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ABSTRACT

Few would argue that the democratization of Mexico’s party and electoral system has progressed remarkably since 1988, and that the effects of this progress have been well-documented in the literature. Though the argument has been made that the fits and starts nature of this process has made Mexico’s democratization hard to see and hard to believe (see Schedler 1998), most scholars of Mexican politics agree that democracy is evolving nonetheless. This evolution has been documented at the national level in executive-legislative relations (see Casar 1998; Weldon 1997, 1999), in the behavior of the national legislature itself (see Nacif-Hernández 1996, 1998; Teeters-Reynolds 1998), in the party system itself (see Alcocer V. 1994; Bruhn 1997, 1999) and in mass-level electoral behavior (see Moreno 1999). However, with the notable exception of a few studies (see Beer 1999, Eisenstadt 1999) at the sub-national level, little research have examined to what degree Mexico’s democratization has filtered down from Mexico City to the state capitals. In a further attempt to bridge this gap, this study looks at what extent any increased inter-party competition has had on the quality and characteristics of PRI gubernatorial candidates and their campaigns in the period between 1989 and 1999. In this study, two questions are asked. First, and most generally, (1) to what degree are the characteristics of priísta gubernatorial candidates in Mexico influenced by the changing nature of the party system, in particular by the party system becoming more competitive? Secondly, (2) how does this increased competition affect the nature of electoral campaigns by these candidates? In other words, do gubernatorial campaigns take on a significance in recent years for both the party and the candidates that they did not have in previous eras of non-competition? Based on the data collected at present, the preliminary results suggest that increasing levels of inter-party competition have had an impact on both the characteristics of priísta gubernatorial candidates (though in which direction is still uncertain) and on the nature of their electoral campaigns (making them more American in the decade between 1989 and 1999.

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Few would argue that the democratization of Mexico’s party and electoral system has progressed remarkably since 1988, and that the effects of this progress have been well-documented in the literature. Though the argument has been made that the fits and starts nature of this process has made Mexico’s democratization hard to see and hard to believe (see Schedler 1998), most scholars of Mexican politics agree that democracy is evolving nonetheless. This evolution has been documented at the national level in executive-legislative relations (see Casar 1998; Weldon 1997, 1999), in the behavior of the national legislature itself (see Nacif-Hernández 1996, 1998; Teeters-Reynolds 1998), in the party system itself (see Alcocer V. 1994; Bruhn 1997, 1999) and in mass-level electoral behavior (see Moreno 1999). However, with the notable exception of a few studies (see Beer 1999, Eisenstadt 1999) at the sub-national level, little research have examined to what degree Mexico’s democratization has filtered down from Mexico City to the state capitals.

In a further attempt to bridge this gap, this study looks at what extent if any increased inter-party competition has had on the quality and characteristics of PRI gubernatorial candidates and their campaigns in the period between 1989 and 1999. First, various aspects of all priísta candidates—biographies will be correlated to the percentage of votes they received in all of the gubernatorial elections during this period (based on elections data available from the Lijphart Election Archives), controlling for state levels of unemployment, inflation, and party incumbency. Second, depending upon the level of inter-party competition faced by the PRI in a given gubernatorial election during this period, efforts were made to determine the fate of losing PRI candidates. In other words, were the losers punished or compensated? Finally, to test the hypothesis that competition affects the quality and characteristics of PRI gubernatorial campaigns, four case studies of gubernatorial elections in the states of Mexico, Nuevo Leon, the Federal District and Chihuahua are examined to determine what if any qualitative differences exist between gubernatorial elections that occurred in the early 1990s versus those that occurred during the period 1997-99.

Indeed, there are very few studies of Mexican gubernatorial candidates in the extant literature, and there are no studies of gubernatorial campaigns. In one comparison of losing PRI precandidates versus winning PRI precandidates for governorships that predates the competitive era, Camp (1977) found that a combination of factors such as previous career experience, camarilla membership, and qualifications peculiarly suited to the political-economic situation of the state in question were significant in determining which precandidates of the official party were more likely than others to be nominated (Camp 1977, 23). The key to success for a priísta gubernatorial precandidate was having had experience at the federal level in either the government or the party (Camp 1977, 24).

Camp’s (1977) analysis assumed that whomever won the precandidate race for the party was assured victory in the general election, and at the time this was by-and-large the case until the PAN captured the governorship of Baja California in 1989. How then have these prerequisites changed in the past decade with the advent of party competition? Is a long trajectory of party service still necessary, or is it now a liability for a PRI gubernatorial candidate? What new dimensions have been added to these candidates and their campaigns?
CANDIDATES AND CAMPAIGNS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE:

Candidate Quality:

Given the paucity of cross-national literature on gubernatorial elections, it becomes necessary to rely on studies of legislative elections, which emphasize the importance of candidate quality in determining election results (Jacobson 1997, 36). The cross-national literature that does address this issue points out that opportunities to serve in the legislature are unevenly distributed in all societies. Hence, most members of legislatures are better educated, have higher status occupations and have more privileged backgrounds than do their constituents (see Matthews 1985, 18). One can easily extrapolate these conclusions to encompass elected members of the executive as well. V.O. Key (1949) posits that where parties play little or no role, more established and well-off people are favored to win (see Matthews 1985, 35). As for institutional structures, electoral systems based on proportional representation encourage group-oriented recruitment rather than recruitment based on skills, qualities and the loyalties of individual candidates (see Matthews 1985, 37). Most importantly for the theory grounding this research, institutional change has been shown to have its greatest effect on recruitment practices (see Matthews 1985, 42). The implications of this for Mexican gubernatorial candidates are clear: when institutions such as party systems change by becoming more competitive, candidate selection and recruitment also changes by taking quality (i.e., skills, attributes, experience) into account as well. The flip-side of this coin is that the nature of gubernatorial elections also reflects this change in the party environment by becoming more characteristically American.

Candidate recruitment and candidate quality are inextricably tied to one another for obvious reasons. Party elites should desire to recruit only candidates whom they perceive to be of a certain quality and who possess certain attributes (e.g., prior experience, money). What is candidate quality then? Though the U.S. literature has paid more attention to this question than the comparative literature, it offers only a few generally accepted indicators of candidate quality rather than a clear operationalization of the concept. The closest approximation to an operational definition of candidate quality in the U.S. literature comes from Peverill Squire (1995), who said that it is the political skills and personal appeal that attract voters to them [i.e., candidates] (Squire 1995, 893). Many of these skills are acquired from previous political experience (see Bond et al. 1985, 512-13; Jacobson 1990; Canon 1993), a variable which as a surrogate for the positive personal characteristics associated with higher quality challengers because we take it to be a concrete manifestation of them (Squire 1995, 893-94).

Campaign Quality:

Americanization of electoral campaigns demonstrates the most obvious effect of increased party competition on campaign quality over time. In the U.S., the literature addressing campaign
quality emphasizes the importance of the candidate's quality to the success or failure of an electoral campaign (Krasno 1994, 18; Jacobson 1997, 52), but it also stresses the significance of campaign funding and organization to the success or failure of a candidate to communicate his or her message to the voters (Jacobson 1997, 54). Also, the preponderance of studies in the U.S. use money as the indicator of whether or not a campaign or candidate is high quality (Abramowitz 1989; Jacobson 1978, 1980, 1985, 1990; Green and Krasno 1988, 1990; Krasno 1994; Thomas 1989). With money, the argument goes, a candidate can buy a campaign organization in the form of political consultants and mass advertising (Jacobson 1997, 65, 67-68). Hence, little difference is made between campaign quality versus candidate quality in the U.S. literature. Because most studies focus on campaign and candidate quality in the context of the U.S., they suffer from a lack of generalizability to other political systems. This is particularly true when theories based on the U.S. case are applied to other countries where institutional constraints (e.g., no reelection, tight party control over nomination procedures) make the reelection incentive irrelevant. Nevertheless, the U.S. literature on campaign and candidate quality makes the point that even if the amount of money spent on a campaign is irrelevant to its outcome, electoral campaigns are important in conveying images and molding perceptions of the candidates (Krasno 1994, 131, 152-53). These images and perceptions may be either positive projections of the candidate's issue positions or attacks on his or her opponent (Jacobson 1997, 71-72).

Campaign funding is still a sensitive issue in Mexico regardless of the level of the campaign, and regulations regarding limits (topes) and sources of campaign funding are a perennial source of conflict among the various political parties at the national, state, and local levels. As of yet, there is no central source of campaign finance data for sub-national elections. Hence, while Americanization of election campaigns is easy to observe (through newspaper coverage), the corresponding professionalization of these campaigns in terms of the amount of money spent on advertising, campaign souvenirs, and political consultants is much more difficult to pin down. Such data are not yet easily accessible from either the state party organizations themselves or state electoral institutes.

Much of the literature on the Americanization of electoral campaigns originates from and concentrates on Western Europe (see Bowler and Farrell 1992, 1999; Farrell 1996, 1997, 1998; Farrell et al. 1998). As denoted by the suffix Americanization, a process whose ongoing effect on political systems outside the U.S. context have yet to be fully comprehended or measured. Only some of this literature focuses on democratizing nations in Latin America, and most of it examines these processes in the context of post-authoritarian regime transitions (Angell et al. 1992; Martz 1990; Martz and Myers 1994; Mayobre 1996; Waisbord 1996). None of this literature, however, considers how democratization through increased party competition (i.e., a transition from one-party rule to multi-party rule) affects campaign Americanization, much less at the sub-national level.

However, this literature succeeds in demonstrating the importance of institutional design in predicting the scope and magnitude of Americanization on electoral campaigns cross-nationally. The distinctions between parliamentary versus presidential systems, and between proportional representation and single-member plurality districts, play a central role in the penetration of Americanization on electoral campaigns. In the case of single-member plurality elections, here is

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3 Katz (1980) emphasizes the importance of these distinctions between electoral systems in
greater scope for candidates to campaign independently of the central party apparatus, and therefore
greater likelihood that they will employ the services of campaign consultants (Farrell 1998, 175). Likewise, the institutional environment of a presidential system is more conducive to Americanization than is a parliamentary system. It is no surprise, therefore, to find some Latin American scholars arguing that campaigns in the predominantly presidential systems of that continent manifest more capital-intensive techniques than in much of western Europe, which largely comprises parliamentary systems (Farrell 1998, 175, citing Angell et al. 1992). Farrell (1998) also makes the relevant point that where there are electorally vulnerable parties (e.g., Mexico’s PRI) there is greater incentive for candidates to run their own campaigns by hiring outside consultants (Farrell 1998, 175).

In this paper, I explore two related questions. First, and most generally, (1) to what degree are the characteristics of priísta gubernatorial candidates in Mexico influenced by the changing nature of the party system, in particular by the party system becoming more competitive? Secondly, (2) how does this increased competition affect the nature of electoral campaigns by these candidates? In other words, do gubernatorial campaigns take on a significance in recent years for both the party and the candidates that they did not have in previous eras of non-competition?

determining campaign style.
Put another way, does an increase in the number of competitive parties and an increase in the strength and viability of these parties at the system level bring an incentive for historically dominant parties to pay closer attention to the qualifications and backgrounds of their candidates in order to attract or keep voters? This question, of course, assumes that institutional structures (e.g., electoral laws, internal party rules) have been altered to such a degree that allows existing opposition parties (e.g., the PAN, the PRD) to become competitive, and that creates a political opportunity structure that is amenable to the formation of new parties (e.g., the PVEM). If the answer to this question is in the affirmative, then in what ways do these changes in candidate characteristics manifest themselves in the historically dominant party? Do the candidates focus their election campaigns on themselves by stressing their commitment to constituency service or their individual policy orientations? Do they devote attention to the past accomplishments of the PRI? Do they instead direct attention on their backgrounds and qualifications for holding elected office?

P1: As competition in the party system increases over time, the quality (however defined) of the formerly dominant party’s candidates in terms of prior political experience improves as well.

One argument that Wattenberg (1984) puts forth to explain the declining importance of parties in the United States is that there has been a lack of effective leadership in the parties. Thus, there is less linkage between parties and candidates in the minds of voters (Wattenberg 1984, 74). The media emphasis during campaigns focuses more on candidates than on parties, making parties less institutionally relevant and salient to the mass public. It stands to reason then that as formerly dominant parties lose their institutional grasp on the electorate (and the party loyalty that goes with it) due to increased competitiveness and/or declining popularity, these parties will try to maintain their hold on or regain lost ground in the electorate by presenting better quality candidates. Hence, electoral laws that shape the nature of the party system are only one factor making the party’s banner (or label) meaningful. To continue to have any meaning or salience with the electorate, parties must also earn the integrity of their labels among voters by providing public or private goods, creating a social base, and building a reputation for being worthy of public approbation (Mainwaring and Shugart 1997, 423). The implication of this is that as competitiveness increases within the party system, party label salience is enhanced by offering voters a wider selection of parties to choose from and by decreasing the amount of information necessary for voters to acquire regarding the candidates. As party system competitiveness increases, the salience of party labels should improve since there are more viable options to the one or two preexisting games in town.

Does increased party competition influence the nature of candidates and campaigning in a linear fashion, or is this relationship bidirectional? As party labels increase in importance to the voters and result in dealignment or realignment in the electorate (see Davis and Coleman 1982), there is also a commensurate increase in the competitiveness of the party system as a whole (see Wattenberg 1991; 4 This question should not necessarily imply that in the past such parties presented weak or poorly qualified candidates as a matter of course, but rather that candidate quality did not matter as much before the advent of competition as it does now.

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Beck 1997, 37-38), making candidate quality a more important factor in the selection process of the party leadership or the voters than it was in previous elections (see Bond et al. 1985, 511). Most studies of the effects of candidate quality on electoral outcomes in the U.S. literature use some combination of the candidate's prior political experience and the amount of money spent on the campaign as an indicator of candidate quality (see Bond et al. 1985; Ragsdale and Cook 1987; Green and Krasno 1988; Epstein and Zemsky 1995). More importantly, these studies indicate that candidate quality has a significant effect on the vote outcome (see Rosenberg et al. 1986; Green and Krasno 1988; Thomas 1989).

**P2: As party system competitiveness in terms of opposition party strength and vitality increases, the quality (however defined) of the formerly dominant party's electoral campaigns for governorships will improve as well.**

Americanization of electoral campaigns is becoming a much-used (or clichéd) buzzword in the cross-national party change literature. The literature on electoral campaigns in both the United States and Western Europe has demonstrated the trend toward increasing professionalism and decreasing reliance on traditional methods of campaigning (see Bowler and Farrell 1992; Farrell 1996, 1997). In the United States, there is another dimension to this phenomenon: emphasis on candidates' qualities as opposed to reliance on party labels alone (see Wattenberg 1984, 1991). This change in both the style (i.e., from traditional to professional) and focus (i.e., from party to candidate) of electoral campaigns has paralleled the changes in the media's use of technology, particularly in regard to television (and the internet) becoming the dominant mode of communication.

The Americanization of electoral campaigns has not been limited to Western European cases. Although limited in number, some studies have examined this phenomenon in the context of parties roles in democratic transitions from authoritarianism in Latin America. Angell et al. (1992) analyze changes over time in party electioneering in Brazil, Chile, and Venezuela. From their findings in this comparative analysis, Angell et al. (1992) conclude that the same Americanization of electioneering seen in Western Europe is in Latin America the result of increased levels of urbanization, industrialization, and education in the society as a whole. They also point to the increasingly widespread influence of television as being the catalyst for this change (Angell et al. 1992, 65). Other scholars have noted the upswing in polling and consulting in Argentina (Waisbord 1996) and in Venezuela (Mayobre 1996) as well.

In particular, the transformation of electoral campaigns from being premodern (i.e., moving the campaign from public meetings and rallies to television spots and photo opportunities) has been striking in Latin America (Martz 1990, 23). In examining changes in campaign professionalization in Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador, Martz (1990) also notes the changes that have occurred over time in parties' electoral appeals. Electoral appeals may truly be characterized as positive or negative, as partisan or non-partisan. Positive appeals stress a candidate's views on issues, projecting his proposals into a negative attack on the opponent's position. Partisan appeals extol the virtues of the candidate's party affiliation, rather than seeking to create the image of a truly national candidate placing broad civic concerns over the interests of the party. Martz 1990,
Martz (1990) groups the former under partisan appeals, while placing the latter under non-partisan appeals.

Being in its infancy relative to similar studies of electoral campaigning in the United States, the cross-national literature on campaign Americanization suffers from several shortcomings. First, most cross-national studies of this phenomenon focus on Western Europe. By broadening its focus to the newly emerged democracies, it could test whether or not campaign Americanization occurs outside the context of consolidated democracies as well. Secondly, what cross-national literature exists on Americanization tends to focus on presidential or prime ministerial elections. Little, if any, attention is paid to campaign Americanization at the sub-national level, specifically as it relates to elections for governor or deputy. Third, cross-national literature addressing this question in Latin America tends to overlook the effects of democratic transitions on the Americanization of campaigns in traditionally dominant parties. Finally, existing studies neglect to consider what effects, if any, increased party competition has on the Americanization phenomenon.

So given this newly-competitive party environment in Mexican gubernatorial elections, I devised the following hypotheses:

**H1:** With increased competition from candidates of other parties, PRI gubernatorial candidates will have more previous political experience and closer family ties to their states than those in the past. This will make them more attractive to the voters, thereby increasing the number of votes for the PRI candidate.

This hypothesis looks at not only at a candidate’s prior political experience as measured by his vita as an indicator of quality, but also how well the candidate knows, and is tied to, his district as well. As the number of competitive parties in the political arena increases, there should be a corresponding increase in the quality of candidates presented by the historically dominant party as part of its strategy to win in this newly competitive electoral environment. Because the electorate now has a larger number of choices in terms of viable parties, it also is offered more choice in terms of individual candidates. Recognizing this increased competitiveness in the party system as a whole, historically dominant parties will want to present candidates who possess skills, qualifications, and backgrounds (e.g., political, professional, educational, civic) that will appeal to the voters in a particular state. This should particularly be evident in states where the historically dominant party either lost or experienced a close race in the prior election. Improving candidate quality is a recognition on the part of the party leadership of the increased competitiveness in the party system, which Kaare Strom (1990) defines as the aggregate uncertainty of electoral contests as perceived by party leaders (Strom 1990, 582). If the party leadership wants to win an election, then it must provide what it perceives the voters want in terms of a candidate. As party system competitiveness increases, parties will more keenly pursue votes (see Strom 1990, 582). Thus, as party system change occurs, I expect that historically dominant parties respond to this change by paying closer attention to the characteristics, and therefore the quality, of the candidates they field in elections.
Indicators for increased party system competitiveness will include changes in percentage differences in the vote totals in states in which the PRI has won in these elections. Indicators for candidate quality include prior leadership experience (either as an elected official, involvement in civic organizations, head of an NGO, or in the private sector), and level of educational attainment. While these biographical data provide useful indicators of the quality of the candidate himself/herself, they offer little insight into the packaging of the candidate to his/her prospective constituents. To measure this aspect of campaign quality, it is necessary to include indicators measuring how well a candidate’s personal background matches or reflects the predominant socioeconomic characteristics of his/her state. Such indicators include whether or not the candidate was born in the district, whether or not the candidate lives in the district he/she represents, whether or not the candidate’s family has a business in the district, the educational level of the candidate, and the candidate’s profession. At present, the only indicator used to measure this variable in this study was the candidate’s birthplace. Of course, none of these indicators are meant to suggest that gubernatorial candidates are drawn from the population at large, but merely that they are familiar and have a well-established presence in their respective states.

Since it is often the case that many candidates have, in fact, had some prior political experience, it is necessary to place this political experience on a scale in order to discern variance in the data. Judging the relative merit or value of various elected, party/sector, or administrative positions in Mexico is not an easy task since most Mexican politicians rotate various positions throughout their careers. There seems to be no linear, upward trajectory that is readily discernible. To deal with this problem, two approaches were taken. The first approach involved using the ordinal scale described below, while the latter approach employed a simple counts measure of various prior positions held without attempting to rank-order them in terms of relative importance or worth. In both cases, positions were disaggregated into elective, party/sector, and administrative categories rather than lumping them together into one variable. What is only reported in this study, however, are the results taken from the former approach.

Using as a model Bond et al.'s (1985) three-point ordinal scale of challenger experience to measure quality, I have devised a five-point ordinal scale that takes varying levels of prior political leadership experience into account for Mexico. 0 indicates no prior political experience; 1 indicates leadership experience as president of neighborhood, civic, and business associations, as well as having been president of the local party organization; 2 indicates leadership experience from prior membership on a municipal council, having served as municipal president; 3 indicates prior service as a state legislator, agency head or state-level party official; 4 indicates prior, nonconsecutive service in the Chamber of Deputies, leadership experience in the national-level party organization, or prior union leadership experience in an organized sector (at the state or national level) popular, labor, or agrarian.

Since the PRI has a long tradition of nominating candidates from outside the state, a change in this policy would be yet another indicator of increased candidate quality. So, as a second indicator of candidate quality, a continuous variable measuring duration of residence (in years) is used. Related to residence, the extensiveness of a candidate’s ties to the state is considered as well, using
dichotomous variable to indicate whether the candidate was born in the district. A family ties in this sense should indicate an increasing tendency towards choosing candidates based upon their roots in the constituency, rather than the traditional sense of a candidate's familial connections to a local party cacique (see Camp 1995, 221). If in the past PRI gubernatorial candidates have had weak ties to the states they govern, a trend toward selecting candidates who are known quantities and whose backgrounds reflect a close affinity to and knowledge of the states they govern would indicate an improvement in candidate quality. While at the same time, there should be less cronyism based on one's familial connections.

Third, the career trajectories of gubernatorial candidates as an indicator of quality is measured by employing a categorical dependent variable. Camp (1995) has shown that a prior career in the public sector versus the private sector has been a strong predictor of political advancement in Mexico. In other words, most political recruitment by the PRI has been through the federal bureaucracy, the party bureaucracy, or at the grassroots level of the party (i.e., party activists) (Camp 1995, 134-35). Any shift in this recruitment pattern across the three elections towards the private sector and away from the public sector may indicate an improvement in the quality of PRI candidates, since it would show a desire on the part of the party leadership to place people other than loyal hacks in candidacies where electoral competition for the PRI is strong. A dummy variable is used to indicate whether a gubernatorial candidate's career was in the public sector or the private sector (0=public sector; 1=private sector).

**H2:** With increased competition from candidates of other parties, PRI gubernatorial candidates will have less previous political experience and fewer family ties to their states than those in the past. This will make them more attractive to the voters, thereby increasing the number of votes for the PRI candidate.

Given the recent image problems faced by the PRI in past years (e.g., the assassination of their presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio in 1994, the scandals involving the brothers Salinas), an alternate hypothesis is that the party leadership may want to nominate candidates to governorships with fewer ties to the party and with fewer familial connections. This would indicate an effort to present a new image to the voters by offering them candidates who are less tainted by the party's tarnished image. So rather than having a long career trajectory with the party and being related to a

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5 Members of the legislative branch come from families that are more often new to politics. These individuals cannot rely as heavily as other branch leaders on kinship and sanguinal ties to facilitate their political careers (Camp 1995, 221).

6 Camp (1995) quotes a former cabinet secretary, Antonio Martínez Báez, as saying, To become a better politician, you need to have more experience in the private sector. It would be very useful for all public servants to have some basic experience in the private sector. I also believe it would serve both sectors because the private sector would have some contact with government officials. The conflict between the two is partly the fault of the lack of reciprocal or mutual experiences. The public officials I know who have had private-sector experience are often better for it (Camp 1995, 134).
former party *caudillo* in the state, a quality candidate may be a newcomer who brings in experience from the private sector outside of government and party/sector experience.

**H3:** As the competitiveness of the Mexican party system in terms of opposition party strength and viability increases from \(x\) to \(x+n\) over time, there will be a corresponding increase in the *Americanization* of deputy electoral campaigns by the historically dominant party (i.e., the PRI).

This hypothesis tests the applicability of the *Americanization* thesis as it has been increasingly ascribed to electoral campaigns in the Western European context to the context of democratizing nations. More importantly, it considers the issue of democratization in a different light by examining campaign *Americanization* not in the context of transition from authoritarian rule *per se* (e.g., from an extended period of military rule), but rather in the context of transition from one-party rule to multi-party rule. The logic for Hypothesis 2 is similar to that for Hypothesis 1 in that increased party competition drives the formerly dominant party to put a *new face* on its gubernatorial candidates by giving them the resources to professionalize their electoral campaigns. Recent findings by Moreno (1999) suggest that depending upon the level of political awareness and strength of partisan identification among Mexican voters, these voters may actually be influenced by campaigns (Moreno 1999, 117, 130). One could extrapolate from these findings that it is thus to the PRI’s benefit to pay closer attention to candidate and campaign quality in order to maximize their vote share. This hypothesis considers the *Americanization* aspect of gubernatorial election campaigns in a climate of increased competitiveness brought about by the process of democratization, which may or may not be a side-effect of campaign professionalization. Acknowledging the new environment of competitiveness in the party system, historically dominant parties will tailor and adapt their candidates’ campaigns to meet the new electoral challenge offered by the opposition parties. To accomplish this, the electoral campaigns of gubernatorial candidates

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7 Interestingly, Moreno (1999) found that the PRI benefitted from *low* political awareness and *low* campaigning by all the competing political parties. This finding suggests that campaigns offer more information and open more options to Mexican voters, thereby helping to increase the vote for parties other than the PRI (Moreno 1999, 123, 139-40). Even though the PRI does better among voters who are least interested in politics, it is unlikely that the PRI will pursue a strategy of abandoning campaigning altogether and giving political nominations to whomever wants them. Rather, the more reasonable implication of Moreno’s (1999) finding for this research is that competition exposes the Mexican voter to other options, giving the PRI all the more incentive to find ways to respond to this competition more effectively.

8 Whether or not (or how) this change in campaign quality affects Mexican voters’ perceptions of the PRI and its candidates is beyond the scope of this research. It is sufficient to assume that party competition levels (as measured by voting percentages in each district) affect elite decision-making in PRI regarding campaign strategy, allocation of resources, and candidate qualifications. For a more detailed treatment of how party
representing these historically dominant parties will become increasingly professionalized and may take on a more American@character in terms of style over substance.

Much of the data on governors are available through 1994 in the *Diccionario biográfico del gobierno mexicano*, which is a government-published encyclopedia listing the biographies of elected officials at all levels of the Mexican government. Where the *Diccionario* left off in 1994, the internet has since taken up the informational slack on the biographies of government officials. Most Mexican state governments now have their own webpages, some of which prominently feature the vitae of their chief executives.

**Election Data:**
In testing these hypotheses, differences in vote percentages for each party in each gubernatorial elections are compared between 1989 and 1999.9

**Candidate Quality:**
Using both the internet and the *Diccionario*, data were gathered on the indicators of candidate quality discussed above. Number of years of party militancy, place of birth, previous positions held (both elected and administrative) in national, state, and local governments, as well as previous party/sector positions held at all three levels.10

**Campaign Quality:**
How increased party system competitiveness affects the formerly dominant party=s electoral campaigns in terms of Americanization must also be examined from a variety of perspectives, using different indicators of change as the dependent variable. The effects of increased party competition on the Americanization of Mexican electoral campaigns are studied by examining case studies (i.e., 1997-1999) gubernatorial elections in four states (the Federal District (1997)11, Nuevo León (1997), Chihuahua (1998), and the State of México (Edomex) in 1999 compared to gubernatorial elections in the same states (with the exception of the Federal District) in the period 1991-1993. In two of these states (the Federal District and Nuevo León) the priísta candidate lost the most recent elections, while in Chihuahua and Edomex the priísta candidate obtained the triunfo. The only feasible source of data to test the Americanization hypothesis is newspaper archives. Using the archives *La Jornada* and *La Reforma* (Mexico City) for both the Federal District and Edomex, *El Norte* campaigns affect voter perceptions in Mexico, see Moreno (1999).

9 These data were obtained from both the Lijphart Election Archive (see http://dodgson.ucsd.edu/lij/ and from CIDAC courtesy of Jacqueline Martínez.

10 No distinction is made between positions held in the party itself and positions held in the organized sectors of the party (e.g., CNC, CNOP, CTM) and their affiliated unions (e.g., SNTE).

11 The Federal District is treated as a state in this analysis, so the campaign for jefatura is not unlike a similar campaign for governor in any other state.
(Monterrey) for the Nuevo León races, and both *El Diario de Chihuahua* and *El Diario de Juárez* for the Chihuahua races, the three-month period (May to July) preceding each of the three elections was examined for coverage of PRI gubernatorial candidates' campaigns. Statements made by the candidate himself or by someone else in favor of the candidate's issue positions, personality, or qualifications for holding office *without* making reference to the PRI were coded as being *candidate-centered*. Any statement made by the candidate that attempted to put distance between himself and the party was likewise coded as *candidate-centered*. Conversely, any statement made in the press by the candidate either in support of the PRI or other *priista* candidates (e.g., candidates for municipal president, local or federal deputies), or that touted his party credentials was coded as being *party-centered*. In each of these elections, a simple count was taken for each category of statements made.

**Findings/Discussion of Candidate Quality Hypotheses:**

For the hypotheses concerning the quality of PRI gubernatorial candidates themselves, the tentative results are mixed. With the exception of the Chihuahua race (in which the PAN was the incumbent party), overall *priista* candidate quality in gubernatorial races in the late 1990s improved over those in elections in the early 1990s (see Table 1). In other words, the winning *priístas* in these races had more prior experience in party/sector, elected, and administrative positions than those in the past, even in cases where a PRI governor was the incumbent. What remains uncertain, however, is to what *if any* degree, increased party competition played a role in this change in candidate quality over time. For the 1992 races in Guerrero and Hidalgo, the percentages for each candidate were unavailable, while in Puebla and San Luis Potosí, the incumbent PRI's margin of victory shrunk between the races in the early 1990s and the late 1990s as the party presented more experienced candidates (who emerged the victors). In Edomex, Querétaro, and Durango, it was impossible to discern whether recent victorious PRI candidates had more previous experience than PRI governors elected in the early 1990s as their states' webpages did not contain biographical information on them.

Where all data were readily available and while not controlling for exogenous factors such as inflation, unemployment, and presidential approval, the conclusion to be tentatively drawn is that winning *priista* gubernatorial candidates with more prior public service, won with smaller margins than their predecessors. The implication of this is that having a longer political career trajectory may have cut in to their margins of victories. In the one case where the PRI defeated the incumbent PAN, the winning *priista* Patricio Martínez García had significantly less experience in the party or the bureaucracy at any level than most of his colleagues. One may speculate that his not being (or at least, appearing not to be) a PRI *hack* may have contributed to him winning a state that is a tradition PAN stronghold. In all cases, the winning candidates were born in their states (the only indicator of the variable *family ties* that could be easily collected), so that was not a factor in either their victories or margins of victory. Hence, the available data seem to offer cautious support for Hypothesis 2. As for Hypothesis 1, more data need to be collected before reaching even a tentative conclusion regarding its merit.

[Table 1 here]

The tentative nature of these conclusions should be emphasized since the data are incomplete at this point. What is most sorely missing from this analysis are biographical data on losing PRI candidates. If this data were available, it could be analyzed for correlations between degree and...
nature of background experience and winning or losing, controlling for other variables. However, most party organizations (including the PRI) see no use in storing information on their losers, and therefore these data essentially do not exist. Some states also have minimal information about elected officials on their webpages. Hence, it is difficult to discern what changes have occurred as a result of increased party competition. In other cases, while biographical information on elected officials is available, results of earlier elections are difficult to obtain, which makes comparison over time impossible.

Findings/Discussion of Campaign Quality Hypothesis:

Judging by comparisons made of newspaper coverage of gubernatorial election campaigns between those in the early 1990s and those in the late 1990s, there seems to be tentative support for Hypothesis 3. Overall, PRI gubernatorial candidates in the elections held between 1997 and 1999 have tended to emphasize their own merits and qualifications for holding office rather than singing the praises of their party (see Table 2). Particular attention was paid in the press to what sorts of gestión política the candidate promised particular groups of constituents that he met with during the campaign. For example, in the race for the jefatura of the Federal District, the priísta candidate Alfredo del Mazo’s program was presented in La Jornada as being his, rather than his party’s, program (Del Mazo planea mejorar la seguridad en todos los niveles, La Jornada, 5/13/97, p.53). In fact, most headlines concerning his campaign in this newspaper featured his name rather than his party label. However, this is not to say that Del Mazo neglected his party altogether. In a campaign stop in the economically depressed area of Iztapalapa, for example, Del Mazo noted the lack of paved streets and police protection and was quoted as saying, Yo ofrezco a ustedes una gestión inmediata ante las autoridades correspondientes para solucionar de manera tajante y definitiva el hecho de que hoy en día se trate de cobrar el aire en lugar del agua, y la haré con mis compañeros candidatos a diputados (En Iztapalapa Del Mazo escuchó quejas por la inseguridad y los cobros indebidos de agua, La Jornada, 5/5/97, p.52). In this statement, the candidate promoted both his and the candidacies of his coreligionists in the party who were running for seats in the Asamblea Legislativa of the Federal District. Nevertheless, despite this candidate-centered campaigning, Del Mazo lost the race to the perredista Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. Since this was the first race for the jefatura of the capital, it is impossible to compare it to earlier campaigns, but it still represents a baseline for comparing how the PRI candidate packages himself (or is packaged) in the current race for the jefatura.

In Nuevo León, the story is much the same, only we can compare the gubernatorial campaign in 1997 to the earlier one in 1991. In this campaign, the PRI gubernatorial candidate, Natividad González Parás, pursued a similar strategy as that of Del Mazo by emphasizing his program as being his rather than the PRI’s. In fact, the promises made by both candidates were very similar. For example, González Parás ofreció además mejorar la infraestructura de salud y de desarrollo social, llevándose una sorpresiva aclamación al mencionar su colocar una guardería en el municipio de Zuazua (Urge Nati a resolver tenencia de la tierra, El Norte, 5/24/97, p.7B). The article then goes on to quote him directly. Like Del Mazo, González Parás would make specific appeals to whichever group of constituents with which he happened to be speaking, but most notably without mentioning
his party. In fact, during a debate between González Parás and the panista Fernando Canales Clariond, the priísta distanced himself from the previous PRI governor of Nuevo León by saying, *Yo* no soy Sócrates Rizzo, soy José Natividad González Parás... (@(Á)Debaten en serio Canales y Natividad, *(El Norte*, 4/25/97, p.4B)). Also during this debate, González Parás went to great pains to emphasize his connections to Nuevo León *Yo quiero mucho a Nuevo León, estudié aquí, no me fui a México [Mexico City] a una escuela prestigiosa, cara, a estudiar, porque confié en las instituciones de mi Estado... *(El Norte*, 4/25/97, p.4B). In any case, this strategy did not pay off for González Parás either, who lost to the panista Canales Clariond.

On the other hand, newspaper coverage of the 1991 gubernatorial race in Nuevo León does not offer much basis for comparison to the 1997 campaign. For the most part, coverage concerns the rules of the game for the elections (i.e., that the elections be clean and fair, and that the results be respected regardless of the outcome) and post-electoral analysis of the outcome. What little coverage of the 1991 campaign there was emphasized the party over the candidate, specifically how they chose their gubernatorial candidate in a more democratic manner *(Á)De los cientos de miles de afiliados que el PRI dice tener en Nuevo León, solo 35,000 votaron, y por Rizzo, *(El Norte*, 3/25/91). The only coverage found specifically concerning the PRI candidate Sócrates Rizzo was a simple description of his campaign *(R)izzo García basó su campaña en foros de análisis, reuniones con grupos sociales o profesionales en locales pequeños y cerrados, visitas domiciliarias y recorridos por colonias en los que se realizaban pequeños actos. En cambio, la propaganda y el uso de los medios masivos de comunicación se prolongó desde antes de la formalización de su candidatura hasta el cierre de campaña *(Domingo 7 en Nuevo León: un padrón incompleto hace desconfiar de las elecciones, *(El Norte*, 7/1/91). However, this conclusion is derived from newspaper accounts that were obtained from a CD-ROM archive. So in order to draw a firm conclusion that PRI candidates and their campaigns have become more important in gubernatorial elections in Nuevo León, it will be necessary to go to the newspaper archives themselves rather than a CD-ROM database.

For Edomex, the results align with those from the Federal District and Nuevo León. Statements in favor of the priísta candidate outnumbered statements in favor of the PRI by almost a 2 to 1 ratio (see Table 2). Yet again, the PRI gubernatorial candidate, Arturo Montiel Rojas, made promises specifically aimed at each community in Edomex in which he campaigned. When comparing his candidacy to that of the PAN, Montiel made frequent references to the differences between the PRI and the PAN *(Califica Montiel al PAN de autoritario e intolerante, *(La Reforma*, 5/15/99). However, Montiel did not seem to go out of his way to link his image with that of his party in the public mind. Like *El Norte* in Nuevo León, both *La Jornada* and *La Reforma* emphasized the candidates’ names in their headlines of articles covering the campaigns. So rather than references to *(el PRI, *headlines attributed statements made by the candidates to the candidates themselves. In

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12 For example: *(En Coacalco, se comprometió a construir un parque recreativo, desalojar las aguas residuales y atender la problemática del canal de Cartegena para terminar con un foco de infección. Más tarde, en Cuautitlán, Montiel señaló que rehabilitará los caminos que conducen a los municipios de Zumpango y Huehuetoca, además de la construcción de una escuela regional preparatoria para los jóvenes, *(La visita de Salinas no afecta las campañas priístas: Arturo Montiel, *(La Jornada*, 6/14/99).
contrast to Nuevo León and the Federal District in 1997, the priista candidate was triumphant in the 1999 gubernatorial contest in Edomex.

How does election coverage from 1993 in Edomex compare to last year’s race? Again, reliance on the same CD-ROM database of newspaper archives for campaign coverage of this campaign makes drawing definitive conclusions difficult. A search of this database yielded only two newspaper articles that concerned the 1993 gubernatorial contest. In one, a brief description of the PRI candidate, Emilio Chuayffet, was given. Even with this small sample, the tentative impression is that references to the party seemed to outnumber specific references to the candidate.

Data collection for the Chihuahua case was incomplete for both the 1998 and 1992 elections. However, judging from the small sample of newspaper coverage already obtained from the CD-ROM database, it seems that fewer references were made to the PRI than to its candidate in the 1998 race. The PRI candidate in 1998, Patricio Martínez García, was the eventual winner. In the 1992, the situation was reversed and the PRI lost the governorship. Again, from this small sample of news items it would be premature to draw any conclusions. So in order to ensure that this impression is valid, it is necessary to search a complete archive of both El Diario de Chihuahua and El Diario de Juárez to complete the data collection for the Chihuahua case.

In all four cases, there seems to be a trend towards more candidate-centered campaigning on the part of the PRI. However, this is only a tentative conclusion. The lack of data in both elections for Chihuahua, and for the early 1990s elections in Nuevo León indicate the need to search deeper in the newspaper archives for these elections, or failing that, omit these cases in the analysis. This study also does not control for exogenous factors such as economic performance (either sociotropic or pocketbook), or the level of presidential/party approval at the time of each of these elections. But until the data are collected completely on newspaper campaign coverage, there is no sense in controlling for these factors at the present time. So based on the evidence currently available from the cases examined, only tentative support can be given for Hypothesis 3.

CONCLUSION:

Data constraints notwithstanding, this research has offered preliminary support for the hypotheses that the way in which PRI gubernatorial candidates campaign and the nature of the candidates

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13 De 41 años de edad y proveniente de una familia de abolengo de esta ciudad, Emilio Chuayffet comenzó su carrera política en 1974 bajo el amparo de Arturo Llorente, entonces subsecretario del Trabajo y Previsión Social. Dos años después fue presidente del PRI en la capital del estado y, posteriormente, alcalde de Toluca. Pertenece al grupo político Atlacomulco, que encabeza el secretario de Agricultura, Carlos Hank González, quien lo nombró delegado en Benito Juárez, cuando ocupó la regencia de la Ciudad de México. Colaboró con los exgobernadores Alfredo del Mazo, Alfredo Baranda García y Mario Ramón Beteta, del que fue secretario de Gobierno. Cuatro secretarios de Estado y el Presidente, con recursos del erario, empujan la aplanadora de Chuayffet. (La Reforma, 6/28/93).
themselves has changed over time. What remains unclear, however, is how this is correlated with increased party competition. Not controlling for the exogenous factors previously mentioned also makes reaching definite conclusions on this question problematic. With such a low N, studies such as these are not amenable to sophisticated statistical analyses, but nevertheless the evidence in this qualitative study has noted a trend over time that the PRI is changing the way it campaigns in sub-national elections. However, one is at a loss for other possible explanations for why the PRI is changing in this way. Increased competition is the only plausible interpretation for these qualified results. Furthermore, the results of this analysis can be interpreted either way depending upon how one operationalizes quality, given the nature of the hypotheses. With more data and the introduction of control variables in future studies, we may begin to state with more confidence that the PRI is paying closer attention to sub-national electoral campaigns. This study also opens the door to future research in other sub-national election campaigns by the PRI in Mexico, such as those for local deputies and municipal presidents.

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La Jornada (Mexico City), various issues.

La Reforma (Mexico City), various issues.


TABLE 1: Gubernatorial Election Results (1991-1999) and Characteristics of PRI Winners\textsuperscript{14}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/year</th>
<th>PRI%</th>
<th>PAN%</th>
<th>PRD%</th>
<th>pty/sec position</th>
<th>elected postion</th>
<th>admin. position</th>
<th>born in state?</th>
<th>militancy (in years)</th>
<th>privsec?</th>
<th>PRI incumbent?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chihuahua 98\textsuperscript{16} (Chihuahua 92)</td>
<td>50 (43.19)</td>
<td>42 (49.84)</td>
<td>6 (1.35)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edomex 99 (Edomex 93)</td>
<td>43 (58.3)</td>
<td>36 (16.5)</td>
<td>22 (8.10)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Querétaro 97 (Querétaro 91)</td>
<td>40 (76.4)</td>
<td>45.06 (18.43)</td>
<td>7.31 (2.88)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Luis Potosí 97 (San Luis Potosí 91)</td>
<td>49.5 (67.2)</td>
<td>41.4 (20.5)</td>
<td>9.1 (2.7)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuevo León 97 (Nuevo León 91)</td>
<td>42 (N/A)</td>
<td>48.51 (N/A)</td>
<td>3.15 (N/A)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baja California Sur 95</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campeche 97</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango 98 (Durango 92)</td>
<td>40 (52.53)</td>
<td>30 (34.27)</td>
<td>47 (3.09)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerrero 99 (Guerrero 92)\textsuperscript{17}</td>
<td>50 (N/A)</td>
<td>2 (N/A)</td>
<td>36 (N/A)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidalgo 99 (Hidalgo 92)</td>
<td>53.5 (N/A)</td>
<td>32.1 (N/A)</td>
<td>14.4 (N/A)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oaxaca 98 (Oaxaca 92)</td>
<td>49 (77.64)</td>
<td>10 (5.36)</td>
<td>7 (9.79)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puebla 98 (Puebla 92)</td>
<td>56 (66.16)</td>
<td>30 (16.65)</td>
<td>16 (5.71)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{14} These data were obtained from various sources available on the Lijphart Election Archive and from Jacqueline Martínez of CIDAC in Mexico City.

\textsuperscript{15} The numbers for pty/sec, elected, and admin are weighted counts for each position held previous to the governorship.

\textsuperscript{16} States/years in bold denote PRI victories.

\textsuperscript{17} This election was marked by a voter abstention rate of 65.9% (Estrada Castañon 1994, 129).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Year</th>
<th>Number of Self-Referential Statements Made by Candidate</th>
<th>Number of Statements Made by Candidate Referring to Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Edomex 99</strong></td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Edomex 93)</td>
<td>21 (3)</td>
<td>11 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nuevo León 97</strong></td>
<td>52 (2)</td>
<td>19 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nuevo León 91)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chihuahua 98</strong></td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
<td>2 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chihuahua 92)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal District 97</strong></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This was the first election for the *jefatura* of the capital city.