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Joy Langston

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine the formal rules of candidate and leadership selection of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), both before significant electoral opposition and after (1988 being the dividing line). This is an important exercise for several reasons: firstly, it is crucial to investigate whether and how the heretofore dominant party has met the challenge of uncertainty at the ballot box in reforming its internal organization; secondly, the work will clarify the rule-based mechanisms that the President of Mexico and the top leadership of the PRI have used in controlling the ability of the state party leaders and activists (and governors) to participate in selecting candidates to run for office and leaders to run the Party; and thirdly, the fact that the very statutes of the PRI allow for enormous vertical control over lower level members will point out the necessity of reforming the rules of the internal party game so that the grass-roots activists —those who, in a real sense, do the work of winning elections— can participate more fully in the life of the PRI.

Many authors interested in Mexico (Bailey, 1988; Butler and Bustamente, 1991; Cornelius, 1987; Eckstein, 1977; Gentleman, 1987; Johnson, 1971; Suárez Farias, 1988) have argued that the formal institutions and rules are easily ignored, and that formal mechanisms of decision-making allow for great discretion in how leaders make policy. Because of the prevalence of the presidential dedazo in candidate selection at all levels of government and party leadership, one could easily assume that the formal rules determining how these decisions are simply ignored. In a general sense, rules create the set of opportunities and restrictions on the actors involved in the organization, and shape their expectations over which actions will result in which outcomes, given the probable behavior of other actors, thus in large measure, determine their strategies. In the context of no-reelection, which makes long-term legislative or executive careers difficult, the rules, which are supposedly ignored in favor of informal routes to power, are in fact perfectly written so that the President of Mexico and his hand-picked leader of the Party are able to force the members of the Party to win positions by demonstrating loyalty to their superiors, and not a healthy respect for the electorate or the members of the Party. By definition, every political party must compete in elections, choose candidates (or validate them) to run for elections, and remunerate those who work within the Party. By studying one of the tasks that every political party must undertake, that of choosing candidates (and leaders), we go a long way in discovering the incentives which individual activists and leaders face

A minimal definition of a political party is that it must compete in elections, place candidates up for election, and somehow “pay” for electioneering. Notice that nothing is assumed about forming ideologies, or making public policy, or governing. For more on this definition of parties, see Joseph Schlesinger, Political Parties and the Winning of Office, University of Michigan Press, 1994, chapters 1 and 2.
within the PRI, and how these incentives will change now that competition at the ballot box is becoming more serious. This is not to argue that the spirit of the statutes is not violated; they are, and so too are many of the formal provisions for selecting the President of the National Executive Committee (the CEN). It is simply useful to recognize just how much vertical control the statutes allow, which in turn gives us a better idea of the informal negotiations over candidate and leadership selection. The study of formal rules also allows us to take into account the importance of the internal attempts to reform the Party's statutes in the National Assemblies.\(^2\)

One point that must be clarified is why the rules surrounding the selection of candidates and leaders of the Party matter, in other words, what is at stake? When the candidates were imposed, either by the governors, the Sectors, or the CEN, a delicate balance was achieved which took into account the demands of the Sectors, powerful political groups at the state level, and local notables. If a politician were passed over in one election, and he stayed loyal and improved his network, there was a reasonable chance he would succeed in the next nomination. Furthermore, he did not lose the candidacy against the winner; it was reasonable to suppose that his superiors simply decided that a candidate with a different profile was needed.\(^3\) Because there was no real exit option (especially before the PRI reforms of 1977), the loser had little choice but to accept defeat in the present and hope for better in the next round. If the loser represented a group of some force (such as bus workers, or small business owners), given the small possibility of a PRI defeat, the rival would work for the winner, and win certain consolation prizes, such as lower level candidacies, or positions in government.

This logic changes under electoral competition. Now, even if the candidates are imposed, Party leaders at the state and national levels must place candidates capable of defeating opposition candidates. If those passed over are angry enough, there is the exit option of running for the opposition party. (This option doesn’t exist everywhere, and once the opposition parties begin to institutionalize their candidacy selection, this exit option will become more difficult). The second problem is what to “pay” the lower level activists, who go door to door to get out the vote. Before, they could have been assured pay-offs once the PRI candidate took office. But if there are no assured pay-offs, and there is no institutionalized accension in the Party, it is not clear why militants should work for the Party. The final problem is the most serious. The PRI leaders have always been obsessed with the factional nature of the primary process, which was attempted during the 1940’s\(^4\) and then abandoned. The danger is that the losers in an open candidate selection process will not accept their defeat, and then refuse to work for the winner, or even worse, go to the opposition. In an open nomination battle, the contenders fight and bloody each other, in an attempt to win


\(^3\) Interview with Miguel González Avelar, May 31, 1996.

\(^4\) See *Historia Documental del PRI*, Vol. II.
the candidacy. Once the nomination is decided, the losers may refuse to work or vote for the winner, thus lowering in many cases the chances for a PRI victory in the state or locality. This may be even more serious when there is a strong possibility of defeat, because there is no assurance that by remaining loyal, one will win the consolation prizes. So a central dilemma exists for the PRI under more competitive conditions: by allowing the militants to choose candidates who can win, the process creates losers who do not accept the outcome and can exit the system. But the problem is two-fold; even when the candidate is imposed, the exit option is still open, so in reality, neither selection process guards against the wrath of the losers. After the 1988 election process, this debate within the PRI over how best to choose candidates and leaders would be exposed in the statute reform process.

This work will be composed of the following sections: I. the formal rules before 1988, II. the XIV National Reform Assembly of 1990, III. the rules after 1990 (and after 1992), and IV. the XVII National Assembly of 1996. These two important reform Assemblies are examined because the XIV took place shortly after the near defeat and clear disaster for the PRI in the 1988 elections, and had as one of its explicit goals reforming the Party to win elections. The XVII National Assembly took place in an even greater moment of confusion and doubt for the PRI. President Zedillo, for the first time in the history of the PRI, stated that he would not be involved in choosing his successor, and furthermore, that the Party would be responsible for choosing its candidates and leaders at all levels, which of course makes the Party rules worth fighting for. It is important to note that electoral competition is not the only driving force in statute reform. President Zedillo’s “healthy distance” between the Party and the Government was also crucial.

Before turning to the statutes, it is necessary to draw a picture of how the PRI is organized and structured. The Party is made up of three Sectors, the Worker, Peasant and Popular, which group together work-based organizations, and the Sections, which are the territorially-based foundation of the Party. The PRI was organized under the three Sectors before 1990, but now the balance has shifted to the Sections, in terms of sheer numbers. The Section is the smallest organization within the Party, one which covers just a neighborhood, and is in closest contact with the (voting) population. Each Sector brings together hundreds of groups, but the Worker and Pea-

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5 It is interesting to note that between 1950 and 1977, 8 National Assemblies were held, or approximately 1 every 4.5 years. Between 1978 and 1996, 9 have been held, or 1 every 2 years. Since the 1977 electoral reforms, the PRI has held a National Assembly before each federal election, and sometimes even more.

6 For more on President Zedillo’s statements on his relationship with the PRI, see reports in La Jornada, El Financiero and La Reforma for the month of February, 1995. El Universal is also an extremely good source for information concerning the PRI.

7 In 1991, the PRI claimed 7.4 million militants divided accordingly: 1 238 000 in the Agrarian Sector (92% in the CNC); 425 000 in the Workers’ Sector (78% in the CTM); 1 334 000 in the Popular Sector (73.5% in the CNOP) and 4 100 000 unaffiliated with any Sector. See the Memoria de Actividades del CEN del PRI, 1991 for more on membership structure.
sant are each dominated by one huge confederation. The CTM, or Mexican Workers’ Confederation is the bulwark of the Workers’ Sector, and the CNC, or National Campesino Confederation is the largest organization by far in the Campesino Sector. The Popular Sector has as its base the National Confederation of Popular Organizations, which is in turn divided into many much smaller groups and organizations, making the CNOP a far looser confederation than the CTM or CNC.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>72 (24%)</td>
<td>75 (21%)</td>
<td>57 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agrarian</td>
<td>46 (15%)</td>
<td>58 (17%)</td>
<td>50 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>182 (61%)</td>
<td>217 (62%)</td>
<td>243 (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300 (100%)</td>
<td>350 (100%)</td>
<td>350 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the 1978 statutes, Mexicans could affiliate themselves into the PRI in only one way; when an individual requested party membership, he was automatically placed in one of the three Sectors, based on his work activity. When an individual joined a union affiliated with the Workers’ Sector, that individual automatically became a member of the PRI and the corresponding Sector. Although it is not explicit from the 1978 statutes, all members of the PRI were members of one of the three Sectors. The statutes implicitly state that an individual cannot join the PRI and not be integrated into a Sector. (This is one of the great changes of the 1990 National Assembly, in which territorially-based membership was not only allowed for, but emphasized over that of Sector-based affiliation. In the electoral reforms of 1996, a proposed constitutional amendment would ban Sector based affiliation to any party). However, in the 1978 statutes, all members had to register their affiliation with both the Sector to which he belonged, as well as the Section of the Party under which his residence fell. Yet, even in 1978, the Sections of the Party were important. The Sections were created by president of the CEN, General Corona del Rosal, in 1960, during the sexenio de Adolfo Lopez Mateos, in an attempt to bring the Party to the neighborhood level. The Sections are subdivisions of the federal electoral districts, and so are the very base of the electoral activity of the Party outside the Sectors. Their central tasks are to keep the voting rolls up to date, participate in campaigns, and promote community projects.  

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exclusive groups formed around the work place, and what was essentially an electoral machine based on territorial residence, charged with important election responsibilities.

Another crucial point not stated in the statutes, is the fact that all candidates from the PRI for federal deputies officially had to represent one of the three Sectors of the Party. In no section of the statutes does it state that the PRI candidates to the Congress must or should represent a Sector. But since no member of the Party could be unaffiliated, it follows that the candidates would represent Sectors. Thus the power of the Sectors within the PRI was a measurable entity: how many seats in Congress, how many governors, how many municipal presidents did each Sector win. This is the famous quota of power (cuota del poder) of the Sectors.

Section I: The Formal Rules Before 1988

Our aim in this section is to make clear from the official statutes which leadership bodies within the PRI are responsible for choosing candidates for different elected positions, as well as leaders at different levels of the Party hierarchy. In doing this, we can identify the formal brakes on the ability of the bases to participate. Many authors agree that the PRI is not internally representative, but do not show how, even if the official rules were followed, the CEN (National Executive Committee) would still dominate 1) which specific procedure (out of the many possible in the statutes) are used in any specific nomination process, 2) the final candidate and leadership lists that come to be voted on, and 3) how the voting is carried out in the conventions and assemblies.

There are two general rules before 1990 concerning the election of candidates and leaders in the PRI. Candidates were chosen in conventions, and leaders were chosen in assemblies. (This will become far more complicated in 1992.)

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11 The following section is based on the 1978 Statutes of the PRI, which is taken from Documentos Básicos del PRI, 1978, published by the CEN del PRI, Divulgación Ideológica. The 1978 Statutes are used because they are the first changes after the important 1977 electoral reform which gave opposition parties proportional representation in the Congress. Although there were changes to the Statutes after the 1984 National Assembly, they were minor.
Section II, Part One: The Nomination of Candidates to Elected Posts Under the 1978 Statutes - the Conventions

As stated in the 1978 PRI Statutes, the internal process of postulating candidates for elected posts were to be handled in such a fashion as to "further the renovating impulse of the democratic life of the Party", ...with the purpose of achieving the following objectives: 1) accelerate the political development of the Mexican people, 2) strengthen the internal democracy of the Party and the unity of the forces that make it up, 3) decentralize the decision-making responsibilities. We now turn to the statutes to see how well these objectives are fulfilled. (See Table 2 for an overview of the candidate nomination process.)

In the PRI, candidates were nominated at conventions of delegates, not through a primary system, in which pre-candidates are voted on by registered Party voters. Conventions under the 1978 rules could take different forms: those made up of one Sector of the Party, by two Sectors, by three, or by one or more Sectors with the participation of the Sections. Any convention for any public office had to take one of these four forms.

There were, in the 1978 Statutes, four different levels of conventions which correspond to different electoral races: the Municipal Conventions nominated the candidates for municipal offices; the District Conventions chose the deputies to the State Congresses, as well as those of the Federal Congress; the State Conventions chose the candidates for governor and senators, and the National Convention was responsible for the presidential nomination.

Under the 1978 rules, the nominating conventions had to be carried out with elected delegates. However, it was not clear from the statutes how and from which Party organs the delegates to the different conventions were to be chosen, leaving enormous lee-way, especially for the sectors, governors and the leader of the CEN (meaning the President of Mexico), to negotiate over who the delegates would be, and in that way, control the results of the conventions —that is, get their people nominated for office.

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12 PRI Statutes, 1978, Título Tercero, Capítulo XI, p. 231. We are not arguing that an internally democratic party is a necessary condition for a democratic regime: we are simply examining how well the PRI meets its own calls for the democratic participation of the bases.

13 However, it is important to note here that the Party organ that writes up the rules for these conventions is different for Local and Federal Congressmen. In the case of the state legislators, the state party committee, the CDE, draws up the rules, while in the case of the federal deputies, the CEN, or National Executive Committee is responsible. This is to keep the governors, who by and large control their respective CDE’s from dominating the choice of candidates for federal representatives, as they do for State Deputies.

14 See Artículo 150 of the 1978 Statutes.
**Table 2**

*Nominating Candidates Under the 1978 Rules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Writes the Rules</th>
<th>Level of Convention</th>
<th>Type of Convention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1) One Sector of the Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For: Presidents</td>
<td>National Conventions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEN</td>
<td>- The President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senators</td>
<td>State Conventions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEN</td>
<td>- Governors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Deputies</td>
<td>District Conventions</td>
<td>3) Three Sectors of the Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEN</td>
<td>- Local Deputies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governors</td>
<td></td>
<td>4) 1-3 Sectors of the party with the Sections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDE*</td>
<td>- Federal Deputies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Deputies</td>
<td>Municipal Conventions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDE*</td>
<td>- Municipal Presidents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Presidents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDE*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*With the prior authorization of the CEN.

If the CEN believed that the particular conditions of the locality involved necessitated special procedures, it could impose them in choosing delegates. Unfortunately, the guidelines for choosing delegates were so vague, there was no way of assuring Party members that the delegates were chosen in a representative fashion, which made it far more likely that the base's (or militants') choice for candidate would have a chance of being nominated (which of course assumes that the militants wanted a different candidate than one imposed by the a sector, governor or higher authority; as we shall see on the section covering the XIV National Assembly, this seems to be the case).

**Section I, Part Two: The Convocatorias under the 1978 Statutes**

The convocatorias are a set of official rules crucial in the nominating process because they constitute the procedures which dictate: 1) how the delegates to the conventions will be elected, 2) how these delegates will vote once in the convention, and 3) what kind of Convention will be held (one, two, three Sectors participating, or some number of them with the Sections). For each election, a different convocatoria is written, which allowed the CEN adapt to different conditions within the states or districts when concocting the guidelines. The convocatorias also set the time periods for registering the pre-candidates, and the time allowed for internal campaigning.

Under the 1978 statutes, the convocatorias or rules for the conventions nominating municipal presidents, local deputies and governors were written by the state party committees or CDES, with PRI or authorization of the CEN, which approved the
rules made by the CDE directing the convention. Thus, no nomination could be held without the CEN approving its procedures. This gave the CEN control over the governors and the sectors in the states, in that if a governor wished to assure that his personal candidate would succeed him, the CEN could make sure that, via the delegates elected, the sitting state executive had not stacked the deck in favor of his candidate. On the other hand, if a state leader wished to implement a democratic nominating procedure, the change had to first be approved by the CEN. This was the case of Tabasco in 1982 when the governor decided to institute a consultation of the bases to elect municipal presidents in his state. He could not have done this without the CEN’s knowledge and approval. Although the CEN did have prior authorization power, the CDES were responsible for three different races, which gives the state committees, and the governors who by and large controlled them, great influence in selecting a large number of candidates, which, before 1988, almost always won the races. The convocatorias written directly by the CEN were those for federal deputies, senators and the president of Mexico.

Even with the formal provisions for voting in the conventions, candidates for local deputies and municipal presidents were often chosen by the favored method of forwarding a “candidate of unity”, which meant there was no opposition in the nomination. This was (and is) done to by-pass the supposedly destructive factional nature of the conventions by simply not allowing several pre-candidates to campaign for delegate votes.

It is important to note that the general delegates (later called the regional coordinators) are the CEN’s direct representatives in the states, whose main task is to gather information on the political situation within the municipalities, electoral districts, and the state in general and report back to the President of the CEN. This brings the regional delegates into conflict with the governor. As mentioned above, the CDES tend to be the governor’s private PRI body in the state, as he is mostly able to place and remove members of this Committee at will.

Once the convention has been completed, there is a clause that protected the CEN against unwelcome surprise candidates chosen from below. The final rule-based power the CEN has over the nomination of candidates at all levels is Article 161, which clearly states that in cases of problems, the CEN is able to either call a new

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15 Cite book on this subject.

16 In an interesting change from the post-1990 statutes, written after the supposedly more democratic XIV National Assembly, the CEN now has the responsibility for writing the rules for the governors’ nominations. In fact, the CDES were only given the right to draw up governors’ Convocatorias after the 1978 National Assembly, which followed on the heels of the 1977 electoral reforms, giving the opposition 100 PR seats in the Congress, a move that the Sectors opposed. To counter this opposition, the CDES were given the right to draw up the Convocatorias for the governors, only to have them taken away in 1990.

17 Carlos Madrazo, President of the CEN from 1964 to 1965, attempted to implement primaries at the municipal level and was met with ferocious opposition from the governors and certain Cabinet ministers, which led to his downfall.
convention, or simply designate new candidates. Thus, if any rebellion occurs, there is a clear rule allowing the CEN to remove the candidate.

Added to its ability to name candidates and write the rules underpinning the conventions, the CEN could also name the candidates to head the PR lists for local and federal Congress (and now, the Senate), with only the suggestions of the three Sectors. In 1978, there were 100 plurinominal seats in Congress; this figure rose to 200 of 500 seats in 1985. Although the PRI cannot win all the PR seats, it still takes a large number of potential candidates out of rule-based procedures.

**Section I, Part Three: The Election of Party Leaders Under the 1978 Statutes—the Assemblies**

As with the rules for nominating candidates for elected positions, what we see in the chapter covering the election of Party leaders is a control by the CEN written into the official statutes. In fact, the CEN dictated who would be part of the National Assembly, the body responsible for then electing or renovating the President and General Secretary of the Party, so the leaders of the CEN controlled the body which nominally was above the CEN, a not very effective separation of powers.

The National Assembly is the supreme organ of the Party, according to the 1978 statutes, and must meet at least once every six years. The Assembly is charged with electing the President and Secretary General of the CEN. The Assembly, however, is made up of delegates whose number and identity were determined by a convocatoria drawn up the CEN, with previous authorization of the National Council. This ability to choose many of the delegates, as well as the ability of the CEN to remove the leaders of the CDE (which then made up a good number of the delegates to the Assembly) gave the CEN a great deal of rule based power over the Assembly’s members and their decisions. There is no mention in the statutes of who made up the list of possible candidates for president and general secretary of the CEN, nor any rules for voting, allowing enormous discretionality in choosing these delegates.

At the state level, the lines of authority were extremely similar, as was the ability of the president of the CDE to control the members of the State Assembly (which is nominally above the CDE) and the Municipal and District Committees. The State Assembly was charged with electing the president and general secretary of the CDE, but the delegates to the State Assembly were elected by rules written by the

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18 Under the 1978 statutes, the rules for electing party leaders were not in the same Título, or chapter, as those of nominating candidates for elected posts. By 1985, these rules had been placed with those of the candidates.

19 Título Segundo, Artículo 40 and Artículo 55, Inciso xiii.

20 The obvious question here is, if the CEN controls every aspect of candidate and leadership selection in the PRI, who controls the CEN? The answer is the President of Mexico, but because this is an informal attribute, it will be left for another work.

CDE. Article 105 of the 1978 statutes states that the Assembly is the deliberative and representative organ of the Party in the state, whose task it is to evaluate the political, economic and social situation of their entity, and from this analysis, discuss and approve the state’s development plan. The State Assemblies can also send delegates to the National Assembly if they are given the chance by the CEN.

The CDE, or State Party Committee, is the body which directs the Party’s activities in the states. Not only did it write the convocatorias for the State Assemblies, but also for the nominating conventions in the municipal, local deputy and governor races. The CDEs also wrote the convocatorias for the Municipal and District Assemblies in which the leaders of the Municipal and District Committees were chosen.

The Municipal and District Assemblies of the PRI have the responsibility of voting in the delegates to the State Assembly, under the rules laid down by the CDE. The Municipal Committees are placed into office by the Municipal Assemblies. The Municipal Committees also wrote the rules for calling to order the Sectional Assembly, which in turn elected the Sectional Committee, the smallest unit of the Party.

Section II: The XIV National Assembly of the PRI (1990): an Attempt to Reorganize the Party to win more Competitive Elections

This section examines how these rules change once the PRI’s candidates were no longer assured electoral victory. What one sees are incremental attempts to improve candidates so they will be attractive to the average voter, (while at the same time improving campaign methods). Yet, it is clear that the need did not produce the good in this case. The sectors put up a fierce fight in trying to protect their quota of power, and while the Territorial base and the militants won a statutory victory in the XIV National Assembly, held in September of 1990, this victory was short-lived.

Two electoral shocks in 1988 and 1989, and President Salinas’ reaction to these shocks in large part explain the willingness of Salinas and his closest allies to attempt to reform both the organization and candidate-leadership selection rules of the PRI. The 1990 reform was the first serious attempt to change the statutes since 1964, under Carlos Madrazo. It is interesting to note that Madrazo, as President of the CEN was not concerned with higher levels of electoral competition, although he did attempt to institute primaries at the level of municipal presidents. His central objective was to reinvigorate the Party’s base, which had been weakened because of several decades of dominating the polls. The reform was instituted to better able to meet the challenge of the opposition parties, by organizing the force of the Party around its territorial and electoral base. The Sectors had to be weakened, especially their hold over candidacies, which were no longer automatically won by their candidates.

22 For more of Carlos Madrazo’s failed attempt to reform the Party, see Rogelio Hernandez and Luis Medina.
Table 3
The Election of PRI Party Leaders Under the 1978 Rules*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader and Assembly</th>
<th>Who Writes Rules</th>
<th>Electing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CEN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-President</td>
<td>CEN</td>
<td>National Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-General Secretary</td>
<td>same</td>
<td>same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Secretaries of Sectors in CEN</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Secretaries of Legislative Coordination</td>
<td>None needed</td>
<td>PRI fraction in the respective Camara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Rest of Secretaries of CEN</td>
<td></td>
<td>President of CEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Assembly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Does not state from which Party organ these delegates should come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Council</strong></td>
<td>CEN</td>
<td>Sectors get to choose who is a delegate to the National Council, but the CEN determines the number. Other members include the presidents of the CDEs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-role is to advise the CEN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each Sector has a vote, while the presidentes of the CDEs only have one.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Assembly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Delegates come from the Municipal and District Assemblies make up the State Assembly. The State Assembly elects the leaders of the CDE under rules written by the CDE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The State Assembly elects the president and secretary general of the CDE</td>
<td>CDE with authorization of the CEN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CDE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Pres. and Gen. Secretary</td>
<td>CDE with authorization of the CEN</td>
<td>The President and Secretary elected in Mun/District Assemblies. The delegates to these Assemblies come from the Sectors and the Section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipal/District Committees</strong></td>
<td>CDE with authorization of the CEN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Important points here: where did the delegates to the Assemblies come from that elected the leaders, and who wrote the rules (convocatorias) that determined the make-up and procedure to be followed in the Assembly in question.
The PRI's presidential candidate was battered in the elections of 1988, capturing only 50.4% of the votes cast, as opposed to 48% for the opposition—31.1% for Cuauhtemoc Cardenas of the leftist front, and 17% for Manuel Clouthier of the PAN. The PRI won 51.1% of the national vote for federal deputies, a 17% drop from its 1985 showing.23 Within the Salinas camp, the blame for this electoral disaster was squarely placed on the Sectors. The evident fury of the voting public over the economic crises that had begun in 1982 and continued with some periods of abatement until 1987 was of course a reason for the voters to reject the dominant party, but other crises, especially that of the devaluation of 1976 had not caused similar electoral problems. The split within the PRI, ending in a rupture, had indeed created a leftist alternative at the ballot box, but electoral challenges from disgruntled losers within the PRI had also occurred and were easily handled by the ruling party (principally those of 1940, 1946 and 1950).

President Salinas and his political staff were firmly convinced that the real problem was the failure of the corporatist sectors, particularly the agrarian and workers' centrals to control the vote of their members, or attract the vote of those citizens unaffiliated with the Party. The electoral turnout before 1988 had been assured by allowing the sectors to choose candidates from within their occupational groupings, who then went on to win territorially-based, first past the post elections. Yet, those within the territorial structure of the Party, that is, within the Sectional and Municipal Committees, did much of the work of winning elections, but were not rewarded in a systematic fashion with elected posts or even access to higher party posts, as were those within the sectors.24

In 1988, the sectors did not deliver their respective votes, and now, far more Mexicans simply did not belong to the Party, and therefore, their votes were not controllable. For example, in the early 1960's, the PRI claimed 8 million members out of a population of approximately 34 000 000 Mexicans, making almost 25% of all Mexicans members of the Party. Yet, by 1990, the PRI only reported 8.3 million members25 out of a population of 80 000 000 people—less than 10%. Obviously, not all PRI members have to vote for PRI candidates, and plenty of non-affiliated citizens do, but there is no doubt that the fall in the percentage of PRI members makes the job of winning the vote more difficult, if only because these voters are not recei-

24 Once Mexico began to urbanize at a startling rate between 1950 and 1980, the peasant sector lost a dramatic percentage of their quota of power in the Congress. Guadalupe Pacheco reports that in 1964, the agrarian organizations won 50% of the seats, but by 1967, that figure had dropped to 25% and by 1969, it had bottomed out at 18%. Yet, unlike the workers' sector, the agrarians were able to keep their voters under tighter control because they voted in their communities. "Estructura y resultados electorales," Examen, August 15, 1990, año 2, núm. 15, p. 19.
25 La Jornada, September 18, 1990, p. 4.
ving direct compensation for their vote, and cannot be directly punished for withholding it.

Added to the problem of a lack of new members, Guadalupe Pacheco finds a “collapse” of the corporatist vote. According to her statistics, in 1988 the agrarian sector won 18% of the PRI candidacies in Congress (that is to say, of all the possible candidates for congressional seats, the Agrarian Sector was able to place its people as candidates in 18% of these seats), the workers’ 22% and the popular 60%. In a district average of the national vote, the agrarian sector won 63% of the votes that were placed for its candidates, the workers’ 48% and the popular 49%. However, because the agrarian sector only controlled 18% of the candidacies, their high vote was converted into very few seats. The workers’ sector won more than 50% of the votes for its candidates in only one third of their district races, while the popular sector performed better by winning over one half of their districts. One can assume, given the close percentage of votes won by the PRI presidential candidate and Federal Deputies —50.1% versus 51.1%, that the sectoral vote was similarly problematic in the presidential vote.

The second electoral shock was the 1989 loss of the governor’s seat in Baja California to the PAN. President Salinas and Donald Colosio, as president of the CEN, were satanized in the northern state for “allowing” the PAN’s vote to be respected. The first loss of a state executive seat showed that opposition parties were now viable options not only in the overheated national presidential campaigns, but the state level as well. Thus, in order to meet what was seen from 1988-1990 as a growing opposition threat, a National Reform Assembly was called for September of 1990. The president of the CEN wrote

The will of our militants to begin to transform the PRI methods in the run up to the XIV Assembly is palpable. In this way (by respecting the will of the militants), the Assembly will ratify the decision to change in order to be a stronger and more competitive party. Memoria de Actividades del CEN, 1990, p. 128.

Not only would the sectoral structure of the perfectly Party have to be downplayed, and the sections made stronger to include the non-organized urban voters, these delicate maneuvers would have to done with the ample participation of the territorially-based militants, in large part by turning over candidate and leadership selection to them, at least formally.

It is important to note that President Salinas was “in charge” of this Assembly. Salinas opened the public phase of the initial preparations of the Assembly on March 5, 1990, when he made a speech on the 61 anniversary of the founding of the Party. He stated that the PRI must reform itself in order to win elections. The most important reform would be “that candidates of the PRI for elected positions must be nominated under democratic mechanisms and the full participation of the militant

26 Guadalupe Pacheco, op. cit., p. 20.
His hand-picked CEN president, Donaldo Colosio, had little experience in the bureaucratic organization of the Party. Rather, his career had centered around Salinas in the Secretary of Planning and Budget (SPP). Roberto Madrazo, the Secretary of Organization of the CEN, and responsible for much of the organization of the XIV, did have experience with the Party, especially as a regional coordinator, but was closely identified as a Colosio man. Thus, the Assembly was closely directed by the President, an important difference with the XVII Assembly.

The Convocatoria written for the XIV is a clear indication of CEN's desire to restructure the PRI around a territorial base. As in the 1984 National Assembly, the delegates to the XIV were in large part chosen from the Sectional and Municipal Assemblies of Consultation and Debate, where the reform agenda (documento base) was discussed and amended. Of over 9,000 delegates to the National Assembly in 1990, 5,578 were chosen from among the members of the Sectional Assemblies in the Municipal Assemblies. Only 1,440 were chosen in the State Assemblies, which were easier for the governors to manipulate. Not only did the Convocatoria call for half the delegates to be chosen from the territorial structure, the basic reform to the statutes was aired in a series of organized fora, from the Sections to the Municipal to the State Assembly level (see Annexus 1 for more on the paths to the XIV National Assembly).

In addition to writing the Convocatoria to allow for the participation of the territorial structure, in the months leading up to the September Assembly, the CEN cleaned out the party organs that made up the territorial base of the Party so that new militants —those not so closely tied to the governors or the sectors— could participate in the National Assembly. New militants were brought into the structure in two ways. First, the Sectional and Municipal Committee members were replaced so that new "cuadros" could then compete to become delegates to the National Assembly. Of the 46,000 Sectional Committees, 26,899 elected new members via the direct vote of the militants of the section. 9,465 held elections via the assembly of elected delegates, and only 1,051 were simply designated by their Municipal Committees. The Municipal Committees suffered a similar fate: of a total of 2,386, 1,259 were restructured either through a direct vote of the base, or the delegates. Thus, thousands of new leaders at the levels closest to the electoral districts were discovered and elected in the Sectional and Municipal Assemblies to win spots in the National Assembly.

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27 La Jornada, March 5, 1990, p. 1.
28 Colosio's political experience in the Congress had been engineered by Salinas. Colosio had been sent by Salinas, when the latter was Secretary of SPP to the Congress to take care of the Budget Committee.
29 Contrast these 9,000 voting delegates with the 4,000 in 1996's National Assembly. More on this in the following section.
30 Numbers taken from Memoria de actividades del CEN del PRI, 1990.
32 Ibid., p. 124.
A second strategy was to use the Secretary of Political Training (the Secretaría de Capacitación Política) and its School of Militants as a training ground in the months before the Assembly so that inexperienced militants would win places as delegates. According to the then Secretary of Political Training, Luis Medina, over 1,600 low level local activists were trained between late 1989 and early 1990.33

The delegates to this assembly, and many of those who participated in its initial stages, were convinced that the PRI had to become more democratic in order to meet the challenge of the opposition. One of their central demands was more control over the selection of candidates and Party leaders so that candidates who had no roots or knowledge of the area, but who had connections with higher ups could no longer simply be imposed on the militants.

The majority of the delegates were not tied to the governors or sectors and had fully participated in the discussion of the original reform proposal sent to the states, which meant that the delegates who actually made it to the National Assembly were far more difficult to control—even by their creators in the CEN. Colosio and Madrazo attempted to control the Assembly of freely elected delegates by setting the agenda of discussion in September. This strategy was only partially successful as various rebellions against CEN manipulation of the Assembly were launched by disgruntled PRI delegates who had expected to change the organization democratically once they arrived at the Tribunals in September.34 The Tribunal for reforming the Statutes was a particularly important and fought over forum, and finally, the product of the delegates' battles was postponed months while the final revision was made.35

The first crucial change to come out of the 1990 Assembly were changes in the candidate and leadership selection rules. Instead of conventions made up of the sectors, one single rule would dictate all nominations and elections of leaders: the direct vote of the militant base in the territorial area of the popular election, or the level of PRI hierarchy (the outgoing municipal committee would organize a vote of the militants in the municipio to vote in the president and secretary of the Municipal Committee). Between 1990 and 1992, the only official pre-requisite to becoming a pre-candidate for the PRI was to be able to demonstrate the support of 20% of the

33 Interview with Luis Medina, September 10, 1996.
34 Colosio and Madrazo also tried to keep the Assembly under control by writing the rules for debate in the Tribunals (the working groups of the National Assembly where the votes would be made on the final proposal). First, all the proposals made in the municipal and state assemblies were unified and digested by the CEN, which produced a new reform proposal that was then discussed in September (the report of the National Analysis Commission). Thus, the CEN controlled the reform agenda. Second, the actual debate in the Assembly took place in four Tribunals, Statement of principals, Statement of Action, Statutes and Modernization. The president and secretary of the Tribunal were selected by the CEN, and not only did these two figures control the debate within the Tribunal, they also formed the Committee (Comisión de Dictamen) that would take the new, voted on proposals, and write the final document to be voted on the floor of the Assembly. This allowed the CEN yet another lever with which they controlled the outcome of the debate.
35 For more on the XIV National Assembly, see La Jornada, September, 2-3, 1990.
members of the Party Committee at the lower corresponding level. Thus, the number of candidates was automatically reduced to 5. The only exception to this general rule would be those made by the corresponding Political Council. Thus, it would be more difficult for the CEN, the Sectors, or the governors to impose candidates, and it was hoped that if the militants were voting for their own people, who would presumably have more ties to the locality, these candidates would be more capable of winning elections, or of being good leaders. At the same time, the capacity of the Sectors to win their quotas also became more difficult—an outcome the CEN had wanted. What was not clear is whether, in trying to lessen the power of the sectors in the candidacy game, the center was willing to let go of its ability to impose candidates. This issue became clear in the selection of candidates for the 1991 Federal Deputy races. Stephen Morris reports that over 90% of these candidates were, in effect, imposed from above and presented to the bases as candidates of unity. Thus, the first real test of the willingness of the Party to leave the selection of candidates up to the militants of the areas in which the candidates would contend was a failure. The most important rule change of the XIV would be formally removed without further notice in the XV National Assembly in 1992.

The question of how to address the factionalism and divisiveness of the nomination battles was not discussed in the 1990 Assembly. If the losers in the nomination could not be made to work for the campaign victory of the winner, the entire Party in the locality could conceivably lose against the opposition. Yet, the governors, or the state PRI leaders were not able or willing to solve the collective action problems that nominations produce, in large part because it is not in their interests to do so (or, in the cases of states where the opposition holds the governor’s chairs, it is not possible). If it can be shown that the best candidates come out of the consult of the bases, then the governors would lose a large part of their control over the Party in their states.

On the organization front, three changes stemming from the 1990 National Assembly were crucial: first, the Party would allow individual affiliation, instead of forced membership in a Sector on joining the Party. Now, in order for the sectors to grow, they would have to offer something to attract new members, i.e., they would have to change at least part of their strict vertical control, especially in the case of the Worker and Agrarian Sectors. Second, in every Assembly or convention, the number of delegates from the sectors had to equal to those from the territorial base. In addi-

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38 A second argument against the consult of the bases as a nomination procedure is that the local caciques would win control over the process. This is a slightly facetious argument, as most of the population lives in urban areas, where caciques do not flourish. Furthermore, in those localities where caciques still do hold control, the strongman would be able to control the votes of his population for his candidate, leading the PRI to win the election, which should be in the interest of the Party.
tion, Political Councils were created at the state, district and municipal levels of the Party, and were charged with advising the CEN, the CDE and the Municipal Committee on electoral and ideological matters. Again, in these Councils, the sectors and territorial base enjoyed the same numerical weight. From 1991-1992, the National Political Council was responsible for electing the General Secretary of the CEN, in a strategy to protect at least one leadership post from the President’s *dedazo*. This provision also quietly dropped out of the rules in the XV National Assembly in 1992.

Section III: The Statutes After 1990

The changes in the PRI Statutes from 1985 to 1991 are at first glance dramatic, although these changes certainly do not guarantee internal democracy in the selection of leaders or Party candidates. More fundamentally, the new rules laid out by the statutes do not create clear cut guidelines to be followed by the Party’s leadership or current president of Mexico. Even after the XIV National Assembly of 1990, governors are still imposed on the states by the President of the Republic and the CEN, municipal presidents are still imposed by the governors, and federal deputy and senatorial candidates are still bartered among the President, the leader of the PRI, Gobernación and the governors.

The discretion of the President is still the rule of the day, and the bases cannot participate fully unless: 1) the President of Mexico decides he will stay out of the candidate selection process, 2) the leaders of the CEN write open convocatorias, and 3) the state involved has no strong leader able to impose himself or one of his associates on the nominating convention. Yet the nature of the game may have changed. Instead of a simply center-state bargaining strategy over how to distribute scarce resources —candidates— competition may shift the bargaining down to the state level so that local groups fight among themselves.

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39 For an excellent review of the important points of the XIV National Assembly less than a month after it was held, see John Bailey, Denise Dresser and Leopoldo Gómez, "Balance preliminar: XIV Asamblea del PRI," *La Jornada*, September 26, 1990.


41 Among the governors directly linked to President Salinas are: Patricio Chirinos en Veracruz, Socrates Rizzo en Nuevo León, Otto Granados Roldán en Aguascalientes, Manuel Cavazos Lerma in Tamaulipas, Rogelio Montemayor in Coahuila and Gonzalo Patrocinio in Chiapas.

We have seen how the clear rule, instituted in the 1990 Assembly, of consulting the bases in choosing candidates or leaders, was dropped in the 1992 Assembly. This demonstrates how easily important procedures can be changed. In this section, the procedures instituted in 1992, and published in 1993 will be discussed. Generally, these are a throw-back to the pre-1990 rules, except that the Sectors' power remains much weaker. Article 127, section 3 of the 1993 Statutes states there are four procedures by which party leaders are to be chosen: 1) direct consultation of the bases, 2) an Assembly, 3) the Political Council of whatever level the leaders are being chosen for and 4) customary practices.* Moreover, the National or State Political Councils determine which of the four methods will be used. However, when one turns to the article discussing the specific attributes of the National and State Councils, there is no mention made of choosing the procedure for electing leaders. Even more confusing are the Articles covering the responsibilities of the State, Municipal, and District Assemblies: each of them is charged with electing their corresponding leaders (as they were in the pre-1990 Statutes). In short, while it is explicitly stated that the National and State Political Councils will decide among four election procedures, the different Assemblies still elect leaders, in essence denying the Political Councils a role in choosing Party leaders.

This is important because in simple terms, the direct consultation of the PRI bases (the first of the above options) is the most participatory method of choosing leaders, and the most democratic—it is, essentially, a primary of registered PRI members in the locality. (Delegates do not vote; the PRI members of the locality vote. This is obviously more difficult for larger districts simply because a good registry of Party members often does not exist, and because there is no structure in place to allow for large-scale voting.) Those PRI militants who wish to be leaders and who can demonstrate a minimum of support among the Sectors of the State Party Committees, may enter into the contest in which registered Party members can vote. Regardless, a clo-

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* In this paper, unless otherwise specified, the 1993 Statutes, which were formulated in a non-reform Assembly in May, 1992 will be used in the comparison. This was done because the new rules coming out of the XIV National Assembly were not published until 1991, and were quickly replaced with the 1993 Rules, which are still in force today, and were the statutes debated in the XVII National Assembly in September, 1996. Differences between the 1991 and 1993 Statutes will be pointed out in detail.

43 This crucial set of rules is written in a strange manner: the guidelines for the consultation of the militant base method are fully laid out, but those of the other three methods are nonexistent. The Article in question simply refers the reader back to the previous section of the statutes, in which the members of each Assembly are loosely spelled out.
reading of the statutes reveals that consultations of the base is not the first option that will be chosen.

The Assemblies survive from the pre-1990 Statutes, although now the territorial and sectoral membership share the Assembly floor and send an equal number of elected delegates. As the rules for integrating the Assemblies are better clarified (yet still vague), the Assemblies could be a reasonably fair method for choosing leaders if and only if the delegates are not controlled by an interested party such as the president or the governor.

For all the lee-way available, there is a basic formula in the 1993 statutes for choosing delegates to Assemblies that did not exist in 1978, and thus cuts down somewhat on the discretionality of the CEN leader in choosing delegates to the National Assembly. Delegates to the National Assembly, which choose the president and general secretary of the CEN, must include: members of the CEN, the presidents and general secretaries of the State Party Committees (CDES), all federal legislators of the Party, two local deputies from each state, 10% of the presidents of the Municipal Committees, 1% of the presidents of the Sectional Committees, and delegates from the Popular Urban Territorial Movement, as well as an equal number of delegates from the three Sectors. It is not mentioned in the statutes who chooses the delegates or how they are chosen or which of the 10% of the Municipal Presidents, Local Deputies or Section Committee heads will be sent to the National Assembly. These questions are determined by each Convocatoria, which is written by the National Political Council, with authorization of the CEN. The president and general secretary are elected in State Assemblies, whose rules are still written by the CDE. The President and general secretary of the Municipal Committee are elected in Municipal Assemblies, whose rules are determined by the Municipal Political Council. The leaders of the Sectional Committees are chosen in the Sectional Assemblies, whose members vote directly for their leaders.

\[44 \text{ Artículo 45, sección 1, capítulo 1.}\]
Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organ</th>
<th>Who Writes Rules (Convocatorias)</th>
<th>Electing Body/Delegates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CEN</strong></td>
<td>National Political Council authorizes rules for National Assembly with CEN writing them.</td>
<td>National Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President and Sec. General</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Assembly</strong></td>
<td>CEN writes convocatoria</td>
<td>Where delegates come from is now specified: 1) Pres. Sec. Gen. of CEN, 2) Members of the CEN, 3) Members of the CEN, 4) Pres. and sec. gen. of the CDES, 5) Federal Deputy and Senators 6) 10% of Municipal Committee presidents, 7) 1% of presidents of Sectional Committees, 8) Representatives of the Sections, 9) Two Local Deputies from each state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elects President and Secretary General of CEN. They must be elected in Assembly</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Assembly can be called if majority of the CDES wish it.

National Assembly now meets every 3 years instead of every 6.

**National Political Council**

Authorizes conventions for 1) National Assembly, 2) Chooses method for electing candidates for Governors, Senators, and Federal Deputies

Members of the NPC are made up of: 1) Members of CEN, 2) Presidents of the CDES, 3) 16 presidents of Municipal Committees, 4) 5 Senators and 10 Federal Deputies chosen by their respective bodies, 5) 1 local deputy from each of 5 plurinominal circumscriptions, 6) Members of the Sectors, 7) Distinguished members of the Party.
State Assembly
State Assemblies elect President and General of the CDE. Art. 81. V. CDE with authorization of the State Political Council

State Political Council
Not clear what role it plays in leadership selection.

Municipal Assembly
Chooses president and Council General Secretary of the Municipal Committee (Art. 100, V.)

Municipal Political Council
Role not clear.

Delegates come from the Party organs:
1) Members of the CDE, 2) Members of the State Political Council, 3) Presidents and Sec. Generals of the Municipal Committees, 4) 10% of the presidents of the Sectional Committees, 5) Federal and Local Deputies, 6) Members of the Sectors within the state.

Members include: 1) the president and general secretary of the CDE, 2) the presidents of the Municipal Committees, 3) Federal and Local Deputies, 4) Members of the Sectors, 5) Distinguished members of the PRI from state.

Delegates from: 1) the Municipal Political 2) members of the Municipal Committee, 3) Local and Federal Deputies of the area, 4) Members of the Sectors.

Members are: 1) president and general secretary of the Municipal Committee, 2) Presidents of the Sectional Committees, 3) Members of the Sectors, 4) Distinguished PRI members in area.

45 Article 127 states that the SPC will choose from among four methods of choosing leaders, yet in Art. 92, which states the attributes of the SPC, no mention is made of this responsibility, and in fact, in each statute covering the election of leaders, the Assembly is named as the method for choosing leaders, leading one to believe that the Political Councils do not in fact have the statutory right to decide how leaders will be chosen.
Section III, Part Two: The Nomination of Candidates After 1992

One of the most important changes in how the PRI chooses its candidates involves the creation of the Political Councils at all levels of the Party's hierarchy, instead of simply at the national level. In most cases, the Political Councils are responsible for writing the rules which will dictate 1) which nominating procedure will be followed, 2) where the delegates for the convention should come from and 3) the amount of time allowed from the date the Convocatoria is written until the registration of precandidates must be completed (usually about 24 hours). Thus, unlike the case of choosing Party leaders, the Political Councils do play an important role in nominating candidates.

The possible procedures to nominate candidates have expanded from only conventions (of 1-3 Sectors, possibly with the participation of the Sections) before 1990, to 1) direct consultation of the bases, 2) conventions with democratically elected delegates equally weighted between the Sectors and the Territorial base, 3) a nomination made in the corresponding Political Council, and 4) customary practice. The Political Council in question (except for State Assemblies, which comes under the purview of the CDES), authorizes the Convocatorias, and hence, decides the nominating method to be used.

But once the convention method for nominating candidates has been chosen, the CEN or the CDE writes the rules for the convention in question. Article 145 states, "The Convocatorias of the conventions to postulate candidates will be written by the CEN (for federal deputies, senators, governors, and the president)". Article 140 states, "The structure and procedure of the conventions will follow the Convocatoria that the respective Political Council authorizes". This appears to mean that the CEN in most cases (see above) and the CDE in others, write the rules, and the Political Council only authorizes them to do so. The CDES are responsible for the municipal presidents and local deputies, having lost the governors to the CEN. So it appears that in the nomination of candidates for elected posts, little has changed in the statutes from 1978 to 1995, despite the attempt in 1990 to reform the Party, except that there are more methods to choose from. The consultation of the bases is one method among four. The CEN has become stronger in that it has direct control over the Governor nomination rules, and the Political Councils are only there to authorize the

46 A central complaint of the state PRIs in 1990 was that the CEN often left one or two days between the publication of the convocatoria and the actual registration of candidates, making it difficult for non-official candidates to organize, and gather the necessary support from the Sectors and territorial organs of the Party. For more, see the Memoria Documental of the XIV Asamblea Nacional del PRI, Secretario de Información y Propaganda, agosto de 1991, especially the chapter entitled "Propuestas estatales de la tribuna de estatutos".

47 Artículo 138, Sección 3.
CEN or CDE to write the rules, which then have to pass muster in the CEN anyway, upon completion.

**Table 5**

*General Forms the Nomination of Candidates Take After 1992*

The corresponding Political Council, either National or State, decides the type of nomination procedure to be used, except in the case of the presidential nomination, which must be done in a National Convention.

**Type of Nomination Procedure**

1) Direct Consultation of the Bases.

2) Conventions with elected delegates.

3) Political Council decides candidate directly.

4) Customary Practice (usually of indigenous population).

**Level of Candidate to be Decided:**

*President* must be nominated in National Convention.

*Governor's* nomination procedure decided by National Political Council.

*Senator* decided by National Political Council.

*Federal Deputy* decided by National Political Council.

*Local Deputy* decided by State Political Council.

*Municipal President* decided by State Political Council.

If the *Convention* (option 2) is the form the nomination will take, then the CEN and CDE write the Convocatorias for the nomination conventions.

**For Conventions:**

*National Convention*

Nominate presidential candidate. CEN writes Convocatoria Delegate selection left up to Convocatoria.
State Conventions
Nominate Governors  CEN writes Convocatoria  Delegate selection left up to Convocatoria.
Nominate Senators  CEN writes Convocatoria  Delegate selection left up to Convocatoria.

District Conventions
Federal Deputies  CEN writes Convocatoria
Local Deputies  CDE writes Convocatoria

Municipal Conventions
Municipal Presidents  CDE writes Convocatoria

Section IV: The XVII National Assembly of the PRI, September, 1996: The Party Takes on the President and Ignores the Opposition.

What were the incentives for once again reforming the Party statutes in a serious way after Ernesto Zedillo took office? Once could argue that there were three stages of the preparations for the XVII National Assembly, which took place in September, 1996, and that, at least during the second stage, comprising the first semester of 1995, the Party’s leaders were confronted with one of the most serious sustained electoral challenges since 1988. Three state houses were lost in less than six months to the PAN. This paper will only consider the third stage from mid-1995 to 1996, which was directed by Santiago Oñate as President of the CEN and Cesar Augusto Santiago, as Technical Secretary of the National Political Council, among others. 48 This period was characterized by a hiatus in the nation’s electoral calendar in that no important elections took place. This allowed the PRI’s leaders to concentrate more on internal battles than those launched by the opposition.

48 The first stage was directed by Jesús Reyes Heroles (a member of the CPN), under the President of the CEN, Ignacio Pichardo Pagaza, the second by Miguel González Avelar (also in the CPN), under María de los Ángeles Moreno. González Avelar worked under extremely difficult electoral conditions in 1995, as the PRI, during the first six months of 1995, lost three governorships (Jalisco, Guanajuato and Baja California) and won a fourth (Yucatán) under a cloud of opposition accusations of fraud.
President Zedillo had begun his presidential period by declaring that the president would no longer interfere in Party matters, such as choosing candidates, electing leaders, or reforming the Party. Once Santiago Oñate was placed as President of the CEN (by President Zedillo), an excellent opportunity was given to remake the Party by giving new spaces to the organization, over those traditionally given to the president in turn, or over those given and quickly taken away from the militant base. The oft-delayed National Assembly was finally organized by a closely knit group made up of Santiago Oñate, César Augusto Santiago, Artemio Iglesias (Secretary of Regional Coordination of the CEN), who were in turn aligned with Enrique Jackson (Secretary of Electoral Strategy of the CEN), Octavio West (Secretary of Finances), and Fernando Ortiz Arana, (Senate majority leader). Significantly, Zedillo stayed away from the planning of the National Assembly and had no close allies installed in important CEN positions to take care of his interests, although he made it clear that the privatización of Pemex would not be an issue.

In asking about the objectives of those organizing the Assembly, the central question is how afraid these leaders were of losing the next three important elections: the 1997 Federal Deputy races, the newly created Governor seat in the Federal District (also to be held in 1997), and the presidential race in 2000. If one argues that the CEN leaders realized that there were few possibilities of losing even the relative majority in the 1997-2000 Congress, (which takes the president and the PRI into the presidential elections of 2000), then the clear strategy for this group within the Party was to manipulate the Assembly so their group could gain control of the 1997 Congress (and perhaps, the Executive office).

In examining the Convocatoria or rules for choosing delegates to the XVII, it appears that a deal was struck with the governors to bring in their carefully selected delegates to the National Assembly, where leaders of the state delegations could control their delegates' votes on important measures. Contrary to the Convocatoria for the XIV, the 1996 Rules mandate that the territorial delegates would be chosen not from among the members of the Sectional or Municipal Assemblies, (in successive elections beginning at the lowest levels), but the State Assemblies, in which the only possible delegates from the territorial base were the Presidents of the Municipal Committees, who are, in large part, placed by their respective governors. The sectoral delegates were chosen within their respective federations.

Further evidence that the leaders of the CEN made a pact with various governors in organizing the Assembly, is that Zedillo has not been able to place of single person from his political group as a candidate for governor. (Cervera Pacheco, one of the two PRI candidates to have won a governor's race in Zedillo's sexenio through 1996, cannot be called a member of the president's group. Zedillo made very clear in the other governor races that his friends would not have any special weight in the nomination battles). Therefore, the sitting state executives do not owe their posts to the president, and have no special reason to protect Zedillo's ability to control the
selection of candidates for the 1997 Congress, or more importantly, his ability to place his own successor, as is traditionally done in Mexico.

The control exerted by the leaders of the CEN over the reform agenda, as well as over the working groups (renamed Tribunals), is very similar in the two reform Assemblies (1990 and 1996). For example, in the June reform proposal, the precandidates for president would first be voted on by the National Political Council. All those who could show the support of 10% of the National Political Council would be placed on a list, which would be narrowed down to five by a vote of the NPC. This list would be sent to the National Assembly, called specifically for this purpose, and voted on by the delegates and the PRI presidential contender chosen. This 10% would mean that many Party members not necessarily tied to the President could viably contend for the nomination, making it more difficult for the President to impose his successor. The clause was dropped in negotiations with the President before it reached the states. A second important change from the original June proposal were the requisites for being a PRI candidate for President, Governor, and Senator. Originally, these hopefuls had to have been either a Party leader or have won a previous elected position. This would have made it more difficult, but certainly not impossible for the "technocrats" serving on the President’s Cabinet be meet the requisites. However, in the working document presented for discussion in the National Assembly, the requirement had been changed to, candidates for these three positions must have been either a militant or a leader of the Party or have held an elected position, making all members of the Cabinet presidential possibilities. The delegates on the Statutes working group rebelled against those defending “the President’s line” and forced a change of the president and secretary of the working group. The new president held an immediate vote to change the clause to “militant (cuadro), and Party leader and have held an elected position”. This change leaves only a few “posibles” on the President’s Cabinet, and creates many more outside of it, by including the leader of the Senate, Ortiz Arana, who has been President of the CEN, and several governors.

49 As in the XIV, the working groups in the September Assembly were led by a president and secretary named by the CEN. Similarly, the first reform proposal sent to the State Assemblies in June of 1996 was drafted by the CEN, and the “suggestions” of the lower level Assemblies reworked by a CEN group before a second, significantly changed proposal was presented to the National Assembly in September. Finally, the president of the working group had the authority to change any proposal that had been approved by the majority vote in the working groups before it reached the final vote of the full Assembly.

50 Apparently, the final reform proposal was finished the day before the Assembly began. It was at this last minute when the President decided to insist that the word “cuadro” be inserted in the document.

51 In the final document voted on, but not read to the delegates to vote on the floor of the Assembly the final day, the word Senator dropped out, thereby allowing the President to prepare his technocrats by sending them to the Senate on the plurinominal list.
who have also held Party leadership posts. Thus, the ability of the President to hand-pick his successor is diminished, as those he has on his Cabinet, are not eligible, forcing him to either prepare their way by sending them to the Senate, bring already eligible politicians into Cabinet positions, or call for another National Assembly (in effect, the XVIII), to remove the offending requirements.

This second major change of still unknown weight is the new mandate of the National Political Council to elect the President and Secretary General of the CEN, thus excluding the National Assembly from this decision. This is seen by some as an attempt to make it more difficult for the President to impose a leader of the Party, although it is not clear that the National Political Council is not as easily manipulated by the President as the National Assembly. This is especially doubtful after Zedillo, said to be furious at the exclusion of most of his Cabinet, simply placed one of his closest political collaborators, ex-Secretary of Gobernación, Esteban Moctezuma, in the position of Technical Secretary of the National Political Council, seen as the second most important post within the PRI.

As for longer term consequences of the XVII, one can argue that the almost deafening silence on candidate and leadership selection procedures signifies that the Party’s leaders have not yet solved their fundamental problem: how to choose candidates able to beat their opponents in cleaner races, while not allowing the nomination process to tear apart the local level party organizations. In fact, a fifth procedure was added that strengthens the Political Councils even further: that of a convention of delegates made up of the Political Council members of the state, district and municipal levels.

It may be that many of the leaders of electoral strategy within the Party believe that for many types of races, especially those of Federal Deputies and Senators, the candidates themselves matter little, and that the real work of winning elections takes place through identifying how to spend scare resources to win 51% of the votes in the district. Finally, it may turn out that the real winners of the XVII were neither the bases, nor the President’s men, but rather, the governors, local level Party groups,

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52 The informal rule that only members of the Cabinet (and regente of the DF) could be considered possible pre-candidates was instituted in roughly 1958, in large part to reduce the number of pre-candidates, and make their status as “posibles” depend on the good will of the President to place them in cabinet positions. This would be an important change in the informal rules of the PRI’s presidential succession.

53 The Technical Secretary is responsible for integrating the Political Councils at the state, municipal and district level, an especially important task as it allows the Technical Secretary to “plant” his loyal people all over the country, and in the organs which will write the rules for selecting candidates in the very near future. Moctezuma, who is widely seen as a failed Secretary of Gobernación, was probably placed to help the President place his candidates for the 1997 Congress. Most believe he will go on to the Congress himself as leader of the PRI fraction. See El Economista, October 3, 1996. However, the rules for integrating the National Political Council have not been completely drafted.
and perhaps, the political group in charge of the Party's organization at the national level.

Table 6.
Rule Changes Stemming from the XVII National Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Election</th>
<th>Organ</th>
<th>Who Writes Rules</th>
<th>Electing Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CEN President and General</td>
<td>CPN</td>
<td>CPN, not the National Assembly (Art. 78, Inciso XIV new Statutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Candidate Selection

(The Secretary of Elections of the CEN in charge of monitoring the procedure. The CPN will publish a General Agreement on Leadership and Candidate Selection).

Type of Nomination Process

1. Direct Consultation of the Bases.

2. Conventions of members of the Political Council (new nominating procedure).

3. Convention with elected delegates.

4. Political Council decides candidate directly.

5. Customary Practice.
Conclusions

This paper has argued two central points: first, that the rules for choosing candidates and leaders of the PRI have enabled the Party’s leaders to control the ambitions and strategies of lower level activists, and second, that the attempts to change these rules have been both confused (in the role to be given the militants in candidate and leadership selection), and difficult. It may well be that the militants will not necessarily choose the candidates that can win against the opposition, or that the opposition will not become stronger at the federal district level. But growing levels of electoral competition have had effects on the incentives of those at the bottom and their leaders at the top. The XVII National Assembly presents evidence that different Party factions are using the rules in their intra-party struggles, just as Colosio and Salinas did in 1990 against the the Sectors. What is not yet clear is whether the PRI will continue to struggle with its reorganization, and how much electoral competition will be necessary to force even more serious changes.
Appendix 1

The Route to the XIV National Assembly of the PRI

How Delegates were Chosen from the Territorially Based Structure of the Party
Sectional Assemblies of Consultation and Debate
Each Sectional Assembly elects 5 delegates to go to the Municipal Assembly of Consultation.

Municipal Assemblies of Consultation and Debate
50% of the delegates to the Municipal Assemblies must come from the Sections.
50% of the delegates must come from the Section organizations in the municipio.

The Municipal Assemblies do two things:

1) Elect delegates straight to the National Assembly.
   - Municipios with 11-30 Sectional Committees send 3 delegates.
   - Municipios with 31-60 Sectional Committees send 6 delegates.
   - Those with 61-90 send 12 delegates.
   - Those with +91 send 18 delegates.
   - The D.F., for each 40 Sectional Committees, send 18 delegates.

5,578 delegates were sent to the National Assembly via this route.
Of these 5,578 delegates, it was not pre-determined how many had to come from the Sections, and how many from the Sectors (as it was in the State Assemblies).

2) Elect delegates to the State Assembly.
   - 2 The President and General Secretary of the Municipal Committee
   - 15 delegates from the Sectors.
   - 15 delegates from the Sections.
   - 5 delegates from the Youth Sector.
   - 5 delegates from the Womens’ Sector.
   - 5 delegates from Civil Society (non-aligned groups).

45% of these were from the Territorially-based structure and 55% from the Sectors. Notice that these 47 delegates to the State Assemblies then had to win another election in the State Assembly to be elected delegates to the National Assembly.

54 This information gleaned from the Memoria Documental de la XIV Asamblea Nacional del PRI, 1990, and El informe de las actividades del CEN del PRI, 1990.
(Cont.)

**State Assemblies**

*Who attended?*

The President and General Secretary of the CDE.
100 delegates from each of the three Sectors within the state.
50 delegates from the Women's Sector.
50 delegates from the Youth Sector.
The Local Deputies.
The Presidents and General Secretaries of the state's municipios.
The 47 delegates from the Municipal Assemblies of the state.

*They Elected to the National Assembly:*

15 delegates from the Sectors.
15 delegates from the Territorially-based structure
5 delegates from the Women's Sector.
5 delegates from the Youth Sector.
5 delegates from Civil Society.

47 delegates from each State Assembly were sent to the National Assembly. **1440 in total via the State Assemblies.**

**Delegate Totals to the XIV National Assembly of the PRI.**

*How many delegates from which Party Organ:*

- 25 from the National Agrarian Sector
- 25 from the National Workers' Sector
- 25 from the National Popular Sector
- 20 from the Women's Sector
- 20 from the Youth Sector
- 64 Presidents and General Secretary of the CDEs

**1440 from the State Assemblies**
5578 from the Municipal Assemblies
132 from Organizations of the Agrarian Sector
632 from Organizations of the Workers' Sector
654 from Organizations of the Popular Sector
60 Senators
263 Federal Deputies

**Total: 8938 delegates to the National Assembly.**
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