Why Dominant Parties Lose

Mexico's Democratization in Comparative Perspective

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The Puzzle of Single-Party Dominance

This book is about single-party dominance, its persistence, and its downfall. Dominant parties have maintained continuous executive and legislative rule for decades despite genuine partisan competition in countries spanning almost all world regions. In these systems, opposition parties compete but lose in open elections for such extended periods of time that we can speak of a "dominant party equilibrium." What sustains this equilibrium and what makes it break down is the subject of this book. Fashioning an adequate explanation is important partly because the current literature falls short and partly because explaining single-party dominance has profound implications for our understanding of the forces that encourage or stunt partisan competition, the process of opposition party building in inhospitable circumstances, the quality of political representation, and the dynamics of regime stability or breakdown in hybrid systems that combine authoritarian and democratic features.

This book focuses both on the question of single-party dominance in general and on the specific case of Mexico where the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) maintained power for longer than any noncommunist party in modern history. The PRI and its predecessors won every presidential election from 1929 to 2000, held the majority in Congress until 1997, won every governorship until 1989, and controlled the vast majority of municipalities. It was so powerful and seemingly unshakable that leaders in other developing countries wanted their own PRI (Krauze, 1997: 549–550), and major political actors inside Mexico thought of it as virtually "the only game in town." Despite long-term equilibrium dominance, opposition parties began to expand in the 1980s, and by 1997 the PRI

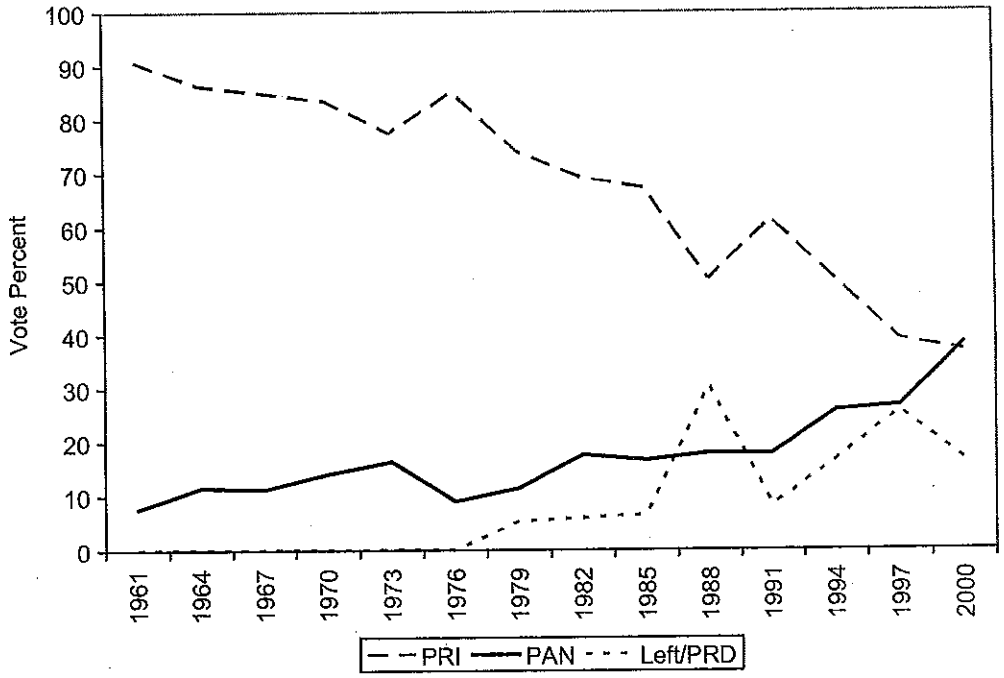

FIGURE 1.1. Lower House of Congress Election Results, Mexico, 1961–2000.

had lost its majority in Congress to the National Action Party (PAN) on the right and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) on the left. In 2000, Vicente Fox of the PAN won the presidency and became the first leader in Mexico's modern history to peacefully receive power from a rival political group.

The PRI's long-time dominance is surprising because it occurred in the context of regular elections with meaningful contestation, where opposition forces were allowed to register as parties and compete for all elected posts. The PRI's ultimate loss and Mexico's transformation into a fully competitive democracy is also intriguing because, as in other dominant party systems, change occurred without the breakdown of the incumbent regime, but rather through painstaking party-building efforts by opposition candidates and activists. Over decades these volunteers built challenger parties and fashioned increasingly powerful electoral challenges to the PRI. But for most of their existence, they remained small parties that made niche appeals to minority electoral constituencies and were thoroughly uncompetitive at the polls. It was not until the 1980s and 1990s that they expanded into major parties with a catchall character that could challenge PRI dominance. Figure 1.1 illustrates the long period of PRI dominance, its protracted decline, and the simultaneous rise of the opposition parties.

What accounts for equilibrium dominance and its eventual breakdown in Mexico and elsewhere? How do traditionally undercompetitive party systems transform into fully competitive democracies? What allows previously small and weak niche-oriented challenger parties to become larger and more powerful catchall competitors that can win elections? What accounts for the timing of dominant party decline in general and why, in the particular case of Mexico, did this change occur in the 1980s and 1990s rather than decades earlier or later?

THE PUZZLE

Current approaches cannot explain equilibrium dominance or its breakdown, and in fact, the alternative theories predict that dominance never exists or it never ends. Most existing theories about party system competitiveness were crafted to explain the dynamics of partisan competition in the fully competitive democracies, and they assume a level playing field where both incumbents and challengers have equal opportunities to appeal to voters in a fair electoral marketplace. In particular, they discount the effect of differential resource endowments by assuming that no party is advantaged with extra money, more canvassers, or the ability to communicate more often and more effectively with voters. The assumption that the electoral market is "neutral" or perfectly fair in which no party has a systematic advantage underlies existing work in the best-known approaches to party competition in the comparative-historical, institutional, and formal theory traditions. But I show empirically that dominant party systems have sufficient social cleavages, enough voter demand, and permissive enough electoral institutions for competitive opposition parties to emerge, even though they do not for long periods of time. Thus, these schools overpredict opposition party competitiveness and therefore cannot explain why single-party dominance occurs at all.

The recognition that incumbency advantages matter has been incorporated into some theoretical statements about party competition, principally in more recent formal theory treatments. However, in their current form, these "non-neutral" models that assume an unfair electoral market for votes err in the other direction and cannot explain why a challenging party would ever enter competition. According to these models, opposition parties that are doomed to lose should not form in the presence of a systematically advantaged incumbent, and therefore dominant party

systems should collapse into one-party regimes that endure indefinitely without challengers.[1]

If these approaches were correct, then, discounting the fully closed authoritarian regimes, the world should be populated with fully competitive democracies or one-party regimes where challengers are allowed to form but do not. Clearly, neither set of approaches explains the dominant party equilibrium that exists when opposition parties compete but persistently fail.

Specific work on Mexico largely echoes these two approaches from the party competition literature. In the 1950s and early 1960s, authors argued that Mexico under the PRI was a democracy, albeit an uncommon one where the incumbent continuously won reelection (Fitzgibbon, 1951: 519; Cline, 1962: 149–156, 173; Scott, 1964: 146). But if meaningful electoral competition were also fair, then we cannot account for the absence of at least one viable challenger. In the 1960s and 1970s, authors began to think of Mexico as a fully closed authoritarian regime, or what Mario Vargas Llosa called the "perfect dictatorship," that should be compared to the military regimes in South America (Brandenburg, 1964: 3–7; González Casanova, 1965; Kaufman Purcell, 1973: 29; Reyna and Weinert, 1977). But if elections were neither meaningful nor fair, and the PRI won consistently through outcome-changing electoral fraud and bone-crushing repression, then there would have been little reason to turn to parties and instead opposition forces should have formed revolutionary movements designed to overthrow the regime or social movements designed to reform it. To be sure, these movements did exist at times in Mexico and other dominant party systems, but opposition forces also consistently formed parties to compete in elections as their primary organizational expression.[2] Thus, existing conceptualizations of Mexico's political regime under the PRI either overemphasize its democratic characteristics, leading

[1] This approach argues that individually rational politicians who want to win elections should always join an incumbent party with a higher probability of victory than a challenger party that is expected to lose. Opposition parties may still form if they can attract personnel by offering a much higher probability of *nomination* than the incumbent party; however, because the incumbent's probability of *victory* is so much higher, assured nominations probably only attract those who have no future chance of winning nomination in the dominant party, such as failed presidential contenders (Epstein, 1967). I take up this issue in more detail in Chapter 4.

[2] Opposition forces sometimes form parties in fully closed authoritarian systems, but unlike in dominant party systems, they are not the main outlet for opposition activism. Throughout the book, "fully closed authoritarian" refers to regimes that are noncompetitive and nonresponsive.

to the puzzle of why opposition parties failed, or overemphasize its authoritarian characteristics, leading to the puzzle of why opposition parties formed at all.

THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

In this book, I develop a resource theory of single-party dominance and opposition party development that focuses on incumbency advantages. I argue that challenger party competitiveness is primarily determined by two types of dominant party advantages: the incumbent's resource advantages and its ability to raise the costs of participation in the opposition. Dramatic resource advantages allow the incumbent to outspend on campaigns, deploy legions of canvassers, and, most importantly, to supplement policy appeals with patronage goods that bias voters in their favor. Dominant parties also impose two types of costs on candidates and activists who decide to affiliate with a challenger. One type of cost is the opportunity cost of foregoing the material advantages that they would have received by joining the dominant party, such as a stipend, kickbacks, or access to an old boys' network of business contacts and favors. The other cost is the cost associated with targeted physical intimidation, beatings, or even killings of opposition activists that occur episodically in some (but not all) dominant party systems. Between these tools, resource advantages are more important. Though potentially harsh and almost always threatening, repression in these systems never rose to the level of purging or purifying the body politic as it did in fully closed authoritarian regimes. Incumbents' access to these competition-altering tools clearly varies across countries and over time, and taking stock of these variations plays a key role in this study.

By virtue of their incumbency advantages, dominant parties attract and retain virtually all careerist politicians who want to win office. So who forms opposition parties? Contrary to the purely instrumental assumptions about individual politicians in existing theory, in-depth interviews in Mexico and anecdotal evidence from other cases reveal that opposition party elites *also* value policy and partisan expression as a way of transforming voters' hearts and minds. But the only citizens willing to pay high costs and reap uncertain benefits are those who strongly disagree with the status quo policies offered by the incumbent. These ideologically oriented candidates and activists build opposition parties when existing theory suggests that they should not, but they end up creating niche parties that make specialized appeals to minority electoral constituencies. The challenger

parties' appeals are then sufficiently out of step with the preference of the average voter that they remain too small to beat the dominant party at the polls. Only when the incumbent's advantages diminish can challengers attract the more moderate personnel that may transform niche challengers into electorally competitive catchall parties.

Dominant party resources primarily come from diverting public funds for partisan use. Unless access to these public resources is blocked by a professionalized public bureaucracy or their use for electoral purposes is prevented by an independent electoral management body with oversight and sanctioning authority, incumbents will skew competition in their favor by dramatically outspending competitors on campaigns and all aspects of party building. Where these institutional constraints do not operate, the magnitude of the incumbent's resource advantages rises and falls with the degree of state ownership over the economy.[3] In this context, state-owned enterprises are particularly important because they are prone to politicization. Their often-secretive budgets and lack of third-party oversight yield manifold opportunities to blur the line between public and partisan resources. Thus, the political economy of dominance involves creating a large and politically controlled public sector. When privatization deprives incumbents of access to illicit public resources, single-party dominance is threatened. In short, economic and political monopolies are mutually reinforcing in the dominant party equilibrium.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MEXICAN POLITICS

This resource theory of single-party dominance helps understand key analytic problems in Mexico's politics. First, my argument accounts for opposition party existence but failure beginning with the initiation of the post-Revolutionary party system and single-party dominance in 1929. In the face of the PRI's advantages, challenger parties only existed because a hard core of ideologically committed citizens formed them to express their deeply anti-status quo beliefs. Citizens who wanted political careers overwhelmingly threw their lot in with the PRI. But opposition personnel were so anti-status quo that they made challenger parties into specialized tight-knit clubs that lacked broad appeal. From an electoral perspective, their organizations and campaign styles seemed designed to fail because they only brought out the faithful and never made a significant dent in the

[3] Threats to the size of the state may come from a variety of sources, including international pressure. Levitsky and Way (2006) provide a conceptualization of this relationship under the category of "Western linkage."

PRI's power. Commentators tended to explain their failure as the result of electoral fraud. There is compelling evidence that the PRI won several key elections, especially local contests, through fraud in the 1980s when opposition parties became more competitive (Eisenstadt, 2004). There is also speculation that the PRI stole the 1988 presidential elections, and even though there is "abundant proof of electoral tampering . . . it has not been possible to unearth evidence – documentary, verbal, mathematical, or otherwise – to conclusively demonstrate that Salinas lost and Cárdenas won" (Castañeda, 2000: 233). As a result, we cannot know whether the PRI committed outcome-changing fraud or simply padded its victory (Castañeda, 2000: 232). In general, during its many decades in power, the PRI's politicization of public funds tilted the partisan playing field so much in its favor that it did not need to steal elections in the counting; it won them through unfair advantages before election day.

Second, my argument helps explain opposition parties' failure to coordinate against the incumbent. Opposition coordination failure helped sustain PRI dominance, especially during its final two decades in power as its resource advantages waned. It would seem natural for challengers to coalesce in a broad anti-PRI front, much like they eventually did in Chile against Augusto Pinochet or in Kenya against retiring President Daniel Arap Moi's KANU party (Howard and Roessler, 2006; Van de Walle, 2002). Despite their mutual interest in democracy, opposition elites did not coordinate because they were ideologically polarized on economic policy around a comparatively centrist PRI. These policy differences resulted from the very pattern of opposition party building that discouraged all but the most anti-status quo volunteers from joining them. Since elites refused to coordinate, mass-level coordination was greatly complicated and anti-PRI voters who prioritized democracy were left to gamble on which challenger party had the better chance of defeating the incumbent in a given election. Riker (1976) first characterized elite coordination failure as a key reason for dominant party persistence, but he did not specify why opposition parties would form on the extremes in the first place.[4] Unless the incumbent has tools to expel challengers from the most efficient position – typically at the center of the distribution of voter preferences – then, as neutral theories suggest, opposition parties should win

[4] Riker's argument was about unidimensional competition in India, a dominant party democratic regime. As I show below, competition in dominant party authoritarian regimes is typically two-dimensional and includes a cross-cutting regime dimension that gives challengers common cause against the incumbent. Thus, opposition coordination failure in these systems is even more puzzling.

with at least the same probability as the incumbent, thus ending single-party dominance.[5] My argument supplies Riker's missing mechanism by showing how the dominant party's advantages carve out a broad center for the incumbent.

Third, a focus on incumbency advantages also helps understand the opposition's ultimate victory. The economic crisis beginning in 1982 angered voters and increasingly turned them against the PRI. Yet the incumbent continued to win national elections until 1997. In fully competitive systems, when voters dislike the incumbent, they more or less automatically turn to the opposition by voting the incumbent out. This did not happen in Mexico in the 1980s in large part because the PRI still had access to the resources of massive state-owned enterprises, dominated the airwaves in campaigns, and outspent competitors by a factor of about ten. By the late 1990s, in contrast, state control over the economy had decreased dramatically and a leaner federal public bureaucracy yielded fewer patronage jobs. As a result, the PRI's national patronage system ran dry. The PRI increasingly favored legal public financing, but this new system included oversight mechanisms that benefited all parties and made partisan competition for votes much fairer. As resource asymmetries declined, opposition parties improved substantially at the polls; however, their expansion was not automatic since decades of niche-party building constrained their ability to take advantage of new opportunities. It was not until the late 1990s that opposition parties managed to overcome this inertia and overturn PRI majorities.

Finally, my argument about the origins and development of opposition parties among ideologically polarized political elites has relevance for two important aspects of post-transition politics in fully democratic Mexico after 2000. Despite Congress's increasing independence and importance as well as widespread agreement that Mexico's state needs reforming, major legislation has stalled and Congress remains plagued by gridlock. One reason is that the interparty coordination problems that once hampered electoral coordination now militate against legislative coordination (see Bruhn and Greene, 2007). In addition, unlike other authoritarian incumbents that were virtually destroyed after losing the executive branch, the PRI has remained competitive in federal elections (see Greene, 2008). This has occurred in part because persistent intra-party rigidities in the PAN and PRD have kept them from convincingly claiming the political center.

[5] See the section "Supply-Side Approaches" in this chapter for an expanded discussion.

In developing my account of PRI rule and its breakdown, I describe opposition party development during much of 20th century Mexico. Yet my description differs from existing work. Excellent literature on the PAN (Mabry, 1973; Arriola, 1994; Loaeza, 1999; Chand, 2001; Mizrahi, 2003; Shirk, 2005) and the PRD as well as its forerunners (Carr, 1992; Bruhn, 1997; Sánchez, 1999; Borjas Benavente, 2003) draws out these parties' differences. To be sure, the PAN is a rightwing party with an upper- and middle-class core constituency and links to both 19th century economic liberalism as well as the Catholic Church. The PRD, on the other hand, is a leftwing party with deep roots in previous communist and socialist parties, urban poor people's movements, and radical intellectual cliques. But a closer look shows striking similarities. Both parties faced a common fate of long-time struggle as regime outsiders, and they both crafted quite similar party-building strategies and organizational profiles as a result. By theorizing the dynamics of single-party dominance, I account for these similarities.

In an excellent book that became available only after my book was completed, Beatriz Magaloni (2006) offers an analysis of PRI dominance and decline that runs parallel to my argument in several general ways.[6] Both books conceptualize single-party dominance as an equilibrium that was unsettled by economic conditions beginning in 1982; however, we have contrasting views about the causal importance of voters versus party elites in ending dominant party rule. Magaloni focuses on voter dissatisfaction in the face of economic crisis whereas I focus on the opposition parties' capacity to take advantage of this dissatisfaction. Voter dissatisfaction with the PRI is clearly important, but it alone cannot account for two key outcomes that my theory can explain. First, like other approaches that I discuss below, Magaloni's theory presumes that opposition parties were always viable alternatives for voters dissatisfied with the incumbent party. I show this is not the case and that the dynamics of dominance compelled opposition elites to build challenger parties that were out of step with the average voter's preferences and thus could not generate enough support to win national elections until the late 1990s. Second, we agree that opposition coordination failure was a major element in sustaining PRI dominance in its final decades, but Magaloni argues that

[6] I had earlier benefited greatly from Magaloni's (1997) doctoral dissertation which focused more specifically on voting behavior in Mexico but did not contain the extended argument about PRI dominance found in her book. I cite her dissertation (along with the corresponding citations of her book) numerous times throughout the present study.

ideologically polarized voters produced this outcome. Although *opposition voters* were indeed polarized to the left and right, given that voters *in general* were quite moderate, opposition party elites' strategies were the cause rather than the consequence of their noncentrist support bases (Greene, 2002b). Thus, I argue that opposition party behavior was the binding constraint on transforming Mexico from a dominant party system into a fully competitive democracy. I craft a theory of opposition party building in dominant party settings that can explain why opposition parties remained undercompetitive and uncoordinated for decades as well as why they eventually expanded enough to win. I use this argument to explain the dominant party equilibrium and its breakdown in Mexico as well as in a number of the world's other dominant party systems.

BROADER IMPLICATIONS

Studying party dynamics in Mexico and other dominant party systems gives analytic leverage on four broader questions that are of interest for comparative politics. First, although work on single-party dominance goes back at least 50 years to Duverger (1954), Tucker (1961), Blondel (1972), Huntington and Moore (1970), Arian and Barnes (1974), Sartori (1976), Pempel (1990), Brooker (2000), and Cheng (2001), none of these studies actually supplies a viable theory of dominant party persistence or decline. These authors were mostly concerned with the creation of dominant party systems and as such they focused on the major periods of nation building that produced them (e.g., revolution, independence, reconstruction after defeat in war, or sustained struggles between rival political forces over modernization). Some argued that incumbents' initial legitimacy as harbingers of national transformation underwrote their long-term dominance. But it is unlikely that the mechanisms that *produce* dominant party rule also *reproduce* it over time, and leading authorities on dominance have recognized that founding projects have limited staying power. Levite and Tarrow argued that "subcultural dominance cannot be indefinitely sustained by dominant parties in societies undergoing change . . . regimes age and even epochal events pass into memory" (1983: 299). Tucker (1961) noted that dominant parties tend to lose their founding ideology quite early and transform from "revolutionary nationalist regimes" into "extinct revolutionary nationalist regimes" or what Huntington (1970: 23, 40–41) called "established one-party regimes." In the specific case of Mexico, analysts similarly referred to the PRI as a "pragmatic" dominant party that primarily sought to sustain itself in

power. But to name something takes us only so far. Explaining the fate of "pragmatic" dominant parties long after their founding projects are abandoned requires not another theory of why dominance begins but one focused on the mechanisms that allow incumbents to win consistently against challengers in open elections.

Second, the transformation of dominant party authoritarian regimes into fully competitive democracies has received little scholarly attention, and researchers are just beginning to uncover the mechanisms that sustain competitive authoritarian regimes more generally (Levitsky and Way, 2006). Transitions to democracy in these systems do not occur through elite pacts or regime breakdown as they do in the fully closed authoritarian regimes (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Karl and Schmitter, 1991). Rather, since elections already involve open competition, transitions occur by building opposition party electoral capacity. As a result, we should focus on the four major tasks of opposition party building: recruiting candidates and activists, creating organizational capacity, generating resources, and shaping appeals that resonate with voters. This final task becomes more important as the market for votes transits from a biased one that favors the incumbent to a fair one in which parties engage in the type of issue-based competition that is one important component of elections in fully competitive democracies.

Third, since opposition parties in dominant party systems are built mainly by outsiders, this book also provides a novel argument about the development of externally mobilized parties that originate in society. Aldrich (1995) developed a theory of internally mobilized parties that emerge as coalitions of legislators who band together to solve social choice problems endemic to democratic policymaking. But externally mobilized parties emerge for different reasons (Shefter, 1977a) and with a different set of hurdles. One of the most important hurdles is that their resource poverty makes it difficult to attract candidates and activists. Current work tells us that aspiring politicians should not join a disadvantaged challenger party (see Schlesinger, 1966, 1991; Rohde, 1979; Aldrich and Bianco, 1992; Cox, 1997: Ch. 8). But on this basis, not only can we not account for challengers to dominant parties, we cannot account for an entire class of activism in organizations that are doomed to lose. For instance, the outsider parties described by Shefter (1977a, 1994) that challenge patronage-rich incumbents should never form. Third-party challengers to the Democrats and Republicans in the United States should not exist. The Green parties described by Kitschelt (1989a), radical rightwing parties described by Kitschelt (1995) and Givens (2005), and a substantial

number of the 261 other new parties that formed in Western Europe between World War II and the 1990s (see Hug, 2001: 80) should never have organized. In general, all political parties that begin as "protest" parties or that attempt to lead public opinion by amassing support in the fashion of a social movement should not exist. The problem confronting prospective participants in the opposition is not unlike what Lichbach called the "rebel's dilemma" where "No potential dissent will become actual dissent" (1998: xii). Somewhat akin to rebellions that should not happen but do, disadvantaged parties form because ideologically charged citizens act on their principles over their interests to build parties from the ground up. I incorporate this notion into an individual-level theory of partisan affiliation that examines how prospective candidates and activists partition themselves between a dominant party and a challenger in the face of asymmetric resources and costs of participation.

DOMINANCE DEFINED AND THE COMPARISON SET

The final reason for studying dominant party systems is that they have been overlooked in recent research that classifies regimes as democracies or dictatorships. By eliminating the grey areas in between, these studies also erase dominant party systems from the world map (Przeworski et al., 2000; Boix, 2003). I define dominant party systems as hybrids that combine meaningful electoral competition with continuous executive and legislative rule by a single party for at least 20 years or at least four consecutive elections. The key feature of dominant party systems is that elections are meaningful but manifestly unfair. Meaningful elections induce opposition actors to form parties and compete for votes. Unfair elections mean that biases in partisan competition tilt the playing field so much in the incumbent party's favor that opposition parties are extremely unlikely to win.

Elections must be *both* meaningful and unfair to sustain the dominant party equilibrium. Meaningful elections distinguish dominant party systems from fully closed authoritarian regimes. If elections were less than meaningful and incumbents effectively annulled competition either by banning challengers outright or by making it too costly for opposition forces to form parties, then dominant party systems would collapse into one-party regimes without challengers. At the same time, unfair elections distinguish dominant party systems from fully competitive democracies.[7]

[7] For a similar definition of competitive authoritarian regimes, see Levitsky and Way (2006).

If elections were fair and incumbents could not bias competition significantly in their favor, then the level playing field would make dominant party systems collapse into fully competitive democracies.

Meaningful electoral competition entails three procedural elements that I draw, in part, from Przeworski and colleagues (2000: 18–29). First, the "election rule" is that the chief executive and a legislature that cannot be dismissed by the executive are chosen in regular popular elections. Second, the "opposition party rule" – a more restrictive version of Przeworski and colleagues' (2000: 20) party rule – indicates that all opposition forces are allowed to form independent parties and compete in elections. This means that the incumbent does not ban challenger parties entirely or as they arise and opposition parties are not forced to join the dominant party or to endorse only the incumbent's candidates.[8] If this rule is violated, as it is in constitutional or *de facto* one-party regimes, then I score the system as a fully closed authoritarian regime. Consider Kenya, for instance, beginning with its independence from Britain in 1963. Until 1982, the dominant KANU banned opposition parties as they arose. From 1982 to 1991, it adopted a constitutional provision that declared Kenya a one-party state. Multiparty elections were later held in 1992 and 1997, but by some accounts, fraud overturned opposition victories that would have ended the incumbent's rule.[9] Like Kenya, Cameroon (1961–1983), Tunisia (1957–), Tanzania (1964–1995), Zambia (1964–1991), Indonesia (1965–), Côte d'Ivoire (1958–1990), Angola (1976–), Gabon (1968–1993), Guyana (1968–1985), Madagascar (1978–1984), Mozambique (1976–1994), and Egypt (1953–) are coded as fully closed authoritarian regimes rather than as dominant party systems.

Finally, an expanded version of the "consolidation rule" indicates that the incumbent may not re-write the rules in a way that permanently consolidates its rule and may not engage in outcome-changing electoral fraud, without which dominance would have ended. Fraud with certainty is incompatible with dominant party rule because it annuls competition and discourages opposition forces from forming parties that compete in elections. As a result, my concept of dominant party authoritarian regime

[8] The Mexican Communist Party (PCM) was not registered from 1949 to 1977. Many analysts state or imply that it was actively banned; however, as I detail in Chapter 3, it failed to meet the registration requirements at a time when other left parties and independent candidates were on the ballot (Molinar, 1991: 33–36; Rodríguez Araujo and Sirvent, 2005: 35–37).

[9] Even if fraud did not change the results of these elections, Kenya would not meet the longevity threshold for single-party dominance after 1992, as defined below.

(DPAR) differs from Sartori's (1976) conceptualization of "hegemonic party" system where "turnover is not even envisaged" (1976: 230) and fraud prohibits opposition victories with certainty (1976: 194–196).[10] Fraud on the margins to increase the incumbent's vote share when observers generally agree that it would have won anyway does not, in and of itself, qualify a regime as fully closed authoritarian because it still implies genuine electoral competition that may involve serious challenger parties.[11] As I argue in more detail in Chapter 2, dominant parties' pre-electoral advantages and in particular their virtual monopoly over patronage resources mean that they usually win elections before election day. As a result, fraud is typically unnecessary and is considered only when other pre-election mechanisms fail and elections are predicted to be close. Even when fraud is used, it is not always successful because it requires substantial resources and coordination among multiple regime supporters that can break down. Consequently, opposition actors never know whether fraud will be attempted or if it will be successful. Fraud with uncertainty is compatible with the dominant party equilibrium because it still provides a rationale for opposition forces to invest in parties and compete for votes.

In sum, meaningful competition means that the electoral arena is open and although authoritarian controls may bring competition below the threshold of "minimally free elections" that many take as a defining feature of democracy, the costs of forming an opposition party do not outweigh the expected benefits. As a result, opposition forces play the electoral game by recruiting candidates and activists, campaigning for partisan hearts and minds, and competing for votes.[12]

The primary focus of this book is dominant party authoritarian regimes (DPARs) which are a large and by some definitions the modal subset of what scholars have recently termed "competitive authoritarian," (Levitsky and Way, 2002, 2006) "electoral authoritarian" (Schedler, 2002, 2005) or "hybrid" regimes (Diamond, 2002; also see Carothers, 2002; Van de Walle, 2002).[13] In describing competitive authoritarian regimes,

[10] See Chapter 8 for an expanded discussion of the relationship between dominant party authoritarian regimes, hegemonic party systems, and predominant party systems.

[11] For a similar treatment of electoral fraud in competitive authoritarian regimes, see Levitsky and Way (2006).

[12] The criteria for meaningfulness set out above do satisfy the classic definitions of minimally free elections found in Schumpeter (1947) and Przeworski et al. (2000); however, I agree with Karl (1986) that such definitions suffer from an "electoralist" fallacy that ignores the surrounding freedoms that ensure the free operation of electoral institutions.

[13] Six of Diamond's (2002: 23) seven historical cases are DPARs. Three of Levitsky and Way's (2002: 51–52) 16 cases are DPARs, four are proto-dominant party systems where

Levitsky and Way (2002, 2006) clearly distinguish them from fully closed authoritarian regimes, and even though they recognize the impact of authoritarian controls on opposition forces, they emphasize the existence of meaningful competition. They state that,

> Although elections are held and are generally free of massive fraud, incumbents routinely abuse state resources, deny the opposition adequate media coverage, [and] harass opposition candidates and their supporters . . . [They] use bribery, co-optation, and more subtle forms of persecution, such as the use of tax authorities, compliant judiciaries, and other state agencies to 'legally' harass, persecute, or extort cooperative behavior from critics (2002: 53).

All DPARs are competitive authoritarian regimes, but not all competitive authoritarian regimes have dominant parties. To be considered dominant, incumbents must also surpass power and longevity thresholds. Regarding power, prior definitions offer widely varying criteria from a mere plurality of the vote up to 75% of legislative seats.[14] I argue that dominance means the ability to determine social choice. In presidentialist systems, this means that the incumbent controls the executive and at least an absolute majority of legislative seats.[15] In parliamentary and mixed systems, it means holding the premiership, at least a plurality of legislative seats, and the impossibility of forming a government without the dominant party.[16]

Existing analyses also disagree about the longevity threshold. The least restrictive measure stipulates a single election (Coleman, 1960: 286–293; Van de Walle and Butler, 1999), but this so dramatically widens the universe of cases that it makes the concept virtually useless. One of the most restrictive measures, on the other hand, sets the bar as high as 50 years (Cox, 1997: 238). But this criterion reduces the universe to just

the incumbent has not yet surpassed the longevity threshold, two are personalist regimes where the president's death might end dominance, and in five incumbents have not ruled through parties.

[14] Blondel's (1968) threshold is 40% of votes; Pempel (1990: 3) uses a plurality of seats; Sartori (1976: 195) uses a majority of seats, McDonald (1971: 220) uses 60% of seats; Coleman (1960: 295) uses 70% of seats, and Beck et al. (2001:170) use 75% of seats. Some of these differences derive from analysts' focus on either presidential or parliamentary systems.

[15] This falls short of the supermajority often needed to make constitutional amendments; however, in practice, the incumbent's control over the executive branch and ordinary legislation should induce enough opposition legislators to "bandwagon" (see Weiner, 2003).

[16] Following Laver and Schofield (1990), indispensability means that a party must occupy the median policy position between coalition partners that cannot form a government without it.

Mexico.[17] I argue that a useful longevity threshold should capture the notion that a dominant party system is a stable pattern of inter-party competition (i.e., a dominant party equilibrium),[18] but should not be so restrictive that it makes the category disappear. Consequently, I set the threshold at 20 years or four consecutive elections. This "one generation" requirement is one way to operationalize Duverger's vague but insightful definition that "A dominant party is that which public opinion *believes* to be dominant" (1954: 308–309).[19] Although it could be argued that a system that was dominant at anytime t was in fact dominant prior to t, to pursue this no-threshold argument, we would have to measure dominance by the mechanisms that sustain it. Treating potential explanatory variables as descriptive measures would succeed only in constructing a tautology.[20]

Clear examples of DPARs where incumbents permitted meaningful electoral competition and passed the power and longevity thresholds, even though they also employed, to varying degrees, authoritarian controls to help maintain their rule include Malaysia under UMNO/BN (1974–), Taiwan under the KMT (1987–2000), Singapore under the PAP (1981–), Mexico under the PRI (1929–1997), Gambia under the PPP (1963–1994),

[17] Other longevity thresholds vary. Przeworski et al. (2000: 27) set the bar at two elections; Sartori raises it to four in one passage (1976: 196) and three in another (1976: 199). Blondel (1968: 180–203) uses a minimum of 20 years; Cox stipulates 30 to 50 years (1997: 238); Ware (1996) argues that the dominant party should hold power "usually;" and Pempel states that a dominant party must hold power for "a substantial period of time" (1990: 4), amounting to "permanent or semi-permanent governance" (1990: 15).

[18] I agree with Arian and Barnes (1974: 592–593) that dominant party systems are *sui generis*, a unique category that is not merely a stage in transition from one type of party system to another.

[19] Despite these justifications, any longevity threshold is arbitrary and will cause classification controversies. Using the two decade or four election criteria narrowly admits Taiwan, for instance. After it lifted martial law in 1986, the KMT won in multiparty elections until 2000. It is below the threshold in years, but above in consecutive elections, having won five.

[20] If, nevertheless, the no-threshold argument were correct, then using any criterion t would artificially limit the universe of cases by dropping what I call proto-dominant party systems that failed before year t or have not yet reached year t. Fortunately, such a truncation will likely bias tests against my hypotheses (Geddes, 2003; King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994). When comparing dominant party systems to fully competitive democracies in the next section, some of the former would be incorrectly coded as the latter, making the two sets more homogenous. When examining the longevity of dominant party systems alone, variation on the dependent variable would be truncated because only cases of dominance longer than t will be included, and this selection bias would also work against my hypotheses.

and Senegal under the PS (1977–2000).[21] I also include Botswana under the BDP (1965–) that is clearly a dominant party system although analysts disagree about its regime type.[22]

Most of this book deals with the case of Mexico; however, I extend my argument to Malaysia and Taiwan in Chapter 8. There, I also show how my approach can help account for dominance in the dominant party democracies of Italy and Japan where incumbents benefited from massive resource advantages but did not employ authoritarian controls. Finally, I do not deal with regionally dominant parties such as the Solid South under the Democrats (see Key, 1964a) because the dynamics of locally weak oppositions differ substantially from the dynamics of nationally weak ones.[23]

WHY EXISTING THEORIES FAIL TO EXPLAIN SINGLE-PARTY DOMINANCE

Existing theoretical work cannot explain the dominant party equilibrium or its breakdown. Having discussed the limitations of arguments that focus on electoral fraud and repression as well as Mexico-specific arguments, I now test hypotheses derived from the well-developed literature on the number of competitive parties. Applying this existing work to dominant party systems implies that opposition parties fail because there is inadequate voter demand, electoral institutions are insufficiently permissive, or there is not enough ideological "space" for opposition parties to occupy. The predictions of these theories should hold in dominant party systems because they permit meaningful electoral competition.

[21] Zimbabwe might be considered a DPAR from 1980 to 2002. Following the 1980 Lancaster Peace Accords, a hybrid regime emerged that included regular popular elections and did not ban opposition parties. (ZAPU merged with ZANU voluntarily although under some duress.) However, Mugabe disregarded the Constitution in ways that country experts argue consolidated his rule. Thus, I exclude it from my analysis.

[22] Przeworski et al. (2000: 23) classify Botswana as a (fully closed) authoritarian regime. Freedom House scores after 1973 just barely rate it as "free" based on the combination of "free" political rights and "partly free" civil liberties for most years. Africanists more clearly identify it as a democracy (see Osei-Hwedie, 2001; Van de Walle, 2004). Classifying Botswana as a dominant party democratic regime would not affect my argument because my approach examines the impact of potential authoritarian controls empirically.

[23] One important difference is that in regional dominance, nationally competitive party organizations can transfer resources to their regionally weak counterparts to increase their viability whereas challengers to nationally dominant parties have almost no access to outside funds.

Nevertheless, dominant parties flourish and challengers fail even where these approaches predict that they should succeed. I test these arguments using data that compare dominant party systems to fully competitive democracies for selected years. I classified system type using the Przeworski and colleagues (2000) data set that distinguishes (fully competitive) democratic from (fully closed) authoritarian regimes. Since these authors do not have a category for dominant party systems, I identified them using the coding rules developed above.[24]

Demand-Side Theories: Social Cleavages, Voter Dealignment, and Economic Explanations

I first discuss the deficiencies of approaches that focus on voter demand for opposition parties, including social cleavages theory, voter dealignment theories based on retrospective evaluations of the incumbent's performance in office, and economic explanations related to the effects of socio-economic modernization and crisis conditions.

Social cleavage theory posits that parties emerge to represent the political demands of groups that crystallize around major social divisions (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Political scientists adapted this argument to account for the number of competing parties based on the number and strength of such cleavages. Thus, multiparty systems emerged in countries with several major social divisions whereas milder social cleavages produced political dualism in the United States (Charlesworth, 1948; Lipson, 1953; Hartz, 1955; Key, 1964b; Cox, 1997: 15).

If this argument makes sense for dominant party systems, then they must have less of the "raw materials" that motivate citizens to form political parties compared to multi-party systems. To examine its empirical plausibility, I compared ethno-linguistic fractionalization (ELF) as coded by Roeder (2001) – a common proxy for social cleavages – and the effective number of parties[25] in dominant party systems and fully competitive

[24] Unless otherwise noted, I include the available country-year or country-election-year data for Botswana under the BDP (1965–), Gambia under the PPP (1963–1994), Malaysia under UMNO/BN (1974–), Mexico under the PRI (1929–1997), Senegal under the PS (1977–2000), Singapore under the PAP (1981–), and Taiwan under the KMT (1987–2000). For this analysis, dominant party democratic regimes are not included in the category of fully competitive democracies. For tests that compare all dominant party systems (DPARs and DPDRs) to all fully competitive democracies, see Chapter 8.

[25] I use the standard measure of vote-weighted parties from Laakso and Taagepera (1979) where $N = \Sigma_1^x 1/v_i^2$. Data come from Przeworski et al. (2000) and the Beck et al. (2001).

democracies in 1961 and again in 1985. A simple difference of means test shows that ELF scores are statistically indistinguishable, indicating that dominant party systems have about the same amount of the raw materials for generating political parties as do fully competitive democracies. However, dominant party systems had, on average, 1.4 fewer effective parties in 1961 and 1.3 fewer in 1985. These differences were statistically significant at the .05 level.[26] In addition, among those systems that transited from dominant to nondominant status between 1961 and 1985, there was, on average, no change in ELF.

It is not surprising that dominant party systems have fewer competitive parties than do fully competitive democracies. The point is that social cleavages do not appear to be responsible for this difference and while objective social divisions may be a necessary condition for the formation and development of challengers to dominant parties, it is not a sufficient condition. The sociological approach fails because it is silent on the constraints to new party formation and development (Sartori, 1968), including but not limited to resource availability.

Another version of the voter availability thesis comes from research on partisan dealignment. When applied to dominant party systems, this approach presumes that voters are aligned with the dominant party and then asks what conditions promote sufficient dealignment to create opportunities for opposition party success. One of the main forces that promotes dealignment is negative retrospective evaluations of the incumbent's performance in office, particularly with respect to economic issues. In the United States and other established democracies, such negative evaluations typically translate into anti-incumbent voting in about equal measure (Abramson et al., 1994). But in dominant party systems, the effects are muted. The best data for testing this hypothesis come from Mexico and Taiwan where appropriate public opinion survey data were available. But contrary to the theory's empirical predictions, a majority of voters in these countries held negative retrospective evaluations of the incumbent, but still planned to vote for it. In Mexico, 76% of voters evaluated the PRI's economic performance negatively beginning more than a decade

[26] Specifically, ELF 1961 was .38 for fully competitive democracies with 2.92 effective parties and ELF 1961 was .56 for dominant party systems with 1.53 effective parties. ELF 1985 was .40 for fully competitive democracies with 2.75 effective parties and ELF 1985 was .52 for dominant party systems with 1.48 effective parties. N = 43 countries for 1961 and N = 46 for 1981. Effective number of parties data were not available for four dominant party systems in 1961 because they were not independent countries. I used the closest subsequent year, no later than 1965.

before it lost power;[27] however, during the 1990s, up to 57% of voters who were the *most* dissatisfied with the PRI's performance still planned to vote for it.[28] In the 1980s, the PRI presided over negative growth rates, record inflation, and dramatic dips in real wages. Although this performance debacle did affect voters, hardship translated into far fewer votes for the opposition than one might expect. In Taiwan, the results are just as striking. Fully 61% of voters surveyed thought that the KMT had done a poor job in dealing with China – a central partisan cleavage (Niou and Ordeshook, 1992). Nevertheless, 51% of those who held the *most* negative assessments still planned to vote for its candidate in the 1996 elections.[29]

Data and analyses from other dominant party systems echo the muted effects of negative retrospective evaluations on the incumbent's staying power. Diaw and Diouf reach a similar conclusion for Senegal, albeit without public opinion data, when they lament the "failure of the opposition to convert popular discontent into a program of action" (1998: 127). Olukoshi argues that in most African countries there is not "an effective and coherent political opposition that is seen by the generality of the populace as constituting a credible alternative to the discredited incumbents which they seek to replace" (1998: 12).

The retrospective voting thesis fails to account for single-party dominance because it treats voters' decisions as a plebiscite on the incumbent's performance alone (Key, 1966; Fiorina, 1981) without asking whether voters find the challengers attractive. Although a majority of Mexican and Taiwanese voters evaluated their incumbent's past performance

[27] Author's calculations based on data from the 1988 IMOP Gallup Poll cited in Domínguez and McCann (1996: 101). Other data suggest that voters disliked the PRI's performance earlier. The 1986 *New York Times* Poll shows that 59% of respondents thought that their household economic situation was bad or very bad, but 45% of these voters still identified with the PRI. In the same survey, a striking 89% thought that the national economy was bad or very bad.

[28] Buendía (2004: 126–128) shows that 57.2% of voters who held negative retrospective pocketbook evaluations still planned to vote for the PRI in 1991. In 1994 and 1997 these numbers remained high at 43.2% and 33.1%, respectively. Buendía also shows that sociotropic evaluations produce virtually the same findings. Magaloni (1997) generates an even higher PRI advantage in 1994 using different surveys and measurement techniques. Her data show that 49.7% of voters who assessed the PRI's performance negatively planned to vote for it (author's calculations based on 1997: 194; also see Magaloni, 2006: 202).

[29] Data come from Hsieh, Lacy, and Niou (1998: 397) and represent voters' evaluations of KMT performance on cross-strait relations with China prior to the 1996 presidential elections.

negatively, when making prospective evaluations, they overwhelmingly preferred the incumbent. Indeed, only 34% of voters in Mexico in 1994 and 13% of voters in Taiwan in 1996 thought the incumbent would perform worse than the opposition in the future.[30] In dominant party systems, negative *retrospective* evaluations of the incumbent may not automatically translate into more positive *prospective* evaluations of the challengers because, for other reasons, challenger parties may form as noncentrist niche parties that are not sufficiently attractive to dealigned voters. As a result, dealignment may not automatically produce realignment and although negative retrospective evaluations of the incumbent may be a necessary condition for opposition party success, it is clearly not sufficient. These data also show that voters truly supported the incumbent when compared to the opposition and therefore imply that challenger parties did not lose primarily due to electoral fraud.

These data go a long way toward showing that no matter what the incumbent's actual performance in office, voters did not hold it as accountable as existing theory predicts.[31] Nevertheless, Haggard and Kaufman (1995) argue that economic crisis contributes to the breakdown of authoritarian regimes. As a simple test of this argument, I examined the effects of change in election year GDP per capita in all DPARs on both the effective number of parties and the vote gap between the dominant party and the first challenger (models not shown). Consistent with Geddes (1999a: 135, 139–140), I find no support for the thesis that economic crisis in and of itself brings down DPARs.[32]

A final demand-side argument comes from modernization theory and suggests that democratization occurs not due to economic crisis but economic growth or development. Regarding growth, Przeworski and colleagues (2000) find limited evidence for what they call the "endogenous" argument that modernization within a country caused democratization

[30] Author's calculations based on Magaloni (1997: 194) and Hsieh, Lacy, and Niou (1998: 397).

[31] Magaloni's excellent dissertation (1997; also see her 2006 book) argued that a modified retrospective model of voting behavior better accounts for the PRI's protracted decline in the face of poor economic performance. In her model, older voters who experienced a longer period of good economic performance under the PRI update their vote intentions slower than younger voters.

[32] Data on the effective number of parties and GDP per capita until 1990 come from Przeworski et al. (2000). Data on GDP per capita after 1990 were coded by the author. I captured long-run, cross-case effects with a pooled OLS. An alternative test would use a time-series cross-sectional model to take account of the within-case over-time effects as well.

between 1950 and 1990.[33] Not only does their best empirical model fail in general, it fails spectacularly for dominant party systems where it incorrectly predicts the regime type of 71.4% of all DPARs as democracies compared to only 13.4% incorrect predictions for fully closed authoritarian regimes.[34] Regarding development, Boix (2003) and Boix and Stokes (2003) argue that income equality drives endogenous democratization. However, a simple pooled cross-sectional test of this argument using election-year data from Deininger and Squire (1996) shows no statistically significant effect of the GINI coefficient on the effective number of parties in DPARs.[35] Thus, even if economic crisis, growth, or development cause authoritarian breakdown in general, DPARs are outliers that appear surprisingly resilient to the democratizing effects of these variables (Haggard and Kaufman, 1995: 13; Smith, 2005: 427).

My argument for dominant party persistence and decline in fact shares many elements with the modernization theories just discussed. Both approaches recognize the underlying importance of income distribution for understanding why social actors would become politically active against the incumbent. In my approach, however, the economic role of the state is central. Where substantial portions of the economy are publicly controlled by an incumbent that politically dominates the bureaucracy, agents in the private sector have fewer resources, no matter how they are distributed, that they could use to support opposition parties. Thus, I argue in Chapter 2 that we should pay attention not only to the level of development and the distribution of income but also to the public-private balance of economic power. Public sector power allowed incumbent dominant parties to withstand economic crises and to "manage the political pressures that stem from economic success" (Haggard and Kaufman, 1995: 13).

Institutional Approaches: Electoral Rules and Barriers to Entry

Institutional theories argue that electoral rules regulate the number of parties. In a generalization of Duverger's Law (Duverger, 1954: 113),

[33] Boix and Stokes (2003) find more evidence for the endogenous argument with an expanded data set that begins in 1800; however, since Mexico is the only country where dominance began before 1950, these findings are less relevant for my purposes.

[34] Author's calculations from Przeworski et al., 2000: 59–76, 84–86. Note that Przeworski et al.'s model predicts that Singapore should have been a democracy with 98% probability, Mexico and Taiwan should have been democracies with 89% probability, Malaysia with 69% probability, and Botswana with 58% probability (2000: 84–85).

[35] As above, a time-series cross-sectional model may be a more appropriate test.

Cox (1997) theorizes that the maximum number of competitors in a given district is M+1 where M is district magnitude.

This account only represents a promising avenue for explaining single-party dominance if district magnitude is lower in these systems than in fully competitive ones. To probe the theory's applicability, I compared the mean district magnitude for lower house elections (MDMH) and the effective number of parties across all fully competitive democracies and dominant party systems between 1975 and 1990 using data from Beck and colleagues (2001).[36] The difference in MDMH across system type was statistically indistinguishable, but dominant party systems had, on average, 1.65 fewer effective parties, and this difference was statistically significant at the .001 level. The same difference in the effective number of parties appeared between the 18 fully competitive democracies and five dominant party systems that used the most restrictive electoral formulas where $M = 1$ (i.e., single-member districts).

Duverger's Law actually provides a correct prediction, on average, for both fully competitive democracies and dominant party systems because it only theorizes an upper bound of $M + 1$ and the mean effective number of parties falls well below this mark. But the theory provides no leverage, nor does it claim to, in understanding why the effective number of parties falls below $M + 1$. Thus, it does not help explain the gap in the effective number of parties between dominant and fully competitive systems or in explaining single-party dominance itself.

A second institutional argument is that the electoral formula not only affects the number of parties but also the pattern of inter-party competition (Cox, 1990). Systems with plurality winner single-member districts should produce two catchall parties that are centrist with respect to voters' preferences whereas those that use multi-member districts create multipartism and often feature what Sartori (1976: 132–40) termed "polarized pluralism" with center-fleeing niche parties. However, in dominant party systems, polarization existed both in systems that used pure

[36] Scholars debate about the best way to calculate district magnitude in mixed systems. Beck at al. (2001) use a weighted average. For instance, Mexico after 1987 had 300 plurality winner single-member districts and five multi-member districts that each elect 40 seats using proportional representation, yielding $M = 16.6$. If instead we follow Cox (1997) and use the median district magnitude, then $M = 1$ for Mexico. Finally, if we follow Taagapera and Shugart (1991) and use the size of the legislature over the total number of districts, $M = 1.64$ for Mexico. Thus, using MDMH for the cross-national test in the main text could bias the result; however, using the same formula to calculate magnitude across dominant party and fully competitive democratic systems diminishes the likelihood that it would.

single-member districts (e.g., Mexico before 1965, Malaysia) and in systems that used mixed systems (e.g., Mexico after 1965) or multi-member districts (e.g., Taiwan).

A final and less well-developed argument in the institutionalist tradition highlights the effects of thresholds of representation. Thresholds may weed out very small parties that cannot win the minimum vote share needed to gain a single seat in the legislature. But empirically it turns out that, using data from Beck and colleagues (2001), the mean threshold in dominant party systems is 0.2% (with 1.6 effective parties), while the mean threshold in fully competitive democracies is actually higher at 1.7% (with 3.2 effective parties). All differences are statistically significant at the .001 level. Overall then, dominant party systems are in fact more institutionally permissive than their fully democratic counterparts with substantially more competitive parties.

Institutional theories fail because they presume a neutral market for votes where competition is completely fair. As Cox (1997: 26) notes, in institutional theories, "No party ever fails to get voters because it is too poor to advertise its position; no would-be party ever fails to materialize because it does not have the organizational substrate (e.g. labor unions, churches) needed to launch a mass party. In an expanded view, of course, the creation of parties and the advertisement of their positions would be key points at which the reduction of the number of political players occurs." I take up Cox's call for an expanded approach by systematically theorizing the role of resource asymmetries in party success or failure.

Supply-Side Approaches: Is it Rational to Form Opposition Parties?

Rational choice models of party competition focus on the supply side and ask when it is rational to form a new party, given the constraints imposed by institutions and voter demand. But in their current form, neither the models that presume a neutral market for votes where competition is completely fair nor those that presume a non-neutral market that is biased in favor of one party can account for the dominant party equilibrium.

Existing neutral models with entry predict at least two competitive parties in equilibrium. A first class of neutral model assumes that the parties announce their policy positions simultaneously. Feddersen, Sened, and Wright (1990) provide a model where a party's expected utility of competing is given by the probability of winning times the benefit of winning minus the cost of competing, or $Eu = pb - c$. A party only enters

competition if its expected utility is nonnegative (i.e., if $pb \geq c$). Since the model uses deterministic spatial voting and no party has a nonspatial advantage, no party can win if it locates away from the median voter. Therefore, if a party enters, it enters at the median and wins with probability $p = 1/n$, where n is the number of parties. As Cox (1997: Ch. 8) points out, this also gives the equilibrium number of parties as $n = b/c$. Thus, single-party dominance could only be sustained if benefits were equal to costs (i.e., if $b/c = 1$). But if benefits equal costs, it is not clear why any party would enter, including the putative dominant party. Osborne and Slivinski's (1996: 71) citizen-candidate model generates an even more restrictive outcome where dominance can only result when $b \geq 2c$ and the single entrant locates at the median.

It might be more realistic to assume a sequential entry model where, if opposition parties form, they announce positions after the dominant party. These models confer a sort of incumbency advantage because they allow established parties to anticipate the position of new entrants and move to cut-off their market share. Work by Prescott and Visscher (1977), Palfrey (1984), Greenberg and Shepsle (1987), and Shvetsova (1995) examine different numbers of exogenous parties and electoral arrangements. Yet none of these models can account for single-party dominance. First, these models only work if the number of eventual entrants is known *ex ante* so that the first-mover can use backward induction to determine its best strategy. But it is not clear, and none of these models specify, why the eventual number of entrants would be known. The dominant party could base its prediction on the upper bound supplied by the electoral system, but if the eventual number of parties falls below the upper bound – the incumbent party's goal – then the conjecture could yield disastrous results! Second, and more consequentially, existing sequential models that assume a neutral entry market yield at least two parties in equilibrium. For instance, in Prescott and Visscher's (1977) model, if a single established (dominant) party expects one other party to enter competition, it moves off the median, randomly choosing to move to the left or right, and produces two equally sized parties in equilibrium.

Empirically, dominant parties exist in multiparty systems with at least two challengers. Nevertheless, existing models that take the number of parties as fixed still cannot account for the dominant party equilibrium. If we assume deterministic spatial voting and unidimensional competition with complete party mobility where parties vie for a single seat, then Cox (1990: 930) shows that any equilibrium must be dispersed and symmetric; however, the interior party virtually always loses and the peripheral parties

may tie.[37] If we maintain unidimensional competition and make the somewhat more realistic assumption of probabilistic voting, then de Palma et al. (1990) and Adams (1999) show that the equilibrium is convergent at the median and all parties win with the same probability. Clearly, neither type of neutral model can account for the dominant party equilibrium.

The models reviewed above assume that competition occurs over a single dimension such as left versus right. As I argue below, dominant party authoritarian regimes typically feature two-dimensional competition. But adding dimensions only gives opposition parties more opportunities to enter and deepens the puzzle of single-party dominance. Existing multidimensional models take the number of entrants as given and begin with a minimum of two; however, for any number of parties, these models predict that any competitor can win when best strategy policy locations are adopted. Neutral models with deterministic voting and two-party competition predict that the parties locate inside the "uncovered set" (McKelvey, 1986) that is typically positioned at the geometric center of voter ideal points (Hinich and Munger, 1997: 61, fn 3; Cox, 1987: 420). Neutral models with probabilistic voting and multiple parties predict convergence to the centrist minimum-sum point (Lin et al., 1999).[38] Without any systematic nonspatial advantages, these models imply that challengers have the same chance of winning as the incumbent. As a result, single-party dominance would not occur.

Thus, if the electoral market were neutral, then opposition parties could simply form and compete with the dominant party as viable catchall competitors. I argue that they instead form as niche parties that adopt less efficient policy locations precisely because the market for votes is non-neutral. But existing non-neutral models err in the opposite direction and cannot understand why challengers would ever enter competition. As described above, when one party (call it the incumbent) has an identifiable and long-term advantage, all rational careerists should join it, thus transforming dominant party systems into one-party regimes without

[37] The interior party typically loses because, despite the divergent equilibrium, the peripheral parties are sufficiently centrist to squeeze the interior party's vote share. Note that the interior party can tie but cannot win for certain strangely shaped trimodal voter preference distributions. One can also imagine dispersed bimodal distributions that permit one of the peripheral parties to win while the other parties lose; however, these distributions take such an odd shape that it is difficult to believe that they exist empirically.

[38] The convergent result obtains when the nonpolicy component is relatively large (but see Adams, 1999). Otherwise, no equilibrium exists. Nonconvergent equilibria are possible as well; however, Lin (2007) argues that the minimum-sum point is the focal equilibrium.

challengers. As an alternative, I argue that we can account for the existence but failure of opposition parties by modifying non-neutral models to include policy goals and partisan expression. These expressive benefits are powerful enough to encourage citizens to join opposition parties in the attempt to transform dominant party systems into fully competitive democracies.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

This book combines formal modeling, quantitative analysis, and qualitative fieldwork to build an argument about single-party dominance in general and the specific dynamics of its persistence and decline in Mexico. I craft new formal models to generate testable hypotheses that discipline and guide the study, although I also make the presentation accessible for readers unfamiliar with such models. I test these hypotheses using a four-pronged strategy. First, I examine the historical development of party politics in Mexico over time. Second, I analyze the implications of my hypotheses at a lower level of analysis by examining data from 1,470 individual responses to the Mexico Party Personnel Surveys that I conducted with a team of researchers at party conventions and national council meetings in 1999.[39] Third, to draw out the specific meaning of the quantitative findings and provide rich stories about grassroots party building, I use local case studies and over 100 semi-structured interviews with candidates and activists at the national, state, and municipal levels. Finally, to extend the analysis beyond Mexico, I present detailed case studies of two other dominant party authoritarian regimes (Malaysia and Taiwan) and in an extension I show how my approach can help understand partisan dynamics in two dominant party democratic regimes (Italy and Japan). I also make briefer references to a host of other dominant party systems throughout the book. By testing the implications of my theory on multiple cases and at multiple levels of analysis, I conduct true out-of-sample tests to overcome the traditional problems associated with single-country studies.

In the following chapter, I develop a general theory of single-party dominance and opposition party development. I argue that incumbent dominant parties can sustain their rule when they create a large public

[39] All surveys were funded by the National Science Foundation (SES #9819213) with in-kind contributions from *Reforma* newspaper for the first four. I thank Alejandro Moreno, Jogin Abreu, and Rossana Fuentes-Berain without whom these surveys could not have been accomplished. Olivares-Plata Consultores conducted the last two surveys.

sector and politicize the public bureaucracy. This allows them monopolistic control over public resources that they can divert for partisan purposes. I develop a new formal model of party competition that shows how these resource advantages affect opposition parties by lowering their probability of victory and forcing them to form at the margins, far to the left or the right of the status quo policies offered by the incumbent where they attract minority electoral constituencies rather than closer to the center where they would appeal more broadly. I also show how authoritarian controls, including repression and the threat of electoral fraud, further reduce opposition party size and increase their extremism.

Chapter 3 introduces the case of Mexico and examines the sources of opposition party undercompetitiveness from the initiation of single-party dominance in 1929 until the 1990s. I show how my theory accounts for historical trends and processes with a substantial degree of precision and why existing theories that presume a neutral or fair market for votes fail. Specifically, I show how the PRI's advantages made left parties fail during three specific time periods when the PRI's move to the right theoretically opened enough "space" for the left to attract more support and win, and how these advantages made right parties fail during two periods when the PRI moved to the left.

Chapters 4 and 5 move from treating parties as unitary actors to examining the dynamics of political recruitment into the opposition. In Chapter 4, I develop a new formal model of individual-level party affiliation for candidates and activists – a group that I argue we should treat together as party elites – that incorporates key elements of the uneven partisan playing field. I take care to explain the model for less technically inclined readers. The model generates very specific hypotheses about the internal composition of opposition parties as the dominant party's advantages change. It also shows how opposition parties can attract candidates and activists even in the absence of splits inside the dominant party. Chapter 5 then uses the Mexico Party Personnel Surveys and in-depth interviews to test the behavioral predictions derived from the model. It also gives a portrait of political recruitment and party-building efforts over time, particularly highlighting the generational differences between comparatively extremist early joiners that rise to leadership positions and more moderate later joiners.

Chapter 6 examines the implications of my theory for opposition party organizations and argues that their initial design as niche parties by early joiners makes them particularly inadaptable to changing conditions. Organizational rigidities hampered expansion so much that even

as the PRI's resources waned in the 1980s and early 1990s and it ceded increasing opportunities for the challengers to expand by attracting more centrist constituencies, the opposition parties remained too out of step with the average voter to win. I demonstrate the strikingly similar organizational profiles and modes of recruitment in the PAN and PRD and show that both were constrained to the core. This chapter draws on the Mexico Party Personnel Surveys, party documents, membership data, and in-depth studies of party building efforts in boroughs of Mexico City.

Chapter 7 shows how the PRI's long rule was finally brought to an end in the 2000 elections. First, I show that resource asymmetries between the PRI and challengers leveled enough to create a fair electoral market for votes. Second, I show how my theory helps explain the failure of the opposition alliance and how intra-party coordination problems constrained presidential candidates from making the most efficient appeals. I then show how Vicente Fox solved the coordination problem by making a successful end-run around the PAN using independent resources whereas Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was limited to the PRD's party resources and thus constrained by its narrower appeals. As a result, Fox, not Cárdenas, brought 71 years of PRI rule to an end.

Chapter 8 extends the argument to other dominant party systems. I show that my focus on hyper-incumbency advantages helps understand the dynamics of dominant party longevity and failure in two DPARs (Malaysia and Taiwan). I also show that, more surprisingly, the theory travels well to dominant party democratic regimes (DPDRs) where incumbents did not supplement resource advantages with authoritarian controls (Japan and Italy). In this chapter, I also show how alternative electoral institutions and government formats can affect dominant party persistence as the incumbent's advantages decline.

The conclusion highlights the theoretical and empirical implications of the argument for the future of partisan politics in Mexico, the effects of resource disadvantages on the development of externally mobilized parties that emanate from society, and the study of regime stability and the transition to fully competitive democracy in competitive authoritarian regimes.