Who governed? Local Government in Mexico during the 1960s

For 71 years, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) not only dominated Mexico's presidential and congressional votes but also won the vast majority of local elections.[1] Revolutionaries had fought for the right to choose local representatives and the principle of municipal governance was enshrined in the 1917 constitution.[2] As a result, opponents of Mexico's one party system focused their critiques on municipal presidents. By the 1960s, opposition politicians asserted that the PRI imposed "rogues and violent men" and claimed only eight of the country's municipalities had experienced free votes.[3] Left-leaning commentators often concurred, arguing that local officials constituted a "mafia".[4] Even discontented PRI functionaries declared that "municipal representatives…. were selected directly from the federal capital" and were "obscure and ill-qualified for the job".[5] By the end of the decade, cartoonist Rius's Don Perpetuo the corpulent, drunken mayor of San Garabato had become a symbol of the PRI regime. Fantastically wealthy, inveterately

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[1] **Each of Mexico's around 2350 municipalities held elections every 2 to 3 years depending on local legislation. As a result, between 1946 and 1980 there were around 30,000 municipal elections. Between 1946 and 1980, the main opposition party, the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) won 52 only municipalities. Francisco Reveles Vásquez, *Partido Acción Nacional - los signos de la institucionalización* (Mexico City: Ediciones Guernika, 2002), pp. 493-505. [actually 68!!]**

[2] Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) (2 volumes), II, p. 32. For a history of the legislation connected to the "municipio libre", see Sergio Francisco de la Garza, *El municipio: historia, naturaleza y gobierno* (Mexico City: Jus, 1947).

[3] "Interview with Manuel Gomez Morin" in James W Wilkie and Edna Monzón de Wilkie, *Mexico Visto en el Siglo XX: Entrevistas de historia oral* (Mexico City: Instituto Mexicano de Investigaciones Economicas, 1969**), pp. 190-208,** p. 200. For PAN emphasis on municipal politics, see Alonso Lujambo "Democratization through Federalism? The National Action Party Strategy, 1939-2000" in Kevin J. Middlebrook, (ed.), *Party Politics and the Struggle Democracy in Mexico: National and State-Level Analyses of the Partido Acción Nacional*, (San Diego: Center for US-Mexican Studies, 2001), pp. 95-128.

[4] Fernando Benitez, *Los Indios de Mexico* (Mexico City: SEP, 1998 edn), (5 volumes), vol. 5 p. 175.

[5] *Excelsior*, 19 Aug. 1968; Braulio Maldonaldo, *Baja California Comentarios Politicos* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1993 edn), p. 141; Manuel Moreno Sanchez, *Crisis política de México* (Mexico City: Editorial Extemporaneos, 1971), pp. 4-5.

corrupt, and imposed from above without any popular support, there was, as one columnist remarked, "a Don Perpetuo in every village".[6] This article uses the declassified documents of Mexico's Ministry of the Interior to examine whether this was the case. Were Mexico's municipal presidents the unpopular, plutocrat "Don Perpetuos" of anti-PRI lore? Or, were they more representative, popular figures, agreed upon, if not democratically elected, by a fairly broad group of municipal voters? Did the government, as President Ruíz Cortines (1952-1958) asserted monopolize the appointment of high tier positions but leave the choice of town councils "to the people".[7]

Social scientists of late 1960s onwards certainly thought not. Popular opprobrium fed academic critiques, and observers argued that local governments formed the foundations of the PRI's narrow, elitist and increasingly sclerotic pyramid of power; the lowest rungs of the exclusive patron-client system. Political scientists and sociologists, peering down from the apex of the regime, asserted that political elites directly appointed municipal presidents. They were "handpicked by higher ups within the PRI government apparatus" and "constituted at the pleasure of the state authorities".[8] If governors and deputies sometimes abrogated this role, they

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[6] Rius, *Supermachos*; *Siempre*, 24 Sept, 1969. Don Perpetuo's full name was Don Perpetuo del Rosal, after the head of the PRI, Alfonso Corona del Rosal. Mockery of municipal presidents is still common. Rius's Supermachos was made into the 1974 film, *Calzónzin Inspector*. In May 2013, activists put up a donkey for election in Ciudad Juárez, a chicken in Tlaxcala and a cat in Xalapa. Dubbed the "candigato", the cat ran under the tag "Como todo buen gato, cuando la cago, la tapo". http://www.dallasnews.com/news/nationworld/mexico/20130705-security-still-an-issue-as-mexicans-in-14-states-prepare-to-vote.ece. (Consulted 1 September 2013)

[7] Quoted in Rogelio Hernández Rodriguez, *El centro dividido, La nueva autonomia de los gobernadores,* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2008), p. 43.

[8] Richard Fagen and William S Tuohy, "Aspects of the Mexican Political System", *Studies in Comparative International Development*, vol. VII, no. 3 (1972), pp. 208-220, p. 209; Wayne Cornelius, *Mexican Politics*

entrusted political imposition to regional strongmen or *caciques*, who "controlled the municipalities as instruments to impose their own economic and political power".[9] In Hidalgo, Juventino Nochebuena appointed municipal presidents throughout the Huasteca; while in Jalisco, Miguel Moreno Padilla controlled appointments in Los Altos.[10]

Down in the villages, anthropologists concurred, arguing that anti-democratic impositions encouraged the growth and maintenance of local oligarchies. Linked by marriage, godparentage, and often a shared landowner heritage, these village elites dominated municipal presidencies and used their connections to extend their lands, monopolize commerce, direct funds to favored schemes, and murder opponents with impunity. In Arandas the scions of the Porfirian landowners cornered

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in Transition: The Breakdown of a One-party-dominant Regime (San Diego: Center for US-Mexican Studies, 1996), p. 30; See also Richard Fagen and William S Tuohy, *Politics and Privilege in a Mexican City* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 21, 43-51; Pablo González Casanova, *Democracy in Mexico*, (translated by Danielle Salti), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 28ff; John F. Purcell and Susan Kaufman Purcell, "Machine Politics and Socio-economic change in Mexico" in James Wallace Wilkie, Michael C. Meyer, Edna Monzón de Wilkie (eds.), *Contemporary Mexico: Papers of the IV International Congress of Mexican History*, pp. 348-367, p. 352; Mauricio Moreno Huerta, *En Busca de la democracia municipal: La participación ciudadana en el gobierno local mexicano* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1994); Enrique Cabrero Mendoza, Rodolfo García Del Castillo, Martha Gutiérrez Mendoza (eds.), *La nueva gestión municipal en México: análisis de experiencias innovadoras en gobiernos locales* (Mexico City: CIDE, 1995).

[9] Jorge Alonso, "Micropolítica Electoral" in Pablo Gonzalez Casanova (coord), *Las elecciones en Mexico, Evolución y Perspectivas* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1985), pp. 349-74, p. 350; Adriana López, "La lucha popular en los municipios," *Cuadernos Politicos*, 20, 1979, 40-51, p. 50; Bertha Lerner Sigal, "Partido Revolucionario Institucional" in Antonio Delhumeau, (ed.), *México, realidad de sus partidos poltiicos*. (Mexico City: Instituto Mexicano de Estudios Políticos, 1970) p. 87; Evelyn Stevens, "Mexico's PRI" in James Malloy, (ed.), *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America* (London: Pittsburg Press, 1970), 227-258, p. 238; Elizabeth Hentschel Ariza, Juan Pérez Quijada, *Estructura en el Cambio: Estudio Procesual de la Vida Politica en Ocuituco,* Unpubl. Thesis, Universidad Iberoamericano, 1986; Stavenhagen Rodolfo, "Un modelo para el estudio de las organizaciones políticas en México", *Revista Mexicana de Sociologia*, Vol. XXIX, No. 2, (1967), pp. 329-336; Javier Hurtado, *Familias, politica y parentesco,Jalisco 1919-1991* (Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993).

[10] Frans J Schryer, *Ethnicity and Class Conflict in Rural Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 130; Tomas Martinez Saldana and Leticia Gandara Mendoza, *Política y sociedad en México: el caso de los Altos de Jalisco* (Mexico City: INAH, 1976), p. 256. See also Paul Friedrich, *The Princes of Naranja: An Essay in Anthropological Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 118.

municipal control for thirty years.[11] In Tetela Felipe Urrutia's thin coterie of local merchants and landowners did the same.[12] In fact, local power and economic achievement were so closely aligned that by the late 1960s, many municipal presidents were accused of paying thousands of pesos for their position.[13] Whoever had "more money" and "greater connections independent of their social base" won.[14] Furthermore, local voters had little opportunity or enthusiasm for resistance. State leaders were unresponsive and organized social movements were harshly repressed.[15] In fact, the rules of the game were so heavily stacked against popular input, many poorer groups simply "absented themselves from politics" or "decided to retire".[16] Pablo Gonzalez Casanova estimated that most of the population was politically marginal.[17] Municipal elections were "rituals", which one observer compared to the mass baptisms of the colonial period.[18]

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[11] Martínez Saldaña and Gándara Mendoza, *Política y sociedad*, pp. 69-71.
[12] Patricia Arias Lucia Bazan, *Demandas y Conflicto: El Poder Político en un pueblo de Morelos* (Mexico City: CIS-INAH, 1979); See also R. Bartra et al, *Caciquismo y poder político en el México Rural* (Mexico City: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones sociales, 1975); Elena Azaola Garrido and Esteban Krotz, *Los campesinos de la tierra de Zapata III: Política y conflicto* (Mexico City: SEP, INAH, 1976); Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Evolución de una sociedad rural* (Mexico City: SEP, 1982); Guillermo de la Peña, *Herederos de promesas: agricultura, política y ritual en los Altos de Morelos* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones Superiores del INAH, 1980), p. 312; Gutierre Tibon, *Pinotepa nacional: mixtecos, negros y triques* (Mexico City: Editorial Posada, 1981), p. 125.
[13] Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth, Culture and Ideology in Mexican National Space* (Berkeley: University of California, 1992), p. 80.
[14] Azaola, and Krotz, *Los Campesinos*, p. 142.
[15] Armando Bartra, *Los herederos de Zapata: movimientos campesinos posrevolucionarios en México, 1920-1980* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1985); Blanca Rubio, *Resistencia Campesina y Explotación Rural en México* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1987).
[16] Alonso "Micropolítica", p. 350.
[17] González Casanova, *Democracy in Mexico*, p. 123.
[18] Azaola, *Los Campesinos*, p. 145; José Luis Reyna, "Desde dentro y desde afuera del PRI. El PRI visto por los mexicanos", *Nexos*, (17 May 1979), pp. 48-51, p. 48; Jorge Alonso, *El Rito Electoral en Jalisco (1940-1992)* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1993); Varela claimed that in Morelos "no one voted". Roberto Varela, *Procesos políticos en Tlayacapan, Morelos* (Mexico City: UAM Iztapalapa, 1984), p. 73.

These appreciations of local authoritarianism clearly have some validity. Many scholars still employ them today. Although historians of Cold War Mexico have dismissed claims of popular passivity, they maintain that by the late 1950s the state was "authoritarian, patriarchal, politically and administratively centralized and corporatist".[19] In the provinces, unrepresentative state-backed oligarchies controlled local politics and pushed peasants towards increasingly radical forms of mobilization. In Guerrero, local impositions forced the cross-class members of the Associación Civíca Guerrense to shift tactics from sit-ins and strikes to guerilla war.[20] The 1961 Gasca rebellion targeted unpopular local officials.[21] At the same time, scholars of Mexican democratization have built their contemporary narratives

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[19] Fernando Herrera Calderon and Adela Cedillo, "Introduction: The Unknown Mexican Dirty War", Fernando Herrera Calderon and Adela Cedillo, (eds.), *Challenging authoritarianism in Mexico: Revolutionary Struggles and the Dirty War, 1964-1982* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 1-19, p. 2. Other recent examples include Jaime M Pensado, *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); Tanalis Padilla, *Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata: The Jaramillista Movement and the Myth of the Pax Priísta, 1940-1962* (Duke: Duke University Press, 2008); Celeste González de Bustamante, *Muy Buenas Noches: Mexico, Television, and the Cold War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012); Aaron W. Navarro, *Political intelligence and the creation of Modern Mexico, 1938-1954* (University Park: Pennsylvania University press, 2010); Armando Bartra, *Guerrero bronco: campesinos, ciudadanos y guerrilleros en la Costa Grande* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 2000); Donald C. Hodges and Ross Gandy, *Mexico under Siege: Popular Resistance to Presidential Despotism* (London: Zed Books, 2002); Verónica Oikión Solano and Marta Eugenia García Ugarte, *Movimientos armados en México, siglo XX* (Morelia: Colegio de Michoacán, CIESAS, 2008); Salvador Román Román, *Revuelta Civica en Guerrero 1957–1960* (Mexico City: INERHM, 2003); Laura Castellano, *México Armado, 1943–1981* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 2007); Eric Zolov, "¡Cuba sí, Yanquis no! The Sacking of the Instituto Cultural Mexico-Norteamericano in Morelia, Michoacán, 1961," in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser (eds.), *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 181–210; O'Neill Blacker, "Cold War in the Countryside: Conflict in Guerrero, Mexico," *The Americas* 66, no. 2 (2009), 214–52; Robert Alegre, "Las Rieleras: Gender, Politics, and Power in the Mexican Railway Movement, 1958–1959," *Journal of Women's History* 23, no. 2 (2011), pp. 162–86.

[20] Alexander Avina, "Seizing Gold of Memories in Moments of Danger: Guerillas and Revolution in Guerrero, Mexico" in Fernando Herrera Calderon and Adela Cedillo, (eds.), *Challenging authoritarianism in Mexico: Revolutionary Struggles and the Dirty War, 1964-1982* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 40-59, p. 43. Also see Elizabeth Henson, "Madera 1965, Primeros Vientos", in Fernando Herrera Calderon and Adela Cedillo, *Challenging authoritarianism in Mexico: Revolutionary Struggles and the Dirty War, 1964-1982* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 20-39.

[21] Elisia Servin "Hacia el levantamiento armado. Del henriquismo a los Federaciónistas Leales en los años cincuenta" in Veronica Oikon Solano and Marta Eugenia García Ugarte, (eds.), *Movimientos armados en México, siglo XX* (Zamora: Colegio de Michoacán, CIESAS, 2008), I, pp. 307-332.

of stuttering emancipation on claims of past authoritarianism. Many now argue that increasing local demands for both decentralization and democracy generated the gradual opening up of the Mexican political system.[22] Dolores Trevizo claims that student-led rural mobilizations against oligarchic rule rather than top-down institutional changes "helped give birth to Mexico's democracy". [23]

Despite these affirmations, over the past decade historians, sociologists, and political scientists have started to reassess the complex contours of political relations under the *revolución hecha gobierno*. Scholars have started pick apart the consciously managed façade of presidentialism, unity, and party discipline, disaggregate the PRI regime, and discover considerable spaces for conflict, autonomy and a rough-and-ready form of democracy. In the states, presidents rarely imposed candidates as governors. Instead they appointed leaders in conjunction with local dignitaries, to which they ceded ample power in return for the "regulation of social conflict".[24] Outside the state capitals, underfunded governors were often forced to do the same. Juchitán cacique, Heliodoro Charis, allied with Zapotec intellectuals to carve out a distinct domain of sovereignty with only a patina of PRI rule. Here, regional leaders together with popular forces

[22] Todd A. Eisenstadt, *Courting Democracy in Mexico: Party Strategies and Electoral Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Andrew D. Selee, *Decentralization, democratization, and informal power in Mexico* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); Victor Alejandro Espinoza Valle, *Las rutas de la democracia: elecciones locales en México* (Mexico City: Ediciones y Gráficos Eón, 2007); Victoria Elizabeth Rodríguez, *Decentralization In Mexico: From Reforma Municipal To Solidaridad To Nuevo Federalismo*, (London: Westview, 1997); Arturo Flores, *Local Democracy in Modern Mexico: A Study in Participatory Methods* (Bury St Edmunds: Arena Books, 2005).
[23] Dolores Trevizo, *Rural Protest and the Making of Democracy in Mexico, 1968-2000* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 2011), p. 1.
[24] Rogelio Hernández Rodríguez, *El centro dividido: la nueva autonomía de los gobernadores* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 2008), p. 40.

decided on local officials, often in the face of state pressure.[25] Even in the heart of the regime, amongst the Grupo Atlacomulco or the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (CNOP), factions and competition abounded.[26] As a result, there was little prospect for direct, linear rule. Acknowledged vertical hierarchies continually intersected with informal horizontal relations. Attempted imposition often necessitated considerable negotiation.

As other scholars are discovering, these political negotiations often involved popular groups. Softer caciques, community leaders, or what María Teresa Fernandez Aceves terms "advocates", carved out spaces within the government system to bring their constituencies limited but important rewards such as roads, hospitals, and protection.[27] Even Sinaloa narcos built schools.[28] At the same time, social movements against tax increases, the loss of local resources, commercial exploitation, transport costs, and unpopular local leadership were common.[29] At

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[25] Jeffrey Rubin, *Decentering the Regime: Ethnicity, Radicalism and Democracy in Juchitán, México* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 45-64; Benjamin Smith, "Inventing Tradition at Gunpoint: Culture, Caciquismo and State Formation in the Región Mixe, Oaxaca (1930–1959)', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 27, no. 2 (2008), pp. 215-234.

[26] Tiziana Bertaccini, *El regimen priista frente a las clases medias, 1943-1964* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional Para la Cultura y las Artes, 2009); Rogelio Hernandez Rodriguez, *Amistades, Compromisos y Lealtades: Lideres y grupos politicos en el Estado de Mexico, 1942-1993* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1998).

[27] María Teresa Fernandez Aceves, "Advocate, or Cacica? Guadalupe Urzúa Flores, Modernizer and Peasant Political Leader in Jalisco" in Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith, (eds.), *Dictablanda: Politics, Work and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

[28] Alan Knight, "Narco-Violence and the State in modern Mexico" in Wil G. Panster, (ed.), *Violence, Coercion, and State-Making in Twentieth-Century Mexico: The Other Half of the Centaur* (Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 2012), pp. 115-35, p. 131; Craig Pyes, "The War of the Flowers", *Oui*, 10 (Oct. 1977), pp. 94-98, p. 97.

[29] For a general introduction see Alan Knight, "Historical Continuities in Social Movements," in Joe Foweraker and Ann L. Craig (eds.), *Popular Movements and Political Change in Mexico*, (Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 1990), 78-102; For tax movements, see Benjamin T. Smith, "Building a State on the Cheap: Taxation, Social Movements, and Politics" in Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith (eds.), *Dictablanda: Politics, Work and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014);

times, protestors were met by force.[30] But, on other occasions, this strategy - what Paul Gillingham dubs "bargaining by riot" - worked. Popular dissent forced officials to accept their demands.[31] And caciques, who were unable to demonstrate the appropriate blend of coercion and flexibility, seldom lasted long. Even elections, so long viewed as the centerpiece of the authoritarian system, were subject to some popular input. During the 1940s and 1950s, at the municipal level, opposition candidates could win, although they often did so as members of part-PRI

For agrarian movements, see Olga Pellicer de Brody & José Luis Reyna, *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana, 1952-1960: El afianzamiento de la estabilidad política* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1978), 123-40; Angel Bassols Batalla, *El noreste de Mexico: un estudio geografico-económico* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1972), pp. 548-51; Salomon Eckstein Raber, *El ejido colectivo en México* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966), pp. 165-8; Steven E. Sanderson, *Agrarian populism and the Mexican state: the struggle for land in Sonora*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 157. For transport movements, see Rogelio Hernandez Rodriguez*, La formacion del politico mexicano: El caso de Carlos A. Madrazo* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1991), pp. 87-8. For anti-governor and anti-cacique movements, see Wil Pansters, *Política y poder en México: formación y ocaso del cacicazgo avilacamachista en Puebla, 1937-1987* (Puebla: Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 1992); Wil Pansters, "Citizens with Dignity: Opposition and Government in San Luis Potosi, 1938–93" in Rob Aitken, *Dismantling the Mexican State* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 244-66; Manuel Saldivar Carrillo, *Memorias de un agrarista Zacatecanos* (Mexico: Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Zacatecas, 2003); Benjamin T. Smith, *Pistoleros and Popular Movements, The Politics of State Formation in Postrevolutionary Oaxaca* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), pp. 289-328, 362-401; Rogelio Hernández Rodríguez, "Strongmen and Weak States" in Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith, (ed.), *Dictablanda: Politics, Work and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

[30] There are many examples of the state's violent repression of popular movements. The most famous is 1968 student massacre. However, in the countryside, repression was relatively constant throughout the period from 1940 to 1968. See Padilla, *Rural Resistance*; Hensen, "Primeros Vientos"; Aviña, "Seizing Gold"; Antonio Santoyo, *La Mano Negra: poder regional y estado en México (Veracruz, 1928-43)* (México, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1995); Wil G. Pansters, "Zones of State Making: Violence, Coercion and Hegemony in Twentieth Century Mexico" in Wil G. Pansters, (ed.), *Violence, Coercion, and State-Making in Twentieth-Century Mexico: The Other Half of the Centaur* (Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 2012); Paul Gillingham, "Who Killed Crispin Aguilar, Violence and order in the Postrevolutionary Countryside" in Wil G. Pansters, (ed.), *Violence, Coercion, and State-Making in Twentieth-Century Mexico: The Other Half of the Centaur* (Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 2012); Alan Knight, "Political Violence in Post-revolutionary Mexico" in Kess Koonings and Dirk Kruijt, (eds.), *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil of War, Violence and Terror in Latin America* (New York: Zed Books, 1997), pp. 105-24; Thomas Rath, *Myths of Demilitarization in Postrevolutionary Mexico, 1920-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Alan Knight, "Habitus and Homicide: Political Culture in Revolutionary Mexico," in Wil G. Pansters, (ed.), *Citizens of the Pyramid, Essays on Mexican Political Culture*, (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1997), 107-129; Alan Knight, "México bronco, México manso: Una reflexión sobre la cultura cívica mexicana", *Politica y Gobierno*, 3 no 1 (1996) 12-15.

[31] Paul Gillingham, "Maximino's Bulls: Popular Protest after the Mexican Revolution", *Past and Present* 206 (Feb. 2010), 145-181.

coalitions.[32] At the same time, a combination of top-down concern for stability and bottom up politicking could generate the nomination of popular PRI candidates. Even Gonzalo Santos, the strongman of San Luis Potosí, had to cede council positions to anti-cacique nominees some of the time.[33]

Although municipal presidents lie at the center of the emerging debate over the relative authoritarianism of the PRI regime, we still know relatively little about them. Contemporary anthropologists proffered fascinating pen portraits, but proposed little overview or comparison and, often paid "insufficient attention to the extreme complexities of politics above the municipal level".[34] Until recently, historians were even less well informed. State archives after 1960 remain out of bounds while the PRI archives are still closed. Elite accounts are rare. Those that do exist either avoid the messy infrapolitics of elections, or, as in the case of Gonzalo Santos, rather overstate the extent of autocratic rule.[35] Personal accounts of low-level PRI functionaries are even less common than those of their famously

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[32] Paul Gillingham, ""We don't have arms, but we do have balls": Fraud, Violence and Popular Agency in Elections" in Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith, (eds.), *Dictablanda: Politics, Work and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Paul Gillingham, "Mexican Elections, 1910-1994: Voters, Violence and Veto Power" in Roderic Ai Camp, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Mexican Politics,*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 53-76; Tiziana Bertaccini, "La organización política del municipio" in Sergio Miranda Pacheco, (ed.), Nacion y municpio en Mexico, siglos XIX y XX (Mexico City: UNAM, 2012), **pp. 204-45,** p. 242-3; Daniel Newcomer, *Reconciling Modernity. Urban State Formation in 1940s León, Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Benjamin T. Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism in Mexico: Catholicism, Society and Politics in the Mixteca Baja, 1750-1962* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), pp. 272-87.

[33] Wil Pansters, "Tropical Passion in the Desert: Gonzalo N. Santos and Local Elections in Northern San Luis Potosí, 1943-1958" in Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith, (eds.), *Dictablanda: Politics, Work and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

[34] Lomnitz, *Exits*, p. 80.

[35] Roderic Ai Camp, "Autobiography and Decision-Making in Mexico: A Review Essay" *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, vol. 19 (May 1977), pp. 275-83; Pansters, "Tropical Passion"; Maldonaldo, "Baja California", p. 141. There are a handful of exceptions such as Victor Manzanilla Schaffer, *Confessiones Polîticas: Sintesis de mis memorias* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1998) and Evaristo Bonifaz*, La politica: experiencias de un poliico bisoño* (Ensenada: n.p., 1982).

closemouthed superiors.[36] Such limited information compares particularly unfavorably with our extensive knowledge of Mexico's political elites. Here, we have considerable information on the "revolutionary family's" backgrounds, education, careers, alliances, and political trajectories.[37] But, Mexico's everyday political players still remain obscure.

This article attempts to resolve this issue by forming a composite picture of Mexico's municipal presidents during the 1960s. The piece is based on the declassified biographies of 337 successful and 102 unsuccessful PRI candidates for municipal presidencies compiled in the months leading up to elections in Veracruz (1961) and Hidalgo, Guanajuato, Mexico State, Nayarit, and Coahuila (all 1966).[38] Around the beginning of the decade, agents from both the Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales (DGIPS) and the Dirección Federal de Seguridad (DFS) teamed up with PRI officials to investigate party candidates for municipal office throughout the states. Often these officials gave agents the basic personal facts as well as more intimate details on nominees' economic positions, gleaned from consultations at

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[36] Exceptions include Porfirio Perez, *Memorias: un dirigente agrario de Soledad de Doblado* (Xalapa,: Universidad Veracruzana, 1992); Susana Glantz, *Manuel, una biograpfia politica* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones Superiores del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1979); Saldivar Carrillo, *Memorias.*

[37] For an introduction see Roderic Ai Camp, *The making of a government: political leaders in modern Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1984); Roderic Ai Camp, *Mexico's leaders, their education & recruitment* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980); Roderic Ai Camp, *Mexican political biographies, 1935-1993* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995); Peter H. Smith, *Labyrinths of power: political recruitment in twentieth-century Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

[38] The DGIPS and DFS biographies are included in the following boxes: Archivo General de la Nación, Dirección General de Investigaciones Polítcas y Sociales (AGN, DGIPS), (AGN, DGIPS), Caja 1275; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1278; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1280; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1281; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A. Henceforth all data comes from the dataset compiled from these documents.

head office.[39] Agents were then expected to fill in the blanks, interviewing locals to assess the candidates' political backing and popular support. The process was called *auscultación.* Although auscultación was a medical term referring to the process of diagnostic monitoring by sound, during the post-war period politicians used the word to describe these investigations, which formed part of the complex task of deciding on candidates' suitability for office.

Undoubtedly, the biographies have certain limitations. The six states encompass a fairly broad geographic and cultural reach, but I have no information for the numerous smaller municipalities of Oaxaca or Puebla, which accounted for over a third of the country's 2351 municipalities.[40] The very existence of the documents demonstrate a degree of state capacity far beyond the 1940s and 1950s, when only one agent covered most of the country's crises and the CIA described the DFS and DGIPS as "not well organized and only moderately effective".[41] But even in 1961, the DGIPS still only contained a director, a sub-director, 38 agents, four typists and a driver, of which seven were described as "incompetent".[42] And in 1965, the DFS only comprised 120 agents.[43] In comparison the FBI had 6000.[44] As a result, more

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[39] A handful of basic biographies included in some of the files are on PRI letterhead paper. AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1279.
[40] Roger Anderson, The Functional Role of Governors and their states in the political development of Mexico, 1940-1964, Unpubl. Ph.D, University of Wisconsin, 1971, p. 118
[41] Sergio Aguayo, *La charola: Una historia de los servicios de inteligencia en México* (Mexico City: Grijalvo, 2001), p. 72.
[42] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980B, exp. 2. Internal report on DGIPS.
[43] There is an emerging debate among scholars about the relative power of the security forces in PRI Mexico. Some scholars including Jacinto Rodríguez Munguía, Alexander Aviña, Louise Walker, Aaron Navarro, and Tanalís Padilla talk of a "security state" in which both the DFS and DGIPS played important roles in observing and, if necessary, repressing dissident groups. Others, including Sergio Aguayo, Pablo Piccato, Paul Gillingham and to a certain extent Gabriela Soto Laveaga play down the force and the competence of both organizations at least until the 1970s, when there was a radical increase in manpower.

remote rural municipalities were often out of reach.[45] Finally, comparison between the two agencies' reports indicate that the agents of the DFS were either chronically naïve or, more probably, deliberately downplayed the influence of governors, deputies and caciques to give the impression of candidates' popular backing. Despite these problems, the reports are no less reliable than the official documents, testimonies, or newspapers, which form the basis of most accounts of the period. In fact, given the premium the state put on managing elections, they were likely to be more trustworthy than most.

The article is split into two parts. In the first section, I undertake a prosopography of municipal presidents of the 1960s. Using data compiled from the biographies, I look at age, gender, religious beliefs, education, sector affiliation, job, and wealth. At the same time, I also look at the candidates' political experience and civil engagement. The second section concerns the choice of PRI candidates for municipal rule. Authoritarian selection processes continued throughout the 1960s. State governors got to pick candidates in state capitals and some (but not all) major cities. However, in less key regions, conflict over candidates and a degree of popular input was relatively common. Undoubtedly local oligarchies, often comprising livestock

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By 1982 there were 3000 agents and over 10,000 informants. Aguayo, *La Charola*, p. 124. See the articles in Louise Walker and Tanalís Padilla (eds.) "Spy Reports: Content, Methodology, and Historiography in Mexico's Secret Police Archive." Special dossier of *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research* 19, no. 1 (July 2013): 1-103; Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith, "Introduction: The Paradoxes of Revolution", Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith, *Dictablanda: Politics, Work and Culture in Mexico, 1938–1968* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Navarro, *Political Intelligence*; Jacinto Rodríguez Munguía, *La otra guerra secreta : los archivos prohibidos de la prensa y el poder* (Mexico City: Random House Mondadori, 2007).

[44] James A. Inciardi, *Criminal Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 175.

[45] This is especially the case for rural areas of Veracruz and Hidalgo. AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1278; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A. In 1965, agents struggled to cover fifty of Oaxaca's 570 municipalities. AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1981.

owners and merchants affiliated to the CNOP, thrived. Don Perpetuos ruled. However, in other areas, the PRI remained wary of appointing wealthy, unpopular caciques and often opted for more popular, representative candidates.

A Prosopography of Municipal Presidents

The average age of the sample of 337 municipal presidents was just over 44. Most of officials were aged between 30 and 60 (figure 1). The largest proportion (36%) were between 40 and 50, born in the decade after the Revolution, and educated in the socialist schools of the 1930s and early 1940s. There were a few exceptions. In Veracruz Felix Perez Castillo, the 64-year-old president of Paso del Mecho and Salvador Pinete, the 59-year old president of Altatonga, had fought in the Revolution or the early land reform struggles.[46] But, in general, the PRI tried to avoid appointing older men. Candidates over sixty were routinely described as being "too old for the job".[47] In contrast, the party was keen to appoint younger candidates. Although candidates in their twenties were rare, age appeared little barrier to appointment. Nearly a third of candidates were in their thirties. Maria Pineda Torres, was even chosen as the PRI candidate for San Juan Teotihuacan at the age of 23.[48] The focus on youth reflected a conscious attempt to recruit younger members at the municipal level.[49] Demographic change made the party highly conscious of the need to appeal to younger voters. At the same time, the party was also keen to cycle offices among generations of village elites as it did among more established

[46] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Paso del Macho; AGN, DGIPS, 1980A, Caja Altatonga.
[47] E.g. AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1284, Villa Ahumada; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1322, Puebla.
[48] AGN, DGIPS, 1275, Caja Tlachichilco; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1275, San Juan Teotihuacan.
[49] The effort started in the 1950s under President Ruíz Cortines. Alfonso Corona del Rosal, *Mis memorias políticas*, (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1995), p. 138.

political players.[50] During the later years of Don Porfirio's reign, local officials were repeatedly chosen from among the aging veterans of the civil wars. Municipal presidents were often in their seventies.[51] The PRI, by opening up these positions to younger candidates, did not make the same mistake.

The vast majority of municipal presidents were men. During the 1960s increasing numbers of women held political positions and women had been allowed to run for municipal office for nearly twenty years.[52] But, only five of the municipal presidents were female. Male dominance of the municipal presidencies may have reflected the social conservatism of many Mexican villages, where men often voted on behalf of their wives.[53] But, the PRI was not averse to running female candidates, especially if they possessed ready-made support networks and could purge regions of unpopular caciques. Each of the five female candidates had already garnered substantial backing through their social work. Pineda, the young female lawyer, had organised the village beauty pageant, established a lottery for the infrastructure board, visited the houses of the poor on behalf of the Red Cross and helped peasants petition for land at no charge.[54] Celeste Castillo Moreno of Huatusco had established a town theatre, set up sowing centres and was head

[50] Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 47; Peter H Smith, "Continuity and Turnover within the Mexican Elite" in James Wilkie, Michael C. Meyer, Edna Monzon de Wilkie, (eds.), *Contemporary Mexico, Papers of the IV International Congress of Mexican History* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976).
[51] From 1890 to 1910 all bar two of Huajuapan de León's municipal presidents were over sixty. Archivo del Municipio de Huajuapan de León, Presidencias, 1890-1910. Congress was even worse and resembled a "museum of natural history" according to Daniel Cosio Villegas. Quoted in Paul H. Garner, *Porfirio Díaz*, (London: Longman, 2001) p. 105.
[52] Roderic Ai Camp, "Women and men, men and women: gender patterns in Mexican politics" in Victoria E. Rodríguez, (ed.), *Women's participation in Mexican political life* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998).
[53] Varela, *Procesos*, p. 74.
[54] AGN, DGIPS, 1275, San Juan Teotihuacan.

of a large CNOP female branch.[55] And Carolina Santos de Urtiaga was an "extremely Catholic" housewife, leader of Accion Católica Mexicana (ACM) and organizer of two local civic associations.[56] All competed against and beat unpopular male candidates. Pineda achieved PRI approval running against a rich local vet "with scarce sympathies"; Santos was judged "the only person who could stand against the two caciques who control the village".[57]

If municipal presidents reflected conservative appreciations of gender roles, they also reflected fairly conservative attitudes to marriage. Only sixteen of the municipal presidents were not married. Eleven were single, one was divorced and four were involved in free unions. They hardly represented most Mexicans. Although divorce rates were still fairly low, by 1970 free unions accounted for around 18% of relationships.[58] They certainly did not represent most Mexican politicians. Presidents all ran high profile affairs and officials were regularly accused of sexual scandals.[59] (Perhaps these played to certain expectations of leadership - the only president not accused of having an affair, Ruíz Cortines, was lampooned for his sexual weediness).[60] And in the villages an earlier

[55] AGN, DGIPS, 1980A, Huatusco.
[56] AGN, DGIPS, 1286, Candela.
[57] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1275, San Juan Teotihuacan; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Candela.
[58] Censo General de Población, 1970 http://www3.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/TabuladosBasicos/default.aspx?c=16763&s=est. (Consulted 1 September 2013).
[59] Monica Lavin, *La Casa Chica* (Mexico City: Planeta, 2012); Pablo Piccato, "Pistoleros, ley fuga and Uncertainty in Public Debates about Murder" in Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith*, Dictablanda: Politics, Work and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968* (Durham: Duke University Press, in press); Ben Fallaw, "Bartolomé García Correa and the Political Economy of Henequen: Haciendas, Parastatals, and Peonage in Postrevolutionary Yucatan, 1925-1935", Latin American Studies Association, Meeting, Washington D.C., 2013.
[60] Samuel Schmidt, *Antología del Chiste Político* (Mexico City: Aguilar, 1996), p. 22. A familiar joke went as follows: "*Cuales son las cosas mas inutiles de Mexico? La vida inutil de Pito Perez, la puta vida de Pita Amor y el pito inutil de Ruíz Cortines".*

generation of caciques had boasted of multiple lovers.[61] But, by the 1960s, official attitudes towards masculinity had changed, in part in response to the perceived sexual permissiveness of the US, in part due to the import of attracting female voters, and in part due to the growing realization that disruptive sexual relations could cause considerable municipal divisions.[62] Of the eight candidates accused of having lovers or being involved in "scandalous behaviour", only one gained the official position, and this was only because he was a drinking companion of the governor.[63] This rather prurient attitude was particularly common in Catholic Guanajuato, where all the candidates were married and many were described as "devoted to their families".[64]

The vast majority of municipal presidents were Catholic. There were only three exceptions. Two evangelical presidents lived in municipalities with sizeable non-Catholic minorities and one was imposed by the governor of Guanajuato to the consternation of the villagers of Apaseo el Grande.[65] During immediate post-revolutionary period, evangelicals had often ruled radical councils.[66] But by the 1960s, the PRI realized that

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[61] Friedrich, *Princes*, p. 143; George Arthur Genz, Entrepreneurship and Caciquismo: A Study of Community Power in a Mexican Gulf Coast Village, Unpubl. Ph.D Diss, Michigan State University 1975, p. 301.

[62] For growing social conservatism: Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 53-61; Ariel Rodriguez Kuri, "Secretos de la idiosincracia. Urbanización y cambio cultural en México, 1950-1970" in Carlos Lira Vasquez and Ariel Rodriguez Kuri, (eds.), *Ciudades mexicans del siglo XX, Siete estudios historicos* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 2009), pp. 19-56; Beatriz Barba de Piña Chan, "Bosquejo socioeconomico de un grupo de familias de la ciudad de México", *Anales del Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia* 11.40 (1960), pp. 87-151; María del Carmen Elu de Leñero, *Hacía dónde va la mujer Mexicana? Proyecciones a Partir de Los Datos de Una Encuesta Nacional* (Mexico City: Instituto Mexicano de Estudios Sociales, 1969); Luis Leñero Otero, *Investigación de la familia en México* (Mexico City, Instituto Mexicano de Estudios Sociales, 1968).

[63] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1280, Cuernavaca.

[64] E.g. AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276, Atarjea.

[65] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276, Apaseo el Grande; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Piedras Negras; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1275, Tomascalcingo.

[66] Deborah Baldwin, *Protestants and the Mexican Revolution: Missionaries, Ministers, and Social Change* (Champagne-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), p. 131.

evangelicals generated considerable disruption. Six evangelical candidates were turned down because "they were not popular except among their congregation".[67] Most presidents, especially in Morelos, Coahuila, and Mexico State, were what the agents described as "liberal" or "non practicing Catholics". José Besares Ramos was baptised Catholic but "without believing in any of the mysteries".[68] Such relaxed attitudes to Catholicism clearly reflected the regional success of anticlerical education programs. However, in Guanajuato and the more clerical regions of Morelos, many municipal presidents were devout, went to church every Sunday, and were even members of Catholic organizations like the ACM.[69] This is somewhat surprising. Despite official rapprochement, relations between the state and clerical Catholics were often tense. During the 1950s the opposition party, the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) had teamed up with priests and the ACM to run fairly successful local campaigns.[70] As recently as the early 1960s, thousands of Catholics protested President López Mateos's (1958-1964) perceived shift to the left.[71] However, under Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970), the PRI re-embraced devout leaders in regions of profound Catholicism.[72] By the end of the 1960s's the US consul claimed that a municipal president in Jalisco "may or may not be devoutly Catholic but his wife and daughters will be, and under no circumstances

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[67] E.g. AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1275, Tlalnepantla.
[68] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1280, Yecapixtla.
[69] E.g. AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1280, Huitzilac.
[70] Donald J. Mabry, *Mexico's Acción Nacional, A Catholic Alternative to Revolution*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1973), pp. 50-70.
[71] Soledad Loaeza, *Clases Medias y política en México, La Querella Escolar, 1959-1963* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1985).
[72] Presidents Cárdenas and Avila Camacho acted similarly. Matthew Butler "God's Caciques: Caciquismo and the Cristero Revolt in Coalcomán", in Alan Knight and Wil Pansters (eds.) *Caciquismo in Twentieth-Century Mexico* (London: ILAS, 2005), pp. 94-112; José Mario Contreras Valdés, *Reparto de tierras en Nayarit, 1916-1940*: *un proceso de ruptura y continuidad* (Mexico City: INEHRM, 2001) pp. 130-5; Martínez Saldaña and Gándara Mendoza, *Política y sociedad*, pp. 35-50.

will he be a Protestant."[73] A decade later, pious Catholics were more supportive of the regime than their secular counterparts.[74]

Municipal presidents almost invariable belonged to the party's popular or peasant sectors. The worker sector only received 2% of municipal seats (figure 2). They were only appointed in municipalities where the working class accounted for a significant proportion of the workforce like the mining town of Mineral del Monte or the railway hub of La Frontera.[75] Here, highly organised unions seemed to have gained "spaces of local power in exchange for political control of the workers".[76] The disparity partly reflects the geographical concentration of Mexican industrialization. The vast majority of workers lived in Mexico City or a small number of large cities. But, the lack of working class presidents also reveals an institutional bias against worker representation in the municipalities. Worker candidates failed to secure nominations in cities with large groups of petroleum workers like Salamanca or factory workers like Tlalnepantla.[77]

The peasant sector received 39% of the municipal presidencies. Compared to the 1930s, when owners of state land grants (ejidatarios) managed to secure nominations in large towns, the numbers look low.[78] However, when compared to census results, provision of

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[73] U.S. Consulate in Guadalajara, "Municipal Government in Jalisco: 1968" 28 April 1968. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB92/mexelect_3.pdf. (Consulted 1 September 2013).
[74] Charles L. Davis, "Religion and Partisan Loyalty: The Case of Catholic Workers in Mexico", *The Western Political Quarterly*, 45.1 (1992), pp. 275-97; Soledad Loaeza "La iglesia Católica Mexicana y el reformismo autoritario" in *Foro Internacional* 25 (1984), pp. 138-165; Roderic Ai Camp, *Crossing Swords, Politics and Religion in Mexico* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 121-122.
[75] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1275, La Frontera, 1966; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1278, Mineral del Monte, 1966.
[76] Quoted in Alonso, "Micropolítica", p. 363.
[77] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1275, Tlalnepantla, 1966.
[78] e.g. Archivo General del Poder Ejecutivo del Estado de Oaxaca, Gobernación, Presidente Municipal de Ocotlán, Informe, 2 December 1938; Barbara Luise Margolies, *Princes of the Earth: Subcultural diversity*

peasant municipalities looks fairly representative or even generous. By 1970, only 35% of the economically active population worked in agriculture. Ejidatarios only accounted for a fifth of these.[79] Furthermore, when compared to results in the federal congress, where members affiliated to the Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC) accounted for only 25% of representatives in 1967, in the municipalities peasant representatives held their own.[80] There were peasant sector representatives in 65% of municipalities where ejidatarios accounted for 15% of the population or more and in 55% of municipalities where the main towns contained populations of less than 5000. In small towns, with large groups of peasants, ejidatarios still ruled.[81]

Popular sector representatives led 59% of municipalities. In part, the high proportion reflected demographic changes. Nearly 30% of the population now worked in white-collar professions, the urban informal sector, or commerce. At the same time, smallholders numbered over one million.[82] However, the dominance of the popular sector also reflected the efforts made to corner Mexicans who were neither workers nor ejidatarios. The sector was created in 1943 to represent soldiers and bureaucrats. During

in a Mexican municipality (Washington: American Anthropological Association, 1975), pp. 37-54; Rita C Fauret Tondato, *De medieros a ejidatarios, la reforma agrícola en el municipio de Arteaga, Coahuila (1920-40)* (Monterrey: Cuadernos de Ceshac, 1999), pp. 104-116; Lawrence S. Graham, *Politics in a Mexican Community*, (University of Florida Monographs, Social Sciences, No. 35, , Gainesville, 1968), p. 34; Donald D Brand, Quiroga: *A Mexican Municipality* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute of Social Anthropology, Washington 1951), pp. 106-8.

[79] Censo General de Población, 1970 http://www3.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/TabuladosBasicos/default.aspx?c=16763&s=est. (Consulted 1 September 2013).

[80] Bertaccini, *El regimen priísta,* p. 310.

[81] Here I ran the database of municipal presidents against population figures for the municipalities from 1970. Censo General de Población, 1970 http://www3.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/TabuladosBasicos/default.aspx?c=16763&s=est. (Consulted 1 September 2013).

[82] Censo General de Población, 1970 http://www3.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/TabuladosBasicos/default.aspx?c=16763&s=est (Consulted 1 September 2013).

the 1950s, the sector expanded, encompassing teachers, merchants, and small farmers. In 1961, Alfonso Martínez Dominguez took over the sector, reorganised the state federations, set up committees designed to help CNOP members, and attracted a wide variety of social groups, including squatters, journalists, garbage collectors, and even 8000 laundry workers. Under President Díaz Ordaz, the sector thrived and captured 52.6% of the seats in the federal legislature in 1967. According to insiders the president "gave the sector more organizational power". In urban municipalities, the CNOP had substantial weight and always outgunned worker sector candidates.[83] By the mid-1960s, the PRI also used the CNOP to gain the support of potential PAN supporters among the professional or commercial classes. As a result, in municipalities that included cities with populations of over 10,000, the CNOP held 92% of the presidencies. But in rural municipalities, the panorama was mixed. In regions with weak ejido unions or large rancher unions, CNOP representatives often gained seats. But, in many areas the CNC held on to power.

To become municipal president, candidates had to be literate (figure 3). In the states under study only one president never went to primary school. Municipal office excluded around a third of the electorate. 53% of the presidents had just gone to primary school, 10% to secondary, 9% to commercial or accountancy schools, 14% to university and 13% to teacher training colleges. In comparison, only 16% of literate Mexicans had done more than primary school. Education often mattered. In relatively urban municipalities, peasant candidates were described as "lacking oratorical skills" and "too poorly educated to be a

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[83] Bertaccini, *El regimen priísta,* p. 294 ff; David Schers, The Popular Sector of the Mexican PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional), Unpubl. PhD, The University of New Mexico, 1972.

candidate".[84] At the same time, in rural municipalities CNOP candidates were often doctors, merchants, teachers, or livestock owners with at least a few years in higher education. Moreover, as municipal presidents were often responsible for balancing the books, those with commercial or accountancy degrees were particularly favoured. Book-keeping was to municipal rule what law was to federal deputies. In Coahuila, nearly 40% of municipal presidents had studied these subjects. However, down in the rural municipalities, education was less important. Agents regularly wrote that peasants had "a sufficient level of education for the position".[85] Primary school educated peasants and farmers often beat better educated if less popular candidates. And in municipalities with towns of less than 5000 people, 82% of presidents had only a primary education. The president of Jantelco was described "with a extremely low mental level, completely apolitical and apparently insane", but popular among the villagers.[86] Whereas graduates dominated the higher echelons of power, the less well educated could still rule rural municipalities.[87]

Municipal presidents, as one might expect, held a wide variety of jobs (figure 4). But, there were no farm labourers and no street vendors.[88] The poorest tiers of society were excluded from office. Ejidatarios dominated and accounted for 34% of municipal presidents. Higher up the CNC, old land reform activists complained that the sector had become "a refuge for unemployed professional aficionados of the Revolution" or "a drain

[84] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1278, San Agustin Tlaxiaca; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1322, Zacapoaxtla.
[85] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1275, Tenango del Aire.
[86] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1280, Jantelco.
[87] Only 4.5% of political elites lacked post-primary education. Camp, *Mexico's Leaders*, p. 48.
[88] These accounted for over 17% of the workforce. Censo General de Población, 1970 http://www3.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/TabuladosBasicos/default.aspx?c=16763&s=est. (Consulted 1 September 2013)

used to flush away political compromises”. [89] The accusations had weight. A 1964 study found that of 50 CNC deputies, two were journalists, three were union leaders, five were millionaires, six were lawyers, two were members of the popular sector, one was the son of the head of the railways and one was secretary of the head of the senate.[90] A few peasant representatives were impostors as well. Angel Gomez Calderon, the CNC president of the rural municipality of Teocolo was a university-educated lawyer, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and a close friend of the governor.[91] Silvano Reyes Gonzalez, president of Villa Victoria had a construction firm worth one million pesos and earned over 10000 per month.[92] However, these were the exceptions. Most CNC representatives were ejidatarios. They were fairly entrepreneurial ones. Nearly a third had other, often quite lucrative, occupations. But, in general, peasants still represented other peasants.

Representatives of the popular sector held a more diverse range of jobs. Most were farmers (31%) merchants (24%), or teachers (15%). In some regions, they represented the population. Nazario Trejo Perez, a farmer from the small municipality of Cardonal owned only 4 hectares, earned around 1000 pesos a month, and was fairly representative of a village where over 60% worked on the land but only 128 voters were ejidatarios.[93] Basilio Salinas Paredes had bought 20 hectares and 38 cows in the small village of La Yesca from the money he had earned as a construction worker.[94] Teachers, in particular

[89] Moises Gonzalez Navarro, *La Confederación Nacional Campesina: Un grupo de presion en la reforma agrarian Mexicana* (Costa Amic, 1968), p. 225
[90] *El Nacional*, 20 Feb. 1964.
[91] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Teocelo.
[92] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1275, Villa Victoria.
[93] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1278, Cardonal.
[94] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1281, La Yesca

were often deemed good compromise candidates, who could bridge both CNOP and CNC sympathies. Saul Bermea Santos, president of rural village of Juarez was son of a small farmer and "popular among the peasant and popular sectors".[95] However others were clearly part of unpopular, rural oligarchies. Many of the "small farmers" were actually large landowners who had escaped land reform and employed the rural landless at low wages. Manuel Padilla Ortiz of Muzquiz was the son of a Porfirian landowner, owned 5000 hectares of pastureland, 300 cattle and 100 horses and had over 100,000 pesos in the bank.[96] Others were part of the new revolutionary elite. Through his close relationship with President Ruíz Cortinez, Carlos Espejo Moreno, had risen from a lowly position in the civil registry to federal deputy and head of the state PRI. When he returned to his hometown of Totula he used his political weight to force take over some of the region's best land and muscle in on the municipal presidency.[97] Many of the merchants were loan sharks or commercial monopolists, who bought agricultural goods on the cheap from desperate peasants. Francisco Jimenez Pacheco, president of Huitzilac bought up all the region's maguey, owned two *pulque* bars and a cantina and earned over 5000 pesos a month.[98] These were the Don Perpetuos of rural Mexico. Many won election, often with outside help. But, chronic unpopularity could also mean failure.

Other popular sector representatives comprised bureaucrats (11%), businessmen (6%), doctors (5%), and lawyers (3%). Doctors, like teachers, were sometimes compromise candidates, whose good works could bridge class divisions. Isidro Galindo Monsivais

[95] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Juarez.
[96] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Muzquiz.
[97] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Totula.
[98] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1280, Huitzilac

was the first popular sector president of the mining town of Nueva Rosita. He had set up free medical services and helped fund the construction of a school for nurses.[99] But, in the main, these men dominated the larger towns where they were either imposed by political elites or agreed upon by a broad tier of the local upper class. Neofito Haro Carrillo, the spectacularly unpopular president of Tepic worked in the state treasury, where he used tax inspectors to enforce his monopoly of egg sales. Commerce and loan sharking brought considerable wealth. He earned 8000 pesos a month, had 100,000 pesos in the bank over 100 hectares of land, and three new cars. But no one opposed him as he was "friends with the governor".[100] Roberto Suarez Nieto, the president of Celaya, was also rich (his business had a capital of 2.5 million pesos). But, he was also popular among the local elites and a member of the Country Club, the Lions, the Rotary Club, and Movimiento Familiar.[101] In fact, the emergence of these businessmen-politicians, especially in the big cities of Guanajuato and Coahuila suggest that by the 1960s, tensions between party officials and local elites had faded. Most entrepreneurs, although they often had family members in the PAN or had flirted with the party themselves, supported the PRI in return for the maintenance of oligarchic rule.[102]

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[99] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Nueva Rosita.

[100] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1281, Tepic.

[101] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Celaya.

[102] For divisions between business elites and PRI, William H Form and William V D'Antonio, "Integration and Cleavage Among Community Influentials in Two Border Cities", *American Sociological Review*, 24.6 (1959), 804-14; Orrin E Klapp and L Vincent Padgett, "Power Structure and Decision-Making in a Mexican Border City", *The American Journal of Sociology*, 65.4 (1960): 400-406; Flavia Derossi, *L'entrepreneur mexcain* (Paris: Centre de développement de l'organisation de coopération et de développement économiques, 1971); For integration see Antonio Ugalde, *Power and Conflict in a Mexican Community, A Study of Political Integration* (Abuquerque, University of New Mexico, 1970); Graham, *Politics*, p. 48; Roberto Newell G; Luis Rubio-Freidberg, *Mexico's dilemma : the political origins of economic crisis*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 103, 108.

If municipal presidents represented a reasonably wide range of education levels and professions, most came from a small and comparatively wealthy class (figure 5). The figures may be distorted. In census estimates of earnings, citizens undoubtedly played down wealth. In contrast, in PRI interviews, candidates probably exaggerated their finances to escape accusations of potential graft. The absence of figures for Veracruz and some of the poorer areas of Hidalgo probably skewed results more. Age and gender also mislead. Most presidents were in their forties and male - the high end of Mexico's earning curve. Finally, many ejidatario presidents, who combined agricultural work with commercial activities, probably included unpaid family labour in their estimates of monthly income. Nonetheless the disparity between presidents' incomes and those of the average Mexican was great. Mexico was an extremely unequal country.[103] In 1970, the poorest 65% of Mexicans earned less than 1000 pesos per month. Yet, only 10% of presidents earned these low wages. 59.2% of presidents made over 2500 pesos per month whereas only 16% of the population made similar amounts. At the same time, nearly a quarter of presidents owned cars. (Although contrary to the cartoonist Rius, the revolution did not get off a horse and into a Cadillac but more likely a 1950s Ford or a Willy's truck.)[104] Some of the presidents were what Hugo G. Nutini, and Barry L. Isaac term "provincial plutocrats", members of the Revolution's new bourgeoisie.[105] Teofilo López García, the president of Singuilucen, made 60,000 per month monopolizing the sale of maguey in Hidalgo to the Patronato de Maguey. He also owned 114 hectares and

[103] Mexico's GINI coefficient averaged around 0.55 between 1950 and 1960. By the end of the 1960s, it had reached 0.58 one of the highest in Latin America. Klaus Deininger and Lyn Squire, "A New Data Set Measuring Income Inequality," *World Bank Economic Review* 10 (1996), 565–91.
[104] Quoted in Harold E Hinds and Charles M. Tatum, *Not Just for Children: The Mexican Comic Book in the Late 1960s and 1970s* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 1992), p. 99.
[105] Hugo G. Nutini, and Barry L. Isaac, *Social Stratification in Central Mexico, 1500-2000*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), p. 119. They estimate that there are around 20 to 50 plutocrats in most provincial cities.

had 1.25 million in the bank.[106] Ignacio Reyes Retena Perez Gil, the president of Guanajuato was a lawyer by training but owned three houses and a ranch worth 2 million pesos and earned 25,000 per month.[107]

Most presidents (77%) earned between 1000 and 10,000 pesos per month. Some were old money, like the rich families of Arandas, who employed inherited wealth to hold onto to political position.[108] Manuel Padilla Ortiz, the president of Muzquiz, was a wealthy landowner who had inherited over 5000 hectares and bank shares from his father and earned 8000 pesos per month. Others were new caciques, who like Don Perpetuo or Camilio Caso of Naranja, had taken advantage of the revolutionary upheavals to monopolize resources and use political station for private gain.[109] Jesús María Ramón Cantu, the president of Acuña was a merchant, restaurant owner and holder of the local beer monopoly. He also possessed a 35-hectare ranch, 1000 goats, 700 cattle and 200 horses. He had built his wealth on the illegal transport of drugs and now claimed to earn over 6000 pesos per month. He had been local deputy once, municipal president twice and was close friends with former governors and presidents. According to the DGIPS report he had "scarce sympathies" and was the "cacique of Acuña". He won the PRI candidacy nonetheless.[110] Finally, some undoubtedly employed their wealth to bribe functionaries for the position. Ejidatarios claimed that Francisco Paez Hernandez, the

[106] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1278, Singuilucen
[107] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276, Guanajuato.
[108] Martinez and Gandara, *Política y sociedad*
[109] Friedrich, *Princes,* p. 27.
[110] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Acuña.

candidate for Atlautla, had taken land grants (*ejidos*), sold them to urban settlers and used 10,000 pesos of his earnings to buy the job.[111]

However, comparative wealth did not necessarily involve perceived exploitation or consequent unpopularity. The line between cacique and industrious, generous local grandee was often blurred. Anthropologist, Elena Azaola Garrido, termed Dona Martina, a wealthy money-lender from Tepalcindo a cacique. But, she admitted that, "although she had all the characteristics of a cacique, none of the village saw her as such". She came from a poor background, offered rates marginally below most local elites, extracted repayment without using force, and was described as "the protector of the poor" and the "mother of the pueblo".[112] "Don Antonio" the cacique of Boca del Rio monopolized the local clam trade, owned the largest restaurant in town, and controlled ejido plots and regional politics. Yet, he also organized the town's electricity, offered loans at low rates, and allowed employees to graze their animals on his lands.[113] Simon Estrada, the cacique of Rosamorada was "arbitrary but with a sense of service". When one woman asked him to sign her divorce papers so she could "marry a gringo", he tossed her a death certificate her and told her to fill in her husband's name as "it would be quicker".[114]

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[111] Archivo General de la Nación, Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, (AGN, GDO), Caja 416, Ejidatarios of Atlautla to President Díaz Ordaz, 4 October 1966.
[112] Azaola, and Krotz, *Los Campesinos,* pp. 43-4.
[113] Genz, Entrepreneurship, pp. 266-287.
[114] Alejandro Gascón Mercado, *Por las Veredas del Tiempo* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónma de Nayarit, 2000), p. 300.

In many municipalities, the traditional bonds linking rich and poor, such as a shared cultural heritage and paternalist practices, could generate considerable popularity even for the comparatively wealthy. Sergio Cardenas Barrera, the municipal president of Villa Unión was a rich rancher who owned two tractors and 350 goats and earned 8000 pesos per month. Yet, government reports claimed that "his knowledge of livestock issues" made him "very popular among all sectors".[115] Antonio Navarrete Mendivil, a teacher from Ruíz, earned over double the average village wage. But, he was admired for his "work with civic festivals, parents organizations, and students".[116] At the same time, the gradual percolation of more "modern" capitalist values could also generate what agents termed "prestige" and "respect". Perhaps, some voters simply suspected that the wealthy would steal less.[117] But, perhaps others admired the "radical upward mobility", hard work, and proven financial probity of their wealthy neighbors or at least hoped they could channel both money and talent towards municipal improvements.[118] This may well have been the case with 30% of the ejidatarios, who worked extra jobs as small merchants, livestock traders or owners of small mills. Agents certainly thought so and often commented approvingly that these men "worked hard" or had gained their wealth through "their own work".[119] And in Piedras Negras, people "believed

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[115] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Villa Unión.
[116] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1281, Ruíz.
[117] Daniel Nugent, "Corruption in Low Places: Sewers and Succession to Political Office", in Yoke-Sum Wong and Derek Sayer, *Twenty Years of the Journal of Historical Sociology*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 236-253, p. 243.
[118] Quote from Friedrich, *Princes*, p. 72. Porfirio Perez Olivares, the peasant leader of Soledad Doblado, had started as an ejidatario. By the 1950s, he farmed 75 hectares, owned a tractor, and ran a successful papaya business. Yet, he still maintained considerable popularity. Perez, *Memorias*, p. 82. Clarence Senior remarks on the spirit of conspicuous consumption among ejidatarios. Clarence Senior, *Land Reform and Democracy*, (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1958), p. 55.
[119] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Coatlán del Rio.

that the candidate could make improvements even if he had to put in money from his own pocket".[120]

If PRI presidents were generally rich, they were also surprisingly independent of the patronage of party, state government, or local caciques (figure 6) The repeated accusations that they were imposed from on high are simply not borne out by the evidence. Only 24% boasted direct outside support. Rogelio Berrueto Santana gained the candidacy of Nava through the support of his brother, a federal deputy.[121] Another 25% of candidates were fairly active in the party, as heads of PRI municipal committees, sector committees or electoral activists. José Santos Ramos, the candidate for Jala, was head of the PRI committee, "had militated a lot on behalf of the party" and was a union delegate for Ruíz Cortines's election.[122] Another 18% were active in peasant, worker, or teacher unions. But, if high up support and party loyalty didn't hurt, neither were they essential. Over 44% of candidates possessed no stated links to the party or the state or federal administrations. Nicolas Gonzalez Blanco, the rancher head of Huayapan de Ocampo, was described as "completely apolitical" but popular among "all the sectors".[123] A handful had even militated on behalf of opposition parties. Gaspar Gonzalez Suarez, the candidate for Jico, was formerly a member of the PPS.[124]

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[120] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Piedras Negras.
[121] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Nava.
[122] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1281, Jala.
[123] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Huayapan del Ocampo.
[124] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Jico.

If clientelist relations and party loyalty were relatively unimportant, municipal experience was judged favorably. Over 40% of presidents had previous experience in local government. Again contrary to contemporary assertions, most municipal officials did not see their appointments as one-off opportunities to ransack local treasuries, but part of long-running municipal careers. Administrative competence - "*Saber gobernar*" - was still a fundamental prerequisite of rule. Miguel Martinez Guzman was "very popular" in Yanga because of his successful school building and literacy campaigns in his earlier stint.[125] The candidate for Jolutla was "well liked for his previous administration".[126] In contrast, well-known past corruption often barred candidates from office. Manuel Castillo Lagunes never became president of Tenejapa de Mata. Although he had considerable support among "the local politicians" he was despised for defrauding peasants during his previous administration.[127]

Finally, if many municipal presidents were not heavily involved in official politics, most were engaged in the kind of non-political associations and clubs, which Alexis de Tocqueville believed were the foundations of civil society (figure 7).[128] Again, this is somewhat surprising. Although historical research is sparse, most contemporary political scientists play down the extent of civil society in PRI Mexico and instead link the emergence of non-political organizations to the process of

[125] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Yanga.
[126] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1280, Jolutla.
[127] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Tenejapa de Mata.
[128] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Penguin, 2004), pp. 604ff

democratization.[129] Yet, 51% of municipal presidents were involved in one or more of these associations. And nearly 35% were members of two or more. Some of these organizations had loose connections to the state. Over 15% of presidents were involved in Juntas de Mejoras Materiales. President Ruíz Cortines had pushed these private-public local infrastructure boards throughout the country during the 1950s. Some became "party political organizations". Others were hijacked and corrupted by local entrepreneurs. Outside Ensenada, rich peasants used government donations to build a tavern so that "drunkards hung around the bar molesting bypassing women and bringing scandal to the village". [130]

But, many organizations were more autonomous civic associations.[131] Presidents were members of religious groups, professional organizations, the Red Cross, Lions and Rotary societies, hunting, sports and exercise clubs, parents associations, masonic lodges, and independent infrastructure organizations. A few were even volunteer firemen. Membership depended on both class and location. Businessmen, doctors, and lawyers dominated the Rotary and Lions clubs of the larger towns.[132] In

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[129] Paul L. Haber, *Power from Experience: Urban Popular Movements in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2006); Selee, *Decentralization*; Joe Foweraker and Ann L. Craig (eds.), *Popular Movements and Political Change in Mexico* (Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 1990); Daniel C. Levy, Kathleen Bruhn, *Mexico: The Struggle for Democratic Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 68-9. One of the few exceptions is Floyd Dodson, "A Note on Participation in Voluntary Associations in a Mexican City" *American Sociological Review*, 18.4 (Aug. 1953), pp. 380-86.

[130] Tuohy and Fagen, *Politics and Privelege*, p. 77; Ugalde, *Power and Conflict*, pp. 121-2.

[131] Even some Juntas de Mejoras Materiales were fairly effective and apolitical. Enrique Krauze, *La presidencia imperial: ascenso y caída del sistema político mexicano, 1940-1996* (Mexico City: Tusquets, 1997), pp, 182, 185.

[132] Rotarian and Lions club were key to middle class sociabilities, especially in northern Mexico. By 1954 there were over 130 Rotary clubs in Mexico. During the 1950s, clubs seem to have increased at around 20 per year. Given this rate of growth, one might assume that by the mid 1960s there were well over 200. (*The*

contrast farmers, ejidatarios, and small merchants tended to be members of infrastructure organizations or school groups. Sports organizations were popular in Mexico State and Morelos; religious organizations were concentrated in Guanajuato; and nearly a fifth of Coahuila's presidents were masons. The high membership of presidents in non-political clubs suggests that civil society was far stronger in 1960s Mexico than contemporary commentators acknowledged. Furthermore, the state was well aware and often tried to tap these independent networks for popular if fairly apolitical candidates. In religious municipalities, agents approvingly asserted that candidates with only a few years of non-active party membership had the support of Acción Catolica or Movimiento Familiar. In Allende, Humberto Cantu Villanueva had "no political experience" built his popularity on his membership of the local baseball team, the Rotarians, and the shooting and fishing club.[133] And throughout the country, candidates were regularly described as "popular among all the sectors" because of their "work on building the local school" or "successful attempts to establish a telephone line".[134] In PRI Mexico's municipalities, civic engagement was more important as party affiliation or state patronage.

By examining the official biographies of Mexico's municipal presidents, varied conclusions emerge. Some are unsurprising and chime with the findings of earlier scholars. Most municipal presidents were male, Catholic and in their forties. Most were comparatively rich, many were farmers, merchants, or teachers and some

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Rotarian, February 1955, p. 62; *The Rotarian*, August 1954, p. 16). Thank you to David Tamayo for this information.

[133] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Allende.

[134] E.g. AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Ocampo.

were imposed from on high. The popular sector garnered most presidencies and the worker sector was chronically unrepresented. However, other results point to a more complex system of local government. Municipal presidencies were open to women and young men, if they possessed sufficient popular backing. Peasants, and especially ejidatarios, continued to rule in more rural areas. And, although most candidates were wealthy, Mexico was no out-and-out plutocracy. 10% were poor and many local leaders had to work two or three jobs to survive. Perhaps most surprisingly, political backing and party activism were not terribly important. Instead, administrative experience, a reasonably clean record, and more than anything civic engagement were key to local position.

PRI candidacy: The rules of the game

However, statistics can only take us so far. Although we now have a fairly clear panorama of Mexico's PRI presidents, the issue remains: how were they picked? Contemporaries often asked themselves the same question. Anthropologist, George Foster admitted that "even among those who participated and [we]re elected to office there [wa]s something of the quality of the unknowable".[135] PRI insider, Mario Ezcurdia thought the process equally opaque calling it "the true secret of the party" and "the most obscure and gripping aspect of the relation between the PRI and public power". He even admitted that leaders were reluctant to "explain this essential mechanism" as it was "the authentic source of the party's political

[135] George M Foster, *Tzintzuntzan, Mexican Peasants in a Changing World*, (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1967), p. 175.

influence".[136] Ten years later, José Luis Reyna agreed, confessing that, "a veil of secrecy surrounded" the process.[137] And while political scientists have started to unmask the networks of camarillas, family alliances, loyalty and friendship, which drove the choice of senior PRI nominees, candidate selection for municipal presidents still remains obscure.[138]

Internal rules for choosing the PRI's municipal candidates changed over time.[139] Between 1946 and 1950, the party ran fairly open primaries, which Paul Gillingham terms "unseen elections" and "sites for intense, contestatory mobilizations".[140] In 1965, the leader of the PRI, Carlos Madrazo, introduced primaries once again. They generated serious contests in nearly half Mexico's states. But, fierce competition between popular candidates and those of the governor of Sinaloa eventually brought the project's demise and Madrazo's dismissal.[141] Outside the periods of primaries, candidates were chosen at sector assemblies. PRI municipal committees would then pass on their suggestions to the state branch of the PRI, which gave the candidates the official seal of approval.[142] Looking over the official statutes, the process appears reasonably democratic, not unlike the

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[136] Mario Ezcurdia, *Análisis teórico del Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Mexico City: Costa-Amic, 1968), p. 108.
[137] Reyna, "Desde dentro", p. 48.
[138] Hernandez Rodriguez, *Amistades*; Camp, *The making of a government*; Camp, *Mexico's leaders*.
[139] Rodolfo Siller called the shifting processes "the Achilles heel of the party" and lamented the constant shifts. Quoted in Bertaccini, *El regimen priísta,* p. 78.
[140] Gillingham, "We don't have arms".
[141] Hernandez Rodriguez*, La formacion del politico mexicano*; Ricardo Pozas-Harocasitas, "La democracia fallida: la batalla de Carlos A Madrazo por cambiar el PRI", *Revista Mexicana de Sociologia*, 70 (2008), pp 47-88; W.V. D'Antonio and Richard Suter, "Elecciones preliminaries en un municipio mexicano: nuevas tendencias en la lucha de Mexico hacia la democracia", *Revista Mexicana de Sociologia*, 29.1 (1967), pp. 93-108; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1320, Cuiliacan.
[142] Hernandez Rodriguez, *El centro dividido*; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1275, Convocatoria, 27 Nov. 1966.

methods employed to select candidates in US party caucuses.[143] But, federal elites, governors, or local powerbrokers often distorted PRI regulations, monopolized one of more of the party organs, and blocked popular choices. As a result, in order to understand the process of selection, it is necessary to move beyond the legal framework, and use the candidate biographies to examine the less formal, but widely understood, rules of the game.[144]

In state capitals and some large cities, governors usually chose candidates directly. Thus Oscar Flores Tapia, the head of the PRI in Coahuila, admitted that the governor always selected the nominees for Saltillo, Torreon, Monclova and Piedras Negras.[145] In Jalapa, the presidency always went to a "career politician" close to the governor's inner circle.[146] The choice of PRI candidates during the 1960s supports this view. Candidates for Saltillo, Torreon, Piedras Negras, Veracruz, Jalapa, Cuernavaca, Salamanca, Celaya, Leon, Tepic and Toluca were all close to the state governors. Rodolfo Guerrero Gonzalez, the candidate for Torreon, was a "compadre of the governor", whom he used to entertain at horse races and cockfights.[147] Bernardino Leon y Velez Contreras, the president of Cuernavaca, was the governor's "party friend" and wrote pump pieces for his administration in local newspapers.[148] Governors made their decisions based on whether

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[143] Robert A Dahl, *Who Governs, Democracy and power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.), pp. 113-4.
[144] Nugent described Chihuahua peasants' attitudes to local elections as follows: "These are the rules by which the state insists we play; let's play." Nugent, "Corruption", p. 250.
[145] Oscar Flores Tapia, *José López Portillo y yo: historia de una infamia política* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1983), p. 172.
[146] Tuohy and Fagen, *Politics and Privilege*, p. 83.
[147] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Torreon.
[148] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1280, Cuernavaca.

the candidate was "personally and politically trustworthy".[149] As a result, many governors' candidates had limited local support and were often extremely unpopular. Guerrero was a rich property entrepreneur, had only arrived from Matamoros a few years earlier, and was suspected of murdering a political opponent in the Aguascalientes bus terminal in 1954. Leon had "no prestige" and was a blackmailer, a womanizer and a drunk. And the president of Piedras Negras was unpopular after he had imposed high taxes on various squatter colonies outside the main town.[150] In spite of candidates' dubious backgrounds, in most cases governor's choices for the main cities ran unopposed. In Veracruz agents speculated that no one contested Manuel Apino Caldelas García as he was the governor's friend.[151] In Tepic, the candidate's strong links to the governor led to the "softening" of prospective opposition.[152]

If governor imposition was the commonly accepted rule in most large cities, there were exceptions. On the one hand, smart but politically weak governors sometimes surrendered their right to choose in order to cozy up to powerful and potentially problematic regional elites. The head of the PRI advised the governor of Yucatán, Carlos Loret de Mola, "to make sure" that the leading local politician, Victor Cervera Pacheco "was his friend" and "find a way to collaborate together". When Loret arrived, he immediately made Cervera candidate for Merida's contentious municipal presidency.[153] On the other hand, the rule of "governor's choice" was not always limited to key

[149] Hernandez Rodriguez, *El centro dividido*, p. 45.
[150] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Piedras Negras.
[151] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Veracruz.
[152] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1281, Tepic.
[153] Manzanilla Schaffer, *Confessiones Polîticas*, p. 127. The move was partly a result of the PAN winning the municipal presidency in 1968. Selee, *Decentralization*, p. 43. In Oaxaca, successful governors repeatedly ceded control of the state capital to the "vallistocracia". Smith, *Pistoleros and Popular Movements*, Chapter 9.

conurbations. In some cases, governors imposed relatives, compadres or very close friends on smaller towns and villages. In Guanajuato, Governor Torres Landa imposed a handful of teachers from the local training college, which he had run a decade earlier.[154] And in Nayarit, Governor Gascon Mercado attempted to unseat some of former state caudillo Gilberto Flores Muñoz's more intransigent caciques by backing the candidacy of close friends.[155] This kind of "wildcat authoritarianism" was a dangerous game. Sometimes the ploy worked, especially where unpopular caciques were in decline.[156] But often such impositions infringed well-understood rules and could generate substantial outrage. Between 1946 and 1970, at least ten governors were dismissed because of popular outrage over the imposition of municipal authorities.[157] And in 1958-1959 President López Mateos overturned authoritarian impositions in Nayarit, Zacatecas, Quintana Roo, and San Luis Potosí. Despite this, authoritarian candidate selection never disappeared completely.[158] From the late 1960s onwards both social scientists and PAN politicians used examples of these types of impositions to highlight the PRI's despotism.

However, in most municipalities top-down picks were not the rule. First, internal competition for PRI candidacies or what insiders termed "la lucha" was rife. In the

[154] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276, Apaseo el Grande, 1966
[155] e.g. AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1281, Tecuala.
[156] e.g. Governor Sánchez Cano was fairly popular in the Región Mixe (Oaxaca) for removing the candidates of the unpopular and extremely violent cacique, Luis Rodríguez. Smith, *Pistoleros and popular movements*, pp. 298-299.
[157] Hernandez Rodriguez, *El centro dividido*, pp. 87-8; Anderson, The Functional Role, pp. 329-94. The governors were Juan Esponda (Chiapas), Edmundo Sánchez Cano (Oaxaca), Hugo Pedro González Lugo (Tamaulipas), Manuel Mayoral Heredia (Oaxaca), Enrique Pérez Arce (Sinaloa), Alejandro Gómez Maganda (Guerrero), Manuel Bartlett Bautista (Tabasco), Oscar Soto Máynez (Chihuahua), Manuel Alvarez López (San Luis Potosí) and Raul Caballero Aburto (Guerrero). The dismissals of Guanajuato governors, Nicéforo Guerrero Mendoza and Jesús Castorena also involved disputes over municipal presidencies.
[158] E.g. in Sonora in 1964 or Tijuana in 1968. (Bertaccini, *El regimen priísta*, p. 104; Selee, *Decentralization*, p. 107)

months leading up to selection, diverse interest groups from peasant organizations through teachers' unions to business associations would put forward their candidates for municipal control. In 29.4% of the municipalities surveyed, two candidates competed for the PRI nomination, and in 21.2% three or more.[159] Some regions were more competitive than others. In Guanajuato single candidates predominated. But, in Mexico State, Veracruz, Coahuila, and Nayarit, competitive candidate selection was extremely common. In Coahuila, only a quarter of municipalities ran single candidates and most of these were reserved for the governor's choice. Second, internal competition was not an individual contest, but often involved broader social alliances. Thus in Morelos CNOP merchants struggled with CNC peasants; in Guanajuato "liberal Catholics" fought former PAN members; in Nuevo León masons fought "Catholic fanatics"; and in Nayarit, CNOP-CNC coalitions fought breakaway members of the faux-indigenista Brigada Agraria Adolfo Ruíz Cortines. Third, internal competition was fierce. Although PRI officials hoped that contests would be decided through a blend of quiet negotiations, horse-trading, and future promises, often the stakes were too high. Negotiations even in PRI head office could turn nasty. Vincent Padgett looked on as a ""belligerent semi-circle" of peasants surrounded the Puebla's party head to protest an unpopular nominee.[160] And, if this strategy failed, internal candidates held rallies, ran local newspaper campaigns, and threatened popular mobilization, running independently, or violence. In 1966 CNOP stallholders in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl warned of a general

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[159] Here, I have removed the results from Hidalgo from the analysis. There was no competition for candidates picked up by the DGIPS in this state. Unfortunately, It is impossible to know whether candidates were picked from on high or negotiated before they reached the federal level of investigation.
[160] Vincent Padgett, *The Mexican Political System* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), p. 4.

market strike.[161]In Compostela, Tecuala, and Guadalupe opponents established municipal civic committees to contest particularly unfavorable decisions.[162] In Tlanepantla they published flysheets which claimed that electors “would not tolerate mockery”, and in Jojutla, they threatened the “possible spilling of blood” as they were “disposed to make [their] civil rights count”.[163]

Fourth, in most municipalities, federal, state, and party administrations were reasonably sensitive, if not always responsive, to the contours of local politics. By the late 1960s, all three practiced auscultación. The party usually sent a representative from the national executive committee who was entrusted with assessing the claims of “the different priísta currents and candidates that aspired to obtain the candidatures”.[164] Governors sent members of the state PRI, who “would visit the various municipalities”, “contact all the factions”, “hold informal conferences” and “create an arrangement acceptable to the community as a whole”.[165] And DGIPS and DFS agents completed their own process of auscultación on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior. As Daniel Cosio Villegas argued, the system of auscultación was “a poor democratic substitute for the open convention”.[166]

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[161] AGN, GDO, Caja 416, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, Sector Público de los Mercados to President Díaz Ordaz.
[162] AGN, GDO, Caja 416, Compostela, Agustín Cambero to President Díaz Ordaz; AGN, GDO, Caja 416, Tecuala, Victor Castillo to President Díaz Ordaz, ; AGN, GDO, Caja 416, Frente Político no Imposición to President Díaz Ordaz; AGN, GDO, Caja 416, Guadalupe, Comité Civico to President Díaz Ordaz.
[163] AGN, GDO, Caja 417, Tlalnepantla, Flysheet “Tlalnepantla no tolera burlas…”; AGN, GDO, Caja 416, Jolutla, Associación de Propetarios de Predios Rusticos to Governor Díaz Ordaz. Threats of violence were a constant weapon against the imposition of unpopular municipal authorities. See Pérez Olivares, *Memorias*. p. 83
[164] Manzanilla Schaffer, *Confessiones*, p. 130-2.
[165] Hernandez Rodriguez, *El centro dividido*,
[166] Daniel Cosío Villegas, *El sistema político mexicano: Las posibilidades de cambio* (Mexico City: Editorial J. Mortiz, 1978), p. 65. And Rodolfo Stavenhagen, in his satirical dictionary of Mexican politics called the activity “a magic and mysterious rite which the mighty employ to discover the Revelation of the Name. Also known as the destape”. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, “Manuel de Aprendiz”, *Fogonazo*, 2 May 1974.

To a certain extent this was true. The process favored those with money and power and the lack of transparency often permitted gross distortions of the popular will. Governors paid off party representatives and state agents. Caciques and regional oligarchies deliberately misrepresented local sentiment. And, those practicing auscultación ignored or downplayed the complaints of poorer voters. But, auscultación was no populist palliative. Instead, it was a means, however imperfect, of ensuring that PRI candidates fulfilled certain local aspirations, were not extremely unpopular, and would not generate serious disturbances.

The results of internal competition and auscultación depended on regions' distinct social structures, power relations, and histories of popular mobilization and were, as a result, extremely diverse. However, certain patterns did emerge. In larger, urban municipalities and commercial centers outside the governor's remit, PRI candidates were selected through a system of what Charles Lindblom and Robert Dahl term "elite bargaining".[167] During the 1930s and 1940s, peasant groups had made substantial electoral gains in these areas, often ruling large towns from peripheral ejidos.[168] However, by the 1960s, these days had gone. In towns like Allende, Moroleón, San Andrés Tuxtla, and Tulancingo doctors, rich merchants, and large landowners dominated. Although some had connections to state or party officials, they were rarely bureaucrats or teachers. Instead they were selected from among the regional upper class and repeatedly described as having "deep roots" or what agents called "*mucho arraigo*". Thus Antonio Gil Vega, a

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[167] A system in which "important decisions were made primarily by negotiations among leaders, who may have a variety of relationships with their followers". Charles Lindblom and Robert Dahl, *Politics, Economics, and Welfare* (New York: Harper, 1963), pp. 171-2.
[168] See footnote 80.

rich farmer with lands worth 500,000 pesos had prestige among “the high social circles” in Allende, while Ramon Hernandez Granado, a former PAN dentist from Irapato was “well accepted in the first social circle”.[169] In some towns, where elites remained unified, competition was limited. Here, business organizations and clubs seem to have nominated their candidates directly. Thus in Metepec, the head of the Chamber of Commerce ran unopposed; and in Salvatierra, merchants and Lions club members backed a fertilizer seller with no connections to the PRI.[170]

In other municipalities, groups of merchants and businessmen competed for the position. At times they were organized into regional sub-parties. In Guanajuato, elites in Irapato and Salamanca chose between representatives of what locals termed the “red” and “green” factions.[171] And in Coahuila, masons faced off against more Catholic candidates. But often, competition generated the considerable fragmentation. In Mexico State, diverse professional groups backed their own nominees. In Tlalnepantla, twenty-one candidates including merchants, doctors, lawyers, the owner of the local beer concession, and the proprietor of a gas station vied for the municipal presidency. On these occasions, elite bargaining could give way to a degree of pluralism as candidates pursued the backing of popular groups. In Tlalnepantla candidates made alliances with market vendors, factory workers, and small farmers and in Guanajuato candidates sought the support of Catholic groups. Membership of civic associations was often important. Furthermore, popularity often brought rewards. In these municipalities, the PRI

[169] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Allende; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276, Irapato.
[170] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276, Salvatierra; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Parras de la Fuente; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1278, Metepec.
[171] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276, Irapato; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276, Salamanca.

candidature almost invariably went to what agents affirmed were the “most popular” candidates irrespective of party or state backing. In Tlalnepantla, Angel Cruz Guerrero won the nomination despite running against a former deputy, the head of the state PRI, and the head of the local popular sector branch.[172] In Irapato, the former PAN member won against the CNOP chief and the governor’s friend.[173] And in Texcoco an esteemed bullfighter gained the nomination in front of the head of the local PRI.[174]

If elite bargaining governed the choice of PRI candidates in major commercial centers, in smaller rural municipalities two processes emerged. In regions of limited land reform or intensive commercial agriculture, caciques and regional oligarchies ruled. In upland Hidalgo, Guanajuato and northern Veracruz, where local elites had either enacted fake land reforms or employed paramilitaries to murder land reformers, livestock ranchers and merchants monopolized PRI nominations.[175] In Guanajuato and Hidalgo, nearly 75% of presidents were selected from the popular sector. In Guanajuato, a third were ranchers, who on average owned over 60 hectares of land and another 15% were merchants with incomes of around 4000 pesos per month. In Hidalgo, 25% were ranchers and another 10% seed, fertilizer, coffee, and livestock merchants. Some possibly represented their populations. Angel Cruz Zuniga, a small farmer from San Agustin owned only 4 hectares and earned 800 pesos a month.[176] Others used their talents to improve village life. Bernardo Gonzalez Cardenas, the president of San José de Gracia may have been a rich

[172] AGN, AGIPS, Caja 1275, Tlalnepantla.
[173] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276, Irapato.
[174] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1275, Texcoco.
[175] Schryer, *Ethnicity and Class Conflict;* Manola Sepúlveda Garza, *Políticas agrarias y luchas socials: San Diego de la Unión, Guanajuato, 1900-2000*, (INAH: D.F., 2000); Santoyo, *La Mano Negra.*
[176] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1278, San Agustín. Tlaxiaca.

rancher, but he also improved the municipal palace, introduced running water, extended drainage and built government offices and a cemetery. "The village had never had such active authorities".[177]

But many others were budding Don Perpetuos like Coroneo president, José Rios Camargo, who owned three fruit farms, ran an off-the-books pharmacy, and was responsible for accidentally poisoning two children; or Victor Manuel Espinosa Hernandez, the president of the tiny village of Tepehuacan, who owned over 100 hectares of prime irrigated land.[178] Here, state governments often allied with local oligarchies and controlled local power, as contemporary anthropologists observed. Whereas in other states, barely 20% of presidents claimed outside support, in Guanajuato, 57% of candidates were supported by political elites. In Hidalgo, the state government clearly distorted the federal process of auscultación and limited internal competition for PRI nominations. Federal agents invariably claimed that all the ranchers and merchants who ran as stand-alone PRI candidates had "ample support". In Jamay, the US consul observed that one rich local family had used monopoly of the regional PRI committee to control the presidency for 16 of the last 22 years.[179] During the 1960s and 1970s, these regions, which also included municipalities in regions of rancher dominance like Guerrero and Jalisco and expanding commercial agriculture like Sinaloa and Chihuahua, would become the primary sites for Mexico's rural Cold War. Here, internal PRI

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[177] Luis González y González, *Pueblo en vilo: Microhistoria de San José de Gracia*, (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1968), p. 283.
[178] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1276, Coroneo; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1278, Tepehuacan.
[179] U.S. Consulate in Guadalajara, "Municipal Government in Jalisco: 1968" 28 April 1968. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB92/mexelect_3.pdf. (Consulted 1 September 2013).

competition was sparse or non-existent and auscultación failed.[180] In these areas state governments and local oligarchies bypassed or bought off federal emissaries, repeatedly repressed anti-PRI movements in favor of more representative forms of local government, and forced these movements into alliance with radical guerilla groups.

However, in most rural municipalities state administrations and party functionaries allowed popular, reasonably representative nominees to contest and often win PRI nominations. In Mexico State, Nayarit, Veracruz, Coahuila and even Morelos, the blend of competition and auscultación led to a degree of pluralism and democracy, at least at the moment of candidate selection. Here, what Dahl and Lindblom term "polyarchy" trumped both elite bargaining and authoritarianism.[181] First, federal and state observers often wrote off the most venal, corrupt and unpopular candidates irrespective of their high level support. In Candela they rejected the local cacique as "extremely unpopular"; in Papantla, they abandoned a state treasury official and friend of former president, Miguel Alemán; and in Misantla they pointed out that the senator's candidate was a hitman for rancher paramilitaries.[182] In Michoacán, they even compiled a list of unacceptable candidates, including murderers, mass murderers, drug traffickers, cattle rustlers, fraudsters, hitmen, drunks, caciques and "aspirant caciques". Of the twenty-one listed, not one gained the nomination.[183] Second, even when selection involved two or more candidates, poorer, less-well connected, popular peasant nominees often succeeded.

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[180] There, was as Roger Bartra commented a "crisis of the structure of mediation". Quoted in Jorge Gutierrez, "Comunidad Agraria y Estructura del Poder" in R. Bartra et al, *Caciquismo y poder político en el México Rural* (UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones sociales, 1975), pp. 62-87, p. 64.
[181] A system defined as one where "non-leaders exercise a high degree of control over leaders", Dahl and Lindblom, *Politics*, pp. 171-2.
[182] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Coatzintla; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Candela; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Papantla; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Misantla.
[183] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1279, "Candidatos para presidencias munciipales".

In the thirty-seven conflicts for PRI nominations, which explicitly pitched “popular” against “unpopular” candidates, on twenty-six occasions the “popular” candidates won. In Atzacan, an ejidatario beat a rancher, linked to the local deputy; in Escobedo an ejidatario beat the founder of the local branch of the Union of Professionals; in Tecuala, the PRI candidate was a popular radio DJ, described as one of the "few able to act independently of the cacique "; in Ixtla an ejidatario who earned 600 pesos per month defeated the local money lender.[184]

By the 1960s, federal authorities, regional governments, and party officials had established broadly understood rules of the game for selecting the PRI’s municipal candidates. In state capitals and large cities, authoritarian picks by the state governor triumphed. But, outside these municipalities competition and auscultación encouraged the choice of more acceptable candidates and permitted a degree popular input. In provincial cities, candidates were selected through elite bargaining. At times, they made selections unanimously, but at times they divided over the top choice and were forced to vie for popular support. In the countryside, two selection processes emerged. In regions of limited land reform or intense commercial agriculture, ranchers and merchants allied with state functionaries to dominate local rule. A degree of authoritarianism, albeit of a fairly decentered type, was the rule. But, in most areas, internal nomination processes displayed a degree of pluralism. The party was no neutral arena, but neither was it entirely skewed to the politically-connected. Here, more representative candidates competed on a fairly

[184] AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Atzacan; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1980A, Tonayan; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Escobedo; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1281, Tecuala; AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1280, Ixtla. Or in Cuatrocienegas, the “far left” candidate and former leader of the ixtlero caravan beat two merchants and a well-backed fellow ejidatario. AGN, DGIPS, Caja 1286, Cuatrocienegas.

equal footing for the PRI nomination. And here, poorer, more popular peasant candidates often won.

Such a synchronic appreciation of selection processes is, of course, limited. Divisions between regions of what might be classified as authoritarian, elite bargaining, and polyarchical selection processes shifted over time. In towns with coherent business elites, corrupt bureaucrats sometimes succeeded. In regions with strong traditions of peasant rule, unpopular merchants might pick up nominations two or three terms in a row. Ejidatarios could become plutocrats and violent caciques. Yet, by the 1960s bottom up strategies of assassination, bargaining by riot, and contesting internal PRI nominations combined with top-down auscultación to encourage the fairly quick turnover of sclerotic oligarchies or exploitative caciques. During the late 1950s and 1960s, dethroning caciques was almost as popular as writing about them. And dozens including Juvencio Nochebuena, the Princes of Naranja, Fernando Parra, Luis Rodríguez, and Aquiles de la Peña, ended up powerless, poisoned, or shot.[185] When the nephew of the well-liked president of San José de Gracia closed cantinas, upped taxes and fines and acquired the nickname "Uruchurtu" he only lasted six months.[186] Anthropologists, who scoured Morelos and Puebla in search of powerful oligarchies, found that social movements regularly forcibly replaced them with more popular candidates.[187] Fernando Benitez

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[185] Rubin, Decentering, pp. 64-5; Schryer, *Ethnicity and Class*, p 87; Friedrich, *Princes*, p. 76; Genz, Entrepreneurship, p. 256; Ramon Alonso Pérez Escutia, *Taximaroa: Hisoria de un Pueblo Michoacano* (Morelia: Instituto Michoacáno de Cultura, 1986), pp. 389-397; Iñigo Laviada, *Los caciques de la sierra* (Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1975), p. 131; *El Imparcial*, 5 May 1959.

[186] The nickname referred to the modernizing and rather authoritarian head of the Federal District, Ernesto Uruchurtu. González, *Pueblo*, p. 236.

[187] Varela, *Procesos politicos*, **p. 34**; Luisa Paré, "Caciquismo y estructura de poder en la sierra norte de Puebla" in R. Bartra et al*, Caciquidmo y poder politico en el México Rural* , (UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones sociales, 1975), p. 48; Elena Azaola Garrido, Tepalcingo, la dependencia política de un

discovered that rebellious ejidatarios had removed the cacique of Muna, despite repression and intimidation.[188] Finally, even when oligarchies or caciques remained in place, the overlap of modern, constitutional, and traditional forms of government often permitted some space for political autonomy. In Chihuahua, Nayarit, Michoacán, Oaxaca, and Chiapas, indigenous groups carved out distinct, if somewhat limited, autonomous zones besides official authorities.[189] In more Catholic zones, religious organizations maintained broadly separate spheres of influence.[190] In San José de Gracia, most major decisions were made by popular vote at mass assemblies held by the local priest on the patio of the local school.[191] Even in ejidos, there was a "species of democracy *en pequeño*".[192] And in the cities, squatters and market traders may have had little input into municipal elections but at the level of the barrio, they often overturned corrupt functionaries or established their own organizations and elected their own leaders.[193]

Conclusion

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municipio de Morelos" in Elena Azaola Garrido and Esteban Krotz, *Los campesinos de la tierra de Zapata III: Política y conflicto* (Mexico City: SEP, INAH, 1976); Patricia Arias Lucia Bazán, *Demandas y Conflicto: El Poder Politico en un pueblo de Morelos* (CIS-INAH, 1979).

[188] Benitez, *Los Indios*, IV pp. 517-8.

[189] Juan Luis Sariego Rodriguez, *El Indigenismo en la Tarahumara, Identidad, comunidad , relaciones interetnicas y desarrollo en la Sierra de Chihuahau* (Mexico City: INAH, 2001), p. 155, 172; María del Carmen Ventura Patino, *Disputas por el goberno local en Tarecuato, Michoacán, 1942-1999* (Colegio de Michoacán, 2003), pp. 52-3; Gildardo Gonzalez Ramos, *Los Coras*, (Mexico City, INI, 1972), pp. 79, 91; Laurent Corbeil, "El Instituto Nacional Indigenista y la reforma del municipio de Oxchuc, Chiapas" in Sergio Miranda Pacheco, (ed.), *Nación y municpio en Mexico, siglos XIX y XX* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2012), **pp. 265-302**; Laviada, *Los caciques*, p. 108.

[190] Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, p. 273;

[191] Gonzalez, *Pueblo*, p. 290.

[192] Pilar Calvo and Roger Bartra, "Estructura de Poder, Clases Dominantes y Lucha Ideologica en el Mexico Rural" in R. Bartra et al*, Caciquidmo y poder político en el México Rural* , (UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, 1975), p. 112; Billie R. DeWalt, *Modernization in a Mexican Ejido: A Study of Economic Adaption* (Cambridge: CUP, 1979), p. 76.

[193] Carlos Vélez-Ibañez, *Rituals of Marginality: Politics, process, and culture change in urban central Mexico, 1969-1974* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 121; Antonio Ugalde et al, *The Urbanization Process of a Poor Mexican Neighborhood* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974).

During the 1960s, , students, discontented peasants, and middle-class groups mobilized against the one party state. Many called for “democracy”, often defined as the ability to select their own representatives.[194] At times, the state complied. But often, authorities met demands with repression. On 2 October 1968, soldiers murdered over 300 pro-democracy students in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico City. Over the following decades, activists, scholars, and opposition politicians accused the state of authoritarianism. They were often fully justified. The PRI continued to use fraud and intimidation to dominate presidential, senatorial, and congressional elections. And under Presidents Luis Echeverria and José López Portillo military, state forces disappeared or murdered thousands of protestors. In regions of Hidalgo, Guerrero, Sinaloa, and Jalisco, Mexicans experienced levels of violence and state repression, similar to those of other Cold War Latin American countries.[195] Yet, at the level of municipal government, the level which “arouse[d] the most political interest in the average” Mexican, state authorities were careful to allow a degree of pluralism.[196] In many areas, the poor were excluded from office (as they were in most Western democracies), and in some areas, governor’s nominees or Don Perpetuos won.[197] Yet, in many others, auscultación, competition for PRI selection, and popular input encouraged the selection of popular candidates tied to local communities and enmeshed in the networks of civil society. Many candidates were young, many were peasants, and even in the big

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[194] Zolov, *Refried Elvis*, p. 131.
[195] Oikon Solano and García Uguarte, *Movimientos armados*, vol. II; Schryer, *Ethnicity and Class*, p. 145; Cedillo and Herrera Calderón, *Challenging*; Castellanos, *México armado*, Chapter 5; Aguayo, *La Charola*, pp.256-87; AGN, IPS, Caja 1711 C; Enrique Condes Lara, *Represión y rebelión en México (1959-1985): Los años dorados del priato y los pilares ocultos del poder* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrua, 2007).
[196] U.S. Consulate in Guadalajara, “Municipal Government in Jalisco: 1968” 28 April 1968. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB92/mexelect_3.pdf
[197] In the U.S. only 5% of political leaders came from the working class during the 1970s. Roderic A. Camp, *Entrepreneurs and Politics in Twentieth-Century Mexico* (New York: OUP, 1989), p. 58.

cities, businessmen and industrialists had to demonstrate a degree of popular appeal.

In many ways such findings back up the work of recent scholars of Golden Age politics, who have argued that even at the height of its power, the PRI state was never as authoritarian, repressive, or autocratic as later its critics claimed. Divisions and internal competition abounded, and at the local level, some vestiges of democracy, albeit it a highly circumscribed version, remained. At the same time, such conclusions also question the more overarching claims of both scholars of Mexico's Cold War and its subsequent democratization. By establishing a rather crude binary between state authoritarianism and popular democracy and constructing a unilinear narrative of emancipation, they not only fail to reflect reality, but also fail to explain the longevity of the PRI. Authoritarianism existed, but it also had limits. These limits not only circumscribed Cold War violence, but also undergirded the regime's resilience. Subnational pluralism coexisted with subnational authoritarianism.[198] Although the student activists of Cuiliacán or the peasants of Guerrero experienced the 1960s and 1970s as times of restricted representation and repression, students and peasants in Morelos, Mexico State, Nayarit, and Coahuila often won local elections as PRI candidates. And while popular mobilization, institutional changes, and economic crises eventually ushered in multi-party democracy, rural Mexicans continued to vote for the PRI. Some were

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[198] For the persistence of "subnational authoritarianism" during Mexico's democratization, see Wayne A. Cornelius, Todd A. Eisenstadt, Jane Hindley, *Subnational Politics and Democratization in Mexico* (San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1999).

forced, but many others appreciated the rules of the game. The party regained the presidency in 2012. Even today, the PRI still controls 62% of local governments and, despite over a decade of democracy many municipalities have yet to select non-PRI rule.[199]

[199] http://www.fenamm.org.mx/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=187&Itemid=123 and Leticia Robles de la Rosa, "Fieles al PRI", http://www.tedf.org.mx/sala_prensa/sintesis/sm2013/may/130529/130529_oc_fieles_al_pri.pdf