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Mexicans React to Electoral Fraud and Political Corruption: an Assessment of Public Opinion and Voting Behavior

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Despite various electoral reforms enacted in Mexico between 1988 and 1994, large numbers of Mexicans doubted the honesty of elections and the general integrity of their country's policy making process. Such doubts did not automatically lead, however, to support for opposition parties that called for greater democratization. Rather, voter preferences were largely dependent on judgments about the opposition's viability and competence. Widespread suspicions about fraud and corruption in Mexico did affect electoral outcomes by making it less likely that potential opposition supporters turned out to vote. Data are drawn from seven national public opinion surveys conducted in Mexico in 1986, 1988, 1991, 1994 (3 polls), and 1995. © 1998 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved

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Introduction

In democratic political systems, elections are the key mechanism for converting majority sentiment into collective outcomes and conveying a sense of legitimacy to governing elites.[1] For many pluralist systems in advanced industrial countries, the rules governing electoral procedures were settled long ago; even the most divisive electoral contests typically spark little lasting social unrest and instability.[2] In Mexico, however, the administration of elections in the 1980s and 1990s came under fire from national and international election observers, scholars, journalists and, above all, the opposition candidates who have run against Mexico's ruling party.

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On July 16, 1988, ten days after Mexico's national elections, the principal opposition contender for the presidency, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, addressed a huge crowd gathered in Mexico city's historic central square, the Zócalo. The opposition leaders, he stated, had "reached the agreement not to recognize public authorities who might emerge from the electoral fraud," likening the official results to "a coup d'état to impose a usurper government..." (*Excélsior*, 9 July 1988, 23A; *Proceso*, 18 July 1988, 26–27). On August 22, 1994, the day after the national elections, Cárdenas gathered tens of thousands of supporters at the Zócalo and declared that the election had been marked by 'massive fraud.' Within hours, he further argued that the elections had to be cleaned up or annulled (*La Jornada*, 23 August 1994, 10; *ibid.*, 24 August 1994, 6).

Allegations of electoral fraud, common during Mexico's history, have become poignant in the 1990s because, at long last, viable opposition political parties and movements challenge the world's longest-ruling political party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Electoral fraud in Mexico is not just an allegation, nor is it merely a ruse by defeated politicians to weaken those who had earned their electoral victory. In June 1994, the then-Director of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), the government entity in charge of running the elections impartially, admitted that the central computer system had been forced to fail in the immediate aftermath of the 1988 elections in order to facilitate doctoring the results—an order that could have been given by at most a handful of people at the very top of the Mexican government (DePalma, 1994; Robberson, 1994).

A related problem is generalized corruption in the Mexican government.[3] Reports of corruption reached spectacular heights in the mid-1990s. For example, in 1995 former Senator Raúl Salinas de Gortari, brother of immediate past President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, was arrested and charged with conspiracy to murder; well over $100 million dollars have been discovered in Raúl Salinas' accounts in Switzerland (Robinson, 1996, 46–47), and, in February 1997, Mexico's 'drug czar,' General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, was arrested for his complicity in drug trafficking.

Electoral fraud and corruption matter in Mexico. But, do they matter to Mexican voters? How doubtful are Mexican citizens about the authenticity and impact of electoral outcomes? What effect might such beliefs have on their likelihood of turning out to vote? How do such doubts affect their choices on election day? Do beliefs about fraud and corruption prompt individuals to back opposition candidates, all of whom in recent elections have called for fundamental political reforms?[4]

As we began this work, we expected that 1) those who believed that fraud and corruption were widespread would be more likely to support the opposition, and that 2) those who believed that electoral fraud was widespread would be less likely to turn out to vote because they thought that voting was a waste of time.

The expectation that attitudes toward fraud and corruption are related to candidate choice and turnout are grounded in theoretical and comparative scholarship. The practice of electoral fraud implies that voters would believe that there is little benefit to them from voting; they may also believe that they would suffer intimidation or worse if they attempt to vote for the opposition. Given potentially high costs and low benefits, it is highly rational *not* to vote (Aldrich, 1993). On the other hand, the effective reform of electoral laws and practices could increase turnout for a pivotal election, assuming that strategic politicians, for whom the stakes are high, act accordingly (Aldrich, 1993, 264, 266). In Mexico, as we will show, much effort was spent in the 1990s on electoral reforms that could affect the likelihood of voting.

For those who do vote, the theoretical literature informed our expectation as well. Following

Downs (1957) and Fiorina (1981), information about controversies surrounding ballot-stuffing and other forms of electoral fraud, and about various kinds of corruption, is exceedingly 'cheap' for Mexicans to acquire.[5] National politicians trumpet charges of electoral fraud; the mass media cover spectacular cases of corruption. The information is typically presented as a 'morality play,' accessible to voters who rely heavily on television to obtain their information. In contrast, it is more difficult and 'expensive' for Mexican voters to obtain more technical information about trade policies, macroeconomic possibilities, and other more abstract policy matters. To be sure, general perceptions about economic circumstances should also matter considerably but there is no prior reason to think that these perceptions would obliterate the importance of views about fraud and corruption on electoral choices.

During the critical juncture of a democratic transition, moreover, opposition party elites focus attention on matters of fraud and corruption. The first key decision is whether to boycott elections called by authoritarian rulers, fearing that substantial fraud will invalidate the results (Huntington, 1991, 174–192). Once opposition politicians choose to participate in such elections, they often appeal for votes on the grounds that only they can banish electoral fraud and corruption forever. To defeat authoritarian rulers, opposition politicians often form broad coalitions based on agreements on the issues of the democratic transition while suppressing temporarily their disagreements over social and economic issues (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986, 40–41). Thus, for a time, opposition politicians speak loudly and with one voice: the results should be higher turnout and more votes for the opposition seeking to end fraud and corruption.

Writing about politics in the United States, John Zaller has argued persuasively that "elite communications shape mass opinion." Zaller argues that "the public responds to elite-supplied information and leadership cues" (Zaller, 1992, 268). Zaller's conclusions seem especially pertinent to democratic transition elections. Elite-level conflict between government and opposition leaders over the procedures of democracy and the transparency of government should focus public attention on these matters and greatly facilitate the diffusion of political information throughout the polity. Voters should become more aware of their own personal stakes in an election and vote accordingly. Zaller makes a related point equally pertinent to democratic transition elections: "when... elite consensus exists, American public opinion... conforms" (Zaller, 1992, 305). In Mexico, despite their own ideological differences, opposition politicians from the right and the left have shaped an elite consensus, amplified by international commentary and the mass media, that the corrupt PRI-dominated system had to be reformed. The cues from this opposition consensus should heighten the salience of the fraud and corruption issues and diminish the salience of other issues.

Scholarship on comparative electoral turnout and voter choice suggests that more competitive national elections are more likely to increase electoral turnout. Institutional barriers (electoral fraud prominent among them) are more powerful explanations of election turnout than political culture (Jackman, 1987; Jackman and Miller, 1995; Powell, 1986). There is prior reason to expect that by the 1990s the democratic values of Mexicans were increasingly in line with those of people in democratic countries (Domínguez and McCann, 1996, 30), on the one hand, and clear evidence of electoral fraud practices that, we hypothesized, would lower turnout.

Scholarship on the United States, in particular, shows that citizens evaluate Presidents and other political leaders based in part on how honest and morally upright they seem (Kinder, 1986; Miller *et al.*, 1986). Moreover, if U.S. citizens perceive the policy making process as unjust, they tend to blame incumbent politicians (Fackler and Tse-min, 1995; Peters and Welch,

1980). More generally, perceptions of a political system's fairness can influence turnout rates (Abramson and Aldrich, 1982; Powell, 1986; Southwell, 1985). Perceptions of corruption certainly affected electoral outcomes in countries as different as Italy, Japan, and Argentina in the 1990s. This gives us ground to expect that political corruption would matter electorally in Mexico.

Finally, there is some prior valuable research in Mexico on questions related to our own. Davis and Coleman studied 500 workers in various settings in Mexico in 1979–80. They argue that electoral "abstention is more likely to represent discontent with political institutions or government performance in semicompetitive systems [e.g., Mexico]... The fewer the viable options available to the voter, the more likely nonvoting will imply the expression of negative affect" (Davis and Coleman, 1983, 764). Their research did not focus, however, on the perception of electoral fraud and corruption. Nonetheless, as Mexican elections became much more competitive in the 1990s, two inferences from the Davis and Coleman work are that discontent should be channeled as votes for the opposition—identical to our first expectation—and that political differences should disappear between voters and nonvoters.

In contrast with these theoretically and comparatively derived expectations, we find that in Mexico in the 1990s the opposition benefited rather little as a result of perceptions of fraud and corruption, once economic judgments and other attitudes were factored in. We also find that the opposition was hurt more than the PRI from the fraud-induced pattern of electoral abstention. Fraud and corruption turned out to be doubly 'bad' for Mexico's democratization—the practices were destructive of constitutional government, and the cumulative weakening of the opposition impeded the democratic alternation of power. We turn, therefore, to explain these puzzling findings.

We use seven large surveys funded and conducted nationwide face-to-face in Mexico by independent non-partisan professional pollsters.[6] To ensure respondent truthfulness, in the three pre-election surveys conducted in 1988, 1991, and 1994 'secret ballot' techniques were employed to elicit voter preferences about candidates or parties. Voters were given a sheet to mark and deposit in a box without showing their answer to the interviewer.[7] Pilot testing showed that this helped to minimize social desirability bias.

The Perceptions of Electoral Fraud and Corruption

In political systems under representative democracy, elections are the vehicle for citizens to choose their governors. As is evident at Table 1, in 1988 just under half of the electorate disagreed that elections were the vehicle to decide how Mexico was run. In 1991, the proportion of voters who disagreed with that statement was still almost one-third.

Mexicans were so suspicious about the efficacy of elections because the PRI had long been able to commit electoral fraud with relative impunity. Such fraud relied on many techniques, among them stuffing ballot boxes, intimidating potential opposition supporters, disqualifying opposition party poll-watchers, relocating polling places at the last minute, manipulating voter registration lists, issuing multiple voting credentials to PRI supporters, organizing multiple voting by PRI supporters transported from one polling place to the next and, in more recent years, tampering with computer-assisted voting counts (Craig and Cornelius, 1995).

In both 1988 and 1991, voter alienation from the political system was widespread. Strikingly, the more educated respondents were much more likely to disagree that elections decided how the country was run. They were accurately informed about shenanigans in Mexican politics.[8] And those who lived in cities and who had greater interest in politics were also most likely

Table 1. Percent disagreeing with the statement "the way people vote is the main thing that decides how things are run"

	1988 % *N*	1991 % *N*
Whole sample	45 (2960)	32 (3053)
Interest in politics		
Much	49 (462)	39 (358)
None	43 (852)	32 (1001)
Education		
Secondary or less	39 (1700)	27 (1809)
Preparatory	52 (643)	37 (577)
University	57 (606)	46 (603)
Age		
18–29	48 (1320)	34 (1144)
30–54	44 (1391)	32 (1611)
55 +	41 (249)	33 (298)
Sex		
Female	44 (1484)	31 (1517)
Male	48 (1476)	34 (1536)
Region		
North	51 (812)	33 (759)
Central	36 (743)	30 (801)
South	39 (711)	33 (630)
ZMGM	57 (694)	35 (863)
Town/City size		
Less than 20,000	40 (1321)	29 (871)
20,000–100,000	43 (358)	31 (611)
100,000–1 million	49 (666)	36 (565)
More than 1 million	55 (615)	36 (1006)

Source: Gallup México surveys, May 1988, and July 1991.

to disagree that elections were decisive. In short, there was a negative relationship between levels of education, urbanization, and political interest, on the one hand, and belief in the decisiveness of elections for governance in the country, on the other.[9] The achievement of Mexico's democratization was difficult precisely because so many of society's elites were alienated from those who governed them, making it more difficult to achieve a broad consensus to enact necessary changes. (By contrast, in the United States there is typically a positive correlation between socio-economic status and trust in the electoral process.[10])

The alienation of Mexican voters was directly related to their expectations about the integrity of the forthcoming electoral process.[11] In 1991, as evident in Table 2, six out of every ten Mexican respondents thought that the forthcoming elections would be something less than 'clean.' In 1994, the proportion of suspicious voters had dropped but it still represented just under half of the self-identified likely voters. The proportion of suspicious voters fell for every category in Table 2. Moreover, whereas in 1991 there were no noteworthy differences among demographic categories, between 1991 and 1994 the proportion of suspicious voters had dropped more than twice faster among those with little education than among those with university education. In 1994, the most highly educated Mexicans were still the most likely to believe that the elections would not be clean.

There were good reasons for the decline in suspicions about electoral fraud.[12] In the months

Table 2. Percent believing that the upcoming elections would be less than "clean": pre-election polls in 1991 and 1994

	1991 % *N*	1994 % *N*
Whole sample	61 (2579)	47 (1529)
Education		
Secondary or less	59 (1533)	43 (1026)
Preparatory	63 (484)	56 (272)
University	65 (512)	59 (230)
Age		
18–29	62 (913)	52 (595)
30–54	61 (1394)	46 (697)
55 +	57 (272)	43 (237)
Sex		
Female	61 (1303)	46 (781)
Male	61 (1276)	49 (747)
Region		
North	61 (634)	40 (379)
Central	59 (668)	47 (642)
South	56 (537)	54 (295)
ZMGM	65 (740)	56 (212)

Note: These figures are based on citizens registered to vote (1991) and self-identified likely voters (1994). Source: Gallup México surveys, July, 1991; Belden and Russonello/Ciencia Aplicada surveys, July 1994.

prior to Mexico's 1994 presidential elections, important changes were made to Mexico's Constitution and electoral laws in order to improve the fairness and transparency of the electoral process. The number of Senators per state was increased from two to four; three would be elected by simple pluralities, and one would be allocated to the party obtaining the second highest number of votes in the state. Thus the opposition would be guaranteed no fewer than one-quarter of the Senate (it held fewer than five percent of the Senate seats at the time of the reform). In the Chamber of Deputies, no party would be permitted to hold more than 315 seats in the 500-member Chamber, thus making it impossible for a single party to change the Constitution by itself.

The electoral registry, the lists of voters, and the voter identification cards would be subject to external audits. Every month each party would receive a copy of the electoral registry on magnetic tapes. A new Office of the Special Prosecutor for Electoral Crimes was established, and penalties for such crimes became stiffer. Polling booth officials would henceforth be chosen through a double random lottery based on their month of birth and the first letter of their last name. That is, the local polling-booth officials would be ordinary citizens chosen independently of their known partisan affiliations, if any. Electoral ballots would have numbered slips to prevent the stuffing of ballots while preserving the secrecy of the vote. Upon casting their ballots, voters would have their fingers marked with indelible ink. Each voter would have a new voter card, with that person's name and address, voter identification number, photograph, signature, and fingerprint. To prevent the swift destruction of ballots that had occurred after the 1988 elections, no electoral lists or ballots could be destroyed during the six months following the election. Mexican citizens could be accredited as election observers, and formally designated 'international visitors' would also be accredited to be present during the elections.

The General Council of the Federal Elections Institute (IFE) was overhauled. Six 'citizen counselors' would be nominated by the political parties and elected by a two-thirds vote of the Chamber of Deputies (thus preventing any one party from imposing its will). Another five IFE members would be the Secretary of Government (who chaired it), two senators, and two deputies; among the latter four, one from each chamber had to come, respectively, from the largest party and from the second largest party represented in that chamber. Each party would be allotted one hour on radio on the three Sundays prior to election day, but no partisan propaganda would be allowed on radio and television during the ten days before election day.

Nonetheless, serious problems remained and many irregularities occurred during the 1994 electoral campaign and on election day. The PRI retained disproportionate strength; some government resources remained available in various ways, albeit informally, for the PRI's election campaigns. The campaign finance laws also allowed the PRI to amass fortunes well beyond the fund-raising capacities of opposition parties.[13] The mass media remained extraordinarily biased in favor of the PRI. The implementation of aspects of the electoral law was seriously flawed; for example, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Electoral Crimes remained grossly underfunded. And independent observers witnessed numerous irregularities on election day. In short, Mexicans continued to have good reasons to be suspicious but they also had good reasons to be less suspicious than before.[14] That is what the evidence in Table 2 has shown. (The very deficiencies of the 1994 electoral reform effort led directly to renewed reform efforts in 1995–96, see below.)

The distrustfulness that Mexicans exhibited toward their government is also aptly explained by the results reported in Table 3. In 1994, while Carlos Salinas de Gortari was still president, nearly half of self-identified likely voters believed that the practice of corruption had increased during the last three years of his term, whereas fewer than one in ten thought that this problem had decreased in importance.[15] In Table 3, levels of education do not explain much of the variation among respondents though, consistent with earlier findings, the better educated

Table 3. Between 1991 and 1994, did corruption...?

	Decrease	Stay the same	Increase	*N*
Whole sample (%)	7	33	49	1529
Education				
Secondary	7	33	47	1026
Preparatory	8	35	53	272
University	6	34	55	230
Age				
18–29	8	39	44	595
30–54	7	31	50	697
55 +	5	24	59	237
Sex				
Female	5	34	49	756
Male	9	32	49	773
Region				
North	9	35	45	379
Central	7	33	50	642
South	5	33	45	295
ZMGM	6	30	60	212

Note: These figures are based on self-identified likely voters. Source: Belden and Russonello/Ciencia Aplicada surveys, July 1994.

respondents were the most likely to believe that the incidence of corruption had increased. Older voters, and voters from the Mexico city metropolitan area, were also more likely to believe that the problem of corruption had worsened during the three years prior to this poll.

In response to the continuing concerns of Mexican citizens, President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León (1994–2000) pledged substantial reforms. In his inaugural address before both chambers of Congress on 1 December 1994, Zedillo noted that "Mexico demands a reform which, based on the broadest political consensus, will eradicate suspicion, recrimination and distrust that mar the electoral process." His goal was to leave "behind, once and for all, the doubts and controversy regarding electoral legality." Consequently, he pledged "to address all relevant issues, including of course party funding, ceilings for campaign expenditures, access to the media and the autonomy of the electoral authorities"—all of which were key causes for concern during the 1994 election. He appointed PAN activist, Fernando Lozano Gracia, Mexico's General Prosecutor (Lozano would develop the judicial case against Raúl Salinas de Gortari). On 17 January 1995, all four political parties represented in Congress signed a 'Political Accord' to launch the process of constitutional and electoral reforms to ensure greater fairness and transparency in elections; President Zedillo promoted and supported these decisions. Though the agreement itself was vague, the political process it signified was noteworthy and significant.[16]

Wider economic circumstances were unfavorable, however. In late December 1994, a large and uncontrolled financial panic, along with a massive devaluation of the peso, broke out in Mexico; its consequences would be felt for months to come and were certainly vivid in the minds of citizens in the early weeks of 1995. This economic crisis weakened support for the Zedillo government.

But voters had also additional political reasons to distrust the promises of electoral reform. On 21 August 1994, at the same time as the presidential election, a gubernatorial election was held in the State of Chiapas. Since January 1994, the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN) had been leading an insurgency, with substantial support from many indigenous peoples in Chiapas as well as from well-wishers in other parts of Mexico. The gubernatorial election was sharply contested and it exacerbated tensions. Observers of the August election in Chiapas reported many more electoral irregularities than had been the norm for the rest of Mexico. The official results gave PRI candidate Eduardo Robledo the victory, but the PRD claimed that its candidate, Amado Avendaño, was the winner. Supported by the Zapatistas, the PRD called for civic resistance and refused to recognize Robledo's victory. On 8 December, Robledo was sworn in as Governor of Chiapas; Avendaño was also sworn in as governor by his supporters at an alternative inauguration (Washington Office on Latin America, 1995, 12–15; Fiederlein, 1996).

On 6 November 1994, elections were also held in the State of Tabasco. Once again, the principal contenders were the PRI and the PRD. The PRD alleged that substantial fraud had been committed and refused to recognize the official results that gave the governorship to the PRI's Roberto Madrazo. Rumors developed that President Zedillo was trying to persuade Madrazo to give up his claim to the governorship in order to reduce tensions and to facilitate nationwide reconciliation among the key political parties at a time of severe economic crisis. Madrazo refused. Instead, he mobilized political support within the PRI in the states of southeastern Mexico, in several of which local PRI 'victories' had been overturned or would soon be (among them Chiapas and Yucatán, see discussion below) through intervention from Mexico city. And on 18 January 1995—the day after President Zedillo had announced triumphantly the 'Political Accord' among all parties—the PRI's National Executive Committee threw its

support behind Madrazo, who would remain Tabasco's Governor (Gil Villegas, 1995, 4; Caballero, 1996, 12; Hinojosa, 1996, 40–41). To some Mexicans, especially to PRD leaders, this 18 January decision in effect voided the 17 January Accord.

During the second week of February 1995, Mexican voters were asked their views about the prospects for political reform. As shown in Table 4, two out of every three Mexicans did not believe that the Mexican government would enact true political reform. And most Mexicans disbelieved that Zedillo was serious about political reform. Nonetheless, voters were more likely to believe the President than the system: 42 percent of respondents considered Zedillo serious about political reform whereas only 31 percent of the same respondents had some confidence in the government's ability to enact reform.

Zedillo's and his government's political reform policies were more noteworthy in the days that followed this poll. Eduardo Robledo resigned as Governor of Chiapas. Shortly thereafter, Mexico's strongest opposition party, the National Action Party (PAN), won the gubernatorial elections in the State of Jalisco; its victory was recognized immediately by President Zedillo who congratulated the PAN's Governor-elect. In subsequent months, Zedillo and his government would also recognize PAN gubernatorial victories in the states of Guanajuato and Baja California Norte, but the PAN alleged fraud in the gubernatorial elections held in the States of Yucatán on 28 May 1995 and Quintana Roo on 18 February 1996—claims that Zedillo and the PRI resisted.[17]

In conclusion, many Mexicans were deeply suspicious about the electoral process, and they had good reasons to feel that way. Important electoral reforms were adopted in Mexico in 1994; citizens noted the difference and changed their views, although important problems remained. In early 1995, however, most Mexicans doubted that the President or his government could enact the reforms that would meet the pledge Zedillo made on presidential inauguration day. And state election results continued to be disputed.

Suspicions of Electoral Fraud and Corruption and Support for the Opposition

For opposition parties to benefit from perceptions that there is substantial electoral fraud and corruption, voters must believe that these are salient issues. Mexicans have been asked repeat-

Table 4. Levels of Public Confidence in the Mexican Reform Process, 1995

"How confident are you in the ability of the Mexican government to enact true political reform?"	
Very confident	12%
Fairly confident	19
Not very confident	40
Not confident at	25
Not sure	4
"Do you think Zedillo will be serious about reforming the political system, or is he just saying that to win votes?"	
Yes, serious	42%
Just saying that	46
Not sure	11

Source: Time/CNN Poll, February, 1995 (weighted N = 1000)

edly about the main problems facing the country. The results in Table 5 indicate that political corruption and electoral fraud have not ranked among the top three problems facing Mexico. Nevertheless, the concern with corruption and electoral fraud has risen both in absolute and in relative terms. In 1994, 9 percent of Mexicans mentioned these issues as the country's principal problem, ranking fourth overall. That was four times the weight accorded to these matters in 1986 and twice that accorded in 1991; the rank in 1994 was also the highest for these years. The salience of the demand for political reform has risen but it is still not among the top concerns.

Table 5. The Political Consequences of Perceptions of Political Corruption: Are Mexicans Demanding Reform?

"What would you say is the main problem we have in the country today?" (1986)

Inflation/cost of living	52%
Foreign debt	16
Inept government	10
Unemployment	8
Drug abuse	2
Overpopulation	2
Political corruption	2

"What would you say are the three principal problems we face today in this country?" (1991)

	First problem mentioned	Total problems mentioned
Inflation/cost of living	20%	37%
Unemployment	14	31
Air pollution	12	22
Drug abuse	7	17
Foreign debt	6	8
Political corruption	4	10
Illiteracy	3	10
Delinquency/robbery	2	9
Overpopulation	2	5

"In your opinion, what is the principal problem in the country today?" (1994)

Unemployment	24%
Economy in general	16
Poverty	15
Corruption/electoral fraud	9
Crime	9
Public services	4
Foreign debt	4
Illiteracy	3
Drugs	3
Chiapas conflict	2
Pollution	2

Source: *New York Times* Survey, October and November 1986 (weighted $N = 1899$); IMOP S.A. (Gallup) Poll, July 1991 ($N = 3053$); Belden and Russonello/Ciencia Aplicada survey of likely voters, July 1994 (weighted $N = 1526$).

How salient are serious allegations of fraud for the Mexican public? On 23 November 1993, gubernatorial and mayoralty elections were held in the state of Yucatán. Serious allegations were made against local PRI officials for committing electoral fraud. In the weeks that followed, protests broke out as the PAN claimed victory in the elections for governor of Yucatán and mayor of Mérida (the capital city of the state of Yucatán). When President Salinas and other national leaders intervened, the state's PRI governor, Dulce María Saurí, and her entire Cabinet, resigned, accusing Salinas of meddling. In the end, the PRI retained the governorship of Yucatán but the 'victorious' PRI candidate for mayor of Mérida resigned; the Yucatán electoral college then chose the PAN's candidate as mayor. These results were consistent with the findings of a large group of Mexican election observers who concluded that the PRI had won the governorship but lost the Mérida mayoralty.[18] This dispute in Yucatán was significant because Mexico's presidential campaign for the August 1994 elections was just getting under way; the Yucatán events could be seen as an early test of the fairness of the electoral process in general.

In the immediate aftermath of these events in Yucatán, Mexicans living in eight cities were asked (15–23 January 1994) about the extent to which they followed various news stories.[19] Nearly all urban Mexicans followed the conflict in Chiapas very or fairly closely, but only about half were similarly following the events in Yucatán—about the same proportion as those following the personal problems of U.S. pop singer Michael Jackson. Indeed, even the conflict in far-away Bosnia competed for attention compared to the issues of fraud in the Yucatán elections. These findings support the proposition that electoral fraud has had relatively low salience.

What weight, then, did Mexican voters accord to the perceived personal honesty of the presidential candidates? We look at the preferences for the major presidential candidates: Ernesto Zedillo for the PRI, Diego Fernández de Cevallos for the PAN, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas for the PRD, as reported in an exit poll conducted on election day, 21 August 1994.[20] In deciding whom to support, most voters accorded the greatest weight to governing ability or experience. This was the principal reason in voting for Zedillo. Even among opposition voters, perceptions concerning the governing capabilities of the presidential candidates remained the main reason why voters supported them. Interestingly, the perception of honesty was a relatively small factor in generating support for Cárdenas. These findings suggest that concerns about honesty have only a secondary effect on the decisions of voters to choose candidates.

We explore this observation more thoroughly by formally modeling vote choices in the 1988 and 1994 presidential elections. Was support for an opposition candidate less dependent on perceptions about electoral fraud and corruption, compared to the significance of economic preferences, other candidate traits, and other factors? To assess this question, we move beyond the open-ended questions of Table 5 in order to study in Tables 6 and 7 closed-ended indicators asking about the extent of fraud and corruption. In Table 6, we regress presidential preferences—support for the PRI nominee versus an opposition contender—on a host of predictors. Because the dependent variable is binary (coded '1' if the respondent backed an opposition candidate and '0' if the respondent supported the PRI), logistic regression was employed. To establish a baseline for the impact of the fraud and corruption items, we estimated three simple bivariate equations between each of the independent variables listed on the left and the likelihood of voting for government or opposition parties. These are located at the top of Table 6. At the bottom of this table, we make the analysis more analytically precise by including a variety of control variables.

The bivariate statistics suggest that there is a strong relationship between perceptions of

Table 6. Did beliefs about the electoral process and political corruption lead to opposition support? Logistic regression coefficients (and standard errors)

Bivariate effects	1988	1994	1994
Voting "decides how things are run"	0.47 (0.07)**		
Expected level of electoral fraud		0.53 (0.07)**	
Perceptions of political corruption			0.72 (0.11)**
Constant term	−1.31 (0.18)**	−1.30 (0.15)**	−2.00 (0.29)**
Partial effects			
Voting "decides how things are run"	0.12 (0.09)		
Expected level of electoral fraud		0.12 (0.10)	
Perceptions of political corruption			0.25 (0.17)
Retrospective economic evaluations	−0.11 (0.08)	−0.24 (0.14)	−0.28 (0.15)
Perceptions of opposition popularity	1.07 (0.16)**	0.74 (0.23)**	0.74 (0.23)**
PRI competence in managing the economy	−1.10 (0.18)**	−1.51 (0.24)**	−1.57 (0.24)**
PRI candidate trait index	−0.86 (0.05)**	−1.03 (0.09)**	−1.03 (0.09)**
Female	−0.14 (0.13)	−0.29 (0.22)	−0.28 (0.22)
Age	−0.02 (0.01)*	−0.02 (0.01)*	−0.02 (0.01)*
Class	0.09 (0.09)	0.05 (0.16)	0.09 (0.16)
Education	0.18 (0.07)**	0.21 (0.12)	0.22 (0.12)
North	−0.21 (0.19)	−0.25 (0.27)	−0.25 (0.29)
South	−0.50 (0.19)**	−0.28 (0.30)	−0.25 (0.29)
DF/México state	0.46 (0.18)*	0.94 (0.33)**	0.93 (0.32)**
Constant term	0.87 (0.55)	2.25 (0.99)**	1.87 (0.99)**

$* = p < 0.05$; $** = p < 0.01$.
Note: The dependent variable was coded '1' if the respondent preferred an opposition candidate and '0' if he or she backed the PRI. Those who were undecided or planned to annul their ballot (approximately 20 percent of the sample in 1994 and 15 percent of those respondents registered to vote in the 1988 sample) were excluded from this analysis. χ^2 for the bivariate models equals, respectively, 58.4, 67.4, and 44.7. χ^2 for the multivariate models equals 756.7, 676.9, and 677.6. Source: Gallup México surveys, May, 1988 (N = 1628); Belden and Russonello/Cincia Aplicada surveys, July 1994 (weighted N = 910).

electoral fraud and corruption, on the one hand, and the likelihood of voting for the opposition, on the other. For both the 1988 and 1994 presidential elections, the results are strong and statistically significant: the more suspicious the voter, the greater the likelihood of backing an opposition candidate. Nevertheless, the inclusion of other variables (bottom half of Table 6) makes it evident that perceptions of electoral fraud and corruption carry relatively little independent weight in shaping the likelihood of support for the opposition. With the control variables included, the relationship between perceptions of fraud and corruption and vote for the opposition becomes statistically insignificant.[21]

In contrast, the main explanation of the likelihood of voting for the opposition is partisan expectations. In both 1988 and 1994, those voters who believed that the PRI would lose the election were most likely to vote for the opposition (labeled in Table 6 "perceptions of opposition popularity"[22]); those voters who thought that the PRI was the best manager of the Mexican economy were least likely to vote for the opposition[23]; and those voters who thought that PRI candidates were intelligent, representative, caring, and able to govern were least likely to vote for the opposition.[24] These are the clearest, most persistent, and statistically significant findings. Age and residence in the Mexico city metropolitan area also mattered in both elections to explain the likelihood of opposition voting. Residents of the capital city and its environs

Table 7. A model of voter turnout in 1988 and 1991: logistic regression coefficients (and standard errors)

	1988	1991
Does voting decide how Mexico is run?	0.15 (0.06)*	0.17 (0.06)**
How extensive will electoral fraud be?	N/A	−0.14 (0.04)**
Do candidates act differently after elections	0.05 (0.07)	0.06 (0.06)
When will the PRI lose an election?	−0.01 (0.04)	N/A
Consistency in economic preferences	0.05 (0.12)	0.06 (0.09)
Level of political interest	0.27 (0.05)**	0.18 (0.05)**
Education level	0.06 (0.02)**	−0.03 (0.02)
Age	0.38 (0.04)**	0.01 (0.01)
Female	−0.04 (0.10)	0.35 (0.10)**
Professional class	0.10 (0.16)	0.11 (0.14)
Working class	0.01 (0.14)	0.34 (0.13)**
Union member	0.16 (0.11)	0.02 (0.11)
North	−0.17 (0.13)	−0.09 (0.12)
South	−0.16 (0.13)	0.19 (0.13)
D.F.	0.48 (0.14)**	0.39 (0.12)**
Church attendance	−0.01 (0.03)	0.11 (0.03)**
Constant term	−2.00 (0.40)**	−0.55 (0.37)

$* = p < 0.05$; $** = p < 0.01$.
Note: The dependent variable is coded '1' if the respondent was a likely voter (67 percent of the sample in 1988; 66 percent in 1991), and '0' otherwise. Model χ^2 = 221.2 (1988) and 222.8 (1991). Source: Gallup México surveys, May, 1988 (N = 2,406), and July, 1991 (N = 2,591).

were more likely to support the opposition, especially in 1994, while older voters were somewhat less likely to support the opposition.

In short, the concerns about electoral fraud and corruption have little direct effect on the likelihood of voting for the opposition though no doubt they may be a reason why voters reach the partisan conclusions that are the proximate explanations of likely voting behavior.

In Fig. 1, we illustrate the process we have uncovered in Table 6. Fig. 1 plots the 'fitted' probabilities from the logistic regression equations; we can see the relationship between the probability of voting for an opposition candidate in the 1994 election and the perception that the election will be fraudulent.[25] The bivariate effects are those that do not take into account any control variables; they appear at the top of Table 6 and on the solid line in Fig. 1. The partial effects measure the impact of electoral fraud and corruption evaluations once the other voting variables have been included; they appear at the bottom of Table 6 and on the broken line in Fig. 1.

The difference in the slope between the two lines of Fig. 1 is striking. It demonstrates that attitudes about the electoral process matter only marginally, if at all, once the variables dealing with partisan expectations are taken into account. As we had shown in our discussion of Table 5, Mexicans accord relatively low salience to electoral fraud and corruption in their assessment of the country's principal problems; consequently, for the most part they vote on the basis of considerations other than their perceptions of electoral fraud and corruption.

Opposition parties did not benefit from the widespread perception that there was electoral fraud and corruption in Mexico. Our analysis strongly implies that opposition candidates would profit little at the ballot box if they were to emphasize only the dishonesty of the PRI, not their own policy making expertise and likely efficacy in governing Mexico.

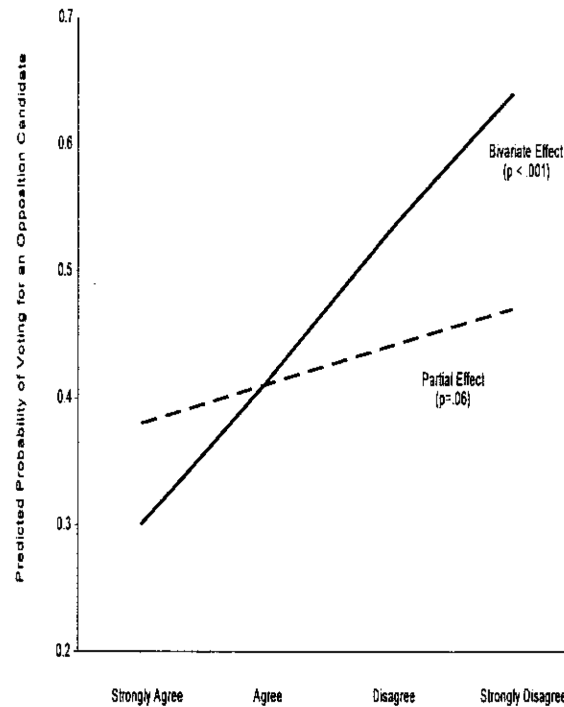

Fig. 1. Do beliefs about the electoral process lead to opposition voting? Source: The logistic regression coefficients in Table 6, with all control variables fixed to their mean values

Suspicions of Electoral Fraud and the Likelihood of Electoral Abstention

What were the effects of perceptions of electoral fraud on the likelihood of electoral abstention? The analysis in Table 7 helps us to understand this process. In the pre-election polls from 1988 and 1991, the sampling frame was based on the entire Mexican electorate. We can, therefore, assess the factors responsible for turning out to vote on election day, irrespective of party preference. In 1988, those who believed that voting decided how Mexico was governed were more likely to turn out to vote. This was not a strong relationship, though it was statistically significant. More important explanations for electoral turnout were such factors as level of political interest, education, age, and residence in the Mexico city Federal District: the more of each, the greater the likelihood of voting. In 1991, belief in the likelihood that voting decided policy was much more likely to increase turnout while belief that the election would be fraudulent was much more likely to decrease turnout. Women, professionals, residents of Mexico city, and those with high political interest were more likely to vote.

Some negative findings from Table 7 deserve to be noted. The expectations that candidates might act differently once they are elected had no effect on the likelihood of electoral turnout, nor did expectations about the future strength of the PRI increase or decrease the likelihood

of turnout. Consistency in economic preferences turned out to be irrelevant. Being a 'statist' or a 'neoliberal' had no discernible effect on the likelihood of voting either year.

The only factors that were strongly significant statistically and that affected electoral turnout in both years were level of political interest and residence in the Federal District, both of which increased the likelihood of turnout. Perceptions concerning the decisiveness of voting or the expectations of electoral fraud mattered, nonetheless, to explain voting turnout, consistent with our expectations; those who believed that voting decided how Mexico was governed were more likely to turn out to vote while those who expected that elections would be fraudulent were more likely to stay at home on election day.

Whose potential voters were more likely to remain home on election day? To answer this question, we turn to Table 8. We focus just on the 1988 presidential election because we have the necessary data for this exercise only for that election. (The two polls cited earlier for the 1994 presidential contests were based on likely voters or actual voters.) We have selected those likely non-voters who had expressed interest in the 1988 campaign but did not trust the electoral process. Had they possessed greater faith in elections, we assume that they would have been inclined to vote given their high level of political interest (and, as shown in Table 7, political interest is a strong and consistent predictor of voter turnout). We compare these 'high political interest likely non-voters' with all other likely non-voters as well as with likely

Table 8. Party perceptions in 1988, by voting status

	Likely nonvoters with high political interest but low trust in the electoral process	All other likely nonvoters	Likely voters
If an opposition party won, the nation's economy would			
Improve	58%	46%	45%
Worsen	25	33	31
Stay the same	17	21	24
If an opposition party won, would there be problems with social peace?			
Yes	59	62	61
No	41	38	39
In the next ten years, the PRI will			
Be stronger	20	30	35
Be weaker	57	36	38
Remain as strong	23	34	27
Rating of the PRI, based on a ten-point scale			
Negative (1 to 4)	27	20	16
Neutral (5)	14	11	9
Positive (6 to 10)	59	68	75

Note: The first column includes respondents who expressed at least some interest in politics but disagreed or strongly disagreed that "the way people vote is the main thing that decides how things are run." Lowest $N = 162$ (first column), 700 (second), and 1670 (third). Source: Gallup México surveys, May 1988.

voters along four partisan dimensions, each of which was found to be highly predictive of voter preferences.

The 1988 high political interest likely non-voters were a fascinating group. A strong majority believed that the country's economy would improve if an opposition party were to win the election; they were much more likely to hold this view than the likely voters or other likely non-voters. The high interest likely non-voters were somewhat less likely to believe that social peace would be endangered if a party other than the PRI were to win, though these differences were modest. The high interest likely non-voters were much more likely to believe than other Mexicans that the PRI would weaken in ten years; a clear majority of the high interest likely non-voters thought that the PRI's days of decline had begun. Finally, the high interest likely non-voters rated the PRI much less favorably than other kinds of voters.

The high political interest likely non-voters constituted an important pool of support for the opposition. Because of their low trust in the transparency and credibility of the electoral process, however, they stayed at home on election day, thereby probably depriving the opposition of electoral support. Perceptions of electoral fraud among these high political interest voters hurt the opposition and helped the PRI.

These are disconcerting findings.[26] Those who may have believed the most in the worth of democracy stayed home, delaying or even impeding a fuller and sooner transition to democracy in their homeland. Those who most believed that the PRI would weaken within the decade, and who held this party in lowest regard, unwittingly contributed to continuing PRI strength by failing to vote.

Conclusion

Many Mexicans have believed, with good reason, that their country has suffered from electoral fraud and corruption. As a result, they have been skeptical of the efficacy of elections and the effectiveness of their government. They understood that electoral reforms in 1994 made electoral fraud less likely but they remained deeply suspicious of the electoral process and of the promises to reform it. Within the year following Ernesto Zedillo's election to the presidency in August 1994, serious allegations of electoral fraud were made in the elections for state governor in Tabasco, Yucatán, and Quintana Roo, as well as in many elections for lower offices.

To the credit of government and opposition, in the Fall 1996 new electoral reforms were approved. Although there was much opposition anger over the amount of public financing that would remain available to the PRI, the reforms were a significant step forward. The Federal Electoral Institute would have only nonpartisan members nominated by a consensual procedure in Congress, and the Minister of Government would no longer serve on it. The governor of the Federal District (Mexico city), hitherto appointed by the President, would be elected directly by the voters. Other valuable changes were enacted (Weldon, 1996). The result was a much fairer nationwide Congressional election in July 1997 when the PRI retained the largest plurality of votes and seats in the Chamber of Deputies but it lost the control of the Chamber to a combined opposition majority.

Despite the serious problems in electoral practices, however, Mexicans have not assigned high political salience to electoral fraud and corruption, though their salience rose in the 1990s. Fraud and corruption were not on the voter's list of the country's main problems, despite the many cues from political elites and the mass media. Consequently, perceptions of electoral fraud and corruption had no statistically significant impact on the likelihood of voting for the opposition once other statistical controls are included; in this way, these findings differ from the theoretical and comparative literature summarized at the outset of this article. The likelihood of voting for the PRI or opposition parties was best explained by other factors, principally expectations about party performance. And the greater transparency of the 1997 Congressional election may make it even more unlikely that these issues would gain greater saliency in the near future; many voters may think (prematurely) that the problems of electoral fraud have been solved even though they remain important in various states of the federation.

Perceptions of electoral fraud did affect the likelihood of voting turnout: the greater the expectation of fraud, the lower the likelihood of voting. (This is consistent with the theoretical and comparative reasoning presented at the outset of this article.) The Mexicans most likely to stay home were also those most likely to have supported the opposition, had they turned out to vote. These voters continued to behave in this more electorally competitive environment as they had in the much less competitive past situation. They failed to support the outcomes they preferred. With greater electoral fairness and transparency, voter turnout may rise in future elections. It did *not* rise for the 1997 elections, however; instead, it fell below the 1994 level.

Mexico's opposition thus received multiple injuries from the practice and perception of electoral fraud. The practice itself has made it harder for opposition parties to receive their fair share of the vote and to defend the honesty of the vote. The perceptions about this practice have had disproportionate effects on opposition voters, who were more likely to fail to vote. Finally, the opposition parties received little new support from those who perceived that fraud was a problem. Greater injuries, of course, were inflicted on Mexican democracy, which was delayed both by pernicious practices and counter-productive perceptual effects.

The corruption scandals that erupted from 1995 to 1997 may, however, at long last provoke enough public outrage to enable the opposition in future elections to benefit from the outcry. In response to the news about money laundering schemes and murders, citizens may become more inclined to see political corruption as a pressing problem. Continuing electoral reforms would make it also more likely that voters would trust the accuracy of ballot counting on election day and thus increase their turnout.

This research also raises questions about transitions to democracy more generally. In Central Asia, the Caucasus region, Nigeria, or the Dominican Republic, for example, opposition leaders competing for power often accuse incumbent governments of corruption and electoral fraud. Because authoritarianism frequently breeds such practices, the charges are often plausible. But the transition toward liberal democracy may not be effective if opposition parties were to emphasize solely their democratic and reformist political agenda, though they should do this, of course. Opposition leaders must bear in mind two additional factors. First, in denouncing the practice of electoral fraud, they must take care not to discourage their own voters from participating in the election. And, second, opposition leaders need to emphasize their capacity to take charge of the government. Citizens are looking for lawfully elected governors, not just saints.

Notes

1. Early versions of this article were presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, Tampa, Florida, 1–4 November 1995, and at the Sawyer Seminar, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, on 9 October 1996. We are grateful to Alfred Cuzán, Stephen Morris, Susan Pharr, Joshua Tucker, and Frank L. Wilson for comments on the earlier draft, and to Harvard University's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and David Rockefeller

Center of Latin American Studies for some research support. We bear sole responsibility for the content of this work.

2. We follow the premises that Robert Dahl articulated in his magisterial summary of democratic theory. Two key conditions for democracy (which Dahl called polyarchy) are the possibility of widespread political participation and the organization of the opposition. Free and fair elections are the key instrument for voters to formulate and signify their preferences and to have them weighted equally in the conduct of government (Dahl, 1971, 3).
3. For a general discussion of corruption in Mexico, see Morris (1991) and Meyer (1995), 149–154.
4. This paper draws from, and builds on, Domínguez and McCann (1996). In particular, we are able to analyze the 1994 presidential elections to an extent that had not been possible before. There are several important works on Mexican elections, and especially on the 1988 presidential elections. See, among others, Molinar (1991); González Casanova and Cadena Roa (1989); Cornelius (1996); Loaeza (1989); and Butler and Bustamante (1991).
5. Fiorina (1981) 10, put it this way about the United States: "The retrospective voter need not spend his life watching 'Meet the Press' and reading the *New York Times*. He can look at the evening news and observe the coffins being loaded by Air Force transports, the increasing price of a basket of groceries between this month and last, and the police arresting demonstrators of one kind or another." In Mexico, of course, citizens need not follow the intricacies of the various reform proposals under debate – surely a daunting task – to know that something had gone terribly wrong in past elections.
6. We are grateful to the pollsters whose data we use for making their findings available to other professionals. We are also grateful to the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) for making available the 1986 survey. Neither the original data collectors nor the Consortium are responsible for the analyses or interpretations presented here. For more information about the technical specifications of the surveys and the exact wording of each question employed in this article, write to one of us, respectively, at mccann@polsci.purdue.edu or jorge—dominguez@harvard.edu. The public opinion studies we draw on here have the following technical characteristics: 1. *New York Times* poll, conducted in October and November 1986 by Gallup México. Weighted $N = 1899$. Available at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), Ann Arbor, Michigan, archive number 8666. 2. 1988 pre-election poll, conducted in May and June 1988 by Gallup México. $N = 2960$. Available at the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Storrs, Connecticut, archive number MXAIPOIMOP88 — PREELECT. 3. 1991 pre-election poll, conducted in July 1991 by Gallup México. $N = 3053$. Also available at the Roper Center, archive number MXAIPOIMPO91 — PREELECT. 4. *Times Mirror* "Eight Nation People and the Press Survey," conducted in January 1994. The Mexican component was administered by the newspaper *El Norte*. Weighted $N = 1507$. Available from *Times Mirror* Center for the People and the Press, 1875 I Street N.W., Washington, DC 20006. 5. 1994 pre-election poll, conducted in Julu 1994 by Ciencia Aplicada. Weighted $N = 1526$. Available through Belden and Russonello, Washington, DC, 1-202-789-2400. 6. 1994 exit poll, conducted on 21 August 1994 by BIMSA. Weighted $N = 8464$. Available through Mitofsky International, New York, NY, 1-800-639-3235.7. *Time* magazine/CNN poll, conducted in February 1995 by Yankelovich, Inc. Weighted $N = 1000$. Also available at the Roper Center, archive number MXYANK95-95004.
7. For more detailed discussion of data sets and survey problems, see Domínguez and McCann (1996), Appendix 2.
8. In 1958, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba found that the more educated Mexicans were also much more likely to get angry sometimes during election campaigns and were much more likely to believe that campaigns are sometimes silly or ridiculous (Almond and Verba, 1965, 112).
9. Referring to Brazil under authoritarian rule but equally pertinent to Mexico, Zaller (1992, 301–302), has argued that "the most political aware members of the public receive the largest amounts of government propaganda, and are also most capable of resisting it."
10. Consider, for example, the findings from the 1992 American National Election Study, conducted by the Center for Political Studies of the University of Michigan and archived at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research in Ann Arbor (study number 6230). In this survey, respondents were asked: "How much to you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what people think – a good deal [coded 3], some [coded 2], or not much [coded 1]?" The correlation between this item and one's level of education is 0.08 which, though not large, is statistically significant and positive. In a similar vein, education is also positively and significantly

correlated with the following two items, each of which touches on perceptions of government accountability via the ballot box: "Over the years, how much attention do you feel the government pays what people think when it decides what to do – a good deal [coded 3], some [2], or not much [1]?" and "Do you think that quite a few people running the government are crooked [coded 1], not very many are [2], or hardly any of them are crooked [3]?"

11. Mexicans were not the only Latin Americans worried about rigged elections. In 1996, citizens of nine Latin American countries were asked whether they thought that the elections in their respective countries were rigged. Mexicans ranked seventh highest, but were exceeded in their distrustfulness of the ballot count by Colombians and Venezuelans – two of the region's oldest democracies (Lagos, 1996, Fig. 7).
12. For discussion of the reform of the Constitution and the electoral law as well as a criticism of those reforms and of remaining undemocratic electoral practices, see Domínguez and McCann (1996), 178–197. For other professional assessments of the process of electoral reform, see Alianza Cívica-Observación 94 (1994a), 23; Alianza Cívica-Observación 94 (1994b) and Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government (1994, 1995).
13. For a discussion of President Carlos Salinas' multi-million dollar fund-raising on behalf of the PRI, see Schulz (1995), 18. For allegations that some of the PRI massive fund raising in 1994 broke the law, see Dillon (1995).
14. For a critical and thoughtful assessment of the 1994 presidential election campaign, Castañeda (1994). For recognition by PAN party president, Carlos Castillo Peraza, that Ernesto Zedillo won the 1994 elections, notwithstanding electoral irregularities, see Castillo Peraza (1996), 4A. For general discussion, see Domínguez and McCann (1996 Epilogue).
15. There is no contradiction, we believe, between the findings of Tables 2 and 3. We think it likely that the tolerance for the pre-existing level of corruption has declined in Mexico as a result of the political struggles of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The greater intolerance for corruption is a partial explanation for reforms that have reduced the likelihood of electoral fraud. Moreover, the belief that corruption has increased may also be a function of this same decline in the tolerance for corruption, not necessarily an increase in corruption, though the latter could have risen as well. The belief that corruption in government has risen is not unique to Mexico; for international comparisons, see Naím (1995).
16. Texts and information courtesy of the Embassy of Mexico to the United States.
17. For some discussion of the Yucatán elections, see Cano (1995) and Caballero and López Vargas (1995). For a discussion of the Quintana Roo elections, see Albarrán de Alba and Morita (1995), and *Novedades*, 19 February 1996, A6.
18. *The Elections in Yucatán, Mexico: Summary and Conclusions of Citizen Observers* (Merida, Yucatan, 28 November 1993); *Miami Herald* (5 December 1993); *New York Times* (26 December 1993), 6; U.S. Department of State (1993), 13–14.
19. *Times Mirror*, Center for the People and the Press, "Eight Nations, People and the Press Survey" ($N = 1507$).
20. Mitofsky International exit poll, 21 August 1994 (weighted $N = 4{,}309$ for Zedillo voters, 2,365 for Fernández, and 1,316 for Cárdenas).
21. The multivariate results hold up well even if the item on 'opposition popularity' were to be dropped from the equations in the lower half of Table 6. While it is conceivable that attitudes about fraud and corruption could be linked to perceptions of the opposition's ability to attract voters on election day – thereby creating a collinearity problem when computing partial effects – the correlations between these items are not large ($r < 0.20$). Once the 'opposition popularity' item is omitted from the equations in Table 6, the partial effect for "voting decides how things are run" (first column) is 0.13, with a standard error of 0.11; the coefficient for "expected level of electoral fraud" is 0.15, with a standard error of 0.11; and for "perceptions of political corruption" the effect becomes 0.28, with a standard error of 0.18. There is no need to change the substantive analysis.
22. Coded 1 if respondents thought the PRI would lose the election, and 0 if they thought the PRI would win.
23. The variable "PRI competence in managing the economy" was defined slightly differently in 1988 and 1994. In 1988, the question was: "If a party other than the PRI were to reach power, do you think that Mexico's economic conditions would improve, would remain the same, or would worsen?" In 1994, the question was: "In your opinion, who would be the most able to improve the economy

of the country?" The names of the parties were mentioned. For both years, we constructed a dummy variable coded 1 if respondents thought in 1988 that the economy would suffer if an opposition party were to take power and in 1994 that the PRI would be most able to improve Mexico's economy. Otherwise, it was coded 0.

24. The 'PRI candidate trait index' is a five-point summary index based on responses to four candidate ratings.
25. Plotting the bivariate and partial effects of the 'voting decides policy' or 'perceptions of political corruption' items would produce findings very similar to Fig. 1.
26. For a discussion of the question whether the 1988 presidential election would have turned out differently if electoral abstention would have been lower, see Domínguez and McCann (1996).

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