally the PAN. The PRD was at times too busy dealing with internal conflicts, and so the PRI and the PAN governed the 60th Congress (Sánchez, interview, 2009). However, in order to deliver the 'product', the party first had to process it internally, taking into consideration its own agenda and thereby self-imposed limitations.

#### ***4.3.4.1 Reconciling factions***

As stated in Chapter 3, the base of the PRI has historically been unions and other important political groups in relation to its long-term maintenance of governmental control. However, many more types of internal factions have emerged within its militants and members, which are inevitably mirrored in the states and also in Congress. They have sometimes become so irreconcilable that consensus on the party's legislative positions cannot be immediately reached (Palomino, interview, 2009). The stage or status of the rivalries between groups determines the type of actors who represent the party in Congress and, logically, the type of intra-party politics which prevail (Sosa, interview, 2009).

As discussed in Chapter 3 (see page 110 of this thesis), three main groups can be identified within the PRI for the 60th legislature. Francisco Palomino, an experienced parliamentary advisor, describes them as follows. The first was led by the leader of the PRI in the Senate, Manlio Fabio Beltrones. The second gathered around the well-known Governor of the State of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto.<sup>62</sup> The third group, in turn, was composed of the moderate *priista* Beatriz Paredes – national leader of the party at the time- and her followers. Emilio Gamboa, leader of the PRI's legislative group in the Lower Chamber, was placed between Paredes and Peña Nieto, and his not belonging to any of the three groups gave him the independence to negotiate the party's cohesiveness (Palomino, interview, 2009).

Gamboa joined his party in 1972. Among other partisan activities, he was part of the team of coordinators for Francisco Labastida's presidential campaign in 2000. Furthermore, he was a close collaborator of Miguel de la Madrid while de la Madrid served as President of Mexico (1982-1988), State Secretary and director of several important public entities during the 1990s; he sat in the Senate twice (57th and 59th Congress) (Impacto Legislativo, 2008).

As the party leader in the 60th Congress, since the PRI, like the PRD, is divided into several groups following different figures, Gamboa had to negotiate with all the

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<sup>62</sup> The interviewee also stated that old-school politicians who are his followers had begun to campaign towards the 2009 legislative elections, and so the 2009 Congress would be a useful weapon against the PRI's presidential campaign.

factions in order to maintain a certain level of cohesiveness. The negotiations were crucial tasks as the PRI was smart enough to operate between the PAN and the PRD to work on majorities towards important votes. Perhaps one of the most useful negotiating tools employed by Gamboa was the distribution of coordinating offices among all three party factions. After all, the PRI's internal organisation within the Chamber was quite hierarchical and coordinated actions through thematic areas and based on divisions by state of representation.

The organisational structure of the PRI, along with the operational framework, had the purpose of 'contributing to consensus-building within the Parliamentary Group ...' aside from guaranteeing freedom of speech and democratic as well as equal participation of the members of the party group (PRI, 2006c, Art. 5).

#### ***4.3.4.2 Operational structures, communication processes and party lines***

The existence of multiple coordinating offices facilitated communication and efficiency, but at the same time left open spaces for subgroups to stand against the general interests of the party. For example, local leaders of the PRI were well known to exert influence through the state coordinations, making consensus-building and block voting more difficult to achieve in the federal Lower Chamber. This was especially true for lobbying for budget allocations (Lazard, interview, 2009).

Emilio Gamboa's advisor, Guillermo Amerena, described to me the communication processes of the PRI in the 60th Congress. These were, as for the previous two parties, both top-down and bottom-up. Regarding top-down processes, there were two types of preparation meetings before floor votes. During the first one, Deputy Gamboa met with the vice coordinators, the state coordinators and the other officers to discuss the main issues on the agenda and agreed on the party position to be taken. Then, the second meeting took place with all the deputies of the party, in which the positions agreed upon in the previous meeting were transmitted to the whole group. Standpoints were taken on specific issues and opinions were given by the members (Amerena, interview, 2009).

Although party lines were given to the members in the meetings, as per the members' own request, the PRI also began providing channels for its members to give opinions instead of only following official lines (Ibid). Presidents and secretaries of committees were given full freedom to do what they believed was best for the party when it came to committee scrutiny and decisions. However, Gamboa kept an eye on things through the plenary meetings to ensure that no extreme or 'inconvenient' positions were being taken (Ibid). Criteria for allocation of speaking time are unspecified, so there are no elements for judging the actual opportunities that members had to express their opinions on the floor.

In general, the coordination of legislative affairs, so as to fulfil the party's agenda, was done by the working groups, which were formed by a representative, the members of the party sitting in the committees involved and a technical secretary to assist with practical matters (PRI, 2006c, Art. 22). In addition, the PRI had a 'council of directors of committees and representatives of the working groups' (Ibid). Its main task was to gather the party leader, the presidents and secretaries of ordinary committees and the representatives of the working groups in order to have accurate, up-to-date information on the legislative tasks being done throughout the Chamber. The leader was in charge of organising the meetings, and he could decide to make them plenary or selective (specialised) (PRI, 2006c, Art. 25).

Thus, it would be logical to assume that the members of the council were the ones in charge of making sure that party lines were followed within committees. Bottom-up mechanisms for the identification of threats should begin with the presidents and/or secretaries of the committees, as was the case in the previous two parties analysed in this chapter.

Party lines were more likely to be emphasised for crucial topics on the party's agenda, such as union-related issues like pensions or retirement funds, energy, budget, allocation of federal funds to the states, communications and transport. These issues have been traditionally at the top of the PRI's concerns.

#### ***4.3.4.3 Behaving as an opposition party***

There is one final topic worth highlighting regarding the PRI. The document which outlines the party's agenda for the 60th Congress and the near political future in general repeatedly states that the organisation was at a critical stage both internally and at the national level. It therefore had to evolve as a viable option for constituents (PRI, 2006a).

That is, the PRI acknowledged that there was 'a serious problem of confrontation, uncertainty and intolerance between polarised forces which created an adverse environment for the country's development. The PRI had, among other challenges, to re-position itself before a sceptical society [...] The PRI's situation was critical, but its representation and presence was undeniable' (Ibid, p. 2, my translation).

The clear intention of acting as a critical opposition party<sup>63</sup> continues throughout the document:

While the Right claims to have established the democratic regime and the Left seeks a legal fracture for the elaboration of a new Constitution, the PRI claims the need to reform laws and institutions as a way to respond to the new challenges, as part of a perspective of social and democratic transformation under conditions of political agreement (Ibid, p. 7, my translation).

Finally, I should also say that the party knew it was important to maintain a clear position of non-negotiation regarding key issues of its agenda, but still be flexible enough to participate in joint ventures on other matters. Thus, the PRI's official documents confirm the suggestion made here of it selling its votes to the highest bidder, but always keeping in mind its own interests.

#### **4.3.5 Other parties**

##### ***4.3.5.1 Convergencia***

Having been formally recognised as a registered political party in 1999, Convergencia competed in the elections of July 2000 within a coalition of the PRD and other small

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<sup>63</sup> This was a discursive strategy to win a legislative majority in the midterm elections of 2009.

parties. As a result, it won two seats in the Lower Chamber, one in the Senate and one more in the local Congress of the Federal District (Convergencia, 1999). In the 59th Congress (2003-2006) it won five seats in the Federal Lower Chamber (Ibid); as for the 60th Congress, when it ran for office in coalition with the PRD and the PT, it became the fourth largest minority, with 17 deputies.

Convergencia's organisation was very simple. Hierarchically speaking, it had only one general coordinator, Alejandro Chanona, and all the thematic areas were dealt with by each party member sitting in the relevant committee (Tagle, interview, 2009). Thus, intra-party communication processes were much more straightforward than in the previous parties that have been analysed.

Based on the weekly legislative agenda laid out in the Chamber's council meetings, the coordinator communicated to his faction the position to be taken on the issues to be discussed. That is, he provided an overview of the political agenda for the week, including the legal implications of the bills under discussion and he then expressed what the party was interested in doing about the matter. This led to a discussion with the members of the group, aiming at a final consensus on how to vote in order to maintain cohesiveness. Overall, the party can be seen as a leftist, cohesive party (Morales, interview, 2009).

Due to the small size of the group, it is difficult to identify the figure in charge of ensuring everyone toed the party line. To begin with, a clear party line is hard to see, since there was an actual leader, the coordinator, and a moral leader, Senator Dante Delgado, the founder of Convergencia, and so two party lines can be identified and two figures towards whom loyalty could be proved (Ibid).

Nonetheless, a general legislative agenda for the 60th Congress did exist, and deputies of Convergencia were expected to work towards its achievement. The programme was put together in compliance with the agreements reached while forming the electoral 'Coalition for Everyone's Well-being' (PRD/PT/Convergencia). Thus, it looks very much like the PRD's and the PT's party make-up in that its main concern is social development and equality.



#### **4.3.5.2 PVEM**

In turn, the Green and Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM, its Spanish abbreviation) has been in Congress since 1997. It has formed electoral coalitions with the PAN and the PRI, and for the 60th Congress it won 17 seats in the Lower Chamber through the Alliance for Mexico (PRI/PVEM).

The general coordinator of the group was Gloria Lavara, and there were no other internal organisational offices. In fact, channels of communication and decision-making on the party's positions were established in an informal, easy-going manner; 'they were not at all solemn, because the party is a generational project' (Puente, interview, 2009). One possible additional reason for not adopting a more complex organisation in Congress is that the national leader of the PVEM, Emilio González, was a member of the legislative group for the period of 2003-2006, so direct supervision from the National Council did not need to be institutionalised.<sup>64</sup>

However, that does not mean that institutionalised meetings did not take place. Every morning, before a Chamber's plenary session, there was a meeting to discuss the daily agenda and also the party's position on certain issues. At that moment a member was chosen to use speaking time in order to set out the group's position on a floor vote. Sergio Mendoza, advisor to Dep. Puente, explained to me that the choice of speaker normally related to expertise in the topic or belonging to the committee submitting the bill or presenting the scrutiny and amendments of a proposal (Mendoza, interview, 2009). As in all the other parliamentary groups, speaking time in the PVEM was controlled by the coordinator.

#### **4.3.5.3 PT**

The Labour Party (PT, its Spanish abbreviation) joined the electoral coalition of the PRD and Convergencia for the 2006 elections. This resulted in them winning ten seats in the Lower Chamber. Deputy Ricardo Cantú was elected as the party leader and Jaime Cervantes as vice coordinator. As was the case for Convergencia, the PT's legislative agenda for 2006-2009 met most of the PRD's concerns. Its main goal was

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<sup>64</sup> However, it seems that Deputy González, who was also party leader, did not intervene too much in the party's legislative operation. Rather, he was busy with administrative issues at the national level and left the true leadership of the group to Deputy Lavara (López Adame, interview, 2009).

to ‘transform the institutions of the Mexican State to match our political development with the level of forwardness that we have reached’ (PT, 2006).

#### **4.3.5.4 PANAL**

New Alliance (*Nueva Alianza*, also referred to as *PANAL*) registered as a political party in 2004 and received formal recognition of the IFE in 2005 (Nueva Alianza, 2006b). As a result of this recognition, for the 2006 elections it ran independently and won ten PR seats in the Lower Chamber. However, in 2007 one of its deputies requested admission to the PAN and therefore left PANAL’s group with only nine members but with no implications for the party’s presence in the Chamber.

The party is linked to Elba Esther Gordillo, a controversial political figure in Mexico. Since 1989 she has been the leader of an important teacher’s union in the country (SNTE), which operates throughout several federal ministries and public institutions such as the National Lottery, the Health Agency for Public Officers (ISSSTE) and even the Federal Electorate Institute. She became a Federal Deputy three times and was once a Senator; her last tenure was in the 59th Congress, when she was the leader of the PRI’s group in the Lower Chamber, however, she gave up her seat only one year after the inauguration (Martínez, 2007; Redacción, 2006).<sup>65</sup>

Having been a member since 1970, Gordillo formally broke from the PRI in 2005, when she quit as the General Secretary of the party, and since then it appears that she has been using PANAL to place her protégées in important positions (Redacción, 2006). She is regarded as a corrupt politician who uses clientelistic practices to achieve her interests and there appears to be evidence that her union gave enough votes for New Alliance to keep its registration as a political party (Martínez, 2007).

The initial coordinator of the group was Miguel Ángel Jiménez, but in April 2008 he handed the position over to Silvia Luna. The party leader is assisted by a vice coordinator and Mónica Arriola was elected to this post since the beginning of the legislature.

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<sup>65</sup> Her resignation was requested due to her excessive willingness to negotiate with the PAN.

#### 4.3.5.5 PASD

As with PANAL, the PASD (Partido Alternativa Social Demócrata) ran for elections for the first time in 2006. Five deputies formed the parliamentary group in the Lower Chamber led by Marina Arvizu. Its electoral programme and legislative agenda stated that the party was formed by citizens who fight for changing unjust and unequal practices within Mexico's political, social and economic situation (PASD, 2006).

This suggests that a small group formed by members with similar interests and backgrounds could easily communicate to vote in the same direction. They held regular meetings to discuss both conjectural and non-conjectural issues of the legislative agenda. For the case of the former, positions were taken in order to vote cohesively on the floor. The latter, in turn, were derived from the electoral programme of the PASD and so block votes were not required to be agreed upon (Conde, interview, 2009).

Even if party discipline was the norm, there was always the possibility of a 'conscientious vote', that is, of a member's defection. In such cases the party tried to convince the individual to abstain instead of voting against the rest of the faction. In the end though, whether the deputy decided to follow the recommendation or not depended on the reason why they were following their own beliefs (Ibid).

According to Deputy Conde (Ibid), defection within her party would stem from the fact that it is a citizen's party *per se* and its background consists of civil causes such as feminism, human rights, freedom, etc., so each party member is committed to a civil cause. Elsa Conde is committed to the feminist movement so when she thought of defecting it was with the sole objective of not contradicting her electoral promises.

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As a general conclusion on party organisation and communication during the 60th Congress, it can be said that, regardless of the size and location on the political scale, all eight party groups relied much more on informal norms than on formal ones. With cohesion and discipline their main tools for effective agenda-setting, all forces, and especially the three largest ones, had to find routes for overcoming obstacles such as factionalism and divided leaderships. They had to reward loyal members and control

the rebellious ones, and the best way to succeed was to keep it clear that a satisfactory legislative performance would be crucial for a post-assembly career.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

As suggested in Chapters 1 and 3, the Chamber is the governmental institution where the three largest parties have the greatest opportunities to shape decision-making procedures. This chapter sought to illustrate exactly how parties influence the Chamber of Deputies, both in terms of its institutional design and its every day work. A first, general answer to the question derives from the parties' use of conditional path dependency, whereby they design procedural rules to suit their goals. Parties use committees and other governing bodies as agenda-setting offices, and also to maintain a balance of power between internal factions by distributing seats in them as prizes to loyal members. This, in turn, requires making sure that the rules allow such use of committee seats.

The case study on the 60th Congress illustrates the hierarchical and elitist nature of the decision-making process, along with the dynamics that party leaders engage in when seeking to ensure favourable rules. The post-electoral context of July 2006 further triggered competition among the political forces and their own internal factions. Consequently, reforms to both formal and informal rules were extreme but necessary to ensure governance and the achievement of agreements within committees and on the floor. Additional adjustments were made accordingly within each party group in order to keep cohesion and discipline as tight as possible. Success was easier or harder to achieve depending on the level of fragmentation between factions.

This particular context of extreme reforms and negotiation mechanisms carried out throughout the 60th Congress proves that rules created through collective action are likely to be followed. They are also likely to endure for as long as the actors involved decide collectively that they are still suitable for regulating policy-making in the Chamber. Hence, even if the PRI, the PRD and the PAN were not absolutely satisfied with the agreements reached for distributing committees and seats in the Directive Board, they were all aware that it was the only way they could all be included. Not

even the unhappiest player of all, the PRD, took the risk of not abiding by the established rules.

A second, and more specific way in which the parties affect the Chamber's design and purpose has to do with the tight control they exert on political careers. Term limits and 'bespoke' informal rules allow the parties to favour loyal and reliable individuals by appointing them to certain committees or positions within these bodies. Loyal party members, whether to a faction, sectoral or geographical leaders, are respected and rewarded, while disloyal ones' aspirations of a career in politics are truncated. Using congressional positions as carrots and sticks and a purely distributional approach to committees inevitably has an impact on the original purpose of the institution, impeding its representing the electorate.

The following chapter will look deeper into the control of political careers during the 60th Congress by determining the variables which made committee appointments more predictable. With this analysis, it should be possible to see clearly that the parties have been overcoming the barriers imposed by constitutional term limits and seem to have unwritten rules as to which individuals are most suitable for the different positions that need to be filled in the Chamber.

## Chapter 5. Party control over political careers

Throughout this thesis we have seen that Mexican parties have diversified their power networks over the years, some relying more on sectoral strongholds, with others relying on territorial ones. They have all been capable of adaptation to achieve better negotiations to secure themselves more effective participation in the decision-making process. The PAN, the PRD and, quite logically, the PRI have maintained the clientelistic and hierarchical decision-making practices that prevailed during the PRI's rule, and have re-shaped a selection of informal rules and formal frameworks to cope with greater pluralism and electoral competition in the last few decades.

It has also been repeatedly said in previous chapters that the three main political parties in Mexico have accumulated a large amount of power. They use it strategically across the governmental agencies in which they participate to secure a place in the decision-making system, which in turn leads to the establishment of certain patterns of behaviour that cannot easily be changed.

This situation has consequently influenced the design and operation of public institutions. Since it is where all three dominant parties are constantly represented, the Chamber of Deputies is one of the bodies most affected. For example, as seen in Chapter 4, its vague rules towards party groups' behaviour and its outdated regulations for committee allocations and management of directive bodies have not been improved on by the parties. Instead, the parties have resorted to rather informal agreements (*acuerdos*) to distribute positions at the beginning of each legislature and whenever negotiations are needed.

More specifically, Chapter 4 identifies two main effects of parties' power over the Chamber of Deputies, the institution of interest for this research. The first one relates to the dynamics of committee appointments, which define the purpose of committees as informative but also demanding.

Parties not only appoint deputies to committee seats based on their professional or political experience, but also consider their loyalty towards the party and the consequential reassurance that they will work for the party's interest. Therefore, committees provide the whole Chamber with accurate information on bills, so as to facilitate decision-making at the time of floor votes. At the same time though, committees concentrate on deputies whose interests (whether they are their own or the party's) lie within the jurisdiction of the committee they sit in (Kaeding, 2004).

Second, the governing bodies of the Chamber, particularly the Directive Board, are also comprised of carefully selected members of each party. They are expected to communicate procedural matters to their group in a timely manner and also to facilitate the promotion of their party's interest. Consequently, deputies' previous political experience determines their appointment to the Board, converting the Board into an elitist body where only those with appropriate leadership skills are likely to sit.

Overall, both allocations are related to parties' control over political careers and the close link between national and in particular local politics and legislative dynamics. Therefore, this chapter will support the arguments laid out in Chapters 3 and 4 about how the parties mirror their internal divisions in their legislative behaviour, their preference for hierarchical decision-making processes and how their exploitation of term limits to control political careers has had a strong impact on the Chamber's operation.

Through a statistical analysis, my aim is to prove what has been argued in preceding chapters: what really matters within parties' strategies for appointments to committee presidencies and seats in the Directive Board is the partisan background of deputies. This constitutes a form of party discipline, exercised through the control of political careers.

Particular positions across the parties' coordination structures are also given on the basis of networks and loyalties. However, due to strong differences between the three parties' organisations, it is impossible to present an analysis for their underlying power dynamics. This matter will therefore be left aside.

Background information was collected for the deputies of the PAN, the PRD and the PRI in the 60th Congress in order to document their age, gender, educational level as well as political and non-political work experience prior to 2006. The database also specifies appointments to committees or governing bodies, along with linkages to organisations or sectors associated with the party.

The data collection was driven by the determination to find the best predictor or combination of predictors for appointments to presidencies within committees and to the Directive Board. The possible independent variables were identified as:

- Party of representation (e.g. are there variations across parties?)
- Type of seat
- Previous public office (federal, state or municipal level)
- Previous bureaucratic position (federal, state and municipal level)
- Active participation in the party as an officer at any level
- Association with sectors or organisations linked to the party
- Age, gender and level of education.

Since the information was substantial with a population of 440 deputies, it was possible to obtain significant results for the statistical analysis. In addition, several variables were used to establish basic parameters to complement the empirical description of the 60th Congress laid out in Chapter 4.

The results discussed in the following pages constitute valuable evidence on how all three parties share the strategy of moving their loyal members around the national and local public institutions to fulfil their interests. This suggests that the PAN and the PRD, born within the system created by the PRI, have adopted the PRI's practices of 'recycling' loyal members, finding ways around the constitutional prohibition of re-election and bringing former deputies back into the Chamber. In doing so, all three parties have locked in informal rules for party organisation and behaviour.

With the purpose of presenting the data collected and discussing the results obtained in a clear and comprehensive manner, this chapter is divided into five sections. The



first one provides summary statistics of the population, showing general characteristics of each party group and differences between them regarding education levels, age or gender composition. In addition, it points to the proportion of deputies who had bureaucratic or elected experience before joining Congress in 2006. Records of party switching are also mentioned.

The second and third sections present the statistical analysis carried out in order to understand the logic of appointments to senior positions of the committees and the Directive Board respectively.

A fourth section follows, which adds statistical evidence to the argument laid out in Chapter 3 regarding candidate selection processes. It addresses the question of which factors make members of the parties more likely to be nominated to the Chamber through proportional representation (PR) seats.

A discussion of the results obtained from the statistical analysis is presented in the fifth section. As this is the final chapter of the case study developed in Part II of this research, I conclude it by providing an overview of the main empirical findings spread across Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

### **5.1 The general picture: summary statistics**

As has been said, the data collected was not only used to construct models for the statistical analysis, but also served to provide a quantitative supplement to the empirical description of the 60th Congress presented earlier in this research. Table 5.1 summarises the descriptive statistics obtained, which will be overviewed in this section.

First of all, it should be mentioned that the 60th Congress of the Chamber of Deputies was, as politics in Mexico has traditionally been, predominantly male. It can be seen in Table 5.1 that a considerably larger proportion of all three parties' members were men. Unsurprisingly, as it is the oldest and most traditional party, the PRI had the fewest number of female members.

<b>Table 5.1 Background Information of Deputies</b>				
		<b>PAN</b>	<b>PRD</b>	<b>PRI</b>
<b>Age</b>				
	Mean	46	49	52
<b>Gender</b>				
	Female	21.7%	20.5%	16.0%
	Male	78.3%	79.5%	84.0%
<b>Education</b>				
	University Degree	65.2%	48.0%	61.3%
	Postgraduate	23.2%	17.3%	19.8%
<b>Previous Elected Office</b>				
Federal				
	Deputy	10.6%	12.6%	27.4%
	Senator	2.4%	0.8%	9.4%
	Both	3.9%	2.4%	8.5%
	None	83.1%	84.3%	54.7%
State				
	Deputy	32.9%	36.2%	39.6%
	Governor	0.5%	0.8%	1.9%
	None	66.7%	63.0%	57.5%
Municipal				
	Mayor	11.6%	15.7%	28.3%
	Councillor	22.2%	10.2%	5.7%
	Both	1.0%	0.8%	4.7%
	None	65.2%	73.2%	81.3%
	Total with no experience = 71.4%			
<b>Previous Bureaucratic Position</b>				
	Federal	20.3%	11.8%	21.7%
	State	24.6%	28.3%	45.3%
	Municipal	28.5%	16.5%	8.5%
	None	26.6%	43.3%	24.5%
	Total with no experience = 30.9%			
<b>Sectoral affiliation</b>				
	Active	9.2%	18.9%	15.1%
	Total	207	127	106

N = 440

Source: Author's calculations with information collected from Impacto Legislativo, 2008

Regarding age, it can be seen that the PAN has the youngest mean, while the PRI has the oldest members on average. Given that it had the monopoly of public offices for decades, this finding is not surprising; it also indicates that the deputies with the

longest political careers belong to the PRI. However, looking into particular cases, it is interesting that the PRD has the youngest member, aged 27, and the PAN has the oldest deputy, aged 79.

Education levels are an important factor for the purpose of committees, especially under the informative approach. Higher education levels mean that the deputies have much more specialised knowledge on policy issues and therefore should be able to engage in in-depth discussions within committees prior to the approval of a bill on the floor. Overall, the members of the PAN, the PRD and the PRI for the period under observation mostly had a university degree as their highest qualification. However, a smaller proportion of individuals had achieved a postgraduate degree, slightly more of whom belonged to the PAN.

Drawing information from records on deputies' experiences in elected offices and bureaucracies, either at the federal or local levels, provided interesting data about the differences between the political backgrounds of the members of each party.

### **5.1.1 Bureaucratic experience**

Summary statistics presented in Table 5.1 show that not all members of the three parties had held bureaucratic positions prior to being elected to the 60th Congress, but compared to the number of members who had not been elected to office, non-bureaucratic experience was less uncommon. Of those who had a previous appointment, the most common offices vary between parties: the highest proportion of members of the PRI and the PRD had experience in state bureaucracies, whereas members of the PAN had served in municipalities.

In contrast, the least common positions held by the PRD's members were at the federal level, quite logically as the party has never held the presidency. In the case of the PRI, the smallest proportion had worked in municipal bureaucracies, presumably because the party had much more appealing offices to distribute at the federal and state levels. Rather obviously, the PAN's lowest number of members' experience corresponds to the federal level; it won the presidency only in 2000 and many of the former bureaucrats aligned with the PRI remained in their posts. After all, the PAN

did not have large numbers of experienced individuals to take over the entire public administration.

### 5.1.2 Elected office experience

As suggested above, a high proportion of members of all three parties had no previous experience in elected offices. This is especially true at the municipal level. With regard to the federal level, the PRI has the most cases of deputies who had previously been deputies, senators or both. It is followed by the PAN and in third place comes the PRD, with a considerably lower proportion than the PRI. The office most commonly held by members of all three parties was a seat in the Chamber of Deputies.

Very few deputies manage to return to the Chamber twice and even fewer achieve it three times (see Table 5.2 below). It is not surprising that the highest number of those who were federal deputies three times belong to the PRI, the majority of whom have also been senators, as the party was in full control of the legislative body for decades. The results shown in Table 5.2 also prove that, even with the existence of constitutional term limits, political careerism is in place. Since no independent candidates are allowed to run for office, parties have become powerful providers of political careers for ambitious politicians.

	PAN	PRD	PRI	Total	% (of total population)
	Number of cases				
Once	26	18	26	70	15.9%
Twice	3	0	10	13	2.9%
Three times	1	1	2	4	0.9%
Never previously	177	108	68	353	80.2%
Total	207	127	106	440	100%

Source: Author's calculation with information collected from Impacto Legislativo, 2008

At the state level, congressional seats were also the most common political experience. Around a third of the members of the PAN, the PRD and the PRI had been elected as deputies in their states prior to 2006. It is interesting to point out that the differences between the parties are not as strong as at the federal level, which

reinforces the argument laid out in Chapter 3 about electoral competition between the three being highest in the states.

Information about political experience of the members of the 60th Congress was also considered for municipal offices. Among those who were mayors, the majority belonged to the PRI, followed by members of the PRD and last came the PAN. The most common office for the PAN was that of councillor. For the PRD, the majority of those who had held a municipal office prior to the 60th Congress had been mayors. The same office was the most popularly held by members of the PRI.

Logically, it seems that the PRI is the party with the most cases of pre-legislative experience in publicly elected offices. Its long-term control of the country still provides it with an extensive machinery to draw from for power allocation purposes. Furthermore, another general trait observed so far is that tenure at the state level seems to be the most common among all the parties' members. This is expected, as local congresses and governorships have been the PAN's and the PRD's initial electoral victories.

However, parties are not the only ones responsible for the considerable number of individuals who have been in and out of public offices throughout their lives. This circumstance also points towards the predominance of ambitious politicians who see politics as a convenient means for a career which allows access to resources and fame. This could suggest that there is an underlying culture of political ambition and the exploitation of networks for personal benefits.

### **5.1.3 Links to party-affiliated organisations**

Following the statements made throughout the empirical section of this research in Part II, the achievement of political careers is allowed or restrained by different party figures. These are not necessarily involved in the organisation itself, but can also belong to entities or sectors associated with the party's life and electoral success. Hence, a variable was created within the database in order to include information about the deputies' affiliation to these groups.

Explicit links to organisations or sectors were not registered for the entire political population; however, analysing those who did have records made it possible to observe that the PRD had the highest level of activity. Next came the PRI, followed by the PAN.

The PRD was formed in 1989 by the fusion of several left-wing parties and organisations, and affiliation of its members to any of these former actors was considered as belonging to relevant sectors. Therefore, a higher activity of the PRD's deputies in this realm might compensate for their reduced experience in elected offices or bureaucratic posts compared to the PRI and the PAN.

This is also related to the fact that many deputies representing the PRD have emerged from non-political sectors such as civil society groups, the academic world and cultural spheres.

#### **5.1.4 Party switching**

It is interesting to see how many deputies have switched between parties and when they have done so. This constitutes valuable evidence of political ambition and careerism among Mexican politicians, as it could imply that the politician would be loyal to any party that gives them the opportunity to build a career.

It is worth remembering that the historical evolution of the parties presented in Chapter 3 point out occurrences of party switching, especially from the PRI to either the PRD or the PAN. Table 5.3 presents data for the 60th Congress; both the PAN and the PRD had members who had been affiliated to another party earlier in their political career. In contrast, none of the members of the PRI had any records of party switching.

A closer observation of the cases of party switching, in terms of when these happened, could suggest that their nature was office-seeking. This is closely linked with the theory of parties being the allocators of political careers. Although it was unavailable for seven of the total 28 cases of party switching, information collected for the

remaining ones show that all of them started to happen in the 1990s, when the PRD and the PAN became electorally competitive.

Furthermore, the earlier defections (in 1994, 1995, 1997 and 1999) were changes of affiliation from the PRI to either the PAN or the PRD. This trend was similar in 2000, 2005 and 2006, which coincides with the preparation of candidacies towards the federal congressional elections of 2000 and 2006.

<b>Table 5.3 Party Switching</b>			
	<b>PAN</b>	<b>PRD</b>	<b>PRI</b>
	<b>Number of cases</b>		
Switched from the PRD	2	0	0
Elected through PR	0	0	0
Elected through SMD	2	0	0
Switched from the PRI	10	12	0
Elected through PR	3	1	0
Elected through SMD	7	11	0
Switched from the PAN	0	2	0
Elected through PR	0	0	0
Elected through SMD	0	2	0
Other	1	1	0
Elected through PR	1	0	0
Elected through SMD	0	1	0
<b>Total switches</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
Previously elected to office by a different party	6	3	0
Elected through PR	2	1	0
Elected through SMD	4	2	0

Source: Author's calculation with information collected from Impacto Legislativo, 2008.

With regard to switches to the PRD or the PAN, all of them happened between 2003 and 2005, except for the case already explained in Chapter 4. It consists of one deputy who resigned from the PANAL when already sitting in the Chamber of Deputies and then decided to join the PAN's legislative group. Being an independent member of the Chamber reduces one's possibility to be actively involved in the decision-making process, since most opportunities are negotiated by parties and are thus granted to their members.

Although the cases of moving from one party to another are merely assumptions as they are not tested through appropriate and reliable statistical analysis to prove causation, they do place most of the switches from the PRI within a period of better opportunities for career-building in opposition parties.

Table 5.3 also shows that 23 out of the 28 switches were made by individuals elected to the 60th Congress through a single-member district (SMD) seat. This could suggest several things: first, that in the ‘recipient’ party, PR seats were reserved for those who had been in the party for longer; second, that the ‘newcomers’ were likely to ensure a victory in their district for some reason, for example popularity or likelihood to defeat the candidate put forward by their previous party; and third, that they were offered that seat if they joined the party.

Once in the Chamber, 57 per cent of the individuals with recorded party switches were appointed as a secretary of a committee and 18 per cent to a presidency. The rest were rank-and-file members of a committee and just one individual sat as a secretary of the Directive Board. This could suggest that senior positions were used as carrots for these new members or maybe were seen as opportunities for effective policy-making. This suggestion is an assumption though as it was not tested through statistical analysis.

Finally, and related to this topic, it was also relevant to register how many of those deputies who had switched parties had been elected to office with their previous party. The observations show that both the PAN and the PRD had six and three cases of deputies who had held an elected office before with a different party from the one they represented in Congress. Their previous experience was perhaps welcome for their new party’s strategy. Six out of the total nine cases were elected to an SMD seat, consistent with the overall seat pattern of those individuals who switched party.

### **5.1.5 What do these statistics suggest?**

This section has presented an overview of the summary statistics derived from the database on members of the 60th Congress affiliated to the PAN, the PRD and the PRI. Primarily used to complement the empirical description of the Chamber offered



in Chapter 4, it does, however, suggest a couple of explanations towards what type of profile makes it easier to be appointed to a committee presidency or the Directive Board.

First, the information suggests that, since the vast majority of members of Congress do not have previous experience either as public officials or civil servants, then the privileged few who do are more likely to be trusted by party leaders to do a good job as presidents or secretaries. They have obviously been active in politics and therefore have good relationships with the party and perhaps even with the electorate.

The second preliminary statement which can be extracted from the descriptive statistics presented herein is based on the higher records of political activity at the state level, both in local congresses and bureaucracies. It could be inferred that deputies with such prior experience would have higher aspirations within the Chamber and probably therefore have the adequate networks to fulfil them. However, making inferences from summary statistics does not provide reliable results. Many factors are involved at the same time when predicting appointments and the actual effect of each one cannot be accurately measured with simple descriptive statistics. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a multivariate analysis to see how multi-causal factors correlate with each other.

The following sections discuss the elaboration and results of the analysis run to predict appointments to committees and the Board for the 60th Congress. They are followed by a prediction of candidate selections to PR and SMD seats.

## **5.2 Committee appointments and party discipline: determinants of distribution of senior positions**

Previous studies on Mexican politics have attempted, just as this one, to identify behavioural patterns regarding legislative decision-making (Casar, 2000; Nacif, 1997, 2002; Weldon, 2004).<sup>66</sup> There is one particular paper in which Langston & Aparicio (2009) determine that appointments to the most active and important committees

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<sup>66</sup> For a full review of the scholarly literature on the Mexican Congress, refer to Chapter 2.

between 1997 and 2006 were driven by previous legislative experience at the federal level and not by the type of seat.

In this context, this study seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge on committee appointments. In order to do so, this chapter aims at finding clear evidence of strong party power over the Chamber between 2006 and 2009 by observing the actual logic of the distribution of committee presidencies and the conformation of the Directive Board.

### **5.2.1 The variables of the study**

It was decided that background information should be collected for the PAN, the PRD and the PRI, as presented in Chapter 3, as they are the largest parties and combined they had 440 deputies. The main question to answer with the data is whether it is possible to identify what the most important predictor or set of predictors was for appointments to committees and the Directive Board. The independent variables were established based on the arguments made in Chapters 3 and 4 regarding the main power structures that have been key for the three parties throughout the years. As already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, they were set as follows:

- Party of representation (to see whether there are variations across parties)
- Type of seat
- Previous public office (federal, state or municipal level)
- Previous bureaucratic position (federal, state and municipal level)
- Active participation in the party as an officer
- Association with sectors or organisations linked to the party
- Age, gender and level of education.

Similarly, the dependent variable was derived from the statements made in Chapter 4 about committee appointments being highly politicised. This is because committees are the bodies in charge of scrutinising bills and have the power to block initiatives from reaching the floor. Thus, they are key for parties' agenda-setting and vetoing and so the selection of members to sit in each of them should be made carefully.

Even though the Organic Law of the Chamber states that committee appointments should be made according to deputies' expertise, political pressures are inevitably strong. Langston & Aparicio (2009) point out that parties have state representations (and for the case of the PRI sector representations), which means that the party leaders in Congress will receive pressure from governors or other state-based individuals to have their agents placed on the front line. Hence, those deputies with strong links to their states, to a sector or to the party in general (such as PR deputies) are more likely to be appointed as presidents.

Putting the matter of committee appointments in terms of a principal-agent relationship, it is obvious that the parties are very strong principals, because they control appointments very tightly, especially leadership positions. In their role as agents, deputies are required to show that they are working for the benefit of their electorate, but also that they are following the lines set by their principal. As will be tested in the next section, the same thing happens with the Directive Board, which is regarded as an important tool to keep control of procedural matters such as allocation of bills to committees and agendas for floor votes.

For the time being, let us focus on committee appointments. Based on all of the above, I defined three dependent variables – Committee Presidency, Priority Committee and Seniority Positions in Priority Committee – and created two models for each one of them. Each model was tested in a binary logistic regression and results are shown in Table 5.4.<sup>67</sup>

The independent variables represent previous experience in elected offices at the federal, state and municipal level, as well as experience as a civil servant at the same three levels. Any activity within organisations or entities associated with the party's stronghold was also considered as part of the relevant background.

Finally, age, gender and level of education served as control variables for model 1 of each dependent variable. They were also used for model 2, in which two additional

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<sup>67</sup> The complete output with the results of the analysis can be found in Appendix 3.

controls were added: membership of the PAN and the PRI, which look for variations across parties. The PRD was taken as the baseline category.

It should also be mentioned that all the variables, except for age and level of education, were coded as dummies, where 1 equals having held the public office or bureaucratic position in turn, and 0 means they had not. As for gender, 1 equals female and 0 means male.

The results presented in Table 5.4 suggest that being appointed to a presidency in any of the ordinary, special, investigative or administrative committees was more likely for those who had been members of the Chamber of Deputies prior to 2006. Furthermore, the column for marginal effect (in italics) shows the effect that the independent variable has on the dependent variable in changing from 0 to 1. For model 1 it states that former federal deputies have a 13 per cent chance of obtaining such important positions; for model 2 it is 12 per cent.

Langston & Aparicio (2009) rightly differentiate between committees, and they assume that appointments to some are more politicised than to others. They created two categories: the first one grouped those committees that had registered the highest levels of productivity in terms of how many bills they received, scrutinised and later on were approved on the floor; and the rest were grouped in the second category.

In this study, I also selected a few committees and labelled them as ‘priority’ ones,<sup>68</sup> but rather than considering their productivity levels, I classified them according to the traditional importance their area of specialisation has had for the parties’ and the national agenda. This also means that the eight committees in this category should be highly sought after by deputies and party figures.

As can be seen in Table 5.5, the only predictor significant at conventional levels for being appointed to a priority committee is the variable ‘Previous Bureaucratic Experience at the Federal Level’. Thus, those members of the 60th Congress who had served in the federal bureaucracy prior to their election as deputies in 2006 had a 20

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<sup>68</sup> Committees of: Agriculture, Energy, Interior, Finance, Budget, Constitutional Amendments, Oversight and Parliamentary Practices.

per cent higher chance of being seated in one of these eight committees. The same prediction applies for presidencies and secretariats in those eight committees, as seen in Table 5.6. Those who had been federal bureaucrats prior to their congressional seat were 12 per cent more likely to be the president or secretary of one of those committees.

Generally speaking, it appears that experience at the federal level is what really counts when the parties are evaluating who to appoint to key positions, either as presidencies or any position in priority committees. A further discussion will be presented in Section 5.5.

### **5.3 Making assumptions on the Directive Board**

An identical multivariate analysis to the ones just discussed was carried out to predict appointments to the Directive Board. The dependent variable was set as 'Directive Board' and two models were created; one without party dummies and the second one including the party of affiliation. Results are shown in Table 5.7.

Let us remember that being on the Directive Board is, along with committee presidencies, a powerful position. Not only does the Board provide its members with additional benefits such as media coverage, assistants and better offices within the Chamber, but it also gives them power status within their parties. They are regarded as guarantors of the fulfilment of the party's agenda across committees and on the floor. Therefore, they are expected to be reliable, loyal and very experienced politicians.

Table 5.7 shows that having been a mayor or a councillor increases the probability of appointment by 10 per cent in both cases. Although a further discussion of the results will come in Section 5.5 of this chapter, I should highlight here that, while committee appointments were based on experience at the federal level, the composition of the Board relied more on municipal careers.

**Table 5.4 Predictors for Committee Presidencies**

DV = Committee Presidency				
Independent Variables	Model 1 438 obs. R2 = 0.0384		Model 2 430 obs. R2 = 0.0446	
	Coefficient (S.E.)	Marginal Effect	Coefficient (S.E.)	Marginal Effect
Constant	-1.4 (1.0)		-1.1 (1.0)	
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the Federal Level</b>				
Senator	1.0 (1.0)	0.20	1.0 (1.0)	0.20
Deputy	1.0** (0.33)	0.13	1.0** (0.34)	0.12
Deputy and Senator	1.1* (1.0)	0.20	1.1* (1.0)	0.21
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the State Level</b>				
Deputy	-0.12 (0.30)	-0.02	-0.14 (0.30)	-0.02
Governor	-0.41 (1.2)	-0.10	-0.44 (1.2)	-0.10
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the Municipal Level</b>				
Mayor	-0.40 (0.40)	-0.10	-0.40 (0.40)	-0.10
Councillor	0.21 (0.40)	0.03	0.30 (0.40)	0.04
<b>Previous Bureaucratic Experience</b>				
At Federal Level	0.12 (0.40)	0.02	0.15 (0.34)	0.02
At State Level	0.14 (0.33)	0.02	0.13 (0.33)	0.02
At the Municipal Level	-0.30 (0.41)	-0.04	-0.20 (0.42)	-0.03
<b>Active Work or Involvement</b>				
As Party Officer	-0.30 (0.33)	-0.04	-0.30 (0.33)	-0.04
In a Sector Linked to the Party	0.10 (0.40)	0.01	0.10 (0.34)	0.01
<b>Controls</b>				
Level of Education	-0.10 (0.20)	-0.01	-0.11 (0.16)	-0.02
Gender	-0.20 (0.34)	-0.03	-0.20 (0.34)	-0.02
Age	0.00 (0.02)	0.00	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00
Member of the PAN			-0.32 (0.32)	-0.10
Member of the PRI			0.00 (0.40)	0.00

Note: \*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

**Table 5.5 Predictors for Priority Committee**

DV = Priority Committee				
Independent Variables	Model 1 438 obs. R2 = 0.0474		Model 2 438 obs. R2 = 0.0476	
	Coefficient (S.E.)	Marginal Effect	Coefficient (S.E.)	Marginal Effect
Constant	-1.0 (1.0)		-.40 (1.0)	
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the Federal Level</b>				
Senator	1.0 (1.0)	0.13	1.0 (1.0)	0.14
Deputy	0.30 (0.30)	0.10	0.30 (0.30)	0.10
Deputy and Senator	0.22 (1.0)	0.10	0.24 (1.0)	0.10
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the State Level</b>				
Deputy	-0.10 (0.23)	-0.01	-0.10 (0.23)	-0.01
Governor	2.0 (1.2)	0.40	2.0 (1.2)	0.40
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the Municipal Level</b>				
Mayor	-0.34 (0.31)	-0.10	-0.34 (0.31)	-0.10
Councillor	-0.33 (0.32)	-0.10	-0.32 (0.33)	-0.10
Mayor and Councillor	0.40 (1.0)	0.80	0.40 (1.0)	0.10
<b>Previous Bureaucratic Experience</b>				
At Federal Level	1.0** (0.32)	0.20	1.0** (0.32)	0.20
At State Level	0.22 (0.30)	0.10	0.23 (0.30)	0.10
At the Municipal Level	0.20 (0.32)	0.04	0.22 (0.32)	0.10
<b>Active Work or Involvement</b>				
As Party Officer	0.12 (0.30)	-0.02	0.12 (0.30)	0.03
In a Sector Linked to the Party	-0.13 (0.33)	-0.03	-0.14 (0.33)	-0.03
<b>Controls</b>				
Level of Education	-0.12 (-0.12)	-0.03	-0.12 (0.13)	-0.03
Gender	-1.0 (0.30)	-0.14	-1.0 (0.30)	-0.14
Age	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00
Member of the PAN			-0.08 (0.26)	-0.01
Member of the PRI			-0.08 (0.31)	-0.01

Note: \*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

**Table 5.6 Predictors for Seniority Positions in Priority Committees**

DV = Senior in Priority Com.				
Independent Variables	Model 1 438 obs. R2 = 0.1043		Model 2 438 obs. R2 = 0.1066	
	Coefficient (S.E.)	Marginal Effect	Coefficient (S.E.)	Marginal Effect
Constant	-2.2 (1.2)		-2.0 (1.0)	
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the Federal Level</b>				
Senator	-0.10 (1.0)	-0.00	-0.11 (1.0)	-0.01
Deputy	0.30 (0.42)	0.03	0.24 (0.43)	0.02
Deputy and Senator	0.20 (1.0)	0.02	0.20 (1.0)	0.17
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the State Level</b>				
Deputy	-0.54 (0.40)	-0.04	-1.0 (0.40)	-0.04
Governor	2.0 (1.14)	0.30	2.0 (1.13)	0.30
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the Municipal Level</b>				
Mayor	-0.40 (1.0)	-0.03	-0.40 (1.0)	-0.03
Councillor	-0.32 (1.0)	-0.02	-0.25 (1.0)	-0.02
Mayor and Councillor	1.31 (1.0)	0.20	1.33 (1.0)	0.20
<b>Previous Bureaucratic Experience</b>				
At Federal Level	1.1** (0.43)	0.12	1.13** (0.44)	0.12
At State Level	0.30 (0.42)	0.02	0.24 (0.43)	0.02
At Municipal Level	-1.0 (1.0)	-0.10	-1.0 (1.0)	-0.05
<b>Active Work or Involvement</b>				
As Party Officer	1.0 (1.0)	0.10	1.0 (1.0)	0.10
In a Sector Linked to the Party	0.31 (0.44)	0.03	0.30 (0.44)	0.03
<b>Controls</b>				
Level of Education	-0.10 (0.20)	-0.01	-0.12 (0.20)	-0.01
Gender	-1.0 (1.0)	-0.10	-1.0 (1.0)	-0.10
Age	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.00	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.00
Member of the PAN			-0.30 (0.41)	-0.02
Member of the PRI			0.02 (1.0)	0.00

Note: \*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01



**Table 5.7 Predictors for Directive Board**

DV= Directive Board				
Independent Variables	Model 1 405 obs. R2 = 0.2044		Model 2 405 obs. R2 = 0.2156	
	Coefficient (S.E.)	Marginal Effect	Coefficient (S.E.)	Marginal Effect
Constant	-6.38 (2.13)		-7.22 (2.37)	
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the Federal Level</b>				
Senator and Deputy	1.2 (1.1)	<i>0.03</i>	1.0 (1.06)	<i>0.02</i>
Deputy	-0.12 (1.0)	<i>-0.01</i>	-0.20 (0.82)	<i>-0.00</i>
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the State Level</b>				
Deputy	0.13 (0.6)	<i>0.00</i>	0.18 (0.60)	<i>0.00</i>
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the Municipal Level</b>				
Mayor	2.12*** (0.75)	<i>0.1</i>	2.11*** (0.77)	<i>0.80</i>
Councillor	2.0*** (1.0)	<i>0.10</i>	1.90*** (0.71)	<i>0.10</i>
<b>Previous Bureaucratic Experience</b>				
At Federal Level	1.21 (0.03)	<i>0.03</i>	1.20 (1.0)	<i>0.02</i>
At State Level	0.10 (1.0)	<i>0.00</i>	-0.02 (1.0)	<i>-0.00</i>
At Municipal Level	2.0 (1.0)	<i>-0.01</i>	-1.0 (1.0)	<i>-0.01</i>
<b>Active Work or Involvement</b>				
As Party Officer	1.24 (1.1)	<i>0.02</i>	1.22 (1.10)	<i>0.01</i>
In a Sector Linked to the Party	1.1 (0.72)	<i>0.03</i>	1.20 (1.0)	<i>0.03</i>
<b>Controls</b>				
Level of Education	0.10 (0.30)	<i>0.00</i>	0.21 (0.30)	<i>0.00</i>
Gender	2.0 (1.0)	<i>0.7</i>	2.1*** (1.0)	<i>0.10</i>
Age	-0.01 (0.03)	<i>-0.00</i>	-0.01 (0.03)	<i>-0.00</i>
Member of the PAN			1.0 (1.0)	<i>0.01</i>
Member of the PRI			1.02 (1.0)	<i>0.02</i>

Note: \*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

#### **5.4 Determinants of seat type**

Chapter 3 discussed candidate selection processes for all three parties. It was said that, overall, ‘outsiders’ were unlikely to be considered. Single-member district (SMD) seats should be the ones which the parties distribute more carefully, as they are scrutinised by the electorate and they also count for the highest number of seats in the Chamber. In contrast, PR ones are often occupied by career politicians, who have held many different public positions and who are well-connected with the party.

This last section provides statistical evidence for the distribution of PR candidacies to the Chamber for 2006. The results of the analysis are consistent with the aforementioned argument (see Table 5.8).

As in the previous sections, one dependent variable was set out, in this case ‘PR seat’, and two models were created for it, one without party dummies and the second one with control for the party of affiliation. According to the results of the logistic regression, the most important factors that influenced the type of seat were whether the legislators had either been deputies, senators (or both), mayors or councillors, bureaucrats at any level or local deputies.

However, only prior experience of federal deputy, senator or both of these offices had a positive effect on being nominated to a PR seat, increasing the probability by 22, 45 and 54 per cent respectively; having been a civil servant at the federal level also had a positive effect of 15 per cent. The rest of the variables had a negative effect; that is, they reduced the possibility of gaining a PR seat instead of SMD by 21 per cent if they had been mayors, 16 per cent if they had been councillors or municipal bureaucrats, 13 per cent for experience as state bureaucrats and 10 per cent if they had sat in a local congress.

This data suggests two main findings.

First of all, experience at the state and municipal level can point towards a closer relationship with the electorate that will be represented in the federal Chamber and also with the regional party office. In turn, this could mean that it is easier for individuals in

this particular circumstance to win a seat through direct election and therefore would be prioritised for an SMD seat. After all, the number of SMD seats won throughout the country by a certain party ensures a corresponding proportion of PR seats, and so ‘secured’ electoral victories should be taken advantage of.

Second, those who have been in the public spotlight at the federal level previously are better off on closed lists. They are perceived by citizens as ambitious individuals pursuing their private interests rather than the common good and are therefore less likely to be voted for. At the same time though, they are clearly favoured by party officials to step into Congress, as they have been around the political sphere long enough to know how institutions work. Thus, they can succeed in putting the party’s agenda forward more easily. Finally, they have probably built the necessary connections within their party to maintain their reputation and image in public life, and certainly have enough connections to be placed on the list for a PR seat. Let us discuss in more detail the results presented in this and the two preceding sections.

**Table 5.8 Predictors for Type of Seat**

DV = Proportional Representation Seat

Independent Variables	Model 1 438 obs. R2 = 0.0474		Model 2 438 obs. R2 = 0.0476	
	Coefficient (S.E.)	Marginal Effect	Coefficient (S.E.)	Marginal Effect
Constant	-0.50 (1.0)		-0.85 (0.89)	
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the Federal Level</b>				
Senator and Deputy	2.44*** (0.70)	0.54	2.41*** (0.65)	0.53
Deputy	1.0*** (0.32)	0.22	0.98*** (0.33)	0.22
Senator	2.0*** (0.70)	0.45	2.0*** (0.66)	0.45
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the State Level</b>				
Deputy	-0.50* (0.30)	-0.10	-0.50* (0.26)	-0.10
Governor	1.04 (1.70)	0.25	1.15 (1.75)	0.28
Deputy and Governor	-1.0 (1.12)	-0.16	-1.06 (1.14)	-0.17
<b>Previous Elected Experience at the Municipal Level</b>				
Mayor	-1.30*** (0.40)	-0.21	-1.27*** (0.40)	-0.22
Councillor	-1.0** (0.40)	-0.16	-1.0*** (0.37)	-0.17
<b>Previous Bureaucratic Experience</b>				
At Federal Level	0.70** (0.33)	0.15	0.64* (0.33)	0.14
At State Level	-0.70** (0.30)	-0.13	-0.65** (0.30)	-0.13
At Municipal Level	-0.90** (0.36)	-0.16	-1.0** (0.38)	-0.17
<b>Active Work or Involvement</b>				
As Party Officer	0.23 (0.31)	0.05	0.23 (0.31)	0.05
In a Sector Linked to the Party	-0.05 (0.35)	0.01	-0.01 (0.35)	-0.00
<b>Controls</b>				
Level of Education	0.02 (0.13)	0.00	0.06 (0.13)	0.01
Gender	0.77*** (0.30)	0.17	0.76** (0.28)	0.17
Age	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00
Member of the PAN			0.35 (0.30)	0.10
Member of the PRI			0.12 (0.35)	0.03

Note: \*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

## 5.5 Discussion

In addition to completing the empirical description of the 60th Congress with statistical data, this chapter has the purpose of searching for patterns to predict appointments to decision-making positions. The statistical analysis required looking into actual evidence of the parties' control over political careers and therefore of how they have embedded path dependency at the core of Mexico's political institutions.

The starting point for any conclusion drawn from the analysis presented above is the existence of term limits. This prohibition explains the large number of deputies with no previous experience in elected office or in bureaucratic posts. Furthermore, it affects the predictors for committee presidencies and seats on the Directive Board because politicians must maintain a good relationship with their parties if they wish to remain active in public life.

However, despite constitutional prohibition for re-election, those seeking to build a career as an elected official have managed to jump from one office to another across different levels of government. If they have been deputies, once their term ended they are likely to have sought a new public post elsewhere and then perhaps have made their way back into Congress three or more years later. Hence, the database I built for the 60th Congress shows that 30, 19 and 38 members of the PAN, the PRD and the PRI respectively sat in San Lázaro before. They enjoyed the advantage of having a reasonable amount of knowledge about the procedures and politics of the Chamber but due to constitutional restrictions, were unable to keep working towards the achievement of their parties' legislative agenda.

Therefore, once they were back in a legislative seat, it is not surprising that they would be more likely to be appointed as presidents of committees. In addition to their experience in the institution, this group of deputies must have pleased their party in their previous tenure, at least enough to be considered for the job once again. Overall, they could be regarded as trustworthy actors capable of ensuring the achievement of partisan and hopefully constituencies' agendas.

A similar logic of reliability applies for predicting appointments to ‘priority committees’. For these cases, individuals who have worked as public servants within the federal bureaucracy have a greater opportunity for appointment. The main concerns of these important bodies are constitutional amendments, the federal budget or specific policy programmes developed by certain ministries, which are better addressed by those who have been on the implementation side. Furthermore, these are topics likely to be prioritised in the parties’ agendas, in an attempt to meet the demands and promises made during the elections. Hence, success must be guaranteed by the parties through sensible appointments and the federal bureaucracy constitutes an additional source of people to recruit trustworthy individuals from.

The Directive Board, another crucial body for setting agendas, is also ideally composed of deputies who have had a visible role in their party. It was seen that experience in municipalities was the significant predictor at conventional levels. The duties of a member of the Board are not as politically significant as those of a committee president, but positions are much scarcer and they guarantee media coverage and wide recognition.

As can be seen, loyal partisan involvement, either through previous elected offices or public service, is rewarded with the facilitation of a political career. The parties have the power to use appointments as carrots and sticks and they do indeed use it.

In order to maintain access to the offices that they use as prizes and therefore to decision-making roles, parties must ensure satisfactory electoral results. Therefore, as I have repeatedly stated in previous chapters, they must come up with sensible strategies for candidate selection.

I showed in Section 5.4 that having been a deputy, a senator or both made candidates more likely to gain a PR seat. Experience in the federal bureaucracy also has a positive effect on being selected. This is part of the parties’ strategy to use more popular figures among the electorate for SMD positions and then place the loyal and partisan career politicians on the closed lists for PR seats. The reason for this is twofold: it derives from the Mexican electorate’s disenchantment with politicians, who are regarded as selfish individuals seeking nothing more than personal success and satisfaction instead of

representing constituents, and it also responds to the strategies of the parties for strategically allocating positions so that loyal members are rewarded at the same time that their agenda is implemented.

The results of the analysis herein presented show that the occupants of PR seats are ‘parachuted’ into Congress by the parties. This suggests that there is consistency with loyalty patterns. Overall, the nomination to any type of seat and the appointment to committees or to the Directive Board are unavoidably controlled by party figures.

In addition, the evidence points towards a very interesting pattern of party strategy for successful agenda-setting. As a committee’s purpose is both informative and distributive (see Chapter 4), party officials must recruit experts on key issues and also individuals who can function as leaders. Therefore, individuals with experience in the bureaucracy or in organisations related to a specific issue are more likely to be appointed to certain committees, and even more so if they are relevant to the parties’ agenda.

This was exemplified in Chapter 4 when each party’s internal selection mechanisms for committees were described. I said in Sections 4.3.1 through 4.3.3 that the three main parties distributed a questionnaire in which every deputy gave a list of their committee preferences, normally based upon their area of expertise. The majority of deputies of all three parties could expect to be placed in one of their top three options.

In terms of recruiting individuals with leadership skills, the fact that committee presidents were more likely to be those with previous legislative experience at the federal level points to the parties’ need for people with better knowledge of congressional procedures.

This strategy of diversifying recruitment for party members throughout the Chamber can also be seen for the Directive Board and as has been shown, it is more likely for those who have been mayors to be selected to the presidency or secretariat of such a crucial body. Being in charge of organising the plenary session’s agenda and channelling bills to committees, the Directive Board would probably be better managed

by individuals who can impose their authority, maintain order and discipline and delegate tasks to other bodies of the Chamber.

In essence, the Board should be composed of those party members with the leadership skills to act as gatekeepers for their party's interests, ensuring their party gets full access to key events and votes. Luis Sánchez Jiménez' testimony (a member of the PRD during the 60th Congress), referenced extensively in Chapter 4, states that as a vice president of the Board his job was to prepare the plenary sessions, informing his party about other parties' aims and goals on certain issues, while also presenting his party's formal position on bills and planning for its success (Sánchez Jiménez, interview, 2009).

Someone with experience at the municipal level should be accustomed to handling some procedural and bureaucratic matters, while delegating others to alternative specialised bodies, such as local congresses or governors. They must necessarily have good negotiation skills and be determined to make their party's views succeed.

This diversification of appointment strategies, i.e. subject expertise for committees and leadership skills for the Directive Board, reflects the parties' need to construct and maintain a pool of loyal members to recruit from. This can be possible only if they can easily control political careers, and over time expand the outreach of their networks to useful sectors such as the federal bureaucracy.

The predictors found in this chapter for different positions show that those who had the opportunity to prove their loyalty and commitment to a party figure could be more easily appointed. Hence, although the majority of the deputies in the 60th Congress did not have public service experience or a history of being in elected office, having a previous political career has an effect on being at the front line of the decision-making system.

I recorded in at least one of the interviews used in Chapter 4 to describe the dynamics of the 60th Congress that a successful political career should include tenure in the Chamber of Deputies because it guarantees media coverage and public exposure (Jiménez, interview, 2010); it also offers opportunities for useful networking.



Regardless of whether this takes place at the beginning or the end of someone's career, getting there requires good connections or proof of political aptitude to a party.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Having discussed the results of my statistical analyses, linking them to the findings of Chapters 3 and 4, it is clear that I have successfully answered the question that drove my data collection and analysis. I asked whether the partisan background of deputies is a significant factor in the allocation of committee presidencies and positions of the Directive Board. The answer is 'yes'. The distribution of offices across all levels of government, including candidacies, is controlled by party figures, guided by loyalty and effectiveness to develop the party's agenda. This necessarily affects internal processes of governmental institutions and therefore their institutional design.

Operating through a vicious cycle, parties benefit from the possibility to tightly control political careers. This allows them to recruit reliable individuals from different strongholds to fill pivotal agenda-setting positions. By doing so, they allow for and encourage careerism among politicians across all levels of government and, ultimately, parties and their members lock-in rules of behaviour and institutional operations that set dependent paths which prove extremely difficult to change. If all the main parties follow similar strategies and find that these work throughout the years, then it is very unlikely that they will agree on new patterns of behaviour in the near future. Thus, this chapter proves that the parties' power has shaped Mexican institutions to their own needs, reflecting their internal dynamics and behaviours.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 have provided the reader with substantial empirical evidence on how parties have accumulated power and used it to shape the country's political system to serve their interests. Having completed the case study, it is useful to provide an overview of the results obtained and how they contribute to a better understanding of the Mexican Congress. The following section serves this purpose.

## **5.7 Final remarks: Empirical findings and normative contributions of the case study**

The case study presented herein has provided substantial empirical evidence on how term limits and party power determine deputies' behaviour. Hence, my results provide added value to existing studies on candidate selection processes in Mexico (Langston, 1998; Langston & Aparicio, 2009) and on how career ambitions affect legislative behaviour (Díaz Rebolledo, 2005). New data was produced to understand electoral connections and political ambitions from within the Chamber rather than focusing on deputies' careers outside of Congress.

### **5.7.1 Control of political careers and term limits**

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the case study presented throughout this chapter and the two preceding ones consists of substantial evidence of the extent of the parties' power, particularly within the Chamber of Deputies. This was clearly highlighted through the observation of two concrete issues: the control of political careers by over-powerful parties; and the inability of term limits to eliminate political careerism and self-interest.

By controlling political careers, the parties maintain discipline within their legislative groups whereby parties use public positions as prizes for loyal members. At the same time though, this has had a strong effect on the country's political behaviour, as it triggers the lock-in of political ambition as the only incentive for becoming a member of Congress, rather than encouraging elected officials to represent the electorate's will. In the long term, this practice makes the Chamber more likely to continue to be used by the parties to set their agendas and by politicians to fulfil their career ambitions, instead of it becoming an efficient representative institution.

Legislators tend to prioritise the interest of the party figure they are loyal to and dependent on in order to build and maintain a long-term career in politics. These figures, in turn, have made sure that the necessary informal rules remain in place to continue managing political careers as they see fit. Ultimately, this has created an informal system used by parties to override term limits and use this strategy to increase their power.

The statistical analysis presented in this chapter clearly confirms the suggestion made in Chapters 3 and 4 that parties tightly control political careers. We have learnt that they have strategies for appointing senior members of committees and members of the Directive Board. Candidate selection processes for PR seats also proved to be carefully planned by party leaders. Overall, party figures always ensured that the most suitable individuals were appointed to fulfil the organisation's agenda.

In addition to unveiling the extent of parties' power and the use that they make of it to control political careers, the empirical description of the 60th Congress also provides evidence towards the effects of term limits on the Mexican political system. As the reader might remember from Chapter 2, I argued that scholars are divided in their opinion about how term limits affect the representative function of legislative institutions and parties. Some state that they are good because they eliminate particularistic behaviours and therefore improve representation. However, others argue that term limits only replace bad attitudes among legislators with others, such as reduced accountability towards citizens (Carey, 1996).

Based on the analysis presented in Chapters 4 and 5, we can clearly observe that term limits in Mexico have certainly not eliminated particularistic behaviour. Their effect has been quite the opposite, as they have vested the parties with the considerable power of using public offices as carrots and sticks. The common practice of party switching discussed in previous pages proves that particularistic behaviour tempts some politicians to change their affiliation if a better career prospect is offered elsewhere.

In reality, term limits were imposed by the PRI in the 1930s with the purpose of controlling its own members. Knowing that good performance in Congress guaranteed a stable career, legislators focused on pleasing the head of the party. When the PRD and the PAN became competitive in federal elections, they adapted their practices and strategies to a scenario where, although term limits are a constitutional prohibition, they can be overridden and used as an extremely valuable tool.

Prior to 2011 there was no serious attempt to change the Constitution to eliminate the prohibition of immediate re-election. When it was finally included in a proposal for thorough political reforms drafted in 2011, changes to term limits were voted against by

the members of the PRI, the PVEM and the PANAL in the 61st Congress (Reforma/Staff, 2011; Salazar & Estrop, 2011). This reflects the ability of parties to summon collective agreements to change some institutional paths but not others, particularly if they are not considered beneficial to all members of the governing elite.

By selecting which rules to keep in place and which ones to change, the Mexican parties have engaged in what I suggest is a conditional type of path dependency. That is, following a historical institutionalist theoretical perspective, we should expect the political institutions to consist of a set of rules that constrain the behaviour of those operating within them. These rules are created by a group of actors and can be modified only when there is a collective agreement that a new path should be taken.

The way in which political elites in Mexico have locked in informal rules and kept term limits shows that they have all agreed, whether implicitly or explicitly, that these rules suit their collective and individual interests. Path dependency is reliant on the willingness of the elites to renounce some privileges in order to secure a favourable position in the long term. Hence, the PRD and the PAN have adopted rules of behaviour set by the PRI, and since they have all been increasing or sustaining their electoral victories and thereby access to power by behaving in such a way, ‘critical junctures’ (Hall & Taylor, 1996) have been absent and with this substantial changes to issues like term limits have not been made.

However, other changes to formal frameworks have been possible. Federal electoral reforms and other important modifications to political rules in the last two decades have been made by the parties because the parties in power have considered them beneficial. In this way, the Mexican system has been shaped by the PRI and re-shaped under pluralism according to existing political contexts that require adequate rules of collective action. Path dependency in Mexico is clearly conditional upon the elites’ calculation of the best way to preserve their power.

### **5.7.2 Normative contributions**

The contextual arguments and empirical findings shown in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 not only uncover interesting patterns of legislative behaviour in response to the initial research

question, but also highlight broader issues about Mexican politics. It is worth discussing them briefly.

I argued that Mexico has made some progress towards democratic consolidation, but is still struggling to bring key legal frameworks up to date in order to improve institutional processes and democratise decision-making. The decision-making process is mainly done by the elites and behind closed doors, thereby reducing accountability and transparency, and with it, undermining the electorate's right to information and political participation.

The main reason behind this is that the parties have made sure that the rules, both informal and formal, serve their interests. The Mexican system was created by the PRI in the early part of the 20th century and has endured despite the fact that since the 1990s the PRD and the PAN have become important electoral competitors. Altogether, they have maintained informal rules of operation and allowed for elitist decision-making to prevail.

Because thorough constitutional amendments that ensure clearer and perhaps fairer participation in politics for all actors have not been possible, constant negotiation of informal rules is the only way forward. All three actors have therefore learnt to manoeuvre around formal rules which might constitute an obstacle to their interests or agendas.

Although the Mexican scenario is now much more democratic since the PRI lost the majority in Congress in 1997 and later on the presidency in 2000, the existence of informal rules and the lack of clarity regarding the limits to parties' power has undermined the quality of democracy in the country. Even when electoral reforms negotiated in the last two decades have led to greater political pluralism, further reforms are necessary to improve transparency, accountability, representation and democracy as a whole, but this will happen only if the parties see these changes as favourable for their interests.

The preceding pages have attempted to summarise the findings of Part II's empirical case study on the 60th Congress of the Chamber of Deputies. These results should

provide an answer to the research question set out at the beginning of this work, and support the contributions that I hope have been made to the literature on the Mexican Congress, legislative and party theories, and to the concept of path dependency. In the last few pages of this thesis I revisit my research question and discuss the extent to which I succeeded in adding valuable knowledge to the aforementioned subjects.

## **Chapter 6. Conclusion**

This research has sought to understand the causes of legislative behaviour in Mexico mainly through an empirical case study of the 60th Congress of the Chamber of Deputies. My purpose was to identify what drives appointments to committees and the Directive Board and, therefore, to observe how informal rules have conditionally been locked in across the country's political system.

Answering the main question meant unpacking it into three specific ones. The first, of a contextual nature, asked why Mexico has developed a unique institutional design where some formal frameworks have been selectively reformed to ensure democratic party competition but others still reflect an authoritarian, undemocratic past. I explored this matter throughout Chapters 1 and 2, and argued that because Mexico democratised without a thorough constitutional reform, practical arrangements made by the elites have served as behavioural frameworks. Over time, this has generated and locked in phenomena such as term limits, hyper-presidentialism, and the later replacement of a strong Executive with a hegemonic system of parties. Altogether, this has made the operation of Mexico's institutions and the behaviour of its parties very different from what general theories of legislative organisation and party behaviour dictate. For instance, in Mexico there is not a clear whip (as in the European Parliament or in the British Parliament) in charge of making sure that fellow deputies toe the party lines. Instead, discipline is kept by multiple figures, ranging from faction leaders to area coordinators within the party groups.

The second question – dealt with in Chapter 3 – focused on parties as the main political actors and asked why they have evolved into hierarchical, powerful organisations that operate through interest-based networks, shaping political institutions to their benefit. I then followed up with a third question, narrowing my focus on the effect of party behaviour to the Chamber of Deputies only and asked how it is that parties' power affects the institutional design and day-to-day operation of the Chamber, particularly concerning appointments to committees and governing bodies – the main questions of Chapters 4 and 5.

In answering questions two and three, I emphasised that term limits are a key issue affecting legislative behaviour and institutional operations. Assuming that their existence makes politicians extremely loyal to their party, term limits have made parties become very powerful over the years. Being easily overridden, non-re-election makes party loyalty the main, and perhaps the only, route into a steady political career, rather than a good record of representation.

An important fact to consider at this point of the thesis is that the extent of parties' power and their consequential ability to shape institutions as they see fit has been possible due to the inherent weakness of Mexico's institutions. This weakness, in turn, is not only a direct effect of the 70-year long hegemonic power of the PRI and the imprint it has left on the system, but also the consequence of the lack of comprehensive state reform to modernise and further the country's democratisation process. Perhaps if institutions had been made stronger through constitutional amendments and the elaboration of new codes for each of the federal powers, parties would have found it much more difficult to operate the way they do now. Particularistic behaviours and parties' control over political careers, although unlikely to disappear in full, could today have a reduced impact on the longer term operation of the Chamber of Deputies. Transparency, efficiency and accountability could perhaps be much easier to achieve. However, despite it being on the legislative agenda since the early 2000s, a comprehensive state reform has not been agreed upon, and thus institutions remain inherently weak.

Through my work, I have reached empirical and theoretical findings that represent significant contributions to the literature on the Mexican Congress, party and committee theories, and term limits. In addition, I provide evidence that broader theoretical frameworks such as historical institutionalism and path dependency, both of which are the theoretical guides for this research, can lead to a clear understanding of the evolution of political institutions and actors. I summarise my findings in the following pages, classifying them into empirical, theoretical and normative findings.



## **6.1 Empirical findings**

First, and perhaps most importantly, this research has provided substantial empirical evidence towards a better understanding of the allocation of committee seats and appointments to the Directive Board in the Chamber of Deputies. We now know that these are done by carefully selecting those members with relevant experience in politics and specific public offices. Those with previous legislative experience are more likely to be appointed to committee presidencies in general, while those who have served in the federal bureaucracy are particularly useful for parties in priority committees. In turn, previous municipal experience can increase the probability of a deputy being appointed to the Directive Board.

Throughout this thesis, I have also gathered new data on candidate selection procedures. I confirmed that individuals who have proved their allegiance to their party by having served in the Chamber of Deputies or the Senate in the past are more likely to be elected to Congress through proportional representation.

Furthermore, we learnt that one way in which parties cope with factionalism is through distributing seats in committees among the factions, who then decide how to fill them according to their internal negotiation practices. Altogether, these findings improve our knowledge on how party power networks operate in Mexico, affecting the quality of its democracy and setting rules of behaviour that are likely to endure over the years. The issues herein discussed have also been found to cause deputies' self-interested and particularistic behaviour, driving them to prioritise their party's needs in order to secure a long-term political career. The analysis of committee business would have undoubtedly provided further details of the practicalities of how party and factional discipline are implemented, and would have added valuable evidence to this latter argument. Future research should explore the matter by requesting access to committee meetings' minutes and other relevant primary sources of information. In addition, future efforts to revisit this research topic could also profit from complementing my detailed, qualitative data gathered through interviews, with data collected by longitudinal studies like the University of Salamanca's Latin American elite survey. This would allow to observe cross-party trends of the importance that deputies give to party lines.

Mexican deputies, just as any politicians, are expected to act in favour of their party's interests, and to protect and promote its brand. Parties are, after all, the primary providers of elected public officials and so anyone wishing to represent society's interests in government must make sure that access to elected offices is as smooth as possible. Therefore, it is not surprising that deputies are prone to particularistic behaviours, but in the Mexican case party (or faction) driven behaviours interfere with the transparent and democratic operation of institutions. This matter sheds light on the weakness of the country's institutions, and on the fact that they were created and shaped by a single party over a long period of 70 years.

Second, and related to the statement made above, my work has found the root of legislative behaviour in the hierarchical, clientelistic attitudes and strategies of the PRI, the PAN and the PRD. Throughout the empirical case study presented in Part II (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) we observe that opposition parties emerged and adapted to a decades-old system designed by the PRI to grant itself resources and power. Consequently, the PAN and the PRD have developed the same attitudes of the PRI and there has been increasingly fierce competition between them for resources and power (Guerrero, 2004; Klesner, 2004; Martínez, 1997). Thus, the parties have had to design a set of informal rules of negotiation, competition and collaboration in parallel with formal frameworks to enable them to coexist. If the political elites who run the three parties fail to adopt a more democratic and transparent attitude towards politics and power, then it is unlikely that the behaviour of their party groups in Congress will move away from informal rules and careerism.

Overall, it is empirically proven in this research that parties have strongly influenced the institutional design of the Chamber, which now reflects the parties' internal divisions, their hierarchical decision-making processes and their strict control over political careers and candidate selection processes. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this outcome has been possible due to the inherent weakness of Mexico's formal institutions. Had institutional rules and formal operational guidelines been modernised and complemented with the necessary constitutional amendments, the Chamber of Deputies would perhaps be better equipped to handle political competition, leaving parties' power more limited than it is today.

The inductive and empirical approach to legislative behaviour developed herein has allowed us to observe that parties have settled into a very comfortable position of power, both facilitated and maintained by the creation of informal rules suitable for political pluralism, and the selective adherence to formal codes of practice. In practice, this is evident in the recruitment of PR candidates to Congress based on their partisan and professional background, which allows parties to create a pool of suitable individuals for different positions across the Chamber. Consequently, building and maintaining a political career has become a fierce competition, where only those who are loyal to the party (or a faction) are likely to survive.

## **6.2 Theoretical contributions**

Throughout this thesis, I have repeatedly said that Mexico's political elites have developed very particular processes of institutional operation, and therefore it is a case that cannot be easily approached by applying 'model' theories built through the observation of the American presidential system or European parliamentary systems. I assumed that any approach towards understanding legislative behaviour in Mexico must see history and context as the main determinants of the elites' decisions to build and lock-in certain institutional paths, i.e. the unintended consequences of the country's pragmatic democratisation process. Thus, historical institutionalism and the concept of path dependency were key theoretical constructs in this research.

Institutions were understood along the lines of Hall & Taylor (2006) as a set of rules of behaviour created by actors which, over time, become universalised and cannot be broken or changed unless collective agreement is reached to do so. In turn, through path dependency it is possible to understand that rules of collective action become locked in as a result of the common agreement between elites. This leads to the existence of 'self-reinforcing dynamics' that make institutions persist over time. Changes will occur only when there is collective agreement on their suitability.

In the Mexican case, every single institution was created by the PRI, and when the PAN and the PRD became electorally competitive, they maintained most of the old rules and

changed only a few of them.<sup>69</sup> Political elites in Mexico operate under formal and informal rules, built and amended along the way to maximise the opportunities for the three largest parties to continue sharing power in the best possible way. This has meant that while some institutional paths have been locked in, others have not, making path dependency in Mexico conditional. That is, while collective agreement has been reached to modify electoral rules to allow for more transparent and institutionalised processes, which ultimately led to the PRI's loss of an absolute legislative majority and later on of the presidential seat, political elites have been unwilling to negotiate a thorough constitutional reform that could eliminate term limits and reduce parties' control over political careers. This argument of conditional path dependency is a useful explanation of the country's past and future political development, particularly when explaining how the PRI has been forced to relinquish some of its hegemonic power over the last few decades to guarantee its long-term survival. Thus, the argument of conditional path dependency is perhaps one of the most significant contributions of this research.

However, it would be misleading to say that path dependency and historical institutionalism alone can explain every single detail of how elites' behaviour and strategies emerged. Admittedly, the detailed origin (beyond historical and contextual developments) of the PRI's, the PAN's and the PRD's motivations and strategies to influence decision-making has not been thoroughly explored in this research. Delving further into that topic would have required resorting, for instance, to elite theory (Highley & Pakulski, 2007; Mosca, 1939; Pareto, 1935) in order to explain how leadership groups across the country achieved a cohesive power and established key networks to effect a regime and specific political outcomes.

In addition to historical institutionalism and path dependency, as I stated in Chapter 2, this work contributes to theoretical explanations of party cohesion and discipline and to theories of legislative organisation, suggesting possible ways to improve these frameworks' perception of outliers, such as the Mexican case, or the opportunity for new theory-building. For example, committees are regarded by parties and deputies as tools to advance political agendas, just as anywhere in the world. However,

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<sup>69</sup> However, as suggested in Chapter 2, the PRI is perhaps the actor who had the most power to select which rules could be modified, because it had been in power for decades.

particularistic behaviours triggered by term limits and encouraged by multiple party leaders, as a result of factionalism, have exacerbated distributive perspectives for allocating committee seats. Committees are not merely designed for deputies to trade influence with another, thereby becoming more powerful in a certain policy area and less powerful in others as would happen under a distributive perspective (Kaeding, 2004), and they are certainly not designed just for developing policy expertise as an informative perspective would suggest. Instead, committee seats in the Chamber of Deputies are used as prizes for loyal members, and are strategically allocated to maintain a certain balance between factions and party subgroups.

As a result, committee purpose and seniority mechanisms in Mexico (and perhaps in other Latin American countries) are much more dependent on informal mechanisms than the European Parliament or the American Congress. In addition, they have more significance for future political careers, as they are used as prizes or punishments by the parties.

Furthermore, party discipline and cohesion in Mexico cannot be solely measured by resorting to roll call data analysis on floor votes, as this would capture only the level of factionalism that is already known, at least in the PRI and the PRD. Instead, what is needed is a more in-depth approach that could help us understand how discipline is enforced in divided parties with multiple interests at stake. For instance, discipline in the Mexican case is better measured at the committee level, where it is mostly monitored by factional or sectoral leaders, rather than by the legislative party group's coordinator. Voting decisions and political points are made much earlier than plenary votes; deputies' efforts to please their principals consist of much more than pressing the correct button on voting day. A secure political career requires constant negotiations, as I exemplified in Chapter 4 with material from my interviews with Dep. Luis Sánchez (PRD, 60th Congress, member of the Directive Board) and David Sánchez Camacho (PRD, 60th Congress, Secretary of the Committee of Vulnerable Groups), among many others. And these negotiations are carried out informally, sometimes behind closed doors.

Thus, the Mexican case has proved that flexible theoretical perceptions of political issues and actors can offer better results, at least when used to analyse non-consolidated democracies like the Latin American ones.

### **6.3 Normative contributions and future research**

Although Mexico is a very unique case due to all the empirical and theoretical elements discussed throughout this research, it is possible to extract some general arguments which could be helpful to address other countries with a similar institutional formation. This is particularly true with regard to analysis on the quality of democracy or legislative politics in Latin America.

In countries like Mexico, which have democratised within the period known by scholars as ‘The Third Wave of Democracy’ (Huntington, 1991), the role of actors has been crucial in the transition from authoritarianism to democracy. However, because their attitudes have not been entirely cleaned of corruption, it has been impossible for democracy to fully consolidate: ‘with consolidation, democracy becomes routinized and deeply internalized in social, institutional and even psychological life, as well as in calculations for achieving success’ (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 3).

Institutions such as the legislative power and the judiciary, as well as political parties or organisations, have been unable to guarantee representation and the protection of civil rights. Furthermore, ‘the responsiveness of governmental policies to the preferences of the electorate’ (Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2006, p. 6), known as political accountability, is not easily achieved due to the imperfect nature of the relationship of representation and the lack of necessary conditions for controlling agencies to function adequately.

The results in this research concur with Morgenstern’s (2002) argument that, compared to the US Congress, the efficiency of Latin American legislatures is much more affected by the party and electoral systems. Parties’ internal stability and struggles can seriously affect the approval of bills and therefore their success at being representative.

Mexican parties have been described here as divided, clientelistic and vulnerable to local pressures, and thus their congressional behaviour and performance are dependent

on multiple leaders. Other countries in Latin America are in a similar situation, and could thus be approached using similar methods to those applied in this research. That is, understanding congressional performance elsewhere in Latin America could be achieved by observing strategies for allocating legislative candidacies.

For instance, Argentina is a case where party unity in Congress has been very strong in the last few decades and gridlocks have therefore been avoided relatively easy (Jones, 2002). However, individual legislators elected through decentralised closed lists have been convinced to vote with the party by either their provincial leader or party figures with the promise of positions and benefits, or other types of incentives (Morgenstern, 2002).

Alternatively, legislative seats in Brazil are allocated through open lists. Those with a greater power to influence legislators are governors and national party leaders, and thus deputies will do what is best for their state or the party's interest if they wish to build a long-term political career (Ames, 2002). That is, Brazilian deputies are under regional and national pressure while taking part in policy-making, and must also accommodate their own interests (Cheibub, Figueiredo & Limongi, 2009).

In contrast to Mexico, where local and particular interests are much stronger, party leaders in the Brazilian federal Congress have been successful in setting party lines and making members stick to them. Important legislation has been approved in the past couple of decades which proves that, when the elites' attitudes are focused on policy-making instead of on the achievement of particular interests, then democratic rules and behaviours can be locked in. Ultimately, this allows for the consolidation of democracy and representation.

In summary, the inductive case study developed herein has provided theoretical assumptions about the limitations that party power and candidate selection mechanisms have for legislative efficiency and representation. These could be used to analyse legislative behaviour as a factor of democratic quality in other countries with similar institutional designs. However, a careful consideration of the evolution of institutions and actors would be needed.

In the future, I would be interested in delving further into this matter, perhaps comparing Mexico with a contrasting Latin American country such as Brazil, but before doing so it would be interesting to see whether there have been substantial variations over time in parties' criteria to appoint senior members of committees in the Chamber of Deputies. I would be particularly interested in extending the database of background information on legislators to cover previous Congresses and the 61st legislature, and see how party leaders have changed their strategies from the times when the PRI was the dominant force in the Chamber, to later years, when the PAN and the PRD have become true electoral competitors.



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## **Appendix 1: Methodology and questionnaires used for interviews**

In-depth interviews were conducted on two separate fieldtrips. The first one took place between the 26th of January and the 6th of February 2009, and the second in September of the same year. The main purpose of these interviews was to complement the official information found in legal documents and on institutional web pages, to present a more accurate empirical description of the 60th Congress.

A series of emails were sent out in early January 2009 to 14 pre-made contacts in the Chamber of Deputies, requesting appointments for interviews. Once physically in Mexico City, phone calls were made to eight other possible interviewees following recommendations from third parties.

The initial intention was to interview Congress members from all eight groups, while making a greater effort to contact the party leaders. Advisors and staff from key committees such as the Budget Department were also targeted as it was envisaged that they too would have accurate information about daily practices not documented in official sources. Interviewing advisors was also useful to ensure representativeness of interviewees if deputies themselves could not be contacted easily.

Due to agenda constraints, only 13 interviews could be conducted in the first trip. Table A1 shows the names of the interviewees and the date of the meeting.

A second trip was arranged for September 2009, with the purpose of carrying out another round of interviews. As was done prior to the first trip, a series of emails were sent in order to secure meetings with members of Congress and their staff. Table A2 has the details of the 21 interviews performed. The reader will notice that the last interview, with Miguel Ángel Jiménez, was done in May 2010. This is because he was unable to meet me during my fieldtrips to Mexico, and I did not have the opportunity to interview him until he came to London to work at the Mexican Embassy.

<b>Table A1 Fieldtrip, January-February 2009</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
Dámaso Morales	Advisor to Alejandro Chanona, Coordinator of Convergencia	26/01/2009
David Sánchez Camacho	Deputy (PRD)	26/01/2009
Guillermo Amerena	Advisor to Emilio Gamboa Patrón, Coordinator of the PRI	26/01/2009
Joy Langston	Researcher at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas	27/01/2009
Elsa Conde	Deputy (PASD)	28/01/2009
Francisco Palomino	Advisor during 59th and 60th Congress to deputies from the PRI	28/01/2009
Adriana González	Senator (PAN)	29/01/2009
Jeffrey Weldon	Head of the Department of Political Science, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM)	29/01/2009
Julio Castañeda Pech	Linkage Secretary of PAN	30/01/2009
Federico Ling	Technical Secretary of the Committee of Foreign Affairs/Advisor to Dep. Gerardo Buganza, PAN	30/01/2009
Benito Nacif	Researcher at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) and Member of the Board of the IFE	04/02/2009
Sergio Mendoza	Advisor to Dep. Carlos Puente, PVEM	5/02/2009
Carlos Puente	Deputy (PVEM)	5/02/2009

<b>Table A2 Fieldtrip, September 2009</b>		
<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>
Ignacio González Rebolledo	Former Federal Deputy (48th and 56th Congress, PRI)	8/09/2009
Alberto Olvera	Researcher at the Institute of Historical and Social Research, University of Veracruz. Specialist on accountability and participation	8/09/2009
Marta Tagle	Former Federal Deputy (60th Congress, Convergencia)	14/09/2009
Roberto Ramírez Archer	Director of Budget and Public Expenditure Studies, Centre of Studies of Public Finances, Chamber of Deputies	15/09/2009
Moisés Alcalde	Former Deputy (60th Congress, PAN)	17/09/2009
Humberto López Lena	Former Deputy (60th Congress, Independent)	21/09/2009
Obdulio Ávila	Former Deputy (60th Congress, PAN)	21/09/2009
Carlos Lazard	Parliamentary staff since 1988	22/09/2009
Susana Servín	Parliamentary staff since 1994	22/09/2009
Gerardo Sosa	Former Deputy (60th Congress, PRI)	23/09/2009
Luis Sánchez Jiménez	Former Deputy (60th Congress, PRD)	23/09/2009
Teresa Ochoa	Current Deputy (61st Congress, Convergencia)	24/09/2009
Miguel Ángel Sánchez	Parliamentary staff since 1997	24/09/2009
Susana Monreal	Former Deputy (60th Congress, PRD)	24/09/2009
Xavier López Adame	Former Deputy (60th Congress, PVEM)	25/09/2009
Diego Díaz & Víctor González	Directors of Impacto Legislativo	28/09/2009
Javier Zambrano	Former Deputy (60th Congress, PAN)	30/09/2009
Erick López Barriga	Former Deputy (60th Congress, PRD)	30/09/2009

Jesús Ramírez	Current Deputy (61st Congress, PAN)	1/10/2009
Ángeles Cortés	Director of the Centre of Studies of Women's Development and Gender Equality, Chamber of Deputies	1/10/2009
Miguel Ángel Jiménez	Deputy (60th Congress)	21/05/2010

<b>Table A3 Failed Interviews</b>
<b>This table has been removed for reasons of copyright</b>

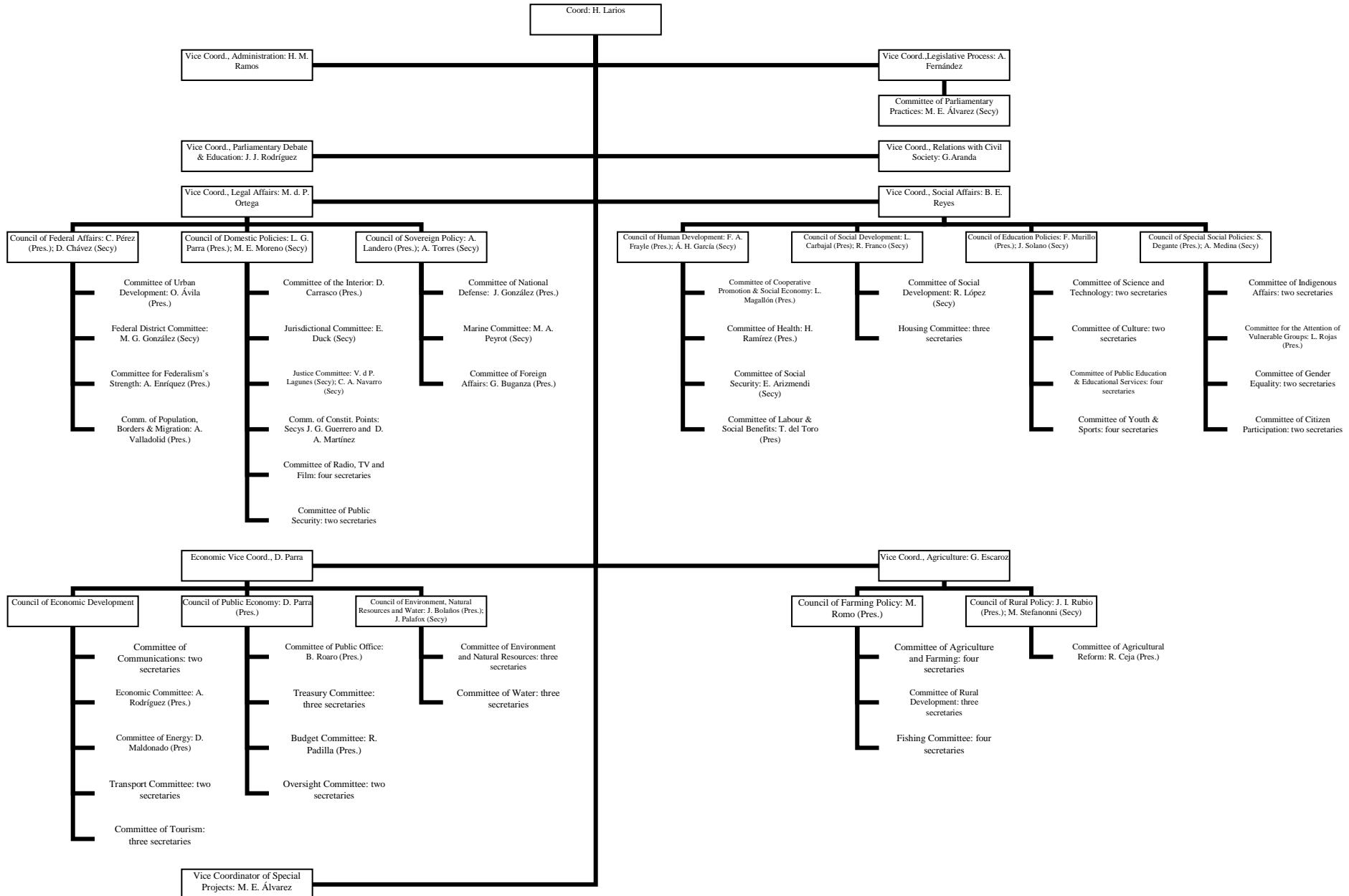
The conversations were established based on the following eight questions designed to obtain specific information. They proved to be successful, and extra data was revealed by the interviewees.

1. *Are there set mechanisms/procedures within the party for consensus building, like daily meetings?*
2. *Is there a mechanism for being appointed to a committee? How did you get appointed to the committees you sit in, for example?*
3. *Do you have certain 'special' obligations or duties to fulfil, derived from the committee seat you occupy?*
4. *Do you communicate in any way (apart from the approved bills which are published in the DOF and then executed) with your state and locality regarding your achievements?*
5. *Do you distinguish between bills when scrutinising them, that is do you personally handle differently more locally targeted bills from the rest?*
6. *Would you say that your party votes cohesively on all issues?*
7. *Do you think that changes should be made to the formal rules of Congress in order for it to become more efficient?*
8. *What are your plans for after Congress?*

The interviews were not recorded. My previous experience proved that Mexican Congress staff and members are much more open to disclosing information and engaging in a lengthy conversation when only notes are being taken by the interviewer. Therefore, the most important facts were kept in notes, which were later transcribed into a computer file. Only some of the interviewees requested some of their statements to remain anonymous when referenced in the research, and so the information was used cautiously in the text, quoted vaguely, i.e. as 'a member of Congress'.

## Appendix 2: The party groups of the 60th Congress: Organisational structures and electoral agendas

Figure A1 Organisation of the PAN in the 60th Congress, Author's creation with data from Diputados PAN, 2006b



<b>Table A4 Thematic organisation of the PAN in the 60th Congress</b>		
<b>Vice Coordination</b>	<b>Councils</b>	<b>Committees</b>
Administration		
Legislative Process		Parliamentary Regime, Rules and Practices
Parliamentary Debate and Education		
Relations with Society		
Legal Affairs	Federal Affairs; Domestic Policy; Sovereign Policy	Urban Development; Federal District; Empowerment of Federalism; Population, Borders and Migration Affairs; Interior; Jurisdictional; Justice; Constitutional Points; Radio, TV and Film; Public Security; National Defence; Marine; Foreign Affairs
Social Affairs	Human Development; Social Development; Education Policies; Special Social Policies	Cooperative Promotion and Social Economy; Health; Social Security; Labour and Social Benefits; Housing; Science and Technology; Culture; Public Education and Educational Services; Youth and Sports; Indigenous Affairs; Attention to Vulnerable Groups; Gender Equality; Citizen Participation
Economic	Economic Development; Public Economy; Environment, Natural Resources and Water	Communications; Economy; Energy; Transport; Tourism; Public Office; Treasury; Budget; Oversight; Environment and Natural Resources; Water
Agriculture	Farming; Rural Policy	Agriculture and Farming; Rural Development; Fishing; Agricultural Reform

Source: Author's creation with data from Diputados PAN, 2006b



**Table A5 The PAN's Legislative Agenda for the 60th Congress**

Main area	Specific Issues	
Economic Agenda	Fiscal	Fiscal incentives; simplification of tax obligations; participation of states and municipalities in tax collection
	Federal Budget	Multi-year budget; reduction of government's expenditures; performance evaluation mechanisms
	Scrutiny of Public Finance	Transparency in political parties' expenditures
	Economy	Increase in financial authorities' power; protection of personal information; enhance development banks; transparency and modernisation of state companies related to energy; credits to small businesses; promotion of more free trade agreements beneficial to Mexico; better industrial policies; incorporation of informal sector to formal economy
	Tourism	Improvement of touristic infrastructure; promotion of tourism
	Transport	Construction of roads in indigenous communities; increase in airport capacity
	Environment	Protection of natural resources through education; law enforcement
	Farming	Protection of internal market against disloyal practices; legal provisions for land ownership protection
Legal and Political Agenda	Public Security and Criminal Justice	Constitutional autonomy of the General Attorney's Office; implementation of judges for ensuring execution of criminal punishments; eradication of human trafficking; oral trials for criminal processes; transformation of Federal Public Security Ministry into a Ministry of the Interior; unification of all federal police forces; provision of faculties for investigation to the police; creation of a general database on criminal information; ensure rights of victims; general reforms to the Constitution and other frameworks to improve law enforcement and public security
	Institutional Reform (Political Reform)	Eliminate term limits for federal deputies; reduction of size of Legislative Power; regulation of lobbying; professionalisation of legislators and efficiency of scrutiny process; limitations to political immunity; regulation of presidential veto; mechanisms for budget management; transparency of all ministries and coordination between them
	Electoral Reform	Homologation of elections across the country; regulation of pre-campaigns; reduction of public funds for political parties and campaigns; reduction of campaign duration; creation of mechanisms for plebiscites and referenda, with the necessary regulation for them; transparency and accountability of political parties
	Human Rights	Constitutional recognition of human rights; provision to declare as unconstitutional those laws violating human rights
	Fight Against Corruption, Transparency and Administrative Development	Better regulated salaries of public officers; upgrade to constitutional status transparency and information access measures and ensure compliance of all entities which receive public funding
	Personal Data; Lottery, Rafts and Bets; Radio and Television	Consolidate legal framework for the protection of personal data

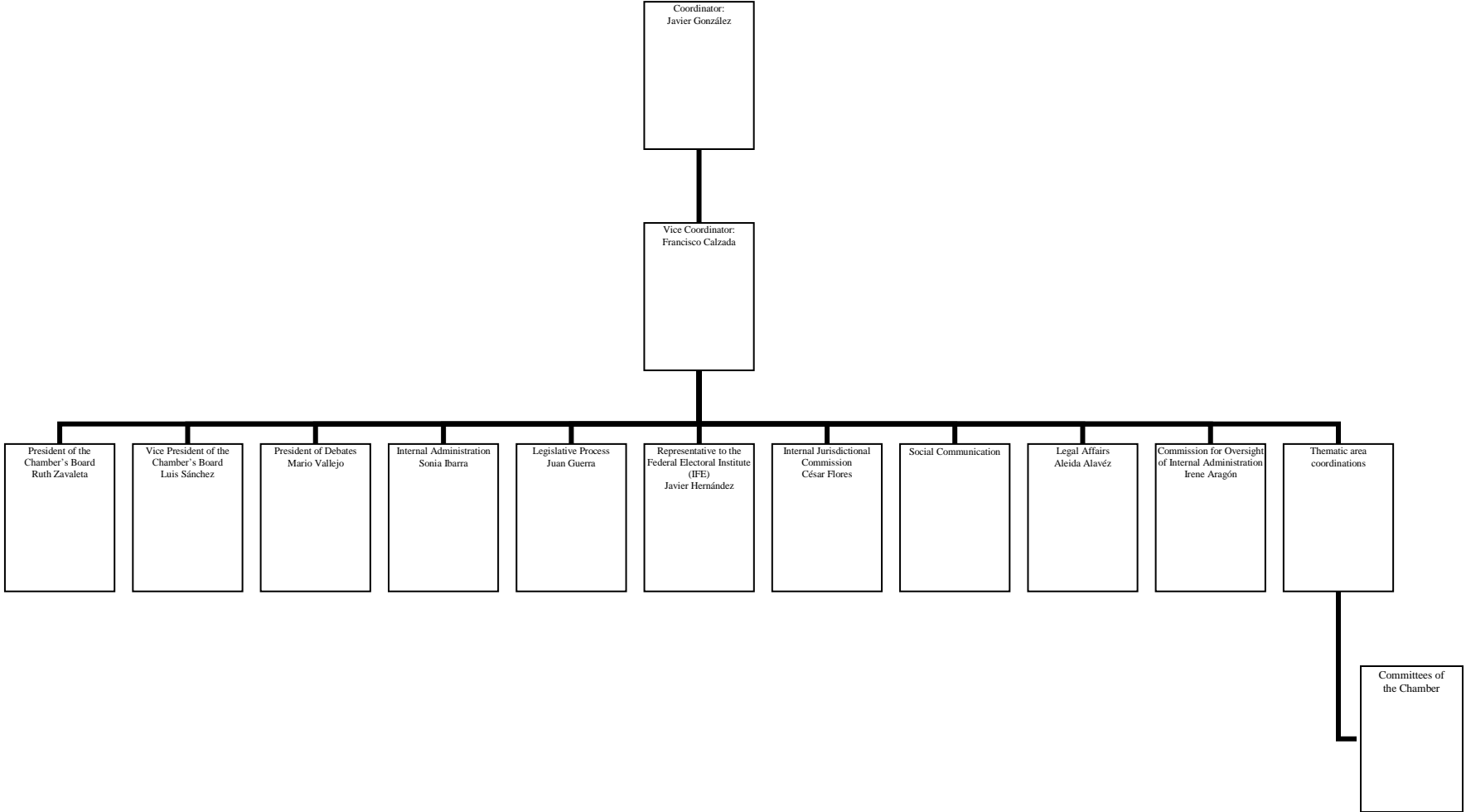
**Table A5 The PAN's Legislative Agenda for the 60th Congress**

Social Policy Agenda	Social Development	Adequate policies for distribution of federal resources between states and municipalities; transparency and accountability for social programmes, including a list of beneficiaries and sanctions to officers who misuse resources; promote regional development
	Housing	Strengthen housing institutions; guarantee property rights of housing and land
	Health	Universalisation and homologation of health services currently provided by diverse entities and increase in coverage; strengthen the national health system by professionalising staff, ensuring sufficient supplies of medicines, improving quality of service and reducing costs; clear legislation on bioethics
	Labour and Social Benefits	Promote new alternatives for hiring personnel, in order to ensure working rights; reduction of risks in working spaces; flexible contracts for women and young people; promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination; foster democratic unions, guaranteeing transparency, accountability and effective defence of workers' rights; promote incorporation of young professionals to the labour market
	Social Security	Transform pension programmes to ensure minimum amounts and ensure financial solvency; create a universal popular pension system; expand and modernise day care centres, expanding the service to more working women; actions in order to support Mexicans abroad
	Education	Improve quality of higher education, ensuring that graduates can easily integrate into the labour market; increase social participation in education policies; improve educational evaluation; promote teachers' training; expand scholarship programmes
	Culture	Establish the right to culture and Congress' right to legislate in cultural matters; strengthen legal framework of culture
	Science and Technology	Strengthen CONACYT (Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología) to make scientific and technological development a national priority; increase of budget for the sector, fiscal stimulus to private sector to foster technological development; promote sustainable development
	Gender and Equality	Consolidate gender perspective within the public administration agencies and increase number of women in important decision-making posts; harsher sanctions against rape and crimes against women
	Vulnerable Groups	Investments for accessibility improvements in public buildings and transport; guarantee respect of rights of children and teenagers; protection of young people against addictions, crime, violence and sexual abuse
	Indigenous People	Integration of mixed mechanisms and agencies for the members of indigenous communities; launch initiatives for social and productive development of indigenous people and create copyrights
	Citizen Participation	Incorporate mechanisms such as referenda, plebiscites and citizen initiatives to the Constitution; increase spaces for civil participation in legislative decision-making and public policies
	Family	Constitutional reforms to identify the family as the centre for protection and social development and create the General Family Law to legalise its rights; coordinate actions to eradicate domestic violence

Source: Author's creation with data from Diputados PAN, 2006a

**PRD**

Figure A2 The Directive Board of the PRD in the 60th Congress



Source: Author's creation with data from PRD, 2006a

<b>Table A6 The PRD's committee oversight within thematic areas</b>	
<b>Area Coordination</b>	<b>Committees of Supervision</b>
Communication, Transport and Tourism (Coordinator: Rafael Franco)	Communications; Transport; Tourism
Culture, Education, Science and Technology (Coordinator: Miguel Ángel Solares)	Public Education and Educational Services; Science and Technology; Culture
Economic Development (Coordinator: Alejandro Sánchez)	Economy; Energy; Agricultural Reform; Cooperative Promotion and Social Economy
Rural Development (Coordinator: Adriana Díaz)	Agriculture and Farming; Rural Development
Social Equality (Coordinator: Holly Matus)	Gender and Equality; Youth and Sports; Indigenous Affairs; Attention to Vulnerable Groups
Public Finances (Coordinator: Faustino Soto)	Treasury; Budget
Social Justice and Human Rights (Coordinator: Alliet Bautista)	Justice; Human Rights
Environment and Natural Resources (Coordinator: Roberto Mendoza)	Agriculture and Farming; Rural Development; Environment and Natural Resources; Fishing; Water
International Policy (Coordinator: Jesús Zazueta)	Foreign Affairs; Population, Borders and Migration Affairs
Domestic Policy (Coordinator: Claudia Cruz)	Radio, TV and Film; Citizen Participation
Social Policy (Coordinator: Daniel Dehesa)	Health; Social Security; Labour and Social Benefits; Housing
State Reform (Coordinator: Salvador Ruiz)	
Security and Law Enforcement (Coordinator: Andrés Lozano)	Public Security; National Defence; Marine
Oversight of the Superior Audit of the Federation (ASF) and Social Controllershship (Coordinator: Hugo Martínez)	Oversight; Public Office

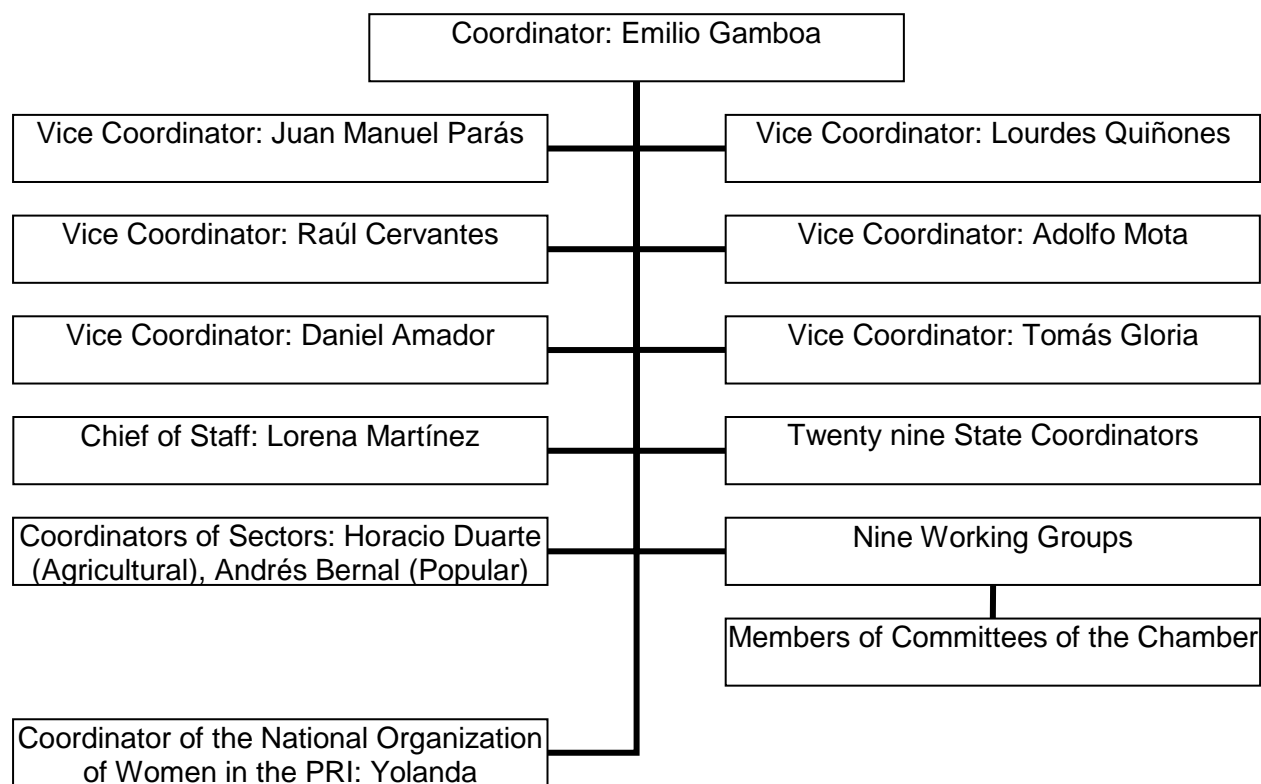
Source: Author's creation with data from [http://prdleg.diputados.gob.mx/trabajo/t\\_01.htm](http://prdleg.diputados.gob.mx/trabajo/t_01.htm)

<b>Table A7 The PRD's Electoral Programme for the 60th Congress</b>	
Topic	Proposals
Transformation of Political Institutions	Transparent and democratic participation; mechanisms for civil participation like plebiscites, referenda and popular initiatives; full inclusion of human rights in the Constitution; improve duties of Congress in order to increase efficiency, transparency and achievement of legislators
Human Rights	Full inclusion of human rights in the Constitution; indigenous rights; compliance with the San Andres agreements to achieve autonomy of the indigenous people; extension of children's, elderly people's and young people's rights as well as being guaranteed by the State; disabled people's and women's rights must also be better protected by the law
Legal Reforms	New regulations for the media to avoid monopolies; new environmental and natural resources' legislation
Social Policy	Procurement of sufficient financial resources to improve education, social security and health services; decent retirement programmes and pensions; economic aid to elderly people (over 70 years old); creation of full-time schools; guarantee health services to the entire population and promote the construction of popular housing
Economic Policy	Alleviation of poverty and economic inequality; economic reactivation programme, which includes fiscal reform, the promotion of national savings, investment and employment. Its goals are to guarantee economic growth, solve agricultural crises and back up social policy; revision of NAFTA
Foreign Policy	Foreign policy for the benefit of the entire nation; re-emphasise constitutional provisions regarding foreign policy; promotion of peace
Domestic Policy	Joint effort with other political forces to develop the country by overcoming political gridlocks and approving reforms

Source: author's creation with data from PRD, 2006b

**PRI**

Figure A3 Organisational chart of the PRI in the 60th Congress



Source: Author's creation with data from PRI, 2006b

<b>Table A8 The PRI Working Group's Oversight of the Committees</b>	
Working Group	Ordinary Committees Overseen
Economic Development	Economy, Communications, Science and Technology, Transport, Cooperative Promotion and Social Economy, Urban Development, Tourism, Energy
Rural Development and Environment	Agriculture and Farming, Agricultural Reform, Water, Rural Development, Environment and Natural Resources, Fishing
Social Equality	Youth and Sports, Indigenous Affairs, Vulnerable Groups, Gender and Equality
Financial Policy and Accountability	Budget, Finance, Public Office and Oversight
Domestic Policy and State Reform	Constitutional Points, Radio, TV and Film, Citizen Participation, Interior, Federal District, Empowerment of Federalism
Legislative Process	Parliamentary Rules and Practices
Foreign Policy	Foreign Policy, Population, Borders and Migration Affairs
Social Policy	Social Development, Culture, Public Education and Educational Services, Health, Social Security, Labour and Social Benefits, Housing
Security, Justice and Human Rights	National Defence, Public Security, Jurisdictional, Justice and Human Rights, Marine

Source: author's creation with data from PRI, 2006c

<b>Table A9 The PRI's Legislative Agenda for the 60th Congress</b>	
Topic	Specific Issue
Social Concerns	Review social policies and programmes; discuss the incorporation of social groups that are marginalised from economic processes and social programmes, such as 'Opportunities'; full exercise of social rights for all Mexicans; revise the mechanism of the Popular Insurance: strengthen and modernise the IMSS and the ISSSTE, without privatising them; increase coverage of the basic levels of pre-school, elementary and secondary schools; solve the demand of mid-level education, technological schools and universities
Political Proposals	Promote a different relation between powers; redesign institutions; redistribute responsibilities among government branches; materialise a third generation of reforms of the political organisms and of the electoral processes such as the IFE, the composition and attributions of Congress, the regulation of internal campaigns, direct re-election of deputies or second round of presidential elections, the political attributions of the Judiciary and the organisation and attributes of the Federal Executive
Economic Priorities	Better distribution of income through a more just fiscal burden and an integral fiscal reform; defend natural resources and the national heritage but also promote an energy reform which widens the energy offering and reduces costs for users without jeopardising national sovereignty; act upon the productive problems, unemployment and low income, especially in the rural sectors
Regionally Targeted Budget	Give the municipalities sufficient resources to meet their increased responsibilities; promote regional development; increase resources for priority areas and programmes, such as education, health, rural development, poverty alleviation, employment opportunities, public security, infrastructure, etc., which have a great social and economic impact

Source: author's creation with data from PRI, 2006a

## Convergencia

<b>Table A10 Legislative Agenda of Convergencia for the 60th Congress</b>	
Topic	Main Proposals
State Reform, Democratic Governance and New Constitutional provisions	Re-emphasise importance of parties as political and representative actors; legal changes to promote legislative majorities; greater attributions for Congress in budgetary matters; ensure justice and law enforcement through a series of legal reforms; electoral reform; increase of civil participation mechanisms in Congress; better frameworks for federalism to operate more efficiently
Equality and Human Rights	Make explicit in the Constitution the protection of the rights of children, disabled population and young people; new framework to protect women concerning abortion, labour and non-discrimination
A New Social Policy	Unified health system; universal social security; recognition of the right to nourishment; improved housing policy; effective alleviation of poverty; external evaluation of social programmes
Education, Science, Technology and Culture	Full-time schools; improvement of quality of education and also widen accessibility to more sectors of the population; make science and technology a national priority; establish in the Constitution the right to culture to force the State to improve its actions within the sector
Economic Policy for a Sustainable and Equal Development	Legal reforms to improve development of farming, fishing and nourishment options; protection of natural resources; modernise the energy sector; thorough fiscal reform and revision of specific tax collection procedures; increase and improve financial aid for development; improve labour protection frameworks; improve pension system
Global Affairs, Regional Blocks and National Projects	Involve Executive and the Legislature in foreign policy; approve a National Immigration Law

Source: Author's creation with data from Convergencia, 2006



## **PVEM**

The party's legislative agenda for the 60th Congress, as in previous legislatures, mainly focused on environmental issues, such as the right of all Mexicans to clean water, ensuring those who damage the environment are made responsible for their actions, and working towards the sustainability of productive activities. However, they also included provisions regarding fiscal reform, the inclusion of direct participation mechanisms such as referenda and plebiscites and adequate regulations of lobbying in Mexico.

Overall, any topic to be promoted or defended by the PVEM was expected to be included in the electoral programme it presented along with the PRI during the 2006 campaigns (PVEM, 2006). The party was determined to participate in collective decisions so as to prevent gridlocks and deliver legislative results.

## **PT**

Generally speaking, the party proposed a series of reforms towards a better state and an improved government, by promoting the direct participation of citizens, more efficient electoral institutions, accountability and transparency mechanisms regarding political campaigns as well as the promotion of coalitions. It also aimed for more just practices and frameworks for Federalism to be fully efficient (decentralisation of public administration, earmarking public resources and the strengthening of states' and municipalities' tax collection powers). Finally, as a labour party, it could not omit its priorities regarding social benefits and social guarantees such as housing, education, social security, pensions, health services and human rights, all of which should be priorities for the Mexican State (Ibid).

## **PANAL**

As a new party running for elections independently for the first time, NA (or PANAL) presented a relatively broad legislative agenda for the 60th Congress, divided into seven large sections: re-definition of the social duties of the state; electoral reform and democratic consolidation; integral reform of the federal public finances; economic

growth with an equality perspective; globalisation; law enforcement, security and legal affairs; and democratic culture.

Overall, the main demands and promises to its electorate focused on achieving the necessary legal reforms in order to defend human rights, ensure better social policies (i.e. housing, social security or education), develop mechanisms for transparency and accountability across all governmental practices, stimulate the internal market and tackle unemployment. In addition, the party was committed to helping Mexicans living abroad to be better protected by consulates (Nueva Alianza, 2006a).

### **PASD**

Overall, the legislative agenda of the party rested on two principles. The first was the promotion of a development model which fosters high-quality education, investment in productivity, economic growth, employment, social well-being and the conservation of the environment. In turn, the second principle sought to build a society with universal rights and freedoms, to which everyone must have access, with effective guarantees and simple mechanisms to defend them. All of the above must be achieved in a context of political plurality and social diversity (PASD, 2006). Specific legal reforms and new frameworks were proposed throughout the document to help achieve these goals.

### Appendix 3: Output for multivariate analyses discussed in Chapter 5

DV = Committee President

Model 1 - without party dummies

<b>Logit model</b>	
Dependent variable	ComRole_Pres
Independent variables	PrevElectFederalSenator PrevElectFederalDeputy PrevElectFederalBoth PrevElectState_Deputy PrevElectState_Governor PrevElectState_Both PrevElectMunic_Mayor PrevElectMunic_Councillor PrevElectMunic_Both PubServiceState PubServiceFederal PubServiceMunicipal ActivePartyOfficer ActiveSector LevelEducation Gender Age

Note: PrevElectState\_Both = 0 predicts failure perfectly. PrevElectState\_Both dropped and 1 obs not used

Note: PrevElectMunic\_Both = 0 predicts failure perfectly. PrevElectMunic\_Both dropped and 8 obs not used

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -205.10529

Iteration 1: log likelihood = -197.41414

Iteration 2: log likelihood = -197.07643

Iteration 3: log likelihood = -197.0761

Logistic regression

Number of obs = 430

LR chi2(15) = 16.06

Prob > chi2 = 0.3782

Log likelihood = -197.0761

Pseudo R2 = 0.0391

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z	p	95% Confidence interval	
PrevElectFederalSenator	0.933429	0.6061502	1.54	0.124	-0.2546031	
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.791206	0.3349736	2.36	0.018	0.1346699	1.447742
PrevElectFederalBoth	1.079819	0.5618879	1.92	0.055	-0.021461	2.181099
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.12457	0.2744783	-0.45	0.65	-0.662538	0.4133972
PrevElectState_Governor	-0.40845	1.20393	-0.34	0.734	-2.768109	1.951208
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.37725	0.3816383	-0.99	0.323	-1.125248	0.3707472
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	0.20529	0.3610979	0.57	0.57	-0.502449	0.9130285
PubServiceState	0.14003	0.3247787	0.43	0.666	-0.496525	0.7765842
PubServiceFederal	0.121761	0.3741637	0.33	0.745	-0.611586	0.8551085
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.280839	0.4090394	-0.69	0.492	-1.082541	0.5208636
ActivePartyOfficer	-0.255832	0.327279	-0.78	0.434	-0.897287	0.3856228
ActiveSector	0.084168	0.3679892	0.23	0.819	-0.637077	0.8054137
LevelEducation	-0.077399	0.1540744	-0.5	0.615	-0.379379	0.2245811
Gender	-0.186795	0.3386563	-0.55	0.581	-0.850549	0.476959
Age	0.002208	0.0159481	0.14	0.89	-0.02905	0.0334652
Constant	-1.405105	0.9263934	-1.52	0.129	-3.220803	0.4105923

Marginal effects after logit  
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{ComRole\_Pres})$  (predict)  
 = .17290244

Variable	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	95% Confidence Interval		X
PrevElectFederalSenator	0.17129	0.13342	1.28	0.199	-0.090218	0.432797	0.037209
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.134044	0.06459	2.08	0.038	0.007448	0.260641	0.148837
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.203374	0.12769	1.59	0.111	-0.046895	0.453643	0.046512
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.017597	0.03828	-0.46	0.646	-0.092628	0.057433	0.348837
PrevElectState_Governor	-0.051041	0.12973	-0.39	0.694	-0.305302	0.20322	0.009302
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.049711	0.04599	-1.08	0.28	-0.139851	0.040429	0.172093
PrevElectMunic_Cllor	0.030749	0.05651	0.54	0.586	-0.08	0.141497	0.151163
PubServiceState	0.020387	0.0481	0.42	0.672	-0.073887	0.114661	0.304651
PubServiceFederal	0.017851	0.05619	0.32	0.751	-0.092288	0.127991	0.186047
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.038027	0.05222	-0.73	0.466	-0.140371	0.064316	0.204651
ActivePartyOfficer	-0.038447	0.05149	-0.75	0.455	-0.139366	0.062472	0.8
ActiveSector	0.012278	0.05474	0.22	0.823	-0.095012	0.119568	0.137209
LevelEducation	-0.011069	0.02201	-0.5	0.615	-0.05421	0.032073	2.12326
Gender	-0.025762	0.04496	-0.57	0.567	-0.113878	0.062355	0.204651
Age	0.000316	0.00228	0.14	0.89	-0.004154	0.004786	48.0977

Note: dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

## Model 2 - with party dummies

<b>Logit model</b>	
Dependent variable	ComRole_Pres
Independent variables	PrevElectFederalSenator PrevElectFederalDeputy PrevElectFederalBoth PrevElectState_Deputy PrevElectState_Governor PrevElectState_Both PrevElectMunic_Mayor PrevElectMunic_Councillor PrevElectMunic_Both PubServiceState PubServiceFederal PubServiceMunicipal ActivePartyOfficer ActiveSector LevelEducation Gender Age PolPartyPAN PolPartyPRD PolPartyPRI

Note: PrevElectState\_Both = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PrevElectState\_Both dropped and 1 obs not used

Note: PrevElectMunic\_Both = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PreElectMunic\_Both dropped and 8 obs not used

Note: PolPartyPRD dropped because of collinearity

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -205.10529

Iteration 1: log likelihood = -196.78764

Iteration 2: log likelihood = -196.42509

Iteration 3: log likelihood = -196.42473

Iteration 4: log likelihood = -196.42473

Logistic regression

Number of obs = 430

LR chi2(17) = 17.36

Prob > chi2 = 0.4302

Log likelihood = -196.42473

Pseudo R2 = 0.0423

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err	z	P> z	95% Conf. Interval	
PrevElectFederalSenator	0.888751	0.6154348	1.44	0.149	-0.317479	2.094981
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.7459087	0.341134	2.19	0.029	0.0772984	1.414519
PrevElectFederalBoth	1.096505	0.5649287	1.94	0.052	-0.0107352	2.203744
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.1425578	0.2753767	-0.52	0.605	-0.6822862	0.3971707
PrevElectState_Governor	-0.4435416	1.198703	-0.37	0.711	-2.792956	1.905873
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.3981119	0.3856767	-1.03	0.302	-1.154024	0.3578005
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	0.2780094	0.3680656	0.76	0.45	-0.4433858	0.9994047
PubServiceState	0.1332843	0.3283672	0.41	0.685	-0.5103036	0.7768723
PubServiceFederal	0.1533236	0.3791725	0.4	0.686	-0.5898409	0.8964881
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.1994694	0.4153639	-0.48	0.631	-1.013568	0.6146289
ActivePartyOfficer	-0.271513	0.3312189	-0.82	0.412	-0.9206902	0.3776641
ActiveSector	0.0671858	0.3691931	0.18	0.856	-0.6564194	0.790791
LevelEducation	-0.1127877	0.1574522	-0.72	0.474	-0.4213884	0.195813
Gender	-0.1809094	0.3392438	-0.53	0.594	-0.8458151	0.4839962
Age	-0.0004154	0.016193	-0.03	0.98	-0.032153	0.0313222
PolPartPAN	-0.3202253	0.323258	-0.99	0.322	-0.9537993	0.3133487
PolPartPRI	0.0030939	0.3655764	0.01	0.993	-0.7134226	0.7196104
Constant	-1.058447	0.9756412	-1.08	0.278	-2.970669	0.8537742

Marginal effects after logit  
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{ComRole\_Pres})$  (predict)  
 $= .1720646$

Variable	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	95% Confidence Interval		X
PrevElectFederalSenator	0.1610058	0.13342	1.21	0.228	-0.100483	0.422495	0.037209
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.1248538	0.06481	1.93	0.054	-0.002166	0.251874	0.148837
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.2066326	0.12867	1.61	0.108	-0.045552	0.458817	0.046512
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.0200249	0.03812	-0.53	0.599	-0.094734	0.054685	0.348837
PrevElectState_Governor	-0.0545463	0.12529	-0.44	0.663	-0.300117	0.191024	0.009302
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.0520118	0.04584	-1.13	0.256	-0.14185	0.037826	0.172093
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	0.0421602	0.05914	0.71	0.476	-0.073761	0.158082	0.151163
PubServiceState	0.0193145	0.04837	0.4	0.69	-0.075489	0.114118	0.304651
PubServiceFederal	0.0225379	0.05745	0.39	0.695	-0.090054	0.13513	0.186047
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.0273338	0.05462	-0.5	0.617	-0.134392	0.079725	0.204651
ActivePartyOfficer	-0.040775	0.05222	-0.78	0.435	-0.143124	0.061574	0.8
ActiveSector	0.0097248	0.05428	0.18	0.858	-0.096671	0.116121	0.137209
LevelEducation	-0.0160676	0.02239	-0.72	0.473	-0.059953	0.027818	2.12326
Gender	-0.0248805	0.04496	-0.55	0.58	-0.113007	0.063246	0.204651
Age	-0.0000592	0.00231	-0.03	0.98	-0.00458	0.004462	48.0977
PolPartPAN	-0.0454027	0.04553	-1.0	0.319	-0.134644	0.043838	0.474419
PolPartPRI	0.000441	0.05214	0.01	0.993	-0.101743	0.102625	0.232558

Note: dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1



**DV = Priority Committee**

**Model 3 - without party dummies**

<b>Logit model</b>	
Dependent variable	Priority Committee
Independent variables	PrevElectFederalSenator PrevElectFederalDeputy PrevElectFederalBoth PrevElectState_Deputy PrevElectState_Governor PrevElectState_Both PrevElectMunic_Mayor PrevElectMunic_Councillor PrevElectMunic_Both PubServiceState PubServiceFederal PubServiceMunicipal ActivePartyOfficer ActiveSector LevelEducation Gender Age

Note: PrevElectState\_Both = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PrevElectState\_Both dropped and 1 obs not used

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -273.68738  
Iteration 1: log likelihood = -260.85727  
Iteration 2: log likelihood = -260.71418  
Iteration 3: log likelihood = -260.71408

Logistic regression  
Number of obs = 438  
LR chi2(16) = 25.95  
Prob > chi2 = 0.0548  
Log likelihood = -260.71408  
Pseudo R2 = 0.0474

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err	z	P> z	95% Conf. Interval	
PrevElectFederalSenator	0.5827468	0.577445	1.01	0.313	-0.5490245	1.714518
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.2506266	0.2991106	0.84	0.402	-0.3356195	0.8368727
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.2233861	0.5382557	0.42	0.678	-0.8315756	1.278348
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.0682651	0.2272248	-0.3	0.764	-0.5136175	0.3770872
PrevElectState_Governor	1.485523	1.222384	1.22	0.224	-0.9103055	3.881352
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.3432281	0.3078208	-1.12	0.265	-0.9465458	0.2600896
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.3301718	0.3221399	-1.02	0.305	-0.9615544	0.3012109
PrevElectMunic_Both	0.3561864	0.7838479	0.45	0.65	-1.180127	1.8925
PubServiceState	0.2189643	0.2807948	0.78	0.436	-0.3313834	0.769312
PubServiceFederal	0.8095192	0.3165828	2.56	0.011	0.1890283	1.43001
PubServiceMunicipal	0.2036148	0.3188132	0.64	0.523	-0.4212477	0.8284772
ActivePartyOfficer	0.1146177	0.2814336	0.41	0.684	-0.436982	0.6662175
ActiveSector	-0.1276701	0.3263193	-0.39	0.696	-0.7672443	0.5119041
LevelEducation	-0.116641	0.1238425	-0.94	0.346	-0.3593677	0.1260858
Gender	-0.7270058	0.3000415	-2.42	0.015	-1.315076	-0.1389354
Age	-0.0050757	0.0132148	-0.38	0.701	-0.0309763	0.0208249
Constant	-0.4591042	0.7777564	-0.59	0.555	-1.983479	1.06527

Marginal effects after logit  
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{PriorityCom})$  (predict)  
 $= .30774747$

Variables	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	95% Confidence Interval		X
PrevElectFederalSenator	0.1347864	0.14142	0.95	0.341	-0.142383	0.411956	0.03653
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.055084	0.06758	0.82	0.415	-0.077378	0.187546	0.150685
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.0493405	0.1228	0.4	0.688	-0.191351	0.290032	0.045662
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.0144873	0.04803	-0.3	0.763	-0.108626	0.079651	0.356164
PrevElectState_Governor	0.3546842	0.27437	1.29	0.196	-0.183069	0.892437	0.009132
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.0697302	0.05929	-1.18	0.24	-0.185935	0.046475	0.16895
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.0670121	0.06193	-1.08	0.279	-0.188397	0.054373	0.148402
PrevElectMunic_Both	0.0803876	0.18553	0.43	0.665	-0.283241	0.444016	0.018265
PubServiceState	0.0473697	0.06156	0.77	0.442	-0.073293	0.168032	0.305936
PubServiceFederal	0.1856435	0.07572	2.45	0.014	0.037233	0.334054	0.182648
PubServiceMunicipal	0.0443393	0.07082	0.63	0.531	-0.094462	0.18314	0.203196
ActivePartyOfficer	0.0240863	0.05831	0.41	0.68	-0.090191	0.138364	0.80137
ActiveSector	-0.0266984	0.06692	-0.4	0.69	-0.157866	0.104469	0.134703
LevelEducation	-0.0248491	0.02636	-0.94	0.346	-0.07651	0.026812	2.13699
Gender	-0.1405551	0.05136	-2.74	0.006	-0.24121	-0.0399	0.200913
Age	-0.0010813	0.00281	-0.38	0.701	-0.006598	0.004435	48.2968

Note: dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

#### Model 4 - with party dummies

<b>Logit model</b>	
Dependent variable	Priority Committee
Independent variables	PrevElectFederalSenator PrevElectFederalDeputy PrevElectFederalBoth PrevElectState_Deputy PrevElectState_Governor PrevElectState_Both PrevElectMunic_Mayor PrevElectMunic_Councillor PrevElectMunic_Both PubServiceState PubServiceFederal PubServiceMunicipal ActivePartyOfficer ActiveSector LevelEducation Gender Age PolPartyPAN PolPartyPRD PolPartyPRI

Note: PrevElectState\_Both = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PrevElectState\_Both dropped and 1 obs not used

Note: PolPartyPRD dropped because of collinearity

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -273.68738

Iteration 1: log likelihood = -260.80505

Iteration 2: log likelihood = -260.65961

Iteration 3: log likelihood = -260.6595

Logistic regression

Number of obs = 438

LR chi2(18) = 26.06

Prob > chi2 = 0.0985

Log likelihood = -260.6595

Pseudo R2 = 0.0476

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err	z	P> z	95% Conf. Interval	
PrevElectFederalSenator	0.5994617	0.5855534	1.02	0.306	-0.5482019	1.747125
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.255848	0.303661	0.84	0.399	-0.3393166	0.8510126
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.2369856	0.5398892	0.44	0.661	-0.8211779	1.295149
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.0691098	0.2274227	-0.3	0.761	-0.5148501	0.3766304
PrevElectState_Governor	1.47848	1.221165	1.21	0.226	-0.9149591	3.871919
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.3362896	0.3106004	-1.08	0.279	-0.9450552	0.272476
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.3216966	0.3267213	-0.98	0.325	-0.9620585	0.3186653
PrevElectMunic_Both	0.3826054	0.7900972	0.48	0.628	-1.165957	1.931167
PubServiceState	0.2291863	0.2844343	0.81	0.42	-0.3282946	0.7866672
PubServiceFederal	0.8251632	0.3201982	2.58	0.01	0.1975862	1.45274
PubServiceMunicipal	0.2175976	0.3236502	0.67	0.501	-0.4167451	0.8519403
ActivePartyOfficer	0.1224058	0.2842344	0.43	0.667	-0.4346833	0.6794949
ActiveSector	-0.1354017	0.327114	-0.41	0.679	-0.7765333	0.50573
LevelEducation	-0.1235183	0.1265286	-0.98	0.329	-0.3715098	0.1244732
Gender	-0.7267888	0.300183	-2.42	0.015	-1.315137	-0.1384409
Age	-0.0051878	0.0134046	-0.39	0.699	-0.0314603	0.0210847
PolPartyPAN	-0.0806604	0.2689903	-0.3	0.764	-0.6078718	0.4465509
PolPartyPRI	-0.0855163	0.3175974	-0.27	0.788	-0.7079957	0.5369632
Constant	-0.3995485	0.8213291	-0.49	0.627	-2.009324	1.210227

Marginal effects after logit  
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{PriorityCom})$  (predict)  
 $= .30767174$

Variables	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	95% Confidence Interval		X
PrevElectFederalSenator	0.1388709	0.14366	0.97	0.334	-0.142696	0.420438	0.03653
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.0562581	0.06868	0.82	0.413	-0.078344	0.190861	0.150685
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.052443	0.1236	0.42	0.671	-0.189809	0.294695	0.045662
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.0146638	0.04806	-0.31	0.76	-0.108863	0.079535	0.356164
PrevElectState_Governor	0.3530972	0.27473	1.29	0.199	-0.185363	0.891557	0.009132
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.0683804	0.05995	-1.14	0.254	-0.185885	0.049124	0.16895
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.065369	0.06299	-1.04	0.299	-0.188826	0.058088	0.148402
PrevElectMunic_Both	0.0866501	0.18804	0.46	0.645	-0.281906	0.455206	0.018265
PubServiceState	0.0496078	0.06243	0.79	0.427	-0.072746	0.171962	0.305936
PubServiceFederal	0.1893787	0.07661	2.47	0.013	0.039217	0.33954	0.182648
PubServiceMunicipal	0.0474448	0.07207	0.66	0.51	-0.093802	0.188691	0.203196
ActivePartyOfficer	0.0256947	0.05876	0.44	0.662	-0.089472	0.140861	0.80137
ActiveSector	-0.0282782	0.06691	-0.42	0.673	-0.159425	0.102868	0.134703
LevelEducation	-0.0263106	0.02692	-0.98	0.328	-0.079082	0.026461	2.13699
Gender	-0.1404947	0.05137	-2.73	0.006	-0.241182	-0.039807	0.200913
Age	-0.0011051	0.00285	-0.39	0.699	-0.0067	0.00449	48.2968
PolPartyPAN	-0.0171643	0.05717	-0.3	0.764	-0.129221	0.094892	0.47032
PolPartyPRI	-0.0180571	0.06646	-0.27	0.786	-0.148311	0.112197	0.239726

Note: dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

**DV = Priority Committee Senior**

**Model 5 - without party dummies**

<b>Logit model</b>	
Dependent variable	Priority Committee Senior
Independent variables	PrevElectFederalSenator PrevElectFederalDeputy PrevElectFederalBoth PrevElectState_Deputy PrevElectState_Governor PrevElectState_Both PrevElectMunic_Mayor PrevElectMunic_Councillor PrevElectMunic_Both PubServiceState PubServiceFederal PubServiceMunicipal ActivePartyOfficer ActiveSector LevelEducation Gender Age

Note: PrevElectState\_Both = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PrevElectState\_Both dropped and 1 obs not used

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -157.57842  
Iteration 1: log likelihood = -144.33533  
Iteration 2: log likelihood = -141.38917  
Iteration 3: log likelihood = -141.14368  
Iteration 4: log likelihood = -141.14273

Logistic regression  
Number of obs = 438  
LR chi2(16) = 32.87  
Prob > chi2 = 0.0077  
Log likelihood = -141.14273  
Pseudo R2 = 0.1043

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err	z	P> z	95% Conf. Interval	
PrevElectFederalSenator	-0.0813878	0.7704033	-0.11	0.916	-1.591351	1.428575
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.2896723	0.4226989	0.69	0.493	-0.5388023	1.118147
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.1719084	0.7030665	0.24	0.807	-1.206077	1.549893
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.5354543	0.3628727	-1.48	0.14	-1.246672	0.1757631
PrevElectState_Governor	1.702665	1.137128	1.5	0.134	-0.5260652	3.931396
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.3700947	0.4942274	-0.75	0.454	-1.338763	0.5985733
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.3169352	0.5200931	-0.61	0.542	-1.336299	0.7024286
PrevElectMunic_Both	1.313214	0.9357962	1.4	0.161	-0.5209128	3.147341
PubServiceState	0.2524776	0.4221866	0.6	0.55	-0.574993	1.079948
PubServiceFederal	1.096886	0.4288835	2.56	0.011	0.2562902	1.937483
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.7332988	0.6117209	-1.2	0.231	-1.93225	0.4656521
ActivePartyOfficer	0.6801249	0.4649639	1.46	0.144	-0.2311875	1.591437
ActiveSector	0.3082665	0.4397872	0.7	0.483	-0.5537006	1.170234
LevelEducation	-0.0921216	0.1878239	-0.49	0.624	-0.4602498	0.2760065
Gender	-0.978407	0.5082073	-1.93	0.054	-1.974475	0.017661
Age	-0.0054175	0.0197967	-0.27	0.784	-0.0442184	0.0333834
Constant	-2.157991	1.191215	-1.81	0.07	-4.49273	0.1767477



Marginal effects after logit  
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{PriorityComSenior})$  (predict)  
 $= .09028616$

Variables	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	95% Confidence Interval		X
PrevElectFederalSenator	-0.0064815	0.05945	-0.11	0.913	-0.123005	0.110042	0.03653
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.0258685	0.04081	0.63	0.526	-0.054116	0.105853	0.150685
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.0150539	0.06549	0.23	0.818	-0.113309	0.143417	0.045662
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.0415338	0.02641	-1.57	0.116	-0.093299	0.010231	0.356164
PrevElectState_Governor	0.2600755	0.25673	1.01	0.311	-0.243097	0.763248	0.009132
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.027548	0.03315	-0.83	0.406	-0.092518	0.037422	0.16895
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.0237908	0.03552	-0.67	0.503	-0.093401	0.045819	0.148402
PrevElectMunic_Both	0.1765133	0.17906	0.99	0.324	-0.174447	0.527474	0.018265
PubServiceState	0.0216102	0.03752	0.58	0.565	-0.051937	0.095157	0.305936
PubServiceFederal	0.1205402	0.0596	2.02	0.043	0.003729	0.237351	0.182648
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.0508656	0.03486	-1.46	0.144	-0.119181	0.01745	0.203196
ActivePartyOfficer	0.047599	0.02745	1.73	0.083	-0.006198	0.101395	0.80137
ActiveSector	0.0277875	0.04328	0.64	0.521	-0.057043	0.112618	0.134703
LevelEducation	-0.0075664	0.01542	-0.49	0.624	-0.037782	0.022649	2.13699
Gender	-0.0643454	0.02601	-2.47	0.013	-0.115316	-0.013374	0.200913
Age	-0.000445	0.00162	-0.27	0.784	-0.003627	0.002737	48.2968

Note: dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

## Model 6 - with party dummies

Logit model	
Dependent variable	Priority Committee Senior
Independent variables	PrevElectFederalSenator PrevElectFederalDeputy PrevElectFederalBoth PrevElectState_Deputy PrevElectState_Governor PrevElectState_Both PrevElectMunic_Mayor PrevElectMunic_Councillor PrevElectMunic_Both PubServiceState PubServiceFederal PubServiceMunicipal ActivePartyOfficer ActiveSector LevelEducation Gender Age PolPartyPAN PolPartyPRD PolPartyPRI

Note: PrevElectState\_Both = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PrevElectState\_Both dropped and 1 obs not used

Note: PolPartyPRD dropped because of collinearity

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -157.57842

Iteration 1: log likelihood = -144.06202

Iteration 2: log likelihood = -141.03665

Iteration 3: log likelihood = -140.77907

Iteration 4: log likelihood = -140.77781

Iteration 5: log likelihood = -140.77781

Logistic regression

Number of obs = 438

LR chi2(18) = 33.60

Prob > chi2 = 0.0141

Log likelihood = -140.77781

Pseudo R2 = 0.1066

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err	z	P> z	95% Conf. Interval	
PrevElectFederalSenator	-0.1132427	0.771873	-0.15	0.883	-1.626086	1.399601
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.2409495	0.4336404	0.56	0.578	-0.60897	1.090869
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.1882133	0.7067297	0.27	0.79	-1.196952	1.573378
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.5416607	0.3634917	-1.49	0.136	-1.254091	0.1707699
PrevElectState_Governor	1.667912	1.130556	1.48	0.14	-0.5479365	3.88376
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.3903031	0.4978923	-0.78	0.433	-1.366154	0.5855479
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.2496955	0.527782	-0.47	0.636	-1.284129	0.7847381
PrevElectMunic_Both	1.328721	0.9430454	1.41	0.159	-0.5196143	3.177056
PubServiceState	0.2432689	0.4274255	0.57	0.569	-0.5944697	1.081007
PubServiceFederal	1.129176	0.4373272	2.58	0.01	0.2720299	1.986321
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.6617178	0.6184795	-1.07	0.285	-1.873915	0.5504797
ActivePartyOfficer	0.6424929	0.4696066	1.37	0.171	-0.2779192	1.562905
ActiveSector	0.2980867	0.4410347	0.68	0.499	-0.5663254	1.162499
LevelEducation	-0.1204695	0.191305	-0.63	0.529	-0.4954203	0.2544814
Gender	-0.9644284	0.5091189	-1.89	0.058	-1.962283	0.0334263
Age	-0.0084412	0.0202327	-0.42	0.677	-0.0480966	0.0312141
PolPartyPAN	-0.2867859	0.4068826	-0.7	0.481	-1.084261	0.5106893
PolPartyPRI	0.018357	0.4458812	0.04	0.967	-0.855554	0.892268
Constant	-1.810931	1.257376	-1.44	0.15	-4.275343	0.6534805

Marginal effects after logit  
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{PriorityComSenior})$  (predict)  
 $= .08991117$

Variables	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	95% Confidence Interval		X
PrevElectFederalSenator	-0.0088764	0.0579	-0.15	0.878	-0.122359	0.104606	0.03653
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.021137	0.04061	0.52	0.603	-0.058465	0.100739	0.150685
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.0165213	0.06636	0.25	0.803	-0.11355	0.146592	0.045662
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.0418318	0.02635	-1.59	0.112	-0.093474	0.009811	0.356164
PrevElectState_Governor	0.2516089	0.25215	1.0	0.318	-0.242588	0.745806	0.009132
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.0287897	0.03293	-0.87	0.382	-0.093331	0.035752	0.16895
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.0190275	0.03733	-0.51	0.61	-0.092191	0.054136	0.148402
PrevElectMunic_Both	0.1789824	0.18121	0.99	0.323	-0.176192	0.534157	0.018265
PubServiceState	0.020713	0.03773	0.55	0.583	-0.053232	0.094658	0.305936
PubServiceFederal	0.124721	0.06133	2.03	0.042	0.004525	0.244917	0.182648
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.0464397	0.03634	-1.28	0.201	-0.117669	0.024789	0.203196
ActivePartyOfficer	0.045169	0.0281	1.61	0.108	-0.009908	0.100246	0.80137
ActiveSector	0.0266892	0.04299	0.62	0.535	-0.057575	0.110953	0.134703
LevelEducation	-0.0098577	0.01564	-0.63	0.528	-0.040506	0.020791	2.13699
Gender	-0.0633626	0.02611	-2.43	0.015	-0.114534	-0.012191	0.200913
Age	-0.0006907	0.00165	-0.42	0.676	-0.003928	0.002546	48.2968
PolPartyPAN	-0.0233444	0.03293	-0.71	0.478	-0.087892	0.041203	0.47032
PolPartyPRI	0.001508	0.03678	0.04	0.967	-0.070577	0.073593	0.239726

Note: dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

## DV = Directive Board

### Model 7 - without party dummies

Logit model	
Dependent variable	Directive Board
Independent variables	PrevElectFederalSenator PrevElectFederalDeputy PrevElectFederalBoth PrevElectState_Deputy PrevElectState_Governor PrevElectState_Both PrevElectMunic_Mayor PrevElectMunic_Councillor PrevElectMunic_Both PubServiceState PubServiceFederal PubServiceMunicipal ActivePartyOfficer ActiveSector LevelEducation Gender Age

Note: PrevElectFederalSenator = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PrevElectFederalSenator dropped and 16 obs not used

Note: PrevElectState\_Governor = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PrevElectState\_Governor dropped and 3 obs not used

Note: PrevElectState\_Both = 0 predicts success perfectly; PrevElectState\_Both dropped and 1 obs not used

Note: PrevElectMunic\_Both = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PrevElectMunic\_Both dropped and 8 obs not used

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -67.380478

Iteration 1: log likelihood = -60.140341

Iteration 2: log likelihood = -54.092273

Iteration 3: log likelihood = -53.733982

Iteration 4: log likelihood = -53.726961

Iteration 5: log likelihood = -53.726953

Logistic regression

Number of obs = 405

LR chi2(13) = 27.31

Prob > chi2 = 0.0113

Log likelihood = -53.726953

Pseudo R2 = 0.2026

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err	z	P> z	95% Conf. Interval	
PrevElectFederalDeputy	-0.1188074	0.8431475	-0.14	0.888	-1.771346	1.533731
PrevElectFederalBoth	1.16159	1.057009	1.1	0.272	-0.9101103	3.23329
PrevElectState_Deputy	0.1271027	0.5688408	0.22	0.823	-0.9878048	1.24201
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	2.122439	0.745518	2.85	0.004	0.6612501	3.583627
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	1.908414	0.6986109	2.73	0.006	0.5391622	3.277667
PubServiceState	0.0700538	0.7881862	0.09	0.929	-1.474763	1.61487
PubServiceFederal	1.20624	0.775521	1.56	0.12	-0.3137534	2.726233
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.4488941	0.9231645	-0.49	0.627	-2.258263	1.360475
ActivePartyOfficer	1.244152	1.081559	1.15	0.25	-0.8756647	3.363969
ActiveSector	1.086904	0.7202849	1.51	0.131	-0.324828	2.498637
LevelEducation	0.0953607	0.2658196	0.36	0.72	-0.4256362	0.6163576
Gender	1.972828	0.6223303	3.17	0.002	0.7530834	3.192573
Age	-0.0062796	0.0336675	-0.19	0.852	-0.0722668	0.0597076
Constant	-6.376445	2.131744	-2.99	0.003	-10.55459	-2.198303

Marginal effects after logit  
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{DirBoardNum})$  (predict)  
 $= .0168827$

Variables	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	95% Confidence Interval		X
PrevElectFederalDeputy	-0.0018964	0.01299	-0.15	0.884	-0.027362	0.023569	0.155556
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.0334786	0.04785	0.7	0.484	-0.060313	0.127271	0.044444
PrevElectState_Deputy	0.0021487	0.0098	0.22	0.826	-0.017051	0.021348	0.355556
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	0.0805033	0.04871	1.65	0.098	-0.014966	0.175972	0.160494
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	0.0669123	0.04031	1.66	0.097	-0.012087	0.145912	0.153086
PubServiceState	0.0011779	0.01345	0.09	0.93	-0.025186	0.027542	0.311111
PubServiceFederal	0.0306672	0.02869	1.07	0.285	-0.025569	0.086903	0.175309
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.0066254	0.01218	-0.54	0.586	-0.030488	0.017237	0.212346
ActivePartyOfficer	0.0152882	0.0102	1.5	0.134	-0.004704	0.03528	0.797531
ActiveSector	0.0273436	0.02618	1.04	0.296	-0.023964	0.078651	0.140741
LevelEducation	0.0015828	0.00443	0.36	0.721	-0.007097	0.010263	2.1284
Gender	0.0642391	0.03154	2.04	0.042	0.002418	0.12606	0.209877
Age	-0.0001042	0.00056	-0.19	0.852	-0.0012	0.000992	47.6617

Note: dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

### Model 8 - with party dummies

<b>Logit model</b>	
Dependent variable	Directive Board
Independent variables	PrevElectFederalSenator PrevElectFederalDeputy PrevElectFederalBoth PrevElectState_Deputy PrevElectState_Governor PrevElectState_Both PrevElectMunic_Mayor PrevElectMunic_Councillor PrevElectMunic_Both PubServiceState PubServiceFederal PubServiceMunicipal ActivePartyOfficer ActiveSector LevelEducation Gender Age PolPartyPAN PolPartyPRD PolPartyPRI

Note: PrevElectFederalSenator = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PrevElectFederalSenator dropped and 16 obs not used

Note: PrevElectState\_Governor = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PrevElectState\_Governor dropped and 3 obs not used

Note: PrevElectState\_Both = 0 predicts success perfectly; PrevElectState\_Both dropped and 1 obs not used

Note: PrevElectMunic\_Both = 0 predicts failure perfectly; PreElectMunic\_Both dropped and 8 obs not used

Note: PolPartyPRD dropped because of collinearity

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -67.380478

Iteration 1: log likelihood = -59.794286

Iteration 2: log likelihood = -53.45929

Iteration 3: log likelihood = -53.009618

Iteration 4: log likelihood = -52.996938

Iteration 5: log likelihood = -52.996915

Logistic regression Number of obs = 405

LR chi2(15) = 28.77

Prob > chi2 = 0.0172



Log likelihood = -52.996915

Pseudo R2 = 0.2135

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err	z	P> z	95% Conf. Interval	
PrevElectFederalDeputy	-0.1511608	0.8521753	-0.18	0.859	-1.821394	1.519072
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.9873208	1.063763	0.93	0.353	-1.097617	3.072259
PrevElectState_Deputy	0.1807008	0.570398	0.32	0.751	-0.9372587	1.29866
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	2.105255	0.7675367	2.74	0.006	0.6009105	3.609599
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	1.898099	0.7085963	2.68	0.007	0.5092762	3.286923
PubServiceState	-0.0217243	0.7940685	-0.03	0.978	-1.57807	1.534621
PubServiceFederal	1.163994	0.7828004	1.49	0.137	-0.3702666	2.698255
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.5726992	0.9397339	-0.61	0.542	-2.414544	1.269145
ActivePartyOfficer	1.222435	1.093807	1.12	0.264	-0.9213877	3.366257
ActiveSector	1.20037	0.7382525	1.63	0.104	-0.246578	2.647319
LevelEducation	0.2088056	0.2900518	0.72	0.472	-0.3596856	0.7772967
Gender	2.097165	0.6427912	3.26	0.001	0.837317	3.357012
Age	-0.0078927	0.0335975	-0.23	0.814	-0.0737427	0.0579572
PolPartyPAN	0.7879873	0.8538712	0.92	0.356	-0.8855695	2.461544
PolPartyPRI	1.019591	0.8991513	1.13	0.257	-0.7427128	2.781896
Constant	-7.215987	2.370619	-3.04	0.002	-11.86231	-2.569659

Marginal effects after logit  
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{DirBoardNum})$  (predict)  
 $= .01519792$

Variables	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	95% Confidence Interval		X
PrevElectFederalDeputy	-0.0021528	0.01163	-0.19	0.853	-0.024939	0.020633	0.155556
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.0235764	0.03807	0.62	0.536	-0.051041	0.098194	0.044444
PrevElectState_Deputy	0.0027773	0.009	0.31	0.758	-0.014855	0.020409	0.355556
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	0.0719874	0.04591	1.57	0.117	-0.018	0.161974	0.160494
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	0.0600985	0.03787	1.59	0.112	-0.014119	0.134316	0.153086
PubServiceState	-0.0003239	0.01179	-0.03	0.978	-0.023422	0.022774	0.311111
PubServiceFederal	0.0263135	0.02573	1.02	0.306	-0.024116	0.076743	0.175309
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.0073958	0.01057	-0.7	0.484	-0.028121	0.013329	0.212346
ActivePartyOfficer	0.0135954	0.00951	1.43	0.153	-0.005035	0.032226	0.797531
ActiveSector	0.028627	0.02638	1.09	0.278	-0.023084	0.080338	0.140741
LevelEducation	0.0031252	0.00433	0.72	0.47	-0.005352	0.011602	2.1284
Gender	0.0650245	0.03122	2.08	0.037	0.003828	0.126221	0.209877
Age	-0.0001181	0.0005	-0.23	0.815	-0.001106	0.00087	47.6617
PolPartyPAN	0.0121526	0.01343	0.91	0.365	-0.014166	0.038471	0.491358
PolPartyPRI	0.0210287	0.02413	0.87	0.384	-0.02627	0.068327	0.212346

Note: dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

**DV = Seat Type PR**

**Model 9 - without party dummies**

<b>Logit model</b>	
Dependent variable	Type of Seat: PR
Independent variables	PrevElectFederalSenator PrevElectFederalDeputy PrevElectFederalBoth PrevElectState_Deputy PrevElectState_Governor PrevElectState_Both PrevElectMunic_Mayor PrevElectMunic_Councillor PrevElectMunic_Both PubServiceState PubServiceFederal PubServiceMunicipal ActivePartyOfficer ActiveSector LevelEducation Gender Age

Note: PrevElectState\_Both = 0 predicts success perfectly; PrevElectState\_Both dropped and 1 obs not used

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -277.28855

Iteration 1: log likelihood = -228.16261

Iteration 2: log likelihood = -226.37106

Iteration 3: log likelihood = -226.34098

Iteration 4: log likelihood = -226.34097

Logistic regression

Number of obs = 436

LR chi2(16) = 101.90

Prob > chi2 = 0.0000

Log likelihood = -226.34097

Pseudo R2 = 0.1837

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err	z	P> z	95% Conf. Interval	
PrevElectFederalSenator	1.953201	0.6514444	3.0	0.003	0.676393	3.230008
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.9500394	0.3186807	2.98	0.003	0.3254366	1.574642
PrevElectFederalBoth	2.437116	0.6514315	3.74	0	1.160333	3.713898
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.4919788	0.2558596	-1.92	0.054	-0.9934544	0.0094969
PrevElectState_Governor	1.04948	1.675505	0.63	0.531	-2.23445	4.333409
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-1.278246	0.3976122	-3.21	0.001	-2.057552	-0.4989408
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.9181906	0.364206	-2.52	0.012	-1.632021	-0.20436
PrevElectMunic_Both	-0.9745762	1.128899	-0.86	0.388	-3.187177	1.238025
PubServiceState	-0.6527297	0.2964637	-2.2	0.028	-1.233788	-0.0716715
PubServiceFederal	0.6746104	0.3258225	2.07	0.038	0.0360101	1.313211
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.8765854	0.3644784	-2.41	0.016	-1.59095	-0.1622209
ActivePartyOfficer	0.2269874	0.3093911	0.73	0.463	-0.379408	0.8333828
ActiveSector	-0.0453484	0.3465667	-0.13	0.896	-0.7246067	0.6339099
LevelEducation	0.0185055	0.1294311	0.14	0.886	-0.2351748	0.2721858
Gender	0.7729076	0.2770541	2.79	0.005	0.2298915	1.315924
Age	-0.005572	0.014091	-0.4	0.693	-0.0331898	0.0220459
Constant	-0.4973016	0.8289916	-0.6	0.549	-2.122095	1.127492

Marginal effects after logit  
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{TypeSeatPR})$  (predict)  
 $= .29749139$

Variables	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	95% Confidence Interval		X
PrevElectFederalSenator	0.4526787	0.12702	3.56	0	0.203723	0.701635	0.036697
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.2184064	0.07659	2.85	0.004	0.068298	0.368514	0.151376
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.5377882	0.10085	5.33	0	0.340128	0.735448	0.045872
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.0996254	0.04979	-2.0	0.045	-0.197221	-0.00203	0.357798
PrevElectState_Governor	0.2495393	0.41518	0.6	0.548	-0.564202	1.06328	0.009174
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.2169236	0.05115	-4.24	0	-0.317181	-0.116666	0.169725
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.1644812	0.05404	-3.04	0.002	-0.27039	-0.058572	0.149083
PrevElectMunic_Both	-0.1613235	0.13746	-1.17	0.241	-0.430735	0.108088	0.018349
PubServiceState	-0.1287861	0.05466	-2.36	0.018	-0.23591	-0.021662	0.307339
PubServiceFederal	0.1512085	0.07702	1.96	0.05	0.000258	0.302159	0.183486
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.1619378	0.05751	-2.82	0.005	-0.274659	-0.049217	0.201835
ActivePartyOfficer	0.0460693	0.06086	0.76	0.449	-0.073223	0.165362	0.802752
ActiveSector	-0.0094134	0.07145	-0.13	0.895	-0.149447	0.13062	0.135321
LevelEducation	0.0038675	0.02705	0.14	0.886	-0.049143	0.056878	2.13532
Gender	0.1737544	0.06516	2.67	0.008	0.046047	0.301462	0.201835
Age	-0.0011645	0.00294	-0.4	0.692	-0.006935	0.004606	48.2729

Note: dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1

### Model 10 - with party dummies

<b>Logit model</b>	
Dependent variable	Directive Board
Independent variables	PrevElectFederalSenator PrevElectFederalDeputy PrevElectFederalBoth PrevElectState_Deputy PrevElectState_Governor PrevElectState_Both PrevElectMunic_Mayor PrevElectMunic_Councillor PrevElectMunic_Both PubServiceState PubServiceFederal PubServiceMunicipal ActivePartyOfficer ActiveSector LevelEducation Gender Age PolPartyPAN PolPartyPRD PolPartyPRI

Note: PrevElectState\_Both = 0 predicts success perfectly; PrevElectState\_Both dropped and 1 obs not used

Note: PolPartyPRD dropped because of collinearity

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -277.28855

Iteration 1: log likelihood = -227.4551

Iteration 2: log likelihood = -225.60582

Iteration 3: log likelihood = -225.57301

Iteration 4: log likelihood = -225.57299

Logistic regression Number of obs = 436

LR chi2(18) = 103.43

Prob > chi2 = 0.0000

Log likelihood = -225.57299

Pseudo R2 = 0.1865

Variables	Coef.	Std. Err	z	P> z	95% Conf. Interval	
PrevElectFederalSenator	1.960082	0.6582242	2.98	0.003	0.6699867	3.250178
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.976767	0.3252156	3.0	0.003	0.3393562	1.614178
PrevElectFederalBoth	2.409661	0.6516239	3.7	0	1.132502	3.68682
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.4802382	0.2570286	-1.87	0.062	-0.9840051	0.0235286
PrevElectState_Governor	1.1547	1.745461	0.66	0.508	-2.26634	4.57574
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-1.274811	0.4017887	-3.17	0.002	-2.062303	-0.48732
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.9726669	0.3677152	-2.65	0.008	-1.693376	-0.2519583
PrevElectMunic_Both	-1.056441	1.142254	-0.92	0.355	-3.295218	1.182335
PubServiceState	-0.6446734	0.2983912	-2.16	0.031	-1.229509	-0.0598374
PubServiceFederal	0.63861	0.3287084	1.94	0.052	-0.0056466	1.282867
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.9512714	0.3712772	-2.56	0.01	-1.678961	-0.2235814
ActivePartyOfficer	0.2323145	0.3125023	0.74	0.457	-0.3801787	0.8448077
ActiveSector	-0.0086563	0.3480927	-0.02	0.98	-0.6909054	0.6735928
LevelEducation	0.0565503	0.1337755	0.42	0.672	-0.2056448	0.3187454
Gender	0.7603831	0.2782139	2.73	0.006	0.2150939	1.305672
Age	-0.0037456	0.0142652	-0.26	0.793	-0.0317049	0.0242137
PolPartPAN	0.3520688	0.2924475	1.2	0.229	-0.2211177	0.9252553
PolPartPRI	0.1248307	0.3484475	0.36	0.72	-0.5581139	0.8077754
Constant	-0.8532989	0.8798345	-0.97	0.332	-2.577743	0.871145

Marginal effects after logit  
 $y = \text{Pr}(\text{TypeSeatPR})$  (predict)  
 $= .29675774$

Variables	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P> z	95% Confidence Interval		X
PrevElectFederalSenator	0.4540477	0.12817	3.54	0	0.202831	0.705264	0.036697
PrevElectFederalDeputy	0.2246777	0.07812	2.88	0.004	0.071557	0.377798	0.151376
PrevElectFederalBoth	0.5336682	0.10261	5.2	0	0.332548	0.734788	0.045872
PrevElectState_Deputy	-0.0971812	0.05002	-1.94	0.052	-0.195225	0.000863	0.357798
PrevElectState_Governor	0.2753184	0.42756	0.64	0.52	-0.562689	1.11333	0.009174
PrevElectMunic_Mayor	-0.2160726	0.05165	-4.18	0	-0.317308	-0.114837	0.169725
PrevElectMunic_Councillor	-0.1721652	0.05321	-3.24	0.001	-0.276458	-0.067873	0.149083
PrevElectMunic_Both	-0.1706927	0.13107	-1.3	0.193	-0.427577	0.086192	0.018349
PubServiceState	-0.1270956	0.05507	-2.31	0.021	-0.235022	-0.019169	0.307339
PubServiceFederal	0.1425818	0.07736	1.84	0.065	-0.009033	0.294197	0.183486
PubServiceMunicipal	-0.1733996	0.05689	-3.05	0.002	-0.284906	-0.061893	0.201835
ActivePartyOfficer	0.0470449	0.06128	0.77	0.443	-0.073055	0.167145	0.802752
ActiveSector	-0.0018042	0.07246	-0.02	0.98	-0.143819	0.14021	0.135321
LevelEducation	0.0118016	0.0279	0.42	0.672	-0.042889	0.066493	2.13532
Gender	0.1706211	0.06538	2.61	0.009	0.042477	0.298765	0.201835
Age	-0.0007817	0.00298	-0.26	0.793	-0.006616	0.005052	48.2729
PolPartPAN	0.0736647	0.06122	1.2	0.229	-0.046316	0.193645	0.472477
PolPartPRI	0.0263857	0.07457	0.35	0.723	-0.119775	0.172546	0.240826

Note: dy/dx is for discrete change of dummy variable from 0 to 1