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Hasta en las mejores familias:
Madrazo and the PRI in the 2006
Presidential Elections

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Abstract

This work examines how the possibilities of winning an election affect the strategies of the party's factional leaders toward the presidential campaign. Using an original data base of the strategies of 132 PRI leaders to support or not the presidential campaign of Roberto Madrazo en 2006, the paper shows that when a candidate is weak at the polls, his internal support can depend on the distribution of selection incentives: legislative candidacies. When Madrazo fell to third place in the polls between January and March of 2006, he did not lose support because many leaders still hoped to win a spot on the ballot. However, once these candidacies were awarded, those who were not included changed their support strategies and began to attack Madrazo in the press, which harmed his campaign even more.

Resumen

Este trabajo estudia cómo las bajas posibilidades de victoria de Roberto Madrazo –candidato a la presidencia por parte del PRI– cambiaron las estrategias de los líderes de su partido hacia su campaña. El estudio utiliza una base original de las decisiones de 132 líderes priístas de apoyar o no la campaña de Madrazo para mostrar que cuando un candidato es débil, su apoyo interno depende de la distribución de las candidaturas legislativas. Cuando Madrazo ya andaba mal en las encuestas de opinión entre enero y marzo de 2006 no perdió apoyo; sin embargo, una vez que las candidaturas fueron distribuidas, los que no habían ganado una oportunidad cambiaron sus estrategias de apoyar (en público) a no apoyar, lastimando aún más la campaña del candidato del PRI.

Introduction

This work aims to understand the relationship between party organization and the Party of the Institutional Revolution's (PRI) presidential campaign—specifically, how the party elite's willingness to support or abandon the presidential candidate affected the campaign of Roberto Madrazo, who was the former leader of the party. This piece explains how a candidate with a reputation for betraying his closest party allies, and his minimal possibilities of winning the presidential contest allowed party leaders within the once-dominant PRI to alter their strategies toward its presidential candidate, Roberto Madrazo. Specifically, when Madrazo still had hopes of defeating his opponents at the end of 2005, he garnered lukewarm support from partisan leaders. But when his possibilities fell in the spring of 2006, many party leaders took advantage of Madrazo's weakness to criticize publicly his political background and his campaign strategy, while openly questioning his ability to win the race; all actions designed to weaken him further. A major factor can help explain why and when many PRI national party leaders changed their stance toward their party's candidate during the course of the election process: the distribution of legislative candidacies produced both winners and losers, with the losers often criticizing the weakened candidate, who could not retaliate as his possibilities of winning the election fell from low to non-existent. This article will also describe how the candidate's falling party support actually helped undermine the campaign. If the PRI's leadership base had supported the candidate, campaign events would have been better attended, the press, both electronic and written, would have reported on these successes, there would have been far fewer reports of party desertions, and voters would not have been subjected to the specter of a party in crisis, which might have influenced their vote, leading to a far less devastating defeat for the candidate, and a better showing in the legislative elections.

Studying the relation between party structure and campaigning is an important topic, but one little examined in the political science literature. On the campaigning side, far more is known about the importance of primaries and their posterior effects on campaigns (Aldrich, 1980; McCann *et al.*, 1996). Yet, the American literature on primaries does not delve deeply enough into the enormous potential for damage that party leaders can inflict on a presidential campaign as evidenced by the PRI's case. The weight of campaign events and media appeals on voting has also been studied (Hillygus and Jackman, 2003; Shaw and Roberts, 2000), but these works tend to ignore how grass roots mobilization fits into the wider campaign, an important issue in Mexican electioneering. Finally, there has been greater attention paid in the US case over the last decade to the important role played by local party organizations in campaigning, even for presidential races (Beck *et al.*, 1997;

Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1992; Jackson, 1996). Contrary to expectations about weak parties in the US, Beck *et al.* (1997) found that county party affiliates were very active in US presidential electioneering, and were important in grass roots organizing. The local party affiliates were considered more central actors than the presidential campaign structure at the local level because they had better knowledge and voluntary man power. Jackson (1996: 425) writing on congressional campaigns, notes that district voters go to the polls in higher numbers when “vigorous campaigns (are) waged by strategic elites increasing political excitement and the flow of information...”

On the organizational side, the academic literature has explored how party organizations change (Denver, 1989; Gibson *et al.*, 1983; Mair, 1997; Scarrow, 1996), the importance of the federal form of government on parties (Chhibber, 2005), and how candidate selection can affect party structure (Gallagher and Marsh, 1988; Hazan, 1996). However, many of these works are often vague on how the pressures of campaigning –and not simply electoral results in general– can affect a party’s organization, in particular, its internal cohesion and vice versa.

The PRI’s presidential campaigning is not solely run “in the air”, that is, through mass media appeals organized by the national party, but also on “the ground”, though campaign events and voter mobilization drives. Disaffected party leaders used a faltering campaign as a chance to alter their strategies with an eye toward future gain in the post-electoral period. Because party leaders were willing to openly criticize the presidential candidate and his campaign, they weakened his electioneering effort, both the advertising and territorial elements.

There are many ways one could examine the relation between party organization and presidential campaigning, such as measuring changes in the number of party activists or the activation of different organizational bases of the party. This paper will employ a different and unique measure: the author made a list of the national party leaders of the PRI who have been active during the past ten years and examined newspaper reports to track these leaders’ strategies of support (or lack thereof) for the presidential candidate across a 14 month period that made up the entire presidential election process (which stretched from the pre-nomination period in the spring of 2005 to election day on July 2, 2006). The months-long process was divided into four periods to study how different trends and events over its course affected party leaders’ strategies: the first period covers from the spring of 2005, when politicians began to mobilize support for the nomination battle up through the destruction of a strong potential presidential nominee in October, 2005. The second period is made up of the months between October and the beginning of the official campaign in January, when Madrazo was forming his team and was still in second place in opinion polls. The third phase is between the beginning of the campaign and late March to early April when legislative

candidates were chosen. The last period covers the final months of the campaign through the PRI's third place finish on July 2, 2006. One should expect different types of strategies to be followed depending on the different period involved, the PRI's electoral chances, and the potential for winning a legislative candidacy.¹

All PRI national leaders active in the past decade were identified *before* the campaign began to help guard against selection bias, with 132 included in the data set. Those who were identified as national party leaders include: current and recent PRI governors, senators whose terms ended in July of 2006 and a randomly selected sub-set of those who left in Senate in 2000. Committee leaders from the Chamber of Deputies in the 2003 legislature were included, as were current members of the CEN (including leaders of the party's sectors), and those working in the 2000-2002 period.² Thus, members of many PRI factions are on the list —both those tied to Madrazo and those who had fought against him. State party leaders were excluded, as they have different spheres of influence and are normally tied to a national leader.

This chapter will be organized as follows: first, a short introductory section will present the issue of Madrazo and his relations with the rest of the party. Then, the nomination and early campaigning efforts will be described, followed by an examination of both the media and territorial aspects of the presidential campaign. During each section, different aspects of the relation between the candidate and the party's leaders will be addressed. In the conclusions, the interactive effects between the candidate and his party will be discussed.

1. Madrazo and the PRI

As is widely known, the PRI was the hegemonic governing party of Mexico since its birth as the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) in 1929 to the loss of its legislative majority in the Chamber of Deputies in 1997 and ouster from the presidency in 2000. Despite the loss of Los Pinos in 2000, the PRI had high hopes of retaking the presidency in 2006. The governing party between 2000 and 2006, the National Action Party (PAN), was perceived as weak and inefficient largely because President Vicente Fox and his delegation in congress were unable to gain passage for crucial reform bills to the energy, labor, and fiscal sectors. The economy, though heavily tied to the United States, grew sluggishly, the number of jobs created was far lower than originally hoped, and immigration to the US grew to record numbers.

¹ 500 federal deputies and 128 senators are elected concurrently with the president, in addition to four state governors in Jalisco, Morelos, the Federal District, and Guanajuato. Chiapas and Tabasco elected governors in the months following the presidential elections.

² Former party leaders who had left politics, retired, or died were excluded from the sample.

During the last years of the Fox's six year term, the PRI under the leadership of Roberto Madrazo (who had won the party presidency in an internal party election in 2002), did remarkably well in state and municipal races, retaking the large and economically important state of Nuevo Leon and the smaller state of Nayarit, and losing only Guerrero in 2005.³ The PRI managed to hold 17 of the nation's 32 states, despite the onset of more fair and competed elections. Madrazo, as leader of the National Executive Committee (or CEN), took much of the credit for these electoral successes. In the 2003 mid-term Chamber elections, the PRI increased the number of seats it held, as the PAN's legislative delegation fell dramatically, in what was seen as a referendum vote against the PAN administration. While the PAN floundered in office, the future candidate for the center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) came under attack when his closest allies were charged with corruption in 2004 and then faced an attempt to disqualify him from the presidential race in 2005. These factors taken together gave the PRI possibilities for retaking the Presidency in 2006. Survey figures from as late as November of 2005 show him in second place behind the PRD's Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador (also known as AMLO) and ahead of the PAN's candidate Felipe Calderon.⁴

The story of Madrazo's rise to power within the PRI (and Mexican politics) is one of perceived treachery, fraud, corruption, and the willful destruction of party rivals. Madrazo gained as many enemies inside the party as outside of it, and his image as inconstant and unfaithful to his word would harm him during his campaign, both with voters and with his party brethren. His fame as an efficient political operator was first tarnished when he was accused of having "bought" his 1994 gubernatorial victory in Tabasco, spending on his race close to what was spent on the US presidential election that year (Eisenstadt, 1999). When his six year non-renewable term was almost up, he decimated his state's PRI affiliate by imposing his personal choice for PRI candidate for governor on the party's local leaders. Several of his close allies left the party and joined the PRD. The 2000 gubernatorial electoral results in Tabasco were actually revoked by the Federal Electoral Tribunal because of fraudulent activities on the part of the state PRI (although the PRI went on to win the electoral rematch).

After the PRI's presidential defeat in 2000, Madrazo became a natural leader within the party, and plotted to win the CEN presidency.⁵ In an

³ During the entire six year term, the PRI lost for the following states for the first time ever: Morelos, San Luis Potosí, Chiapas, Yucatán, Michoacán, and Guerrero.

⁴ Consulta Mitofsky (which consistently reported high preferences for Madrazo), had Madrazo in second place in November, 2005 at 33%, AMLO leading at 35%, and Calderón in third with 32%. See Consulta Mitofsky (2006).

⁵ Thanks in large part to Madrazo's complaints and threats, then President of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo organized an open party primary to nominate the party's 2000 presidential candidate instead of simply choosing his favorite. Madrazo lost the 1999 presidential primary and complained about the process's unfairness, but did not leave the party. This gave him enormous credibility with PRI members who were angry about the technocratic take-over of the party under Carlos Salinas, president from 1988 to 1994.

amusing turn of events that soured many members of the PRI against him, Madrazo was accused of perpetrating massive fraud against his own party brethren to win the 2002 CEN election. Once he was ensconced in the party presidency, Madrazo began to make promises to the Fox administration and business leaders on structural reforms. However, after the PRI's strong showing in the 2003 mid-term elections, he used a blocking strategy to paralyze the legislature on important reforms to the antiquated labor, energy, and tax laws.

During this period, Madrazo made a fateful decision to attempt to destroy his erstwhile ally, Elba Esther Gordillo, General Secretary of the PRI and leader of the powerful National Teachers' Union (SNTE). During her tenure as General Secretary of the CEN, Gordillo had also been elected to the Chamber in the 2003 mid-term elections, and had openly campaigned to become the leader of the PRI's legislative delegation, promising to use her close personal relationship with President Fox to push through structural reforms. Madrazo demonstrated his lack of a firm policy stance on structural reform and his willingness to destroy his political allies when he took advantage of a rebellion by the PRI's backbenchers against a fiscal reform bill to oust Gordillo from her Chamber leadership post in late 2003. Gordillo stayed in the PRI, but also helped form a party that would eventually compete against her own party in the 2006 presidential elections.

By 2005, Madrazo in his role as party president stated that he preferred not to use an expensive and potentially divisive party primary to choose the presidential candidate, but other leaders within the party decided to mobilize against his potential candidacy and formed within the PRI a group known as Democratic Unity or more informally, TUCOM (All United against Madrazo). TUCOM was made up of modernizing PRI governors who had just left or were about to vacate their governor posts, as well as the PRI's senate leader.⁶ Using a complicated choice mechanism, TUCOM would forward a single candidate to run against Madrazo in the open party primary, (which they had insisted upon and won), and the losing TUCOM competitors would support the winner against Madrazo.

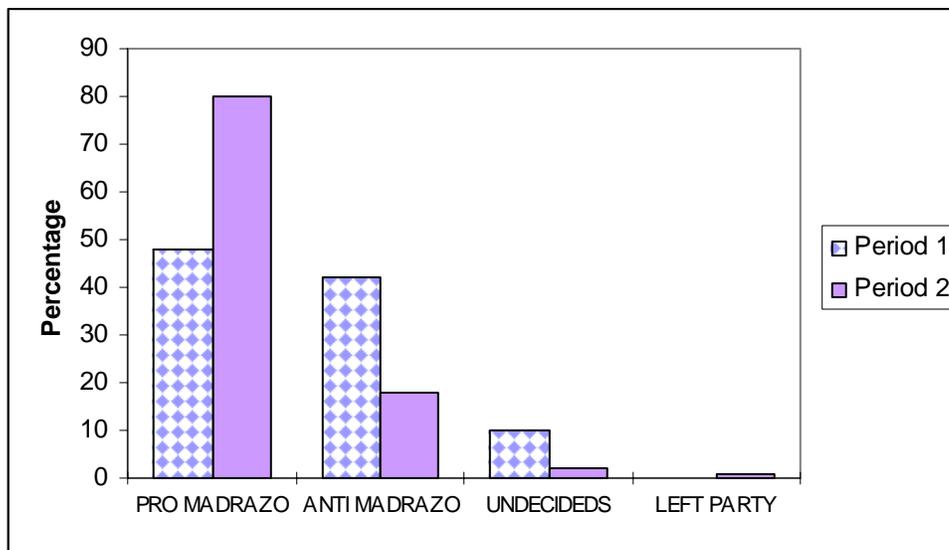
Madrazo did not enjoy the full support of many members of his party because of his reputation for destroying his enemies and friends, as he did once again in the nomination struggle. Arturo Montiel, former governor of the large and economically important Estado de Mexico, won the TUCOM's internal selection process and became Madrazo's rival in the primary. Between July and September, preferences among PRI supporters for Montiel had climbed from 40% (vs. 45% for Madrazo) to 48%, with Madrazo's numbers

⁶ TUCOM's leaders included former governors: Enrique Martínez y Martínez, of Coahuila, Tomás Yarrington of Tamaulipas, Miguel Alemán of Veracruz, Arturo Montiel of Estado de México, Manuel Ángel Nuñez Soto of Hidalgo and Natividad González Paras, governor of Nuevo León, , Eduardo Bours, governor of Sonora, and Enrique Jackson, former leader of the PRI fraction in the Senate.

falling to 38% in September.⁷ Yet, Montiel’s nomination hopes were quickly destroyed when allegations of his immense fortune were leaked to the press in October, 2005. This opened the way for an almost uncontested Madrazo victory in the nomination process, but harmed the party’s campaign enormously as the corruption charges against Montiel simply reinforced the image many voters already held of the PRI at large.⁸

During Period 1, which extends from the spring and summer of 2005 to the destruction of the TUCOM candidacy in October, Madrazo did not enjoy overwhelming support from his party colleagues. The pro and anti-Madrazo forces were quite evenly split, with about 10% of the party’s leaders refusing to weigh in publicly, as seen below in Graph 2. During the period between the end of Montiel and the beginning of the official presidential campaign in January 2006, Madrazo enjoyed his highest levels of support. When Montiel was carried bloodied from the field, many PRI leaders who had initially supported TUCOM shifted to the pro-Madrazo camp.

GRAPH 1. MADRAZO SUPPORT OVER PERIODS ONE AND TWO



Most members of the PRI and political analysts expected Madrazo to simply cancel the nominating primary and call a session of the National Political Council (CPN) to validate his foregone candidacy in November. However, a political non-entity won the right to compete in the primary, forcing the party to organize an expensive nationwide election that garnered no political rewards in terms of energizing the party’s base or showing voters that the PRI was an internally democratic party.

⁷ This telephone poll was taken of 605 PRI sympathizers. “Cuestionan priistas honestidad de Montiel”, *Reforma*, October 17, 2005.

⁸ Raymundo Riva Palacio, “Estrictamente personal”, *El Universal*, November 11, 2005.

Despite Madrazo's jump in support from within his party, his history of treachery came back to haunt him as his former ally Gordillo used the Teachers Union's resources to organize an anti-Madrazo campaign. Billboards and flyers appeared in November and December asking, "Do you believe Madrazo? Me neither". Her supporters showed up at early campaign events, heckling the candidate. As we have seen, Montiel's disgrace also harmed the Madrazo campaign as private tracking polls showed the PRI lost up to ten points in the states in which the TUCOM was strong. The PRI candidate and his team made another decision in December that turned out to be a mistake: intent on winning independent voters, the PRI's team decided it would run in a coalition with the Green Party (PVEM), whose candidate Bernardo de la Garza, had spent millions of pesos during the second half of 2005 in a successful bid to win public support. With de la Garza's popularity around 8%, the Green Party sold its support to its alliance partner at a high cost, winning 12% of its legislative seats that the PRI-PVEM would go on to win. Unfortunately for the PRI, the voter support for the Greens vanished when the PVEM made its alliance with the PRI, and de la Garza quit the Alliance for Mexico and refused to campaign with the Madrazo.

Madrazo's campaign was off to a rocky start; he had fought with the leader of the largest union in Latin America, his political allies in Tabasco, and the former governor of the largest state in Mexico. He had been tied to two electoral scandals (three, if one counts the 2002 CEN election). His negative ratings were high at 40%, and his primary was an expensive disaster.⁹ What awaited him was the strategic behavior of his own party's leaders as the actual campaign progressed.

2. The Early Campaign

As mentioned above, the PRI campaign depended on both nationwide media appeals and the territorial drive. The media strategy was run by members of the CEN who were also close allies of Madrazo, and during the first half of the campaign, the messages were largely made up of attacks on López Obrador¹⁰ and the Fox administration. The appeals in the first part of the six-month campaign centered on the phrase: "Qué las cosas se hagan" (so things get done) and "Yo sí puedo" (I can do it). The problem for the PRI candidate was that no one could know what things would get done because many questioned Madrazo's democratic credibility and his economic stance, which seemed determined by short-term political expediency alone. Madrazo and his team of

⁹ Consulta Mitofsky, www.consulta.com.mx also reports that in December of 2005, the PRI had the highest percentage of probable voters identifying with the party, 8 points more than those of the PAN, and 11 points higher than for the PRD.

¹⁰ The Madrazo media team came out with a spot questioning AMLO's honesty which was later recalled by the Federal Electoral Tribunal, long after the spot had run its natural course and been taken of the air.

advisors made a concerted effort to burnish his tarnished personal image in the advertising campaign; for example, by not using his last name (slang for “hit” or “slug”). The team also used his incapacitated wife in TV ads to convince voters to trust her husband.¹¹

Madrazo’s criticism of Fox centered on two issues: crime and economic growth. Yet, the PRI candidate had to walk a fine line of his economic platform. He criticized the so-called neo-liberal policies of the PAN and Calderón, while also accusing López Obrador of populist tendencies. But Madrazo’s campaign team found it difficult to produce an alternative development plan. The candidate’s plan to improve public safety centered on harsher penalties for several major crimes, but he did not appear to have a serious strategy for attacking the root causes of the enormous problems of corruption, drug-trafficking, and organized bands of kidnappers and car thieves active in several important cities, many of whom are tied to former and active police units.

The first half of the national media campaign culminated in the April 25th debate, in which the PRD candidate chose not to participate, leaving only Madrazo to joust with Calderón (with the presence of the two minor candidates as well). The nationally televised debate turned into a failure for Madrazo and a clear victory for Calderón, which clinched his rise to first place in the polls (for a few weeks), and Madrazo’s increasing irrelevance in the presidential race.¹²

During February and March, the territorial campaign began in earnest. The PRI has always (in one form or another) followed a two-prong strategy in its territorial campaigning: the first is made up of visits and campaign speeches given by the presidential candidate in front of large crowds, and the second is the grassroots canvassing and mobilization drives. Both parts of the territorial campaign depend on support from the PRI governors and mayors, and other PRI leaders in those states not governed by the PRI. If partisan governors and mayors choose to, they can aid the presidential electioneering effort in many ways, such as mobilizing voter drives, organizing campaign events, and paying for local media. Almost 40% of Mexico’s population lives in states governed by the PRI. So, if the party’s governors place their electoral machinery at Madrazo’s disposal, the PRI could win a large percentage of these votes, enabling it to vanquish its foes on Election Day.¹³ Furthermore, once the deputy and senate races are underway, there can be a great deal of

¹¹ However, reports surfaced at the end of 2005 of the real estate fortune owned by Madrazo, which he was unable to explain, given his salaries over the years as a public servant.

¹² The PRI candidate was nervous: his eyes shifted back and forth, his voice was hoarse, he made rude attacks on a minor candidate, and when he held up a piece of paper to make a point, his hands shook visibly. Calderón, meanwhile, was calm, smiling, and well-spoken. Roberto Campa, the candidate of Gordillo’s New Alliance Party (Panal), spent most of his interventions criticizing Madrazo, and ended the debate by accusing him of not having paid his taxes in the last few years.

¹³ Raymundo Riva Palacios, “Estrictamente personal”, *El Universal*, November, 2005.

combining of forces: the deputy hopefuls can appear with the presidential candidate, they can use his flyers and posters, or they can ignore his electioneering efforts. Thus, if the candidate's relation with his party is weak and contingent on selective goods such as candidacies to legislative posts, it could affect his ability to win support "on the ground". Campaign events will be half empty, governors will not push his campaign with state economic leaders, fund raising will be stifled, and voters, even if they do not read newspapers or attend campaign events themselves, will eventually hear of the candidate's inability to win support among his own party members.

Throughout the course of the campaign, Madrazo reportedly visited more than 250 municipalities, mostly large cities, state capitals, and Mexico City's sprawling bedroom communities, such as Ecatepec.¹⁴ However, the candidate ran into several problems: he was heckled and the campaign stops were badly attended, which were reported in the press.¹⁵ Stump speeches were and are used in Mexico as a demonstration of the candidate's popularity with voters and they are signs of the ability or willingness of the local PRI apparatus to organize and mobilize voters on behalf of the candidate. These events are an important element of the coverage of the campaign on the nightly news and press reports. The problem of low attendance at campaign stops would become far more pronounced in the last period of the campaign.

The second aspect of territorial campaigning is grass roots organizing, carried out by party volunteers, and designed to reach into voters' homes and workplace. The national PRI had begun to organize over a million vote promoters who made informal visits and talked with neighbors under the argument that because the media campaign was not going well, the candidate's message had to be reinforced with personal contacts.

Legislative candidates are chosen in late March and early April, so one might expect that most PRI leaders would *not* abandon ship during the first three months of the official campaign (between January and March) no matter how badly the candidate is doing, as they would wait to see if they appeared on the finalized lists of candidates. As expected, there is little change between the pro-Madrazo figures between the second and third periods, with his supporters falling from 80 to 75% of the universe of 132 national leaders.

By the end of these first three months, there was no doubt that Madrazo had relinquished second place to Calderón, who began surmounting the ten point difference that separated himself from the frontrunner, López Obrador. According to Consulta Mitofsky, Madrazo dropped from his high of 33% in December to 27% in April, while Calderón rose to lead the race at 35%, with

¹⁴ "Madrazo ofrece limpiar al gobierno de corrupción", *El Universal*, June 26, 2006.

¹⁵ Madrazo had an almost pathological problem with arriving to events on time, causing the attendees to leave by the time he had arrived. Low attendance was reported everywhere, for example in Guanajuato, Ciro Pérez Silva, "Yo no busco en la política un salario; vivo de mis rentas", *La Jornada*, May 31, 2006.

AMLO trailing by one point.¹⁶ Falling to a distant third by April was extremely problematic as voters would naturally begin to see the election as a two person race and even if the PRI were some people's first choice, they might vote their second preference to avoid their worst alternative.

With the prospects of a Madrazo victory becoming increasingly remote, legislative candidacies became more crucial to cementing PRI leaders' loyalty to the Madrazo campaign. If Madrazo had been positioned to compete with López Obrador, one would have expected few PRI leaders to abandon him, even if they did not win a candidacy, because they could either expect to be a part of his administration, or they would have feared angering a future president. Because of Madrazo's problematic political past and his dealings with his own party members, he had weakened the normal relations of support one would find in a party, and had to depend on the distribution of selective, excludable benefits, most importantly, the legislative candidacies.

The PRI has had a long and difficult history of trying to adapt and at times democratize its selection procedures in the face of growing competition. Yet, in 2006 Madrazo had no qualms against imposing candidates on his party, and scrapped the nescient primary system that had been partially implemented in the 2003 legislative mid-terms.¹⁷ Under the terms of the Alliance for Mexico, the Governing Body of the Alliance was empowered to generate a single list of candidates for each type of electoral formula (simple majority and proportional representation lists for both the Chamber and Senate) leaving the National Political Council (CPN) to deliver an up-down vote on the lists — its members could not change the order of the names on the closed PR lists, nor could they add or remove names.¹⁸

Winning the right to represent the party in the legislative elections was a way to survive politically regardless of Madrazo's electoral fate; therefore, the incentives to compete for a candidacy were extremely high, and if one did not win a spot on the ballot, there would be few reasons to support the candidate to the end. Only a few PRI politicians criticized Madrazo *before* the lists were drawn up as a way to threaten the candidate into including them, as seen in the numbers mentioned above: the candidate only lost 5% support between his high of 80% in the second period and the third period.¹⁹ But once

¹⁶ "Encuesta nacional en viviendas: Segunda quincena de junio 2006." www.consulta.com.mx. The Grupo Reforma poll had Madrazo in third place in March at 25%, trailing Calderón at 31% and AMLO at 41%! By April, Calderón had climbed to 38% and first place, with AMLO dropping to second at 35%, and Madrazo 15% behind the front runner at only 23%. See Alejandro Moreno and Roberto Gutiérrez, "Pelean por votos volátiles", *Reforma*, May 24, 2006.

¹⁷ According to the PRI's statutes, candidates can be chosen either in a party primary or through district level conventions (or customary law for indigenous municipalities). See Article 25 of the PRI Statutes. However, these rules no longer hold if the party runs in an alliance, as it did with the Green Party in 2006.

¹⁸ For more on the Alliance with the Green Party, see "Dictamen al acuerdo del órgano de gobierno de la coalición "Alianza por México" por el que se elaboran las propuestas de candidatos a senadores de la república y Diputados Federales al Congreso General...

¹⁹ Carlos Flores Rico and Heladio Ramírez are two examples: they questioned and criticized the candidate publicly in the third period, won candidacies, and then supported Madrazo throughout the fourth phase of the campaign.

the lists were finalized, the contingent nature of Madrazo's support among PRI leaders became apparent. Between Period 3 and Period 4, Madrazo supporters fell from 75% of all leaders to 54%, a loss of a quarter of his allies. As we shall see below, most of those who switched strategies towards Madrazo did so because they did not win candidacies, and they used the months of May and June to weaken the president candidate through attacks in the press.²⁰

These public manifestations of discontent took many forms: some questioned Madrazo's ability to win the election;²¹ others, such as Senator Manuel Bartlett, recommended that PRI supporters should vote for the PRD candidate to avoid a PAN victory. Others began to discuss openly how to reorganize the party's executive committee once Madrazo had lost,²² while some even began as late as May to call for a substitute candidate to take Madrazo's place on the ticket.²³

While party leaders in other parties involved in democratic elections around the world probably have the same concerns as the PRI leaders did and voice them privately, very few do so in their respective nations' press. What did the PRI leaders hope to gain through attacking their party's president candidate once the lists had been drawn up and their names excluded? The sheer numbers could not have made a difference in the final vote tally, and according to many polls, Madrazo was already so far behind, their efforts to weaken him were probably redundant. Furthermore, the coattail effect between the presidential race and its legislative counterparts is quite strong; many PRI leaders were, in effect, driving down the party's vote and seat totals in the majority districts for both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. This paper argues that the public attacks went beyond anger at an unpopular presidential candidate and his team. Rather, because of the low poll numbers, PRI leaders no longer feared Madrazo and were attempting to weaken him dramatically as to insure that his political group within the PRI would be destroyed or at least severely weakened after the elections, opening up the National Executive Committee to new leaders and groups in the post-election period.

It is important to note another major finding of this paper's research on party leaders' strategies: most national PRI leaders did not leave the party (only nine of out the universe of 132), while far more state leaders did choose to exit the party. State leaders are those whose posts are or have been primarily in state politics or at the municipal level. During the course of the

²⁰ Support during the third and fourth periods took several forms: claiming Madrazo could win the election, appearing with him at campaign events, mobilizing grass roots voter drives, and finally, calling all those who criticized the candidate traitors.

²¹ Jesús Murillo Karam openly declared that Madrazo could not win and his party in Hidalgo should concentrate on doing well in the congressional races, not on saving Madrazo's campaign.

²² Senador Mario González Zarur was plotting openly in June to help ensure the CEN presidency for his ally Jackson.

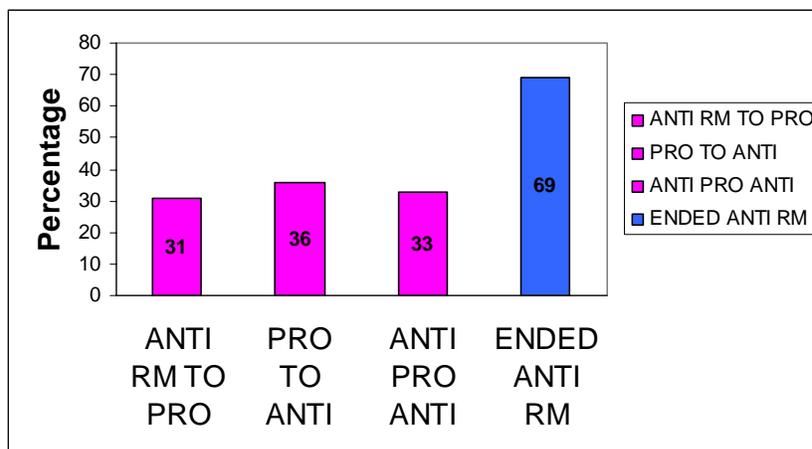
²³ Governor Peña Nieto apparently organized a group of governors to this end and failed.

campaign, important party leaders from the states began to desert the PRI's ranks, including former state party leaders in Guerrero, a former lieutenant governor of the state of Coahuila, several leaders of the state SNTE in Nuevo León, Querétaro and Coahuila.²⁴ One can ask why so many local leaders were willing to leave the PRI while their national counterparts were reluctant to do so. One possible answer is that the payoff structure is different for local and national leaders. National leaders have fewer options with either the PAN or PRD because of their history or political experience, but if they could destroy Madrazo's influence and weight within the PRI, they could take over the party and derive benefits from its control. State leaders do not have this option. Rather, they are (by their nature) better poised to win direct elections in the state, and can use other party labels to do so.

The following two graphs will help show the strong relation between candidacies and the loss of leadership support for Madrazo. In the aggregate, 39% of the party leaders stayed loyal throughout the four periods, 14% were openly anti-Madrado throughout, while 46% of the leaders switched their strategies in one of the four periods. Graph 2 disaggregates this "switcher" group into three types: those who shifted from the anti-Madrado group to the pro-Madrado faction, those who were pro-Madrado in one of the first two periods and then began to criticize him publicly in a later period, and finally those who jumped from the anti to the pro-group, before ending up in Period 4 as Madrazo critics. These three groups are evenly distributed, but it is worthwhile to note that 69% of all switchers ended up in the anti-Madrado camp.

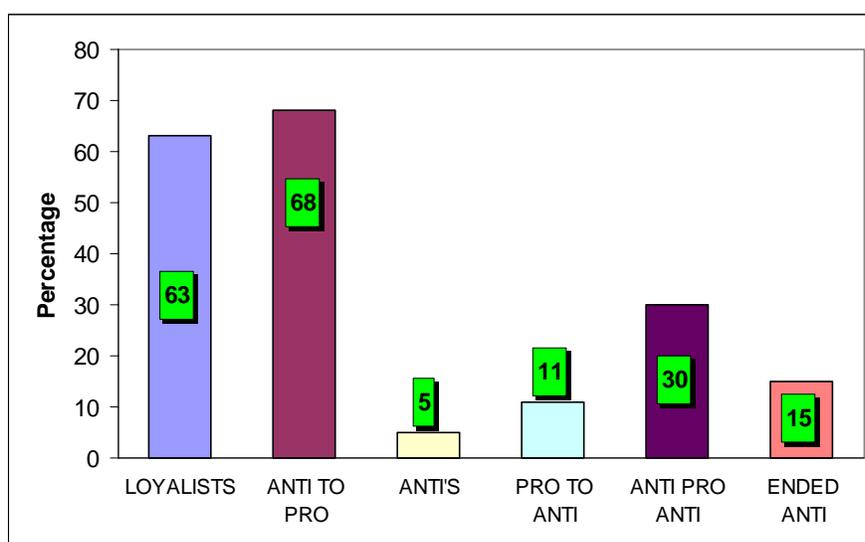
²⁴ In San Luis Potosí, el PAN nominated an ex-member of the PRI and leader of the state's SNTE to an elected post. In the state of Jalisco, federal deputy Gonzalo Moreno Arévalo was named as the general coordinator of the PAN's gubernatorial candidate. In Chihuahua, a member of the last state government of Chihuahua was nominated to a senate candidacy for the PRD. A leader of the PRI in Chiapas left the party when he was denied the gubernatorial nomination. Members of the CNC in Yucatán threatened to leave the party. The party's candidate for governor in Guanajuato declined his candidacy when his ally was denied the senate nomination.

GRAPH 2. DIFFERENT TYPES OF SWITCHERS



In Graph 3 below, the paper looks at the relation between winning a candidacy and belonging to different types of groups, from the loyalists to the anti's to the disaggregated groups of switchers. The two groups that supported Madrazo into the fourth period were by far the most successful at winning a place on the ballot, at 63 and 68% respectively. Of those who were consistently anti-Madrazo across the four periods, only 5% won the right to compete for another post. The pro-to-anti groups were not much more successful; only one in ten became PRI candidates, while the jumpers did better at 30%, they won less than half of the percent of the loyalist group. The average success rate of all those ending in the anti-Madrazo group is 15%.

GRAPH 3. DIFFERENT GROUPS AND THEIR CANDIDACY PERCENTAGES



If one examines the timing of the shifts in support between Periods 3 and 4, the importance of legislative nominations in Madrazo's falling leadership support becomes clearer. Of the 132 PRI leaders, 40 had at one point been pro-Madrazo and then switched to an anti-Madrazo strategy.

40 PRO's to ANTI

73% switched between Periods 3 and 4
17% switched earlier.

Almost three quarters of these pro to anti-Madrazo switchers changed their strategies between the Periods 3 and 4, after the candidacies were announced, lending credence to the argument that their changing strategies were due to being excluded from the candidate lists, not from major ideological differences with the candidate.

Of the 21 PRI leaders who had been in the anti-Madrazo camp and later supported him, the vast majority made their decision to change their stance toward the candidate when it became apparent he would be the candidate, that is, between Periods 1 and 2.

21 ANTI's to PRO

86% switched between Periods 1 and 2.
14% switched later.

Again, very few leaders used an attack strategy to win a candidacy. Rather, many supporters of a TUCOM candidate went over to Madrazo after Montiel's fall and supported him throughout the rest of the campaign. As we have seen, 68% of this group went on to win a candidacy.

3. The Madrazo Campaign Tries to Regroup

While a large part of his party began to rebel against his campaign, Madrazo changed campaign strategies on both the media and territorial sides. In the media campaign, Madrazo dropped the attacks on AMLO, and instead followed a two sided strategy: attack the Fox administration and make programmatic appeals on economic and social issues. As the race developed into a two-sided contest between the PAN and PRD candidates (and the appeals began to polarize between the "rightest" option of Calderón and the "populist" offer of AMLO) Madrazo moved to claim the ideological center and the moral highroad as a moderate. This plan, while good, ultimately failed. By mid-May, the PRI candidate scrapped his media team and brought on board his old marketing

adviser, Carlos Alazraki, who promptly came out with a new TV spot that showed a delinquent urinating himself when faced with the prospect of a Madrazo presidency. Madrazo's muddled economic ideas were also presented, and he attempted to transform himself into a "center-progressive" candidate, offering tax exemptions for the poor, programs of salary increases for workers to prime the domestic market for consumer goods to push up employment, and the creation of nine million new jobs during his *sexenio*.²⁵

In a May spot, he claimed, "I am Roberto Madrazo and I guarantee you more safety, more jobs, and less poverty." However, voters did not believe him. For promises to be taken seriously, the candidate himself must be credible, and Madrazo simply was not. Madrazo's attempt to position himself as the moderate in between two extreme options was a good idea that could not prosper because voters considered the background of the candidate and the scandals surrounding his rise to power, and decided he was not suitable for the presidency.

But if the media side of the campaign was not working, the party could depend on its territorial structure, or at least, that was the argument. In early May, César Augusto Santiago, Secretary of Organization in the CEN, announced another territorial strategy, the "20 with Madrazo" drive, in which over a million vote promoters would capture at least 20 voters each. The PRI's 364 legislative candidates (in plurality districts) would work along side these vote promoters and use Madrazo's videos, flyers and advertisements in their individual races to reinforce the presidential campaign.²⁶ Between June 13th and June 26th, the last day of the campaign, the candidate visited 140 *municipios*, in which 75% of the nation's population resides, to make his final speeches and convince voters.

However, Madrazo's relation with governors and other party leaders weakened the territorial strategy. According to some analysts, most governors were not willing to move their party's bases in their respective states because of the campaign's stagnation in third place;²⁷ furthermore, because the PRI's candidate had fought with the leader of the SNTE, teachers all over the nation were more inclined to campaign for other candidates.

As shown above, many PRI leaders had not only distanced themselves from their party's presidential candidate, they criticized him openly in the press. Thus, Madrazo had a difficult time moving beyond his party's base to undecided voters. In fact, in the Reforma exit poll, only 74% of PRI identifiers stated they had voted for Madrazo, while 93% of PRDistas and 89% of PANistas voted for their respective candidates.²⁸ Despite the modified media strategy and the renewed territorial efforts of the second half of the campaign,

²⁵ Ciro Pérez Silva, "Yo no busco en la política un salario", *La Jornada*, May 31, 2006.

²⁶ José Gil Olmos, "Arranca el tricolor su campaña '20 con Madrazo'", *Proceso*, May 15, 2006.

²⁷ Mario Gutiérrez Vega, "Replantea PRI estrategia", *El Norte*, March 26, 2006.

²⁸ See *Reforma*, July 3, 2006.

Madrazo not only came in third, eight points behind those almost tied for first, but also dragged down his party's legislative vote, for both the Chamber and the Senate, to historically low levels.

Conclusions

Party organization and unity had an effect on the presidential campaign in Mexico, just as the faltering campaign had an effect on party leaders and their strategies. Because Madrazo was unpopular and mistrusted within his own party, much of his early support from party leaders was contingent on whether the leader in question would win a legislative candidacy. If the presidential hopeful had been a serious contender, then most likely even those PRI leaders who did not win a spot on the lists would have stayed loyal and not come out publicly against him as the campaign wore on, mostly because they would have feared that if he won the election and they had been critical during the campaign, he would have destroyed them politically.

The open criticisms from members of the party, and the fact that many of the PRI governors and mayors were unwilling to work for the Madrazo campaign, weakened his territorial efforts; events were poorly attended, which was then reported in the press, economic leaders in the states did not feel obligated to donate resources, and grass roots mobilizing was hampered. As state level desertions from the PRI won nation-wide coverage, voters and PRI identifiers withheld their support from the PRI candidate, which was reflected in the polls. Even when the candidate changed his media team and his marketing appeals to become more programmatic, and offered himself as a moderate option between two extremes, he found it impossible to connect with voters. Of course, it is impossible to know what would have happened under different circumstances: if Madrazo had not destroyed so many of his party rivals and if he had not committed fraud in two gubernatorial elections in Tabasco, perhaps his image would have been more neutral, leading both party leaders and voters to support him in greater numbers.

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