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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the trajectory of the development of the Mexican left-wing Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in the period 1996-2006. There are three main reasons for focussing on this period. The first is that the PRD's origins are already very well documented in the literature on the subject (Bruhn 1996, Borjas 2003), hence to study the early years of the party would involve some repetition. The second reason is that since 1996, the Mexican transition to democracy has picked-up pace. The PRD, which struggled for the democratisation of Mexico, has had to reposition itself on the political stage in recent times. The third reason is that during the period from 1990 onwards, most of the countries in Latin America have leaned politically to the Left, while Mexico is still governed by a conservative party. The study will examine the nature of left-wing politics in Mexico, its internal and external adversaries, and the factors contributing to the persistence of conservative rule.

In terms of economic development, Mexico is very similar to other Latin American countries. In many countries of the region the import substitution industrialization phase ended in crisis. Free-market economics were implemented. These economic measures became crucial for Mexico in the 1988 election, in which ex-PRI member Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas competed in the presidential election with PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Huge electoral fraud in 1988 united the oppositional groups under one party, the PRD. The Salinas' administration implemented a neoliberal program that caused the Tequila Crisis.

The failure of neoliberal policies in Latin America is often interpreted as a key factor to understand the turn to the left in the region. However, in Mexico this did not occur. Thus, the first chapter of this essay is dedicated to an analysis of the socio-economic factors at work in the country and some of the key features that can be identified regarding the PRD's electoral results. Apart from socio-economic factors, the PRD's electoral campaign will also be analysed. One of the indicators of the weakness of the PRD is its lack of national infrastructure.

The second chapter of this study is dedicated to this issue of institutionalisation. The analysis will explore the theoretical perspectives related to institutionalisation to understand more clearly why it is such an important factor for a political party, particularly the PRD. There are four main categories associated with institutionalisation. Three of them are covered in the second chapter. The fourth one, which refers to the 'systemness' understood as an increasing of the scope and density of the interactions that constitute the party as an organization, is discussed in the third chapter.

The third chapter examines the PRD's development and the party's internal struggles. The scope is limited to the internal election of the president of the party, national congresses, and the arguments between leaders. The attempt is to prove that many of the problems related to the party inability to win a federal election derive from its internal weaknesses.

The study draws on existing literature on the subject, using also the Mexican press, and interviews with Kathleen Bruhn, Gerado Fernández Noroña and Francisco Reveles Vázquez.

DID MEXICO TURN LEFT? THE ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF THE PRD DURING THE PERIOD 1997 - 2006

In 2006 everything worked well for the presidential candidate of the PRD, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, until election day. On 2 July 2006, the Mexican electorate chose, by a very narrow margin of votes, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa from the conservative National Action Party (PAN) for president. Jorge Castañeda states that the turn to the left on the political stage in Latin America is a consequence of the process of democratisation combined with the social, demographic and ethnic configuration of the region (Castañeda 2006). The democratisation process ended successfully in Mexico in 2000 with the victory of PAN's candidate Vicente Fox in the presidential election. For the first time in 71 years of Mexican history the representative of the hegemonic party, the PRI, lost. The changes had emerged even earlier in 1997, when the opposition won the election to the Chamber of Deputies. The good performance of the PAN and the PRD was possible thanks to the electoral reforms of the 1990s. Thus, Mexico fulfils the conditions required to be described as a delegative democracy (O'Donnell: 1994).

Regarding socio-economic indicators Mexico is comparable to other Latin American countries, which are governed by the Left. The level of the poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line in Mexico is very similar to Brazil and Chile (see Table.1.1). In the case of inequality measured by the Gini coefficient, Mexico is more equal than other countries of the region with the exception of Uruguay. Thus, why did Mexico not turn left?

Table 1.1 Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line in five Latin American countries ruled by the Left

Brazil (2003)	22
Chile (1998)	17
Ecuador (1998)	46
Mexico (2004)	18
Peru (2004)	53

Source: World Bank Indicators 2007/8

Table 1.2 Inequality measured by Gini coefficient in seven Latin American countries ruled by the Left

	Gini index*
Bolivia	60.1
Brazil	57.0
Chile	54.9
Ecuador	53.6
Mexico	46.1
Uruguay	44.9
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	48.2

* A value of 0 represents absolute equality, and a value of 100 absolute inequality.

Source: World Bank. 2007 World Development Indicators 2007. CD-ROM. Washington, D.C.

In fact Mexico did turn to the Left, but not enough - the Left in Mexico won neither presidential elections nor parliamentary elections in 2006, although the PRD did receive the highest number of votes in its 18 year history. Table 1.3 contains the data related to the PRD electoral results for the Chamber of Deputies in the period 1997 – 2006. In 1997 the PRD became for the first time the second biggest party in the Chamber of Deputies.

Table 1.3 The PRD in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies in 1997 - 2006

Party/Coalition	Year	Votes	%	District Seats	Votes	%	List Seats	Total Seats
PRD	1997	7,436,466	25.0	70	7,519,914	25.0	55	125
Aliance for Mexico (PRD, PT, PAS, C, PSN)	2000	6,942,844	18.7	26	6,984,126	18.7	40	66
PRD	2003	4,694,365	17.6	55	4,707,009	17.6	41	96
Coalition for the Good of All (PRD, PT, C)	2006	11,941,842	29.0	98	12,013,364	29.0	60	158

Source: <http://www.electionresources.org>

The second time this happened was in 2006. However, in 2006 the PRD received almost 4 500 000 more votes than in 1997, which is a 37% difference. The data related to the presidential election illustrates the increase of the support to the party even better. López Obrador received almost 2,5 times more votes than Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas six years earlier. Thus, even though, Mexico is not ruled by the Left there is an evidence of the shift to more leftist positions in the political preferences.

Table 1.4 **The presidential candidates of the PRD in years 2000 and 2006**

Candidate	Votes	%
Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano - Alliance for Mexico (PRD, PT, PAS, C, PSN)	6,256,780	16.6
Andrés Manuel López Obrador - Coalition for Good of All (PRD, PT, C)	14,683,096	35.3

Source: <http://www.electionresources.org>

A closer look at the electoral data and the levels of well-being sheds light on the PRD's performance in particular Mexican states. Table 1.5 combines the level of well-being in 1995 and the state electoral outcome for the PRD in the period 1997-2006 in the plurality elections. The highlighted rows represent the states in which the PRD won 30% of the votes in a minimum of two electoral races. The numbers prove that the PRD is strong in the region of the highest level of well-being, which includes the Federal District as well as some states with very low and medium levels of well-being. Hence, the PRD receives votes in very diversified areas, like the rural states, for example: Guerrero, Michoacan, or Oaxaca, and the urban ones, like in the case of the Federal District. The party is much stronger in southern Mexico, than in the north, which in recent years became dominated by PAN. While it is possible to construct an analogy between the poor south and better

Table 1.5 The electoral outcome of the PRD in the plurality elections to the Chamber of Deputies in the period 1997 – 2006 at the state level combined with the level of well-being

STATE	LEVEL OF WELL BEING IN 1995*	PRD 1997	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF VOTES IN 1997	ALIANZA POR MEXICO	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF VOTES IN 2000	PRD 2003	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF VOTES IN 2003	COALITION FOR THE GOOD OF ALL	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF VOTES IN 2006
AGUASCALIENTES	2	37183	293896	13%	30533	370473	8%	17788	261479	7%	70480	401591	18%
BAJA CALIFORNIA	2	79231	605280	13%	76543	844784	9%	34734	548782	6%	179192	925645	19%
BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR	Nd	14121	117073	12%	63291	163195	39%	45993	106435	43%	75712	175287	43%
CAMPECHE	6	75354	216173	35%	38991	255108	15%	6303	263171	2%	62542	300255	21%
COAHUILA	2	76971	558586	14%	75757	806883	9%	27040	427650	6%	165111	923039	18%
COLIMA	4	38429	198844	19%	27303	216376	13%	24480	200826	12%	32278	251071	13%
CHIAPAS	7	182478	649807	28%	276622	1068899	26%	147355	731588	20%	461974	1244448	37%
CHIHUAHUA	2	91170	911602	10%	83187	1119844	7%	47134	757095	6%	153074	1147011	13%
DISTRITO FEDERAL	1	1750723	3947800	44%	1315932	4384072	30%	1259021	2941691	43%	2468718	4799053	51%
DURANGO	4	42703	406668	11%	62547	498677	13%	14538	364862	4%	95754	564974	17%
GUANAJUATO	7	200982	1596451	13%	145941	1839498	8%	183953	1504423	12%	256934	1939111	13%
GUERRERO	6	285914	691890	41%	348307	927982	38%	240713	630348	38%	452001	972873	46%
HIDALGO	4	168222	651550	26%	151916	810895	19%	93043	561509	17%	296838	932670	32%
JALISCO	2	240492	2103113	11%	205551	2587748	8%	154254	2312424	7%	364345	2872922	13%
MEXICO	5	1312142	3941992	33%	1030512	5084043	20%	699469	2982049	23%	2031389	5633607	36%
MICHOACAN	4	432249	1101338	39%	549252	1445546	38%	291798	829471	35%	566088	1472812	38%
MORELOS	Nd	176403	451561	39%	123340	630616	20%	102687	514213	20%	221066	698737	32%
NAYARIT	4	56874	280614	20%	65747	351619	19%	23621	227714	10%	132511	357814	37%
NUEVO LEON	2	39421	1376725	3%	103539	1518134	7%	30172	1424183	2%	164942	1753155	9%
OAXACA	7	250014	846431	30%	276390	1120855	25%	144078	817409	18%	554235	1326174	42%
PUEBLA	6	219953	1262350	17%	217612	1706522	13%	87839	1155894	8%	492516	1966353	25%
QUERETARO	4	42767	471793	9%	41660	554439	8%	39859	516922	8%	114442	649011	18%
QUINTANA ROO	3	39639	173550	23%	57734	282237	20%	14554	186987	8%	112352	375027	30%
SAN LUIS POTOSI	6	75004	724918	10%	76659	824343	9%	53676	638888	8%	147088	942785	16%
SINALOA	2	176251	793072	22%	155310	959370	16%	81200	650372	12%	169841	966614	18%
SONORA	2	198993	740363	27%	137823	865681	16%	87679	782141	11%	141155	922687	15%
TABASCO	6	216093	545960	40%	239521	672376	36%	180039	489653	37%	464004	902913	51%
TAMAULIPAS	2	213875	820436	26%	96583	1078902	9%	60694	795878	8%	242175	1187934	20%
TLAXCALA	4	57894	250286	23%	92975	346165	27%	67788	210461	32%	142496	407109	35%
VERACRUZ	6	550470	2111721	26%	582938	2637188	22%	229299	1906348	12%	834026	2886033	29%
YUCATAN	4	35996	501055	7%	28186	691086	4%	27599	524468	5%	93697	779273	12%
ZACATECAS	4	58455	429013	14%	164642	501837	33%	175965	386311	46%	182866	517210	35%
NACIONAL		7436466	29771911	25%	6942844	37165393	19%	4694365	26651645	18%	11941842	41195198	29%

*Scale 1 – very low level of well-being, 7 – very high level of well-being

Source: Electoral data: IFE, www.ife.org.mx; Well-Being data: INEGI, 1996, Sistema Nacional Estadístico y de Información Geográfica – www.inegi.gob.mx

developed north, the pattern of electoral choice is not solely determined by the economic dimension.

The issue of Mexico's electoral choices is more complex due to the legacy of the PRI. The inheritance after the hegemonic party rule determines that the PRD and the PAN confront the PRI at the state level much more often than they confront each other (Lawson, McCann, 2003: 65). Corporatism is still present in Mexico. The most important unions are controlled by the PRI. Even though the union's bargaining power was weakened by the process of privatisation and opening up of the economy, they are still influential in strategic industries, amongst them the oil industry. Hence, apart from the well-established political structures of the PRI, such a social composition determines that the Left lacks its typical power base. The PRI is also influential in the poorest areas of Mexico. López Obrador pointed out that about 55% of the poorest Mexicans voted for the PRI due to clientelism (*Proceso* 07 Sep 1997: 20). The socio-economic explanation proposed by Castañeda might be used to partly explain the electoral growth of the PRD (see table 1.4), but it is at the same time too limited.

Kathleen Bruhn states that if there was only one dimension of politics then such an assumption would be true, but there are also many other dimensions like: social, religious, cultural etc (2008). She adds that Mexican society is much more conservative than that of most Latin American countries and is particularly sensitive to violence which is associated with the experiences of the Mexican Revolution. Therefore the party is often portrayed as violent in the media, which is one reason the PRD cannot win enough

support to rule the country. For example, in 1994, the rise of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) brought many concerns in public opinion about the left. Three years later, the PRD distanced itself from the EZLN and proposed a more centrist agenda.

The party likewise became more flexible by incorporating well-known external candidates, mainly from the PRI, a move that was positively perceived by the voters (Reyes García 2001 : 99-100). This practice provoked many controversies within the PRD. On the one hand, it meant that the PRD experienced higher number of victories at a local and federal level, whilst on the other hand there was the question of the loyalty of the new members, who had drifted to the party due to the weakening of the PRI, as well as fostering clientelism.

The situation of the parties changed in terms of their finances and media opening. The 1996 electoral reform made new funding available, which allowed the PRD to organize its campaign and to create the Sun Brigades (Bruhn 1999: 95). There were three axes of the campaign in 1997: advertisement on radio and television, the campaign of each candidate, and the door-to-door campaigning of 63 000 members of the Sun Brigades (*Proceso* 1 June 1997: 12). Some of the members were volunteers, but many of them were paid 300 pesos. The Sun Brigades incorporated a three step strategy. The first visit was called the PRD asks, the second the PRD proposes, the third the PRD asks for a vote. The main strategist of the Sun Brigades was Rafael Landerreche Gómez Morín, a

grandson of the founder of the PAN. López Obrador, who was at the time the president of the PRD, coordinated the work.

The Sun Brigades were the instrument for the lack of the national structures of the party (*Proceso* 20 July 1997: 20). Their work was crucial for the triumph in the first elections for Mayor in Mexico, an electoral race won by Cárdenas. The PRD won a bastion of support in the most densely populated of area in Mexico where 11,2% of all registered voters lived (Bruhn 1999: 92). Hence, victory for the leader of the PRD reflected on the good performance of his party. The triumph in the Federal District gave the PRD a real opportunity to govern. During the campaign, Cárdenas promised to solve the problems of Mexico City and initiate new policies regarding children, elderly people, single mothers, and to fight against insecurity and corruption. The survey conducted by the Universidad de Guadalajara after half a year of the Cárdenas administration showed that 31,2% people described the new administration as bad, 58,4% stated that nothing had changed, and 8,2% were very content (*Proceso* 31 May 1998: 6-11). The same poll indicated that Cárdenas was likely to win the presidential election in 2000.

However, until 2000, the perception of his record in governing Mexico City became worse. In spite of the fact that Cárdenas' chances to play important role in the presidential election were low, he was chosen as the PRD's candidate. According to Greene, such a selection was dictated by the moral authority of the PRD leader rather than his electoral popularity (Greene 2007: 229). Bruhn pointed out three other key factors: the failure to construct an opposition alliance between the PRD and PAN due to the distrust between

the parties, the internal structure of the PRD, which was cemented by the authority of Cárdenas, and Mexican electoral law, which discouraged the resignation of the registered candidates by conditioning the party funding on the electoral results (Bruhn 2004: 133).

Cárdenas' campaign style was old-fashioned. While the PRD candidate was travelling around Mexico, addressing his left-wing agenda to the crowds in the plazas, Fox conducted a well-equipped media campaign consisting of 65 well targeted clips (Greene 2007: 239). The intensive media campaign was carried out through the creation of the Friends of Fox movement. There is no doubt that the personal charisma of Fox was another important indicator for the phenomenon called "Factor Fox". The elections had a plebiscitary character. The strategy of the Fox camp was to convince people that their candidate represented a change and the promise of democracy. However, the success of that electoral tactic was partly achieved thanks to the errors made by PRD. The PRD strategy attempted to polarize the electorate around the economic issues by attempting to attribute the evils of Neoliberalism to the PAN and the PRI, and the more nationalist economic program to Cárdenas. Thus, according to Palma Esperanza, the choice was between the real change, which should have been identified with Cárdenas, and the same old politics, which should have been identified with Labastida and Fox (Cotidiano March/April 2001: 106). The author claims that such a discourse appeared to be neither credible nor clear. The shift to a more leftist stance appealed primarily to the party's core voters (Greene 2007: 237). In consequence, it was easier for the PAN to promote the idea of the valid vote, which was seen to be a vote for Fox. Whereas the 2000 election was a

disaster for Cárdenas, the star of López Obrador was beginning to shine. López Obrador was elected mayor of Mexico City.

In 2003 Mexican society appeared to be disillusioned. The change that had been promised did not occur and democracy did not resolve the problems of the citizens. According to the survey conducted by Covaburrias y Asociados S.C., 52% of the interviewees did not see or hear any publicity related to the campaign (*Proceso* 29 Junio 2003: 22). Abstention reached 58% (Camp 2006: 3). The new president of the PRD, Rosario Robles, promised to gain 20% of the votes. In May 2003, two newspapers, *Reforma* and *El Universal*, published the polls, which stated that López Obrador enjoyed a 83% and 85% level of the endorsement as mayor of Mexico City (*Milenio* 12 May 2003: 14). Thus the ambition of the PRD and the numbers proposed were optimistic. In the election the PRD attracted mainly self-declared leftist voters (Camp 2006: 7). Nevertheless, the PRD won 96 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The electoral result seemed to be a victory. In reality the electoral outcome did become a problem for Robles, because it meant that the PRD obtained 18,8% of the vote. Hence, Robles had to resign. A few days after the election, Cárdenas reflected his preoccupation about the fall of the voting and lack of the PRD presence in whole Mexico (*La Jornada* 09 July 2003: 14). At this stage, Cárdenas still did not discount the possibility of his standing in the 2006 elections (*Milenio* 10 Feb 2003: 34).

In the end it was López Obrador who was nominated as the presidential candidate by the PRD in 2005. His popularity derived from the social policies implemented in the Federal

District, which were related mainly to the elderly and poor people. On 11 August 2005 López Obrador began his route around Mexico. The idea was to build a broad citizens' movement (López Obrador 2007: 184). It was again the means by which to ensure an advantageous lack of party regional structures. In March 2005 there were 970 local communities; their number increased up to 4000 before the election (Grayson 2007: 239). The main campaign began in January. The election slogan was "The Good of All, Above All the Poor." Thus the party attempted once again to attract the poorer strata of the society, by highlighting evils of Neoliberalism. The alleviation of poverty and the implementation of social policies were the central issues of the PRD campaign. López Obrador, like Cárdenas six years earlier, travelled around Mexico. In contrary to the 2000 the presidential campaign, López Obrador was hardly trying to position his agenda in the centre (Bruhn 2006: 19). According to the surveys conducted by the eight main companies, López Obrador was approximately 8 points ahead of his closest competitor in January and February (Nexos May 2006: 29). The first time the new leader in the presidential race was indicated was in March, by the polls made by GEA-ISA and Arcorp (Nexos May 2006: 29). In March López Obrador reacted with anger to president Fox's interference in the campaign. At the rally he told the president to "shut up chachalaca", chachalaca being a rare bird known for chattering endlessly (New York Times 7 April 2006). A few days later the PAN transmitted its new electoral advertisement, which showed first the Venezuelan president, Chavez, who is known for his antipathy to Fox, and later López Obrador.

The negative campaign began. The PAN decided to pull negative strings by calling López Obrador a danger for Mexico, a liar, and a populist similar to Hugo Chavez, whose politics would bring crisis and debts. López Obrador did not respond immediately to these insinuations. In the midst of the media attack López Obrador decided to miss the first television debate, which took place in April, and as a result of this, lost the lead (Klesner 2007: 11). He claims that the first debate was a trap, that it was known from the beginning that he would lose it (López Obrador 2007: 210). Calderón was the winner of the first debate. From then on his camp worked on promoting more a positive image. He was introduced as a “Jobs President” (Grayson 2007: 251-252).

López Obrador attacked Calderón in the second debate in June. He accused the PAN candidate of helping his brother-in-law’s software company win government contracts. The PRD camp prepared an advertisement to illustrate this. Nonetheless, it was too late. Calderón was very close. Ten days before the election day most of the surveys gave a 3% advantage to López Obrador. Then, according to the PRD candidate, the ‘mafia’, as López Obrador chose to call Fox, Salinas, Elba Esther Gordillo, Calderón and others, decided to orchestrate an electoral fraud (López Obrador 2007: 213). Hence, the speaker of the PRD, Gerardo Fernández Noroña, when asked why Mexico did not turn to the left, responded that actually it did, but the PRD was robbed of the election (Fernández Noroña 2008). On the election day, the president of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), Luis Carlos Ugalde, announced that the winner of the contest would be announced during the following couple of days, because the result was so close. On 6 July the IFE declared that Calderón had won.

This alleged electoral fraud became legendary in Mexico. The PRD people point out that it was a right-wing “mafia”; others accuse the U.S. or even Interpol. Luis Mandoki directed a movie called “Fraude Mexico 2006” in which the conspiracy is presented as an attack by the entrepreneurs and political clique, who defend their business against the national leader and the nation. There are many doubts related to the 2006 presidential elections. There were many errors and irregularities. For example, all together there were on the one hand 800 000 excessive ballots, and on the other hand 716 000 ballots were missing (Mandoki 2007). This means that more than 1,5 million votes were unaccounted for in the election. The PRD appealed to the Federal Electoral Tribunal (TEPJF). López Obrador called a rally in Zócalo in Mexico City and asked followers to block the city until the final verdict of the TEPJF. The PRD stated that the votes were badly counted and that president and the business organizations interfered in the campaign, an intervention prohibited by law. Finally, 9% of the total votes were recounted. On 5 September 2006 the TEPJF announced that there were irregularities, however, they were not grave enough to question the electoral outcome. Calderón won by 233 831 votes, or 0.56%. The electoral archives do not prove that there was any fraud, but nor do they prove that Calderón won objectively (Crespo 2008: 102).

MEANING OF INSTITUTIONALISATION

The main aim of a political party in a democratic system is to gain power by winning elections. The PRD reached this objective in recent years at a municipal and governmental level. In 2003 the party ruled 14,6% of the city councils (Borjas 2005: 445), and six states: Baja California Sur, Zacatecas, Michoacán, Federal District, Tlaxcala, Chiapas – in total governing 23 961 318 Mexicans (Sánchez 2005a: 467). As mentioned in the previous chapter, after the defeat of 2000 and the deterioration of his influence in the party, Cárdenas realized that the lack of territorial structures lowered the odds to win the election. A lack of national infrastructure is one of the symptoms of weak institutionalisation. Hence, the problems related to the institutionalisation of the PRD can be seen as key to our understanding of why Mexico is not ruled by the Left.

While the PRD grows at a regional level, it had been victory in the presidential election that prompted the creation of this party. In the presidential system, which is the case of Mexico, executive power is concentrated in the hands of the president. Therefore, to gain power in Mexico requires success in the presidential election. The PRD emerged as an alliance of the left-wing parties - the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM), the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS), the Mexican Worker's Party (PMT), and PRI dissidents. These conditions determined the organizational heterogeneity of the PRD.

Panbianco stresses the importance of the origins of a party (1988: 50). The genetic model, as Panbianco calls the formative stage of the party development, determines the

organizational structure for a long period of time. Therefore, rather than considering the PRD as a left-wing party, it is more appropriate to consider it as a party of multiple left-wing positions (Noroña 2008), a “coalition of separate political groupings” (Lawson 1997: 25) or as a block of “intimate enemies and circumstantial friends” (Martínez 2005: 155). This mosaic of political views remained on the political stage thanks to strong leadership, which in itself implied weak institutionalisation. Without Cárdenas, unity would be impossible (Sánchez 1999: 63).

The leader and the collective identity associated with the party ideology are the most important elements in the formative phase of the party development (Panebianco 1988: 53). Regarding its ideology, the PRD as a party, which embraced a broad spectrum of political orientations from social democracy to the radical left, had problems articulating clearly a programmatic unity. As a result, the party was built around common objectives like democratisation, victory in the presidential election, and a counter-neoliberal stance. Hence, it is often considered as the electoral party (Reveles 2004). The PRD is an electoral party because of its strong focus on the elections. This type of party tends to reduce ideological baggage, strengthen its top leadership, downgrade the role of the individual member, de-emphasise class divisions, and secure access to a variety of interests groups (Kirchheimer 1966: 190). Nevertheless, the PRD became an electoral party in 1997 because this was the year of its first significant electoral triumphs. Until 1997 the PRD was purely an opposition party.

After the 2000 election, the PRD president, Amalia García, stated that the two central motivations that gave cohesion to the party – a desire to defeat the PRI and to elevate the charismatic figure of Cárdenas - were gone (*Dialogo y Debate* 2000: 50). With its leader deeply wounded by the third electoral defeat, the PRD had to strengthen itself through internal reform. It was not the party's first attempt. Even though the PRD reorganized itself and its main features many times, *caudillismo* and factionalism were deeply- rooted characteristics that remained (Sánchez 1999: 57). These two features are further symptoms of weak institutionalisation. The topic aroused concern between the scholars of the subject of PRD development (Reveles 2004, Vivero 2006). They highlight that the party neglected to develop rules and routine. Furthermore, to an extent this hybrid construction condemned the party to suffer permanent internal struggles, and also fostered corporatism and clientelism.

Before moving forward in this investigation of the level of institutionalisation achieved by of the PRD it is worth delineating the concept itself. In general terms, institutionalisation is “the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability” (Huntington 1968: 12) or “the way the organization ‘solidifies’” (Panbianco 1988: 49). Institutionalisation can be related to the party system as well as to the party. Hence, there is a tendency to confuse party institutionalisation and the institutionalisation of the party system, which are not congenial concepts (Randall & Svåsand 2002: 6).

The notion is that the institutionalisation of a party contributes to the institutionalisation of a party system (Mainwaring & Torcal 2006: 205). However, Randall and Svåsand claim that there are cases, which do not follow this pattern. They point out that institutionalisation can be interfered with by conditions like unevenness. Randall and Svåsand write: “Extreme unevenness of party institutionalisation not only detracts from the competitiveness of the party system; it is also likely, though not bound, to mean that significant social sectors are excluded not only from power but from any meaningful party representation” (2002: 9). In this sense, the low level of institutionalisation of the PRD in the period 1988 until 1995 can be explained by the unevenness of the political system. In the first years, the PRD was repressed; the political system was closed and immobile.

Institutionalisation of the party system was investigated by Mainwaring and Scully, who measured it by using four criteria: volatility of electoral choices, the depth of the party penetration of society, the legitimization of the political parties in the perception of citizens and organized interest groups as channels to propel candidates into power and the internal consolidation of the parties themselves (Mainwaring & Scully 1995: 5-34).

Either the volatility of electoral behaviour or the party penetration of society had changed dramatically in Mexico since the 80s. The process of democratisation deteriorated the highly institutionalized system of hegemonic party rule in Mexico. The weakening of the PRI altered the balance on the political stage and created space for the PAN and the PRD to operate and gain support. This is the reason why democratisation brought

deinstitutionalisation. As Mainwaring states “high levels of institutionalisation may result from a stultified party system” (1999: 26). Thus deinstitutionalisation in the case of Mexico was positive in the sense that it facilitated a more diverse political landscape.

In this regard, the question of the thresholds of institutionalisation emerges. Is there any perfect point on the scale of institutionalisation? Mainwaring and Scully classified Venezuela as a stable. However, well-institutionalised political system of Venezuela collapsed and subsequently opened the way for populism. Hence, “an institutionalised party system per se, does not automatically deliver or even facilitate most outcomes that one hopes a democracy will produce” (Mainwaring & Scully 1995: 21). Thus institutionalisation has its own dynamics related to elements of political and economic development of the particular country.

Mainwaring and Scully measure volatility of electoral choice in Pedersen’s index. According to their data, in the years 1981 – 1991 the Pedersen’s index for Mexico equalled 22,7 in the case of the elections to the Chamber of Deputies. The simplified calculation based on the data presented in the Table 2.1 show that the volatility of electoral choices is lower in years 1997-2006 and reached 10,1. This calculation was made by taking into consideration the results of the three main parties in four consecutive elections, whether they formed coalition or not. The index is equal to the sum of the net percentage of the gains and losses of the parties divided by two and divided by the number of electoral periods. In the case of the presidential elections the volatility is 19,6 (Table 2.2).

Table 2.1 **Mexican elections results to the Chamber of Deputies 1997 - 2006**

YEAR	PAN	PRI	PRD
1997	25.9 %	38.0%	25.0%
2000	38.2 %	36.9 %	18.7 %
2003	30.7 %	40.8 %	17.6 %
2006	33.4 %	28.2 %	29.0 %

Source: Own evaluation based on the data from IFE

Table 2.2 **Mexican presidential elections 2000 and 2006**

YEAR	PAN	PRI	PRD
2000	42,5	36,1	16,6
2006	35,9	22,2	35,3

Source: Own evaluation based on the data from IFE

The penetration of the society by the party is measured by three variables: longevity of the party existence, the difference between presidential and legislative voting, the control of the organized sectors.

The PRD was established in 1989, and as such is the youngest of the three main parties in Mexico. 19 years in the history of the party is not a lot. The difference between the presidential voting and legislative voting patterns can be observed in the cases of the PAN in 2000 and the PRD in 2006. The control of the organized sectors is constrained for the PRD, which might be related to its age, internal complexity and the PRI legacy. It does not mean that the PRD has no ties with civil society and the independent unions.

The third indicator in Mainwaring and Scilly's categorization, which is the perspective of a party legitimization to control the power is debatable. Although the political parties are among the least trusted institutions in Mexico (Camp: 2006), they control the resources in the political system, such as funds and candidate selection (Langston 2007: 246). This

control consolidates the party system. In the case of the PRD, state funding is one of the reasons that cements the party structure (Semo 2003: 130). In the Mexican system, 90% of the party funds come from the budget. In Table 2.3 there are examples of the amounts in pesos that the parties received in election years.

Table 2.3 Public funding of the parties in Mexico in selected years

YEAR	PAN	PRI	PRD
1997	527 248 111	892 112 657	391 336 040
2000	692 713 249	921 114 278	656 852 500
2003	13 08 513 109	1 445 251 549	574 235 770
2006	1 129 321 165	1 226 924 414	722 691 369

Source: IFE

In the elections since 1997 until 2006, the three main political parties participated and currently there are no indicators that this will change.

Party institutionalisation, which is the last element of the Mainwaring and Scully framework, deserves closer investigation. Huntington distinguishes four dimensions of institutionalisation: adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence (1968). According to this categorization, adaptability stands for the functional adaptation of a party over a period of time. There are three main components to evaluate adaptability. These are: the age of the party, shifts in leadership, and the shift from the oppositional role to a governmental one. The age of the PRD has already been discussed in relation to party penetration of society. The party survived its first significant shift in leadership when López Obrador took the place of Cárdenas as the presidential candidate. The shift from an oppositional role to a governmental one was achieved at the state and municipal level.

Complexity refers to the structure and sub-units of the party. The lack of local structures was already mentioned as a problem of the PRD. Dix points out, that personalism limits complexity (1992). He also states that while the authoritarian – populist parties passed away, there is also “counter evidence of an overall decline of party caudillos”, which can be exemplified by Cárdenas’ challenge to the PRI (Dix 1992: 498-499). Even though the PRD might be evaluated as a populist party, it would better match Dix’s category of democratic populism (1985: 29-52). Basing his argument on the examples of Democratic Action (AD) in Venezuela, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) in Peru, and the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) in Bolivia, Dix claims that democratic populist parties tend to institutionalise. While most of the countries in Latin America experienced periods of democracy in the twentieth century, Mexico did not. Thus, a low level of institutionalisation can be associated with the peculiarity of the Mexican political system after the Revolution

The next category from Huntington’s framework is that of autonomy, which refers to a party’s independence from other social groupings. Janda points out that for example, the autonomy category is questionable if we follow the example of the Labour Party in the UK and its relation to the unions (Janda 1980: 19). Levitsky followed Janda and gave as an example the Peronist Party (PJ) in Argentina (1998). However, in both cases the trade unions, which constrained party autonomy were weakened by market friendly policies. The PRD autonomy is not limited. Coherence is the last variable in Huntington’s framework. It is associated with the internal consensus related to the functionality and procedures of the party itself (Huntington 1968). Penabianco stresses the importance of

autonomy and coherence. He claims that institutionalisation can be measured on two scales: the degree of autonomy and degree of systemness. The former of these emphasizes the relationship of the party with the external environment, while the latter one is associated with the internal cohesion of the party (Panebianco 1988: 55).

According to Panebianco, these dimensions are related in a way that “a low degree of systemness often implies little autonomy *vis-à-vis* the environment, and vice versa” (Panebianco 1988: 57). The autonomy factor coexists in Huntington’s and Panebianco’s categorization, while the notion of systemness is very similar to coherence combined with complexity. The factor of systemness will be further evaluated below, while a more detailed investigation regarding its extent will be presented in the next chapter.

These two frameworks of Huntington and Panebianco were applied to investigate Western European parties, which developed in an environment of consolidated democracy. Until recently, Mexico did not really experience democracy. In terms of a political tradition it combined, as Carlos Fuentes stated, an authoritarian tradition and a revolutionary tradition. Thus, again the conditions of the political system limited the possible scope of institutionalisation.

Mainwaring points out that many parties in the third way of democratisation had scant funds and the level of professionalism was low (1999: 37). Public financing guarantees the funding in case of Mexican parties.. However, the professionalisation of the party is often neglected. The PRD does not invest in the cadres in terms of development (Noroña 2008).

Another problem is that as Mainwaring states in many cases of fluid systems politicians are not loyal to the party. In Mexico, many ex PRI members joined the PRD. In some cases it weakened the PRD even more by breaking its fragile cohesion. The situation is reminiscent of Dirk Tomsa's example of the Golkar party in Indonesia, which did not have an organizational infrastructure then decided to accommodate the local leaders into the party. Tomsa writes: "These leaders then took over important dual functions: on the one hand they acted as brokers for the party, while on the other hand they remained patrons to their own clients in their old, established local network" (2008: 38).

The good news is that the PRD is not an isolated example of a low level of institutionalisation. Low institutionalisation is actually quite common in Third World countries. In this context, the example of highly institutionalised Western European parties is rather untypical (Herbut: 2002: 65). Thus, institutionalisation should be rather understood as "the process by which the party becomes established in terms both of integrated patterns of behaviour and of attitudes, or culture" (Randall and Svåsand 2002: 12).

Randall and Svåsand question the assumption of the party institutionalisation in relation to the new democracies as well as its relation to the party system. They examined many obstacles, which constrained the development of the parties in the newly democratized countries. Their model identifies two general dimensions internal and external. Within each of these dimensions they distinguish two aspects: structural and attitudinal. The

framework looks as follows: internal/structural refers to systemness, internal/attitudinal refers to value infusion, external/structural refers to decisional autonomy, and external attitudinal refers to reification (see Table 2.4)

Table 2.4 **Dimensions of party institutionalisation**

	INTERNAL	EXTERAL
STRUCTURAL	SYSTEMNESS	DECISIONAL AUTONOMY
ATTITUDINAL	VALUE INFUSION	REIFICATION

Source: Randall and Svåsand

The internal/structural dimension depends on the ability to build the organization. Randall and Svåsand (2002) claim that ‘systemness’ is the increasing scope, density and routine of the interactions that constitute the party as an organization. Randall and Svåsand point out that party building in Third World democracies is not gradual as it is in Europe. In the case of the PRD the party emerged as a broad coalition in opposition to the hegemonic party rule and the dominant neoliberal economic model. In the first years of its existence, the PRD was oppressed. A few hundred militants were killed during the Salinas presidency. The party was living in a state of confrontation with the political system. In the 90s, the party moved to a more moderate stance, and opened negotiations with the government. In the period under consideration in this study, 1996 – 2006, the PRD showed some signs of institutionalisation. Until 1996, the financial resources available to the party were scant. There was no historical tradition on which to build a democratic left-wing party. Charismatic leadership and factionalism limited institutionalisation, as did clientelism. These obstacles were distinguished by Randall and Svåsand. Leadership and factionalism are the most striking features of the PRD. Thus the next chapter will be dedicated to them.

Value infusion refers to the internal culture of a party, which entails identification and commitment of the party members and the supporters. Levitsky, proved on the example of the Peronist Party (PJ) that “value infusion and routinization are distinct organizational phenomena that do not necessarily occur together”(1998: 82). The PJ is highly infused while poorly organized. Randall and Svåsand (2002) argue that a party’s success in creating a value-system is important for party cohesion. Thus, to what extent are the members of the PRD committed to the party? In 2003 Semo claimed that the PRD had officially the support of two million of the affiliates, but their function was limited to participation in the external and internal elections (2003: 125). The members of the PRD are more committed to the currents than to the party. There are also examples of the front liners who left the PRD, like Muñoz Ledo or Rincón Gallardo, due to their political ambitions or lack of confidence in the party.

The Argentinian PJ was infused by value thanks to Peron or Peronism. In the PRD Cárdenas played the crucial role. Identification with the leader has two interrelated dimensions. Cárdenas is on the one hand perceived as a democratic fighter; on the other hand his principals are associated with the presidency of his father, Lázaro Cárdenas, who is the most popular president in the Mexican history. Hence, the ideology, which influenced the PRD, is called neo-cardenismo. Neo-cardenismo is a mixture of Mexican nationalism and socialism, which had the clearest stances in terms of economic policies. It represents anti-neoliberal stance. The battle over the privatisation of PEMEX is a good example. It is worth noting that the oil industry was nationalised by Lázaro Cárdenas. Thus there is a historical tradition, which derives from the post revolutionary era.

However, neo-cardenismo has ended with a shift in leadership. Since 2003, the party has been infused by obradorismo, which is reminiscent of populist politics. Grayson calls this way of making politics ‘messianic’, which “refers to a person whose political vision and trajectory combine leftist, populist, nationalist, and corporatists elements in a way that separates him from other politicians” (2007: 3). Nevertheless, it is much too early to assert whether or not López Obrador infused the PRD with value, or whether this phase is just a temporary fixation.

The final element of the Randall and Svåsand framework is reification, or the extent to which the party identity and image is embedded in the popular imagination. The PRD is one of the biggest parties in Mexico. Thus it is recognizable. The name of the party derives from its origins of struggle against hegemonic party rule. The democratic revolution can be understood as the transition from this hegemonic system. The PRD is often called the party of the Aztec Sun, which is its symbol. Yellow became the colour of the party. Hence, during the rallies the plazas are filled with the people wearing yellow cloths. These symbols are recognizable. However, nowadays the media has a stranglehold on the popular imagination. Regular access to the media is one of the most important ways to create and establish a recognisable image of the party. In Mexico, generally speaking the media tended to be against the PRD. The party was portrayed as violent or corrupted. Noroña states that just one newspaper, La Jornada, and one radio station were favourable towards the PRD (2008). Thus, the party built its identity in a very hostile environment. At this stage, having examined the main external and internal factors to

political development and success, it is possible that the main problem of the PRD could be the PRD itself.

SYSTEMLESS

The PRD fought for democracy in Mexico hence the name of the party refers to democracy. Democracy symbolized liberation from the hegemonic party rule. By promoting democracy the PRD cut off also from the notion of communism. In this way the democratic left attempted to distinguish itself from the totalitarian inheritance. The idea is that while the communist party treated the country in a totalitarian manner, the democratic left would do it in a democratic way. However, to be reliable the new left had to prove what it meant by democracy and it could be achieved by practicing internal democracy. Katz suggests that there are three main reasons why the internal democracy matters that much for the new-left. Firstly, internal party democracy allows representation of the social segments by legitimizing the dominance of the party on the ground over the party in a public office and makes the party manifesto more important than individual views. Secondly, the internal democracy encourages members to become actively involved in the policy making. Thirdly, internal democracy holds the party leaders accountable as well as enforcing control over the party members (Katz 2006: 35-36). However, the PRD was established by ex-PRI members and the Mexican leftist parties, which did not have an experience of democracy. Therefore instilling democratic values on the party proved extremely difficult.

Due to the fact that the PRD is a broad coalition of different political groupings in conjuncture with the belief in democracy, the PRD decided to respect its genetic pluralism. Therefore, in the I National Congress of the party in 1990 the right of the

affiliates to organize in the currents was recognized. The notion of the current is to secure the free expression for different groups (PRD 1991: 166). These groups have evolved into significant power structures. In 2004 there were for example: Forum New Sun (FNS a.k.a. Amalias), New Left (NI a.k.a. Chuchos), National Democratic Left (IDN a.k.a. Bejaranos), the Civic Movement of the Libertarian Left (MCIL a.k.a. Civicos), National Unity and Renovation (UnyR) amongst others. Each of them represented a different political project within the same party, which resulted in permanent conflict and lack of consolidation.

Vivero describes the trajectory of the term current in the Basic Documents of the PRD. He suggests that substituting the word current with the word organization in the statute in 2001/2002 might have been a consequence of negative connotation of the currents (Vivero 2005: 134). He states that the intention was to present the party as a more consolidated entity. The currents evolved into internal organizations, whereas the PRD, for the first time in its history identified itself as the democratic party of the left (PRD 2002: 1). In the VIII Congress in 2004 the currents were theoretically dissolved. In reality, however, they are still one of the predominant features of the PRD.

Every party in the world has factions. The uniqueness of the PRD relies on the fact that it is the only Mexican party, which recognized the currents. Furthermore, the political polarization within the party is so apparent because the party represents extremely polar political views associated with the radical Left, social democracy and Mexican nationalism. Thus, the stability of the internal life is related to the balance of forces

between the currents and the leader. The constellations are changing dynamically; one time enemies become allies and vice versa. The tension grows as internal or external elections get closer. At this time the press usually announces the possible rupture, split or the demise of the PRD.

In 1996 the PRD experimented for the first time with the democratic national internal election to the National Executive Committee (CEN). At the beginning of the race there were four candidates for the presidential seat of the PRD: López Obrador, Amalia García, Heberto Castillo and Jesus Ortega (whom decided to resign and support López Obrador). *Proceso* López Obrador, a former PRI member, built his campaign around the idea of the party in movement and activation of society (*Proceso* 22 Jan 1996: 29). This project assumed that the PRD should become a movement in the period between elections, while function as a party during the elections (*Proceso* 22 Sep 1996: 19 - 21). Amalia García, who joined the party from PCM, highlighted the weaknesses of democracy and the need to build a centre-left party (*Proceso* 22 Jan 1996: 25). Heberto Castillo, one of the leading left-wing politicians in Mexican history, founder of the PMS and the man who allowed Cárdenas to compete in 1988 elections, criticized *caudillismo* and hence promoted further democratisation of internal life and institutionalisation of the party. He wanted the PRD to become a broader project because the left-wing attracted 10% of the society (*Proceso* 03 June 1996: 38).

Immediately before the internal election Muñoz Ledo began an historical argument with Cárdenas related to the presidential election 1988. He stated that Cárdenas tried to meet

with Salinas after the contest (*Proceso* 30 June 1996: 14). Cárdenas did not only refute this but he questioned the intentions of this announcement. He asked whether Muñoz Ledo wanted to break away from him or whether he attempted to deepen the differences or disturb the process of the internal elections (*Proceso* 30 June 1996: 15). The two main candidates to the presidential seat, García and Lopez Obrador, distanced themselves from the conflict between the leaders (*Proceso* 07 July 1996: 22). However, both of the contenders were endorsed by one leader or the other – García by Muñoz Ledo and López Obrador by Cárdenas. It was not first time, that both Cárdenas and Muñoz Ledo had disagreed, however, previous spats concerned political tactics; whether the party should struggle or rather should evolve in a constructive opposition and push for pacted-transition.

López Obrador won 76% of the votes (*Proceso* 21 July 1996: 17) and the result was quickly accepted by counter-candidates. Nevertheless, Castillo accepted the outcome and did not hide his disappointment. He suggested that such a high number of the votes for one candidate were suspicious (*Proceso* 21 July 1996: 35-36). Furthermore, the outcome from the López Obrador home state, Tabasco, where he won 98% of the votes was a striking example. Semo, conversely was sceptical about quality of the choice. He stated that 66% of the votes in the internal elections came from four Mexican states: Tabasco (28%), Michoacán (18%), Mexico (12%) and Federal District (8%) (*Proceso* 21 July 1996: 35-36). A huge advantage for López Obrador facilitated the development of the PRD (Martínez 2005b: 162).

Additionally, the skills of López Obrador aided to build internal consensus within the party. There were three main incentives behind this temporary institutionalisation of the chaos within the PRD. These were: i. proportional distribution of the power between internal groupings, ii. new financial resources associated with the public funding, iii. separation of the party from Cárdenas for the 1997 election (Martínez 2005: 78). This consolidation of the party before the election was one of the factors for the triumph in 1997. The victory of the PRD in the election also eased the conflict between the leaders. Cárdenas became the mayor of Mexico City, whereas, Muñoz Ledo became the first member of the opposition party to preside the Chamber of Deputies.

The success in federal election in 1997 changed the PRD political position. Thus in 1998 in IV National Congress (which according to the statutes is the most important organ of the party) the Basic Documents were changed. The PRD defined itself as a leftist party, which recognized the elections as the only access to power. The Congress was a breakthrough in the PRD history. The delegates decided to decrease the number of the external candidates from 50% to 20% and the CEN's proposition was to limit it to 30%. Borjas writes that the agreements reached in the IV Congress, which were in many areas opposed to the proposition of the CEN, demonstrated an important difference in comparison to the previous meetings, in which the delegates ratified the resolutions negotiated by the currents. According to her, the delegates in the IV Congress were more independent and acted for a better-consolidated party (2004: 235).

By the end of 1998 Muñoz Ledo announced his aspiration to become a presidential candidate. He stated correctly that Cárdenas based his potential start in the presidential race on the achievements of his governance in Mexico City (*Proceso* 25 November 1998: 19-22). Cárdenas at this stage suffered due to the unfortunate appointments in Federal District, the lack of a plan to fight corruption and the lack of a vision and coordination regarding public security (*Proceso* 13 August 1998 28-31). Nevertheless, he did not relinquish his presidential ambitions. The struggle over the nomination signified a new conflict between the historical leaders. Soon 103 of the PRD deputies signed a card in support of Cárdenas (*Proceso* 17 January 1999: 22-24).

In this heated environment the four candidates were preparing to contend for the power in the PRD. They were: García, Ortega, Rosa Albina Garavito and Mario Saucedo. The uniqueness of this election derived from the fact that candidates to the presidential seat in the CEN were not coming from the PRI. García, who represented the current FNS, introduced the political program, which assumed further democratisation of Mexico, with the strong accent on the reform of the judicial system and alleviation of poverty. García said that to achieve this aim the PRD had to be better organized at every level on a national scale (*Voz y Voto* March 1999: 5). In her view the party should have been developed with respect in terms of pluralism and tolerance.

Ortega, a former member of the PST and the PMS and a leader of the current NI, in response to the question of: what made his candidacy different from the others, answered that he had the ability to conciliate the extremes (*Voz y Voto* March 1999: 7). It meant

further consolidation of the party, which would translate into its accountability in national politics. He claimed that the party should move from the oppositional stance to the proposition of solutions. Albina, who similarly to Saucedo represented the social left, expressed the need to fulfil the meaning of the party identification proclaimed in the IV Congress with the content (Martinez 2005: 81). Thus creation of the left-wing formation was the meaning of her proposition. Saucedo, the leader of the Civicos opted for the recovery of the relationship between the party and the social movements. He stood against as he formulated 'priisation' of the PRD (*Voz y Voto* March 1999: 8).

The election was a bitter lesson for the party. García won by less than 1% over Ortega. However, there were irregularities in 32% of the ballot-boxes (*Proceso* 28 March 1999: 14). The number of the errors determined that the election was void. Cárdenas did not like this decision of López Obrador. He was supporting the view that the election should have been cleaned but not cancelled (*Milenio* 7 August 2000: 24). Thus, the PRD, which claimed to fight for democracy deviated the process of the internal democracy and negated its principles. The election demonstrated to the public the corporatist or clientelist nature of the relations within the PRD with the practices originated from the PRI.

In the second election in 1999 the previous contenders as well as Cárdenas and López Obrador supported García. In this race Muñoz Ledo (who founded in the meantime a current called New Republic) supported Ifigenia Martínez. García obtained 55.18% of the vote (Reveles 2004: 52). The internal struggle continued. Felix Salgado Macedonio,

one of the new competitors to the presidency of the CEN called García and Jesús Sombrano usurpers (*Proceso* 15 August 1999: 12-16). He claimed that the fraudulent practices had not been eliminated. The members of the internal opposition were soon suspended by the CEN.

Martínez points out two things related to the election in 1999. On the one hand the process showed the weaknesses of the party in terms of channelling the conflict of different groups, and thus possibility for standardization of internal life. On the other hand this election enforced the power of the left-wing in the PRD landscape (Martínez 2005: 85). Reveles adds that in the deteriorated organization the position of Cárdenas strengthened (Reveles 2004: 52). The role of Cárdenas was enhanced even earlier thanks to victory in Mexico City. However, the chances to win the presidential race in 2000 were seriously weakened by the scandalous atmosphere. Muñoz Ledo questioned the influence of Cárdenas in making decisions within the party, especially during the internal elections. He claimed that his own position in the party was undermined. Finally he decided to become a candidate of the Authentic Party of the Revolution (PARM). The PRD was providing the negotiations with the PAN regarding possible alliance in 2000 elections. In March Cárdenas said that he might support Fox in the presidential contest (*Proceso* 14 March 1999: 18-22). The PRD did not find common ground with the PAN hence the scrappy coalition of five parties (PRD, PT, PSN, PAS, CD) emerged under the name the Alliance for Mexico. Whereas the PRD designated Cárdenas to run for presidency, the internal struggle between various groups over the places on the electoral lists began. To make things even worse García put her daughter on the list. She was

accused for ‘maternalism’ (*Proceso* 02 April 2000). This decision was an extreme example of nepotism within the party. These elements of internal weakness and impoverished reputation combined with the mistaken electoral strategy contributed toward the catastrophic result in the 2000 race.

The election in 2000 highlighted new crack in the PRD. López Obrador rejected an offer to coordinate the campaign of Cárdenas. He aspired to the seat of Mayor of Mexico City, which was against the wish of the leader (*Milenio* 7 August 2000: 22). Many members of the PRD associated with Cárdenas blamed López Obrador for the third defeat in the presidential contest. There were three factors mentioned: the cancellation of the internal election in 1999, refusal to manage the presidential campaign and finally, the lack of support during the campaign in Mexico City. Regarding the latter point López Obrador could not base his campaign on weak achievements of Cárdenas. In the 2000 election the PRD reached a critical point. Muñoz Ledo became a candidate of the PARM. Gallardo, one of the creators of the PRD, left in 1998 to build left-wing alternative. Cárdenas was defeated and his position within the party devaluated. López Obrador became a mayor of Mexico City. The rival party, the PAN won presidency.

The consequence of the disastrous elections was that different groupings within the PRD began searching for a scapegoat. The Cárdenas’ supporters blamed the CEN controlled by the dominant currents. The CEN in response blamed Cárdenas, who did not allow the participation of the CEN in the campaign by the creation of the parallel independent body, which took over control of the process (*El Cotidiano* July/Aug 2002: 57). These

two opinions divided the PRD in the VI Congress in which the party attempted to reform and rearrange itself.

García stated that the party was to reform deeply to successfully respond to the new reality of democratic Mexico (*Voz y Voto* 15 March 2001: 10). She and Ortega attempted to consolidate the party by regulation of the informal leadership of Cárdenas. This position was criticized by the growing internal faction built around Rosario Robles, who favoured the concept of building a broad front under the leadership of Cárdenas against the neo-liberal policies (*El Cotidiano* Sep/Nov 2002: 60). These contradictory tendencies were reflected in the document *The Political Line* approved by the congress. The PRD defined itself as the oppositional party, which would seek the agreements with the government of Fox in the areas related to improving democracy (La Jornada 3 June 2001). Conversely, the PRD announced to foster the alliance of the social and political actors against the neo-liberal policies of the Fox administration. The divisions, which emerged in the VI Congress, determined the election of the CEN.

The 2002 internal election of the PRD were the third contest for Ortega. His main counter-candidate was Robles. Ortega was supported by Chuchos and Amalios. He said that the PRD should become a political alternative to the government. In his view it meant that the party needed to be united around common principles, constructive and have a modern program (*Voz y Voto* 15 Jan 2002: 8). He said that the modern parties were solid institutions; hence charisma had to be replaced with rules and organization. Robles agreed with Ortega that the party could not concentrate in the hands of one person

(*Voz y Voto* 15 Feb 2002: 18). She denied that Cárdenas supported her candidacy. She claimed that her aspiration was to consolidate inclusive party. She proposed a party ideologically based on leftist nationalism and cardenism, which confronted the government (*El Cotidiano* July/Aug 2000: 65).

Two days after the internal election the results were not announced. The irregularities were abundant but smaller than in 1999. About 20% of the ballot-boxes were not installed, which led to the nullification of the elections in the states of Mexico, Puebla, Veracruz, Michoacan and Tamaulias (*El Cotidiano* July/Aug 2003: 67). Finally, after two weeks Robles was announced as victorious. She received 441 724 votes while Ortega received 281 005 (*El Cotidiano* July/Aug 2003: 68). Soon after the announcement of the official results the VII Congress was convoked to discuss the internal election. As a direct result the Commission for Legality and Transparency was established to investigate irregularities. In the Congress Robles called Cárdenas a compatriot and a friend (*Forum* Sep 2003: 16).

One of the promises of Robles was that the PRD would gain 20% votes in federal election. To reach this objective she used the political marketing tools. The candidates were to be chosen on the basis of their popularity, which was measured by the polls prepared by the company Mitofsky. It meant that many militants of the PRD did not have a right to choose their candidate. The party opened the space for external, often controversial candidates. Robles said that the currents had to sacrifice their quotas for the expansion of the party (*Forum* Sep 2003: 16). In terms of the political preferences Robles

also moved closer to López Obrador. The division between the president of the CEN and Cárdenas broadened. The latter one called the objective to win 20% of the votes was mediocre (*Forum Sep* 2003: 16). After the election Robles resigned leaving an enormous debt of 409 million pesos (*La Jornada* 20 March 2005). In her place the PRD nominated Leonel Godoy as an interim president.

At the beginning of the 2004 as preparation to the VIII Congress Godoy introduced the document *The organizational Line*, which stated that the PRD was not organized (*Enfoque* 8 Feb 2004: 12-13). The document claimed that the prestige of the party decreased in society and the model of the party was exhausted. In March confidence in the PRD was destroyed by the corruption scandal. Members of the administration of López Obrador were recorded receiving bribes from the Argentinean entrepreneur (and lover of Robles) Ahumada. The incriminating evidence was shown in the national television. The PRD sunk into the most serious crisis in its history.

Cárdenas stated that anybody, who was involved in corruptive practices, would not have a place in the PRD (*Masiosare* 14 March 2004). After three days he added that López Obrador was not a part of the corruption cycle. Cárdenas proposed in the VIII Congress to dismiss the members of the CEN; however, Godoy, who was always very close to the leader, rejected this proposal (*Voz y Voto* May 2004: 11). The will of the leader also encountered huge resistance between militants (*Masiosare* 2 May 2004). The caudillo lost his position. The crowd was chanting one name: López Obrador. The congress established new rules, which were to guarantee the dissolution of the currents.

The scandal reflected on the popularity of López Obrador, nevertheless, according to the polls he still was much ahead of other possible candidates. Subsequently, the Mexican Congress began to consider the impeachment of López Obrador. The case related to the construction of a public road on private strip of land (New York Times 30 Aug 2004). The process of impeachment would eliminate the possibility of the mayor of Mexico City to run in the presidential election. In the meantime Cárdenas began to build a broad political front to impel him as a presidential candidate of the PRD (*Proceso* 8 August 2004: 22). Simultaneously López Obrador incorporated many controversial former PRI members to run his campaign (*Proceso* 19 Dec 2004: 41-44).

In the 2005 election to the CEN Leonel Cota Montaña competed with Camilo Valenzuela Fierro. The former candidate addressed the problems of corruption and political bureaucracy. The latter one stressed the issues of institutional weakness and ideological confusion, which lead to loss of credibility (*La Jornada Michoacan* 22 Feb 2005). The irregularities in the electoral process appeared again. About 15.8 % of the ballot-points were not installed. Cota, who was close to López Obrador, received 76% of the votes. In the VIII Congress new president of the CEN confirmed his program. Finally López Obrador was not impeached and could compete in the elections. Cárdenas declined to participate in the internal election. One of the biggest problem for López Obrador was that he was a very strong candidate with a very weak party (*Voz y Voto* May 2004: 9)

CONCLUSION

The PRD is the most successful left-wing party in Mexican history. This success is partly related to the process of democratisation brought about by reforms of the political system. These reforms, especially the public funding of the political parties in turn brought about the institutionalisation of the party system. Whilst Mexico was democratizing and institutionalizing new political system, the PRD encountered serious problems related to redefinition of the party's politics and successful internal reorganization. The main problems were related to the cohesion of the party, its leadership, the policies proposed, and increasing the scope of influence.

In the years 1997 – 2006 the PRD won 30% of the votes in a minimum of two electoral races in 10 states. It is not enough to win the power in Mexico. Hence, the party implemented three main techniques to broaden its scope of influence. First one was the mobilization program of the Brigades of the Sun, which allowed the PRD to win the elections in the Federal District in 1997 and 2000. Second one was the inclusion of the external candidates on the electoral lists of the party. Many of them were the ex-PRI members. Third one was the creation of the civil networks in 2005. However, each of these strategies had short-term effect. Thus, in the long run building a national infrastructure of the party is a better solution.

The creation of the national infrastructure was constrained by three main factors. First one is related to the PRI national strength. Second one is related to the finances of the

PRD. The losses of the party in the elections in 2000 and 2003 caused the reduction of the public funding for the party. The PRD had serious financial problems in these years. Third one is related to the internal organization. The PRD has many factions called currents and a strong informal leadership. The currents are fighting for the presidency in the CEN. Thus, there are two centres of political power within the party – the CEN and the leader. The study shows that the PRD wins the elections in case when the CEN is dominated by the supporters of the leader. However, lack of the regulations of the relationship between the leader and the CEN causes problems, which occurred in the elections in 2000 and 2003. All of these can be seen to be symptoms of weak institutionalisation.

Weak institutionalisation however, does not mean a total lack of institutionalisation. The PRD is an example of a party which is run by informal rules or, as Sartori said, “invisible politics”. In such a construction, statutes are not so important. The game behind the words indicates a struggle between powerful internal groups. Hence, the struggle is permanent. The struggle is ongoing between the currents as was the case of the 1999 and 2002 internal elections or between the dominant currents and the leader as was the case of the 2001 and 2004 National Congress. These internal problems could have been channeled in a formal way to build a cohesive party.

However, now the PRD has its new chance. López Obrador is wild card for the PRD. He has many enemies within the party. His postulate not to legitimize the 2006 elections renewed the old debate within the party: whether to act as constructive opposition or

struggle for further democratisation. The question emerges whether the lack of recognition of the president of the Republic entails lack of the recognition of the PRD local governments, which are part of the Mexican government. In 2008 the internal election in the PRD ended in fiasco and severe crisis hit the party again.

Therefore, the postulates to normalize the internal life of the party and prepare an attractive set of policies seems to be rational. Especially bearing in mind the peculiarity of the Mexican political system, which is a presidential system with three main parties, where the PRD, apart from winning the presidency, would also have to gain more than 50% in the Chamber of Deputies in order to gain the authority to actually govern the country. Thus, there are three options for the PRD: the first one is to foster a more conciliatory stance in regard to other political actors, the second one is to institutionalize the party, and the third is to build populist movement around the figure of López Obrador. Otherwise it seems almost impossible that Mexico could really be governed by the Left.

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