The Personalistic Movement-Party and the Dangers of Duality

Dissertation

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By

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Abstract

This dissertation is a comparative study of personalistic movement-parties. Movement-parties are a particular type of parties that organizationally and ideologically straddle the line between political parties and social movements. While existing works have earlier identified movement-parties of the Green and Post-Industrial Extreme Right types, this dissertation identifies a third type of this party family, the Personalistic Movement-Party. Unlike other members of this party genus, personalistic movement-parties have in the Latin American context proven highly durable, and have remained in semi-institutionalized states for prolonged periods, despite attempts at party change.

The failure of this party type to institutionalize is posited to be a product of a complementary logic: 1) The dominance of a leader who has contempt for the constraints of more traditional parties, and 2) a fundamentally different conception of the role of the political party and party institutionalization by a significant sector of the party elite, where a great divide exists on even the desirability and value of becoming a more traditional political organization.

After identifying this construct and its significance, a range of theoretical propositions on party change are examined in the empirical chapters of the dissertation. Through the method of elite interviewing with 40 members of the PJ/FpV in Argentina, and 80 members of the PRD in Mexico, the characteristics and logics of the personalistic movement-party are examined in depth. The study arrives at the conclusion that personalistic movement-parties are not unitary actors, but remain in a profound and permanent tension between party builders and movement advocates with sharply diverging readings of the perceived political reality, and following diverging logics.
To my parents

To Patricia
Acknowledgements

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of long work. I dedicate this dissertation to them.
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FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: Political Science
Minor Field: Latin American History
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INTRODUCTION

In its simplest form, this dissertation can be read as an argument for the claim that party type matters. It argues that the particular organizational and ideological makeup of parties have a great impact on not only their own internal stability and cohesion, but potentially also for anchoring the vote, and for the stability of the institutions of liberal democracy as a whole. It is an in-depth case comparison of the Argentine Partido Justicialista (Justicialist Party, PJ) and the Mexican Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Party of the Democratic Revolution, PRD), guided by the historical case of the French “Gaullist Party,” which I categorize as belonging to a separate species of parties, the personalistic movement-party.

Movement-parties, as their name implies, are hybrids. They are political formations that display the behavior and organization both of social movements, on the one hand, and traditional political parties, on the other. Existing typologies consider this party type a separate “genus” of political parties (Gunther and Diamond 2003), and two types have so far been identified: Left-Libertarian parties mostly of the “Green” type (Kitschelt, 1988), and Post-Industrial Extreme Right parties (Ignazi, 1996). I argue a third type exists that while it displays features of these and other party types, warrants a separate designation as a Personalistic Movement-Party. It has five major characteristics: 1) Mass mobilizational; 2) Uninstitutionalized and personalistic top leadership; 3) Unclear boundaries between the party and affiliated organizations; 4) Semi-loyal anti-institutional orientation; and 5) No dominant and/or clear ideological orientation.

Founded mainly on the basis of wide yet often heterogeneous movements, political formations that seek to bridge the divide between movement and party have been lauded by observers for their potential to bring in previously underrepresented and marginalized groups in the democratic process (Van Cott 2005, Rice and Van Cott 2006). Yet while parties such as the PJ and the PRD have brought about and defended democracy, and have often performed much more admirably than more institutionalized parties, their particular setups in the final instance represent a threat to the stability of democratic institutions, as they do not fully perform a classic function of political parties – to serve as an ideological anchor both on the mass level and party

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1 Given its multiple names over the past half-century, I will here for simplicity’s sake use this label to describe the party founded by Charles de Gaulle.
level – and are in addition susceptible to us-vs.-them conceptualizations and all-or-nothing approaches to politics that breeds both internal and external stability. Their emphasis on mass mobilization over institutional reform prevents them from being fully effective players in the legislative arena. I find that the particular setups of this non-institutionalized party type make them prone to such manifestations, and put party type at the head of a causal explanation: The ideological and organizational setups of parties do matter.

**The remarkable permanency of under-institutionalization**

While political parties, as other organizations, are expected in time to gradually institutionalize their organization, personalistic-movement parties are distinct in that they do not automatically engage in the forging of a clear ideological consensus, and the building of a more routinized party organization. In doing so, they defy the common wisdom, which asserts that unless they institutionalize, they will fade away. According to Kitschelt (2006), the logic of electoral competition will eventually make them transform, or face electoral extinction.

However, as will be explored in this dissertation, it is not clear that parties that do not do so will necessarily face extinction. Personalistic movement-parties have, remarkably, in several cases survived for decades, yet have failed to institutionalize their party-movements, despite what will be identified as notable attempts at party change.

The initial task of this dissertation is to conceptualize a party type that has been absorbed under a variety of labels, but whose particular characteristics I argue warrant a separate category, as their particular behavior – and failure to institutionalize – does not make sense unless we approach these organizations as belonging to a separate and distinct party family, namely personalistic movement-parties. This theoretical construct will be developed in the first part of this dissertation.

Then, I will theorize on how personalistic movement-parties, a non-institutionalized party type, may or may not evolve into a more institutionalized party formation. The failure of these parties to institutionalize is posited as a product of a complementary logic: 1) The dominance of a leader who has contempt for the constraints of more traditional parties, and 2) a fundamentally different conception of the role of the political party and party institutionalization by a significant sector of the party elite, where a great divide exists on even the desirability and value of becoming a more traditional political organization.

Yet exactly when will party elites change from advocating the logic of the movement and loyalty to a personalistic leader, toward the building of an institutionalized and autonomous party organization? While party change is clearly driven by a confluence of factors, this dissertation
will further explore the concept of party change, by focusing on political elites as the main agent of change. It asks: When will political elites invest in institutionalized party structures unconditionally loyal to liberal democratic institutions, and when will they resort to movement-party appeals? The investigation starts out with no presuppositions regarding what are the main factors behind this change, but rather presents a series of a priori theoretical propositions, presented in Chapter 1, which will be tested against empirical data in a thorough analysis of crucial cases of existing personalistic movement-parties, and their political elites. Through an examination of two major existing political parties, and one historic case, this comparative inquiry seeks to identify which propositions on party change fit the best with the cases, and under what scope conditions these prepositions apply (Lijphart 1971, George and Bennett 2005, 74-76), in order to explain when personalistic movement-parties are more likely to become traditional parties, and when they are more likely to remain advocating the movement logic. Finally, the dissertation also seeks to serve a heuristic purpose (Eckstein 1975) by exploring causal mechanisms and causal paths on party change that may not have been previously identified in the literature. It is for this purpose the process-tracing case-oriented approach is eminently suited.

**The comparative case study and process tracing**

In order to answer the question on what makes movement-parties change, I will engage in process tracing in a structured comparison of a limited set of cases. The goal of the case study is to elicit rich, detailed material that can be used in analysis to answer the research question at hand. The case study allows the investigator to engage in “detailed examination of an aspect of an historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events” (George and Bennett 2005, 5). The approach therefore provides very high conceptual validity. The small number of cases allows the researcher to become very familiar with the phenomenon under investigation, and the case study “engenders an extensive dialogue between the investigator’s ideas and the data” (Ragin 1987, 49).

Scientific research aims at making causal inferences (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 7), and the case study approach does attempt to approximate experimental rigor in that it identifies similar phenomena of interest, and engages in a rigorous comparison of the theoretically important similarities and differences of these cases (Ragin 1987, 31). Yet the main purpose of qualitative research is not principally to study the relationship between variables; its main value lies precisely in its ability to address causal complexity and accommodate for a variety of explanations and causal complexity, where the familiarity with the cases allows the researcher to tease out what are likely to be variegated and conjunctural causes.
The process-tracing method, principally through elite interviews, archival research, and historical study, attempts “to identity the intervening causal process –the causal chain and causal mechanism –between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable” (George and Bennett 2005, 206). Through tracing process, the investigator can narrow the list of possible causes, and carefully address the links between theoretical propositions and observed outcomes. An excessive and narrow focus on hypothesized relationships may prevent the researcher from discovering possibly relevant underlying causal changes, and from discovering new research questions and producing new hypotheses. In this study, I will therefore as well seek to uncover what, if any, previously unknown opportunities or hindrances may have affected party development over time.

I find the comparative method and the case study to be the most suitable to address the research question at hand, as they allow for modest empirical generalizations in a defined category of cases, and are, in the final instance, highly sensitive of the complexity and historical specificity that exist in the real world. To understand the internal workings of parties, I believe no substitute exists for intensive interviewing, that is, semi-structured monologues with party operatives and officials. I am interested in the attitudes of elites, and use elite interviewing as my method to elicit primary data that speak directly to the research question.

The method of elite interviewing

I chose elite interviews as my main research method as this method is particularly suited to address the research question of elites’ motivations for party building. Elite interviewing is a tried and tested method, and is crucial for understanding causal complexity and uncovering unknowns (Tansey 2007). Indeed, for this project this strategy is particularly relevant as no other direct way exists to elicit this information rather than talking with the very actors who participate in the political process.

Through elite interviewing, insights can be gained in the internal process and workings of the political parties under examination, as well as on the attitudes of the individual interviewees toward both traditional and movement-party setups. Elite interviews are particularly useful to establish what a set of people think, and to help reconstruct recent events. They provide crucial information, and can shed light on the process to uncover factors that are not always clear from the outcome.

I am interested in the attitudes of the elites regarding the lines of conflict of the organizational and programmatic dimensions of their parties, and regard elites to be the ones deciding on their organization and ideological orientation. For this purpose, I designed semi-
structured and open-ended questionnaire templates for both process- and attitude-mapping purposes. Through the interviews, I sought to obtain knowledge of the internal organization of the parties, and also to map the attitudes of party elites such as legislators and party operatives toward existing institutional setups. Due to the theory-generative nature of this project, I believe this strategy was particularly well suited to address the research puzzle.

A note on The Ohio State University’s Institutional Review Board is here in order. I was preparing for my first research trip to Argentina at a time when the IRB board at OSU was rather stringent in its interpretation of the rules governing research, including at first requesting preapproval of every interview question. As the very point of the research enterprise is to uncover new information, which may lead to new questions as older ones are answered, this requirement, met with considerable protest, was eventually dropped. Yet in order to expedite an already delayed request for approval, I settled on anonymity for all interviewees. While some of my subjects would likely have asked for anonymity in the first place, blanket confidentiality for all sources nonetheless represents a trade-off. As no officials can be quoted in this project, it clearly removes an element of accountability from the researcher, although it should be noted that every interviewee, with the single exception of one functionary in the Kirchner administration, allowed the conversation to be recorded, and around 80 percent of the interviews were moreover transcribed in their entirety. This original source material is retained by the investigator. On a more personal note, I will admit it was also rather frustrating to achieve access to the key political elites of the two parties under investigation, including the highest ranks of the PJ and the Kirchner administration, and virtually the entire party elite of the PRD in Mexico, yet not being able to identify any of them.

Yet confidentiality also offers an important upside, which I as well took note of during several of the interviews. Given that virtually all of the interviewees are highly active participants in national politics, and given the sensitive nature of some of the topics discussed, offering confidentiality likely allowed them to speak more freely. As it was explicitly clear that they would not be named – several interviewees as well asked during the interview for confirmation of this – I believe this in the end increased both the reliability and the quality of the data. The fact that the interviewees moreover knew they could not score any political capital by political attacks at internal opponents, I believe further ensured that the data they furnished was reliable, and the opinions expressed genuine.
Table 1.1: Distribution of formal recorded interviews, Argentina and Mexico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Category</th>
<th>Interviews in Argentina</th>
<th>Interviews in Mexico</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members of Chamber of Deputies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Senate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionaries of the Argentine government</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of Mexico City government</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Legislators (Buenos Aires, Mexico City)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico: PRD National Executive Committee</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other members of national party elite</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of union leadership</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State level: PJ porteño and PRD-DF</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico: Legitimate Government</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico: FAP and CND</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To select interviewees, I used a combination of reputational and positional data, as the respondents were chosen not only by virtue of their political positions and their known involvement in the process of interest, but also by their reputation among fellow peers who identified them as key actors within the party. To hold an official high position in the party and to have knowledge of and influence on the party’s workings can, to be sure, be two very different things.

In both countries, around half of the interviewees were approached through snowballing, while the other half came through “cold calls” or other non-referred approaches. While snowballing is a chain-referral technique that is skewed toward obtaining new contacts with the same characteristics, this was considered an advantage, as I was indeed interested in looking at what common traits and patterns in attitudes possibly went together among the various sectors of the two parties. Yet I also engaged in purposive sampling, where I explicitly set out to gain access to certain actors that I knew from their background to represent certain groups. In Mexico, I pursued interviews with members of all the relevant national corrientes, or internal party groups, in the PRD. With the exception of one corriente (UNYR), I further interviewed the national leadership of all. In Argentina, it was particularly important to obtain interviews with PJ members.

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2 Also includes some interviewees who are no longer member of the PJ but form part of the FpV.
3 Also includes some interviewees who are no longer members of the PRD.
4 They included one national secretary, four undersecretaries, and four prominent functionaries below secretary rank.
5 In the Argentine case, people based on reputation (or own declaration) to have a significant and recurring impact on the party. In the Mexican case, this included the official leaders of all the corrientes, with the exception of UNYR. This category also includes all the principal candidates to the PRD presidency in 2008, and one former national presidential candidate. Despite intensive efforts – and I emphasize intensive here – I only achieved a handshake and a few exchanges of words with the other former presidential candidate of the PRD.
and peronists allied with President Néstor Kirchner, but also those opposed to his government and his part of the PJ. Here I will note that it proved a particularly challenging task to achieve interviews with the latter group, not so much for their relative smaller size in the party, but principally for their penchant for cancelling interviews. In the end, however, I believe both groups were represented well. Similarly, in Mexico I targeted groups both in favor of the continued dominance of Andrés Manuel López Obrador in the party, and those desirous of a party more autonomous from its former presidential candidate.

The elite interviews were open ended and semi structured. This meant that while I had a set of standards questions, I also varied them depending on the person interviewed. This was a direct function of whether earlier questions had been answered, and whether new issues turned up.

While this study focuses on party elites, I also made efforts not to lose track of the “perspective on the ground.” In Mexico, I was lucky to experience the intense party activity surrounding the March 2008 internal election, in which I participated as an invitado internacional in Mexico City to observe the process first hand, and I also attended three mass rallies of former presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador. I also attended meetings of the PRD’s national council and conferences of the corrientes NI, ADN, and the Movimiento, as well as several other arrangements surrounding the internal election. In Argentina, while the national branch of the PJ was “intervened” by federal authorities, I was able to follow the very exciting election to Chief of Government for the city of Buenos Aires in 2007 up close, through attending several mass meetings and campaign rallies for FpV candidate Daniel Filmus.

**Measuring change**

This dissertation further asks what factors make party leaders want to institutionalize their party, and what make them want to maintain the movement logic. It aims at uncovering any common factors that facilitate movement between party genera, that is, from a non-institutionalized state toward a more institutionalized party formation, as well as locating factors that facilitate the upkeep of the movement logic. Party change in essence thus refers to the dynamics and prospects of institutionalization of movement-parties, which I conceive of as a stage prior to party institutionalization. This does not mean party institutionalization is regarded a linear and irreversible process. On the contrary, I will detail how the PJ and the PRD have experienced several relatively dramatic swings toward becoming more institutionalized parties, as well as equally notable setbacks. Guided by existing typologies and my new conceptualization of
the personalistic movement-party, the work offers contingent generalization on party change within the larger group of movement-parties as a whole.

While the empirical chapters will detail the progress and reversals within the PJ and PRD, party change principally refers to changes the party makes, by its own volition, to its organizational and ideological setup. It means the parties will be valued not just as means to an end or as subordinate to a larger movement, but as autonomous organizations in their own right. In terms of indicators, externally, it entails change away from insurrectional strategies and/or mobilization, toward placing primacy on participation in the legislative arena. Internally, it means the establishment of internal organs or respect for existing party institutional setups, and creating accepted internal mechanisms for solving differences such as on party program, electoral strategies, and candidacies. It also means that the party leader has not only de jure but also de facto powers, where the decisions of the official leadership are not overruled by party strongmen. Finally, movement toward institutionalization also means the establishment of a common ideological framework. As the empirical chapters will detail, there has been considerable dynamics in all these aspects in the cases under study.

**Case selection: Personalistic movement-parties in Latin America**

Given the continent’s history of *movimentismo*, (Alberti, Castiglioni and Munini 1985, Rock 1987b, Alberti 1996) or an emphasis on political movements rather than parties, I find the concept of the movement-party eminently suitable to the Latin American contest. In particular, while movement-parties are generally considered transitional or rather short-term phenomena, in Latin America the movement-party logic has proved remarkably resilient.

The brunt of the empirical work consists of an analysis of the Argentine PJ and the Mexican PRD, through a theoretically oriented historical narrative of the two parties, and through an analysis of current material on the two parties gathered through extensive fieldwork in 2007-2008. Given their differences with the existing species of movement-parties, I argue that these two parties represent a new subgroup that I have designated the personalistic movement-party. This conceptualization builds on the historic case of the French Gaullist Party, which eventually shed the movement emphasis and became an institutionalized party of the “catch-all” type.

Historically, both the PJ and the PRD have experienced what I identify as swings toward more institutionalized party forms. The timing of this study of their current organization was moreover particularly fortuitous as both parties were at the time of writing undergoing a ferocious struggle that dealt precisely with the question of whether to prioritize their movement focus or
not. The dissertation will examine these very recent events, as well as to track and analyze earlier changes identified in the literature.

The case of gaulism will as well be introduced as a third empirical case. General Charles de Gaulle was aggressively anti-institutional, and founded a highly personalized and non-institutionalized movement-party. Yet upon the exit of the original founder from the French political scene, the Gaullist Party eventually changed from a loosely organized social movement claiming to be beyond left and right, toward becoming the dominant party formation of the French right. As such, it represents a clear case of personalistic movement-party transformation.

A recent review of the extant party literature notes,

If we are to achieve a more encompassing comparative study of parties, then gaps between the American and Western European literatures must be bridged and parties in other parts of the world (re)incorporated into the literature.6

This dissertation aims to make a modest contribution toward amending that gap, as it identifies and conceptualizes a party type that is particularly relevant in Latin America, but has its origin in Europe. While I develop the term to fit with the Latin American context, I was early unconvinced by earlier explanations of movimientismo that regarded the party type principally a manifestation of political culture in a given region. While this is not a study of party origins, the Argentine, Mexican, and French cases indicate equifinality, or that a range of multiple pathways may lead to the same phenomenon, despite highly diverging environments and historical trajectories. While I tentatively limit my scope to the Latin American context, the study strongly suggests that the model of the personalistic movement-party will be applicable to a broader range of contexts as well.

The relevance of the study

Our empirical and theoretical knowledge of movement-parties remains greatly underdeveloped (Kitschelt 2006). This is partially a result of a disproportionate focus on political parties in the more economically developed regions of the world. Despite substantial contributions in recent years, the majority of works on political parties still addresses parties found in the industrialized democracies of the West. This dissertation aims at making both an empirical and theoretical contribution to the study of a phenomenon that I argue has great relevance for the stability of liberal democracy. It will both provide substantial information on the inner dynamics of two of Latin America’s most important political parties, and explore new ground on what makes these parties change.

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6 Wolinetz (2007, 582).
I develop the construct of the personalistic movement-party in order to better understand the dynamics of these parties, whose internal instability and external mobilizational and often anti-institutional emphasis cannot be explained by using existing party categories.

We need to understand the internal dynamics of movement-parties because their particular setup can be a source of significant instability, as the party type does not adequately perform traditional party functions such as grounding its vote in ideological terms, where loyalty – including that of a significant part of its political elite – is principally to a personalistic leader and a larger “cause” rather than to concrete programmatic objectives amenable to compromise and negotiation. When a party seriously questions the feasibility of reform, it also abandons the function of channeling political conflict to the legislative arena.

Compared with movement formations, traditional political parties are subject to other institutional constrictions, and acknowledge their role as part of a larger system where other parties exist and are accepted as legitimate actors. Within movement-parties, however, a significant section of its elite may not necessarily share this conception, as will be explored in detail in the following chapters.

When little agreement exists on ideology, the particular setups of movement-parties lend themselves well to friend-enemy dichotomies, which may be manifested in both dimensions – internally, against the “enemies” within one’s own movement, and against external “threats.” As traditional parties are regarded as divisive, the movement instead claims to represent the nation as a whole. Yet friend-enemy logics of articulation have the potential to lead to a contingent rather than absolute acceptance of liberal democracy and the rules of the game, as opposition to the movement can be construed as opposition to the “nation” or “the people” itself, and must be fought by whatever means necessary.

In Latin America, in a context of generally weaker and less consolidated political institutions, the matter takes on a particular importance. When a major political party advocates complete institutional transformation and dismisses the value of gradual reform and negotiation, it is in the final instance making its acceptance of liberal democracy itself contingent rather than absolute.

Research, in the final instance, I believe should address important real-world problems. While personalistic movement-parties have at times greatly reinforced political democracy, their characteristics make them less ideal actors than they could have been. The theoretical focus of this study thus aims principally at a mid-level explanation for a distinct party type. While this contingency and specificity thus limits its scope, it is hoped a more nuanced theory will in the end prove all the more relevant to the subject matter, namely the inquiry into how elites may or may
not engage in the required ideological and organizational labor in order to transform personalistic movement-parties into more institutionalized party formations.

**Plan of the dissertation**

Chapter 1 introduces the party species of the personalistic movement-party and develops its theoretical significance. It further explains how the particular internal traits of this party type can be used to explain why these parties remain in non-institutional states for considerable time. It also presents a set of common theoretical propositions regarding party change to be tested in the empirical chapters.

Chapter 2 presents the French Gaullist Party as an historic case of a personalistic movement-party that eventually did become an institutionalized political party of the political right.

Chapter 3 is an historic yet theoretically oriented narrative of the Argentine PJ. It builds on previous studies to identity two major moments of party change, and also in particular draws attention to what is postulated as the intrinsic weakness of the party type, as witnessed by the internal party turmoil of the late 1990s, which continued in full force after the dramatic events of 2001.

Chapter 4 is based primarily on research carried out in a short but intensive period in the first months of 2007. It details the internal dynamics and existing divisions within the PJ, and analyzes the party’s national collapse and continued internal fault lines. While research was finished before then-President Néstor Kirchner declared his intentions to assume as PJ party president, the chapter also traces this development as part of a larger trajectory, and regards it a third attempt at party change.

Chapter 5 presents the PRD as a personalistic movement-party, and demonstrates how the internal division over this cleavage remained central throughout most of its existence. While the party for the most part struck an uneasy balance between the advocates of the movement logic and those of party institutionalization, this debate occasionally took center stage, such as its 1995 move toward party change.

Chapter 6 is based on fieldwork during the fall 2007 and winter 2008 academic quarters, and is a detailed examination of the continued fault lines with the PRD, which came increasingly into the open following the 2006 electoral debacle. The crystallization between party builders and movement advocates culminated in the 2008 internal party election, and I regard preceding and subsequent developments to make out a significant case of party change.
Chapter 7 presents the findings in a comparative framework. Personalistic movement-parties contain within them both party-builders and movement-advocates, who follow sharply diverging logics, and the party does not react to institutional and electoral stimuli as a unitary actor. Its different sectors have a significantly diverging reading of what they perceive to be the political reality, and act accordingly. Notably, movement-advocates are much less receptive to institutional and electoral pressures, and party change therefore appears a particularly arduous process that is more likely to come from elite transplantation than elite conversion. The main impediment to party change is therefore posited to be a product of a fundamental disagreement between its elites on the party’s organizational form and ideological focus, and of role the non-institutionalized leadership of party strongmen.
CHAPTER 1
THE PERSONALISTIC MOVEMENT-PARTY

I don’t believe in the ideological confrontation between left and right; this ended with the Cold War. I am neither of the left or of the right; I am above that political chart…I would say that we raise the banner of the nationalism that General Charles de Gaulle led in France.7
- Ollanta Humala, presidential candidate for Partido Nacionalista Peruano, April 2006.

The party hybrid of movement-parties forms a separate family of political organizations that lies somewhere between social movements, on the one hand, and political parties, on the other.8 Despite their designation, movement-parties do not necessarily originate in social movements; furthermore, even if they did grow out of such organizations, the original movement that gave grounds to a political party may long since have faded away. Rather, movement-parties are characterized by the application of the particular organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition (Kitschelt 2006).

Movement-parties operate and are organized according to the patterns typical of social movements. They do not follow the organizational setups of traditional party formations, and are instead averse to formal organization. They lack clear internal rules regarding authority and representation, and few rules exist or are respected on how to elect, train, and replace their leaders. Due to their lack of organizational stability, movement-parties are not institutionalized parties, but are rather both internally and externally unstable and anti-institutional in orientation.9

This chapter builds on the typology of Gunter and Diamond (2003), which considers movement-parties an analytically and conceptually distinct genus of parties. The existing literature on movement-parties identifies two existing species of parties, either of the Postindustrial Extreme Right (Ignazi, 1996) or of the Left-Libertarian kind (Kitschelt, 1988) both of which are found in the European setting, and considered transient or short-lived phenomena.

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7 Quoted in “No soy de izquierda ni de derecha.” Página 12, April 4, 2006.
8 A political party, in Sartori’s definition, is a group that “presents at elections, and is capable of placing, through elections, candidates for public office” (1976, 64). Movements, however, are not restricted to this electoral arena. Wilkinson (1971) defines a social movement as “a deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into ‘utopian’ community” (1971, 27).
9 The concept of party institutionalization, discussed below, here refers essentially to the process where, in Huntington’s classic formula “the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability” (1965, 394) where the political party, rather than a means to an end, becomes an end in itself.
This chapter will introduce and discuss a third type, the Personalistic Movement-Party, which has historically thrived particularly in the Latin American setting, but is also increasingly found in other geographical settings. The party type is particularly noticeable for its highly mobilizational potential, and for its remarkable persistence. While movement-parties, as other uninstitutionalized formations, are posited to either transform or face extinction, personalistic movement-parties have notably persisted in uninstitutionalized states for decades. The main characteristics of this party type are:

1) Mass-mobilizational: The party has a large mass base that engages in frequent mobilization.
2) Uninstitutionalized and personalistic top leadership: The power of the party’s de facto leader is not based on an institutionalized process, and is highly personalistic and inherently instable.
3) Unclear boundaries between the party and affiliated organizations: It is difficult to establish where the party ends and begins, due to the use of extra-party networks and non-party candidates.
4) Semi-loyal anti-institutional orientation: The party’s loyalty to existing institutional setups are contingent rather than absolute, depending on whether they serve the cause of the “movement.”
5) No dominant and/or clear ideological orientation: Ideological discourses of the left-right kind are greatly downplayed in favor of a vague and often eclectic and doctrine espoused by its leader.

This chapter aims to do the following: It will present the personalistic movement-party and explain why the party type warrants a separate categorization from existing types. Then, it will explain both the party’s external behavior and its highly uninstitutionalized state as a product of the type’s remarkable internal characteristics and the dynamics of the movement logic. While personalistic movement-parties may survive in seemingly stable equilibriums, I identify how they are internally sharply divided, between one sector that promotes the building of a more traditional party organization, and another that on the contrary advocates the movement practices, and is even openly hostile to the very concept of forging a more solid party organization, and a more clearly defined ideology. Movement-parties contain within an inherent tension between these two groups over fault lines of programmatic and ideological orientation, tactics, strategies, and the very desirability of party institutionalization, where the two groups follow an internally consistent logic. While this internal struggle prevents the parties from institutionalizing, they are nonetheless held together by a “cause” promoted by its personalistic leader, but are inherently instable as interparty warfare lurks whenever the power of its leader wanes, and consensus over the stated “cause” of the party breaks down.

Finally, while I conceptualize the personalistic movement-party as a non-institutionalized party formation, I argue this political formation can move away from the movement-party genus toward more institutionalized party types. This does not mean that this development will happen in a teleological manner or that it is irreversible; on the contrary, I emphasize that there may be movement in either direction. Yet the assumption that the party may at times lean more toward
the movement-logic, and at other times toward that of a more institutionalized formation, lies at the heart of this study. With the focus on political elites¹⁰ as the main agent of change, I will present a range of theoretical propositions for when we may expect to see such movement.

**The movement-party in the literature**

Personalistic movement-parties belong to a wider family of parties of which two members have been identified: Left-Libertarian parties mostly of the “Green” type, and Post-Industrial Extreme Right parties (Kitschelt 1988, Ignazi 1996, Gunther and Diamond 2003, Kitschelt 2006).

While the movement-party term has been in use for quite some time, comparatively little labor has been done to formally delineate and further develop the concept. Most recently, Kitschelt (2006) has noted that movement-parties in general share the following characteristics: a) They avoid traditional institutionalization and organization of their party-movement, and are disdainful of traditional parties and their setups; b) they make little investments in formal and permanent mechanisms or routines for solving intraparty disputes, whether on issues of party program, leadership selection, or party strategy; and c) they combine participation in formal democratic competition with extra-institutional mobilization.¹¹

Personalistic movement-parties, which I identify as a new theoretical construct, have been subsumed under a variety of general labels, such as the “catch-all” category, the even broader “populist party” family, and, given its lack of a dominant ideological orientation, the personalistic electoralist party. Yet given their hybrid status as both parties and movements, I locate them squarely within the wider movement-party genus.

The phenomenon of movement-parties was first observed in Western Europe, and was originally considered a manifestation of the “New Politics” that emerged out of social movements in the late 1970s and 1980s. The term was first and foremost applied to the Green parties, whose structure and discourse differed greatly from those of traditional parties, and caused a great deal of typological confusion as the new formations appeared to be both parties and social movements at the same time.

¹⁰ “Political elites” here refer to “persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organizations, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially (Burton, Gunther and Higley 1992, 8). Within political parties, this includes members of national councils, party congresses, national lawmakers, executives, and others likely to be able to exert influence on the party’s direction.

¹¹ This outlines build directly on Kitschelt (2006, 280-281). Extra-institutional mobilization refers to actions outside of the institutional path, usually but not always coterminous with “anti-parliamentary” actions. Empirical examples range from emphasis on mass street mobilizations, *plazismo*, the blocking of roads, the shutting down of political institutions such as the national congresses and judicial system, and so forth.
While they were at first not characterized by a single comprehensive ideology, the Greens reacted against materialism, and argued that economic redistribution and industrialization had largely been achieved, and should no longer be the fundamental guiding issues of politics. Prominent as well was their advocacy of environmental protection, pacifism, and a ban on the deployment of nuclear weapons (Müller-Rommel 1989, Kitschelt 1989). While they at first claimed to be beyond left and right, they were nonetheless soon considered to belong on the political left.12

Their general rejection of materialism and “politics as usual” was clearly mirrored in their organizational setups. Reacting against what they regarded as increasingly hegemonic and bureaucratized welfare states, they rejected centralized organization, centralized leadership, and party bureaucracy, all seen as hallmarks of the discredited traditional bureaucratic parties. Through their emphasis on grass-roots organization, the Green parties intended to transcend classic party setups, and stressed the need for going beyond traditional parties in order to encourage a broader political participation, for example through the introduction of elements of direct democracy.

Later, in the early 1990s, an entirely new species of parties emerged as a major political force that similarly espoused anti-establishment views and eschewed traditional political organization. Yet the rejection of established authority stemmed from a fundamentally different type of alienation from the modern welfare bureaucracies. While the parties were greatly shaped by their national settings and their key political issues often varied according to the context (Poguntke 1996, 334), the “postindustrial extreme right parties” (Ignazi 1996) or “anti-political-establishment parties” (Schedler 1996) shared a general opposition to immigration, and a rejection of multiculturalism.

While the new right parties, like the Greens, also at first rejected the left-right divide as obsolete (Schedler 1996, 316), as their name implies they were soon unequivocally placed on the political right, as much for their rejection of welfare states, as for their rejection of immigration...

12 While the Greens also at first claimed to be beyond left and right, scholars such as Kitschelt and Hellemans would “decisively refute the theory popular among ecology party activists themselves that the ecological discourse is neither left nor right” (1990, 233), placing the parties squarely in the latter category. The Green parties at first did, however, at first “display mixtures of left-wing and conservative views” and it was “difficult to fit the supporters of the ecology movement into the traditional left-right pattern” (von Beyme 1985, 131), and explicitly rejected the left-right axis – the prevalent around which Western politics are organized (Kitschelt and Hellemans 1990, 211) – as the main axis of political competition. More recent work confirms that virtually all European Green parties, when judged by their own elites, are clearly located on the political left (Ladner and Brändle 2008, 109). The odd case of the Mexican Green party – surely the sole rightwing Green party in the world – is a noteworthy exception.
and multiculturalism. When compared with Left-libertarian parties, their scorn for traditional politics had a particular sinister ring due to their implicit rejection of the foundations of liberal democracy itself, as many of the new parties were deemed to share a “fundamental rejection of the democratic rules of the game, of individual liberty, and of the principle of individual equality and equal rights” (Betz 1998, 3). The parties and their supporters’ inability to secure their demands through traditional politics, and their rejection of the established political channels drove them toward a logic where, rather than relying on the old parties, they sought to bypass them, through “neo-populist” appeals and demands of plebiscites and referenda (Immerfall 1998).

Most had no formal organization or partisan organizational structure that would allow for a clear decision-making process. Rather, the value of the party was downgraded vis-à-vis its strong and centralized leader, who often imposed his or her program on the party through a highly verticalist “Führerprinzip” (Ignazi 1996, 552).

In sum, both parties shared a rejection of traditional party structures, which was, however, regarded to have negative implication for party cohesion: Their desire to avoid a more traditional, bureaucratic party structure eventually lead to massive instability in both party types. Kitschelt (2006, 288), therefore, notably regarded movement-parties to be “transitional phenomena,” as the logic of electoral competition would eventually force the parties to widen their reach and forge a more solid organizational structure in order to resolve questions of collective choice – put bluntly, to institutionalize, or die. Yet by doing so – by forging a more permanent organization and an ideological preference schedule beyond single issues – they were effectively abandoning the mode of the movement-party.

However, outside of the this context of the advanced industrial democracies of the West, a range of existing parties defy these predictions, and have notably lasted as non-institutionalized movement-parties for decades. In Latin America, movement-parties of the personalistic kind such as the PRD and the PJ have persisted and outlasted predictions of party demise. Rather, the

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13 Like the Green parties, they appear new “extreme” right parties were at first ironically, often ideologically and programmatically highly flexible, many times abruptly changing position on a variety of core political issues.
14 “Plebiscitarian” is here defined as in contrast to elections or referenda whose outcome is uncertain and voted upon. Plebiscitarianism, rather, merely seeks “approval” of a decision already made.
15 The term “populist” is not the only conceptual link to parties outside of the European context. Corradi (1977), in an early examination of the PJ, argued that a “Führerprinzip permeates peronist behavior at all levels of politics—from labor unions, municipal and provincial government, and congress, all the way to the presidency.” However, as explored below, the PJ, which moreover would shed many of its most authoritarian tendencies during the Renovation, does not belong to this party type, due to a highly diverging organizational characteristics, and a clearly diverging ideological and programmatic orientation.
parties have survived and even thrived in what are categorically non-institutionalized states, and the party type is clearly not limited to the either geographical or “post-material” contexts.

In Latin America, far from far being manifestations of post-materialist attitudes, personalistic movement-parties have in response to brutal misdistributions of wealth, rather clamored for an active redistributionary role for the state.\textsuperscript{16}

Moreover, while Kitschelt noted that movement-parties lack paid professionals and physical infrastructure such as party headquarters, the presence of such features within the Latin American personalistic movement-parties have not, however, meant an end to the movement logic; remarkably, as the empirical chapters will demonstrate, even with the existence of a formal organization, personalistic movement-parties remain locked in an uneasy balance between their respective party and movement advocates, who follow strikingly diverging logics.

\textbf{Personalistic movement-parties vs. personalistic electoralist parties}

The lack of a dominant or clear and consistent ideology identifiable in left-right terms typical of personalistic movement-parties bears on the surface a resemblance to the Personalistic party species, part of the wider genus, or party family, of Electoralist parties (Gunther and Diamond 2003, 185-188). While similarities clearly exist – Personalistic parties such as Berlusconi’s Forza Italia exist principally as vehicles for their leaders – there are nonetheless fundamental differences between the two. First, while the Personalistic Electoralist party emphasizes modern media campaigns over the building of a party base and is organizationally thin, the personalistic movement-parties have massive membership rates that, while undoubtedly inflated, truly reveal a mass membership base. Second, and related, personalistic movement-parties are highly mobilizational, and often emphasize the active participation of its membership base – or, crucially, affiliated organizations – in activities such as marches and even anti-institutional activities such as the “taking” of e.g. airports, congress, and the courts, an aspect clearly lacking within Electoralist parties in general, whose party organizations remain highly dormant outside of election season. Finally, while both parties emphasize the recruitment of

\textsuperscript{16} While it is beyond the scope of the current study to examine party emergence, it should be noted that a further commonality between movement-parties exists in that while they may originate in highly diverging historical and social settings, they share the common trait of having been constructed largely in response to the current dominant political structure, or “the establishment,” to which they are wholly opposed. An element of “crisis” appear a necessary condition. Existing institutions are at least initially rejected as undemocratic or perceived as not sufficiently inclusionary for their participation or, crucially, may not be considered sufficiently effective to be able to implement one’s agenda through them. This lasting orientation appears likely to have an important impact on how the party elites value party institutionalization itself.

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extra-party candidates for elected office, within personalistic parties it is particularly hard at times to establish exactly where extra-party networks end, and where the party begins.

**Personalistic movement-parties vs. extant movement-party types**

In their typology of parties, Gunther and Diamond note that the movement-party family is “particularly appropriate for newly emerging parties prior to their institutionalization” (2003, 188). This was indeed the case of the Green parties, which share the general traits of the movement-party family with the personalistic movement-party, and eventually did move toward more traditional party formations (Frankland et al, 2008).

Empirically, however, it is clear that while personalistic movement-parties are non-institutionalized, they have survived in this state for a considerable amount of time, and party age on its own has not had a decisive impact on their level of institutionalization.

Moreover, in matters of policy agendas, when compared with the Greens the personalistic movement-parties have rather clamored for more state intervention, and not less. Most notably, however, the personalistic movement-parties reject the Left-libertarian emphasis on decentralized leadership, and do on the contrary place paramount importance on strong leadership. While central party authority within personalistic movement-parties may be weak, this is rather a function of a lack of ability to establish control, rather than of direct intent, as in the case of the Greens.

The emphasis on a strong leader would, in turn, appear to push the personalistic movement-parties closer to the category of the Post-Industrial Extreme Right parties. Yet a shoehorning of the party type into this category presents a new set of issues that make them fit uneasily here. Ideologically, as their name implies, while a plethora of national variations certainly exist(ed), Post-Industrial Extreme Right are indeed of the political far right. In terms of redistribution, these parties' harsh attacks on the welfare state as such appear even more ideologically and programmatically alien than the post-materialist agenda of the Greens. The difference is not about programmatic content per se, but that conceptually, the Extreme Right parties do contain within them clear and dominant ideologies – despite national variations – as opposed to the highly diffuse ideological manifestations of personalistic movement-parties.

Finally, like the Electoralist parties, the Extreme Right parties tend toward very small formal organizations, and despite the occasional march, in general are very far from engaging in mass mobilizations efforts. Whatever ruckus this party type may cause in the streets, it is decidedly dwarfed by the mass rallies of personalistic movement-parties such as the PJ and the PRD and, in its heyday as a movement-party, the Gaullist party.
“Populist parties”: A less useful analytical category

Personalistic movement-parties, as will be explored below, rather than expressing clear and dominant programmatic and ideological positions, tend toward discourses that are highly populist (Knight, 1998), as the party type emphasizes appeals to “the people,” and often shapes discourses and politics in highly dichotomous terms of “us vs. them.” In Latin America, as elsewhere, personalistic movement-parties have indeed mostly been categorized as “populist parties.”

It is clear that populism as a political term refuses to go away, though it remains a “notoriously slippery concept” that has undergone many changes over the past decades (Taggart 2000, 2). As Laclau observed, “Few terms have been so widely used in contemporary political analysis, although few have been defined with less precision” (1977, 144).

In Latin America, the term initially gained acceptance as a description of the historic drives to mobilize multi-class constituencies behind developmentalist and redistributive projects. Populism was thus particularly tied to the historical setting of one type of economic development policies, namely import-substituting industrialization, particularly from the 1940s to the 1970s. Yet as import-substituting strategies yielded to neoliberal economic setups in the 1980s, it became clear that populism was able to not only survive under neoliberalism, but even thrive.17 Roberts (1995) and Weyland (1996) argued that traits of populism had survived well until present times, where “neo-populists” such as Carlos Menem, Alberto Fujimori, and Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil continued to bypass intermediary organizations in favor of highly personalistic, anti-establishment appeals to the lower classes. While antithetical to state-led general distribution, neoliberalism was nonetheless highly compatible with more targeted economic handouts of the clientelist type in situations of economic austerity.

Merely in terms of organizational structure, “populism” has been used to describe an immense variety of political formations that differ greatly in their level of party organization, from the informal labor-based PJ in Argentina, to the top-down verticalist predecessor of the corporatist PRI under Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico, to even the Chilean Socialist Party (Burgess and Levitsky 2003, Knight 1998, Drake 1978, Drake 1999).

The Peruvian case examined by Roberts (1995) in particular demonstrates this immense variety. The historical APRA has generally been considered a mass-based, tightly organized, and highly disciplined party, which during its heyday from the early 1930s to the mid-1980s regularly

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17 Dresser (1991) was the first, to my knowledge, to use the term “neopopulism,” in order to describe the policies of Mexican president Carlos Salinas (1988-1994). PRONASOL, a poverty-reduction program “run out of the president’s private pocket” (1991, 3), was politically highly selective and targeted to party supporters.
attracted support from more than a third of the Peruvian electorate. By contrast, the hastily-assembled *Cambio 90/Nueva Mayoria*, an electoral formation designed to bolster the 1990 presidential candidacy of Fujimori, existed solely for the purpose of its leader and was immediately demobilized following his electoral victory (Roberts 1995, 100). Yet while Fujimori’s party went down with its disgraced leader in 2000, APRA recovered from a collapse in the 1990s to capture the presidency in 2006, as well as a third of the country’s legislative seats. It remains the best-established party in Peru today. Yet both APRA and Fujimori’s purely electorlist formation are deemed “populist” parties, indicating that the label incorporates an extremely variegated range of parties.18

Finally, parties such as the Venezuelan AD, as well as the earlier examples of APRA and the PRI, all of which have been subsumed under the broad populist umbrella, in their heyday had quite institutionalized and formalized party organizations – a far cry from being “fundamentally anti-institutional in orientation” (Taggart 2000) and from relying on “unmediated uninstitutionalized support” (Weyland 2001, 14), which are designated hallmarks of populism. As with every analytical concept, once it may be applied to virtually every existing case, its generality will in the end render it less useful as a basis for comparison. While “populism” remains highly useful as a tool to describe a type of political strategy or discourse, for the purposes of comparative party analysis it brings too many pitfalls, and incorporates too variegated a group of parties under its wide umbrella.19

**Personalistic movement-parties vs. the “catch-all” party**

Finally, the “catch-all” label has been applied to parties with vague ideologies and looser organizations, and as such appears to fit well with the personalistic movement-party’s lack of ideological coherence. The term came to use in the 1960s, as Kirchheimer (1966) lamented a

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18 Roberts (1995) calls APRA “Latin America’s oldest populist party.” Weyland’s definition, which omits Roberts’ (1995) references to class composition and economic redistribution/clientelism, is the more restrictive of the two. To him, populism is “a political strategy utilized by a personalistic leader who seeks government power – or exercises it - based on support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers” (1996, 5). In a similar yet even broader fashion, Knight deems populism to be mainly a “style, characteristically involving a proclaimed rapport with ‘the people’, a ‘them-and-us’ mentality, and (often, though not necessarily) a period of crisis” (Knight 1998, 223). Weyland, also notes that two “subtypes” of populism exist, “depending on whether its constituency has some minimal traces of organization or is completely unorganized” (2001, 14), but even so the category remains immensely broad. In the Latin American context, characterized by uninstitutionalized parties, one is hard pressed to find any major party that does not, in some way or another, fit under this umbrella category. Roberts (2007) correctly notes that the political definition of populism does not presume any particular type of organization.

19 For instance, Weyland (2001) applies the label to both Alan García’s APRA and Carlos Andrés Pérez’ AD in Venezuela– the latter, before its demise, often presented as a textbook example of an institutionalized party in Latin America. Indeed,
development of weaker party loyalties, watered-down ideologies, excessively broad party appeals, and the loss of past party functions of socialization.

Yet very much like “populist parties,” the term “catch-all” has been applied rather discriminately to a wide range of party formations worldwide, and has been used to describe a party’s organization, electoral strategy, or ideological orientation, and at times all.

As opposed to personalistic movement-parties, catch-all parties such as the Spanish PSOE, despite a reduced emphasis on organization and ideology, always remained political parties. Moreover, even while the German SPD – Kirchheimer’s main example – indeed did shed considerable “ideological baggage” at Bad Godesberg in 1959 in favor of a more “catch-all” approach, the party nonetheless retained programmatic orientation clearly distinct from its main antagonist, the CDU, and its leftwing orientation was never seriously called into question. Finally, it should also be noted that whereas the catch-all parties increasingly downgraded the importance of mass membership in favor of new media campaigns, the mass mobilizational focus has not only been retained by personalistic movement-parties, but remain one of their very key definitional characteristics.20

Personalistic movement-parties in theory and practice

The theoretical construct of the personalistic movement-party covers a group of political parties that has previously been subsumed under other labels. This is not merely a typological exercise; the construct is a highly applicable tool to understand the very peculiar nature of this party and its behavior, which does not fit well with other parties, and also, to be addressed in the following section, to understand why this party type fails to institutionalize.

As its name implies, the purpose of the personalistic movement-party is primarily to promote the agenda and “cause” of its dominant leader, who is usually its founding leader, and provides the party with its initial ideological orientation. Indeed, it is hardly coincidental that personalistic movement-parties have long been commonly referred to as derivates of their leaders, such as the cases analyzed in the empirical chapter of this dissertation: Gaullisme, from party founder Charles de Gaulle; peronismo, from Juan Perón, and cardenismo, from Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (and, to be sure, lopezobradorismo, in the case of Andrés Manuel López Obrador).

20 Also, to recall, the “catch-all” term implied an evolutionary development of political parties, as Kirchheimer indeed suggested all parties would follow the “catch-all” example – a trajectory belied by the formation of newer programmatic parties, and the radicalization of older ones. As Koole notes, rather than trying to prove the existence of a “one best” party type that is typical for a certain period of time, we should rather ask why, under what circumstances, some parties develop in one direction, while other parties in another (1996, 520).
Indeed, these political formations have many times in their trajectory been known principally by these highly personalistic terms rather than by their official party names.

The following section will expand upon the defining characteristics of the personalistic movement-party, and moreover provide empirical examples of these traits from the three parties examined in this dissertation, namely the French Gaullist Party, the Argentine PJ, and the Mexican PRD. As has been noted earlier, while other parties in the literature may share one or several of these traits, it is their particular combination that allows us to designate a party as a personalistic movement-party.21

1) **Mass-mobilization**: The mobilizational aspect of personalistic movement-parties is a key characteristic, as it sets the party type apart from a range of otherwise related parties. First, a mass party membership is required. The Gaullist Party in its heyday as a personalistic movement party had a party membership of more than a million, and the RPF in particular emphasized mass rallies. One such rally in Paris, on Oct. 5, 1947, drew upwards of half a million people, and these gatherings were in general rather pagan acts with their heavy use of flags and other national symbols. While the Gaullist Party’s would be drastically trimmed in size, principally due to fears of infiltration from the right, when de Gaulle became president of France, the mobilizational aspect inherent to the party returned with the May 1968 demonstrations, when de Gaulle himself called for the formation of the highly militant extra-party Comités de défense de la République, which led Le Monde to pose the question, “Is Gaullism the UDR or the CDR?” The mass mobilizational aspect of gaullism largely disappeared, however, with George Pompidou’s assumption of the party reins.

Peronism’s penchant for mass mobilization is well known, as both Juan Perón and his wife Eva Duarte relied heavily on mass mobilizations of particularly organized labor. Indeed, one can argue that peronism itself was born as a political expression on the very back of one such mass mobilization, on Oct. 17, 1945. Even as the party moved away from organized labor in the 1980s and 1990s toward the informal sector, the practice continued with President Carlos Menem, who notably sought to co-opt the very location of the Oct. 17, 1945 march in order to turn it into a mass mobilization in favor of his abrupt programmatic volte-face and turn toward neoliberalism. While President Néstor Kirchner initially moved away from the mobilizational aspects of the PJ, ahead of the defeated Resolution 125 vote to raise agricultural export taxes, rallies organized by the PJ and other affiliated actors drew hundreds of thousands of supporters.

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21 The empirical examples below will be further detailed and fully referenced in the empirical chapters of the dissertation.
In its relatively short existence, the PRD has remained a heavily mobilizational party. Party founder Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, during his 1988, 1994, and 2000 presidential campaigns, preferred rallies and *plazismo*, where public squares were filled to the brim in mass meetings, to more modern campaign techniques. His successor Andrés Manuel López Obrador, both as a provincial party politician, mayor of Mexico City, and 2006 presidential candidate, if anything increased the focus on mass rallies to express support for his policies. Indeed, ahead of the 2005 desafuero vote in Mexico that would temporarily disbar him from the candidacy, a march by the PRD drew at least a million participants in downtown Mexico. Repeated mass marches kept up a heavy pressure on the federal authorities, who eventually dropped the charges. On the 2006 campaign trail, though he also relied much on modern mass media, AMLO would continue the practice of holding outside mass rallies. Following the 2006 electoral debacle, the PRD’s mobilization would reach even new heights, with massive encampments in Mexico City, and protest marches against the alleged fraud. In the subsequent internal battle over the PRD, while most of the PRD’s internal currents are mass based, the groups aligned with AMLO have in particular continued to mobilize in protest against new legislation, and AMLO’s new organizations, the CND and the Legitimate Government, have continued campaigns of mass affiliations for future contests. Finally, in the case of the PRD, it is also worth noting that the PRD, despite increasing calls to end the practice, have insisted on mass elections by the party base to elect its national leadership, which have with no exceptions turned into highly contested and disruptive events.

2) Uninstitutionalized and personalistic top leadership: Personalistic movement-parties share a further common trait in the uninstitutionalized nature of the party’s top leadership, which is manifested in different ways. More often than not, the party’s de facto leader is not the same as its de jure leader, and former party leaders generally seek to retain real control of the party even if they have long stepped down from official executive positions. Leadership transitions in such party formations therefore tend to be particularly traumatic.

While de Gaulle had ruled the RPF with an iron fist as its party president in the 1940s and early 1950s, upon assuming the national presidency, he largely ignored the party. This does not mean he did not expect to remain its final arbiter, and the party never appointed an official party president until 1976, long after both de Gaulle’s and his successor Pompidou’s death. While the process of transition of power between de Gaulle and Pompidou went by quite smoothly, this was above all due to de Gaulle’s advanced aged and weariness of politics; when Pompidou in early 1968 sailed up as a natural presidential contender, de Gaulle first reprimanded him publicly, and
later sacked him as prime minister. While Pompidou in turn rather sought to de-personalize the Gaullist party and embark on a process of party building, upon his death there was no clear heir apparent, and the party’s fortunes plummeted as it descended into infighting.

Within the PJ, the party’s leadership transitions have with few exceptions been highly traumatic affairs. Upon Perón’s death in 1974, the lack of an heir apparent and any institutionalized process for choosing a successor to the party founder, when coupled with the party’s internal contradictions, in many ways led both the party and the country to a civil war. With the coming of democracy in 1983, it would take several years and a significant party split for Antonio Cafiero to assume as party president. Later, when Carlos Menem finally stepped down as president in 1999, the PJ’s infighting would eventually lead to the party’s split, and the party’s institutions were so discredited they could not be used to mediate in the vicious internal power struggle.

The PRD was for at the first decade of its existence intimately tied to Cárdenas, and was very much a product of his 1988 presidential candidacy. Even though he stepped down as official party president already in 1993, he remained the party’s dominant figure, and his support was vital for any aspiring party leader. Cárdenas was finally surpassed by López Obrador in 2000, although the power struggle would last up until the present. AMLO, although he had not been PRD president since 1999, managed to impose his candidate Leonel Cota, who was regarded in general as highly subordinate to the PRD’s real boss, López Obrador. Finally, when AMLO’s preferred candidate failed to win the 2008 party presidency contest, rather than accepting defeat, AMLO, through the mobilization of his supporters, has gone to considerable lengths to in practice sabotage Ortega’s leadership, including campaigning for the PRD’s opponents.

3) **Unclear boundaries between the party and affiliated organizations:** While most parties enjoy the support of organized groups that may pitch in with personnel during election time, it is a particular trait of the personalistic movement-party that the borders between the formal and informal party organization – between the party proper and its affiliated organizations – are so blurred that it is usually hard to make out where these extra-party organizations end, and the party begins. The party type relies heavily on extra-party networks that compliment or even directly usurp the functions of the party. In its extreme form, this is manifested as competing party organizations both claiming to represent the “official” party. In parallel, there is a particular emphasis on the recruitment of non-party candidates for elected office, who often emanate from these affiliated networks rather than from within the party structure.
At least until de Gaulle became president, de Gaulle relied much on associated organizations and secondary groups to fill positions within the Gaullist Party, and gave little priority to the party’s official organization. Indeed, at times several Gaullist parties existed, and both leftwing and rightwing gaullist organizations claimed the mantle of “true” gaullism. The party itself, it should be noted, went through at least half a dozen name changes even when de Gaulle was still alive.

Perón from the beginning made it clear that the Peronist Party was to be subordinated to the larger “movement,” and the rules regulating the composition of its “labor,” “feminine,” and, later, “youth” wings were rarely respected. In exile, Perón actively thwarted the building of a formal party organization, and frequently announced the creation of parallel party structures and competing organizations, with the result that many PeJotas existed. After democracy came, this practice hardly abated, and in the years 2003-2007, notably, President Kirchner often fought the official party structure, and allied with dissident party factions and networks that were more often than not on the very margins of the official party structure. In 2005, he took on directly the most powerful PJ organization in the country, in the province of Buenos Aires. Rather than any alignment of peronism permanently behind his leadership, this scenario is likely to be played out in the 2009 mid-term elections, where a “dissident” sector of the PJ, lead by millionaire businessman Francisco de Narváez, in turn is claiming the mantle of peronism, and has largely through his own wealth built up an organization competing against the official PJ, now led by Kirchner.

The PRD proves a further exceptional case of parallel and overlapping party structures. While Cárdenas already in 1994 had relied primarily on a separate presidential campaign organization over which the PRD had little input, AMLO, as PRD president, would take this a step further when he launched the Brigadas del Sol networks of paid vote canvassers. While given at least partial credit for the party’s significant 1997 gains, critical voices early pointed to their inherent unreliability as a paid force. While their performance were rather mediocre in the 2000 and 2003 campaigns, AMLO still prioritized their successors the Redes Ciudadanas in 2005 and 2006, which, however, then and later faced massive critique following their performance, and may have cost AMLO his victory. The Redes, moreover, usurped a range of party functions, and even increasingly imposed its own candidates over the heads of the PRD’s official organization, causing significant friction with the party proper. The Redes were, finally, notable in that among their official coordinators, not one was from the PRD, but the PRI. The PRD had a long tradition of recruiting disaffected members from other parties, principally the PRI, and this development shot ahead under AMLO’s leadership of the party. For instance, in 2005, he angered the PRD in
Mexico State by imposing a non-party businesswoman as candidate for governor, and despite her disastrous loss, still awarded her a “safe seat” on the proportional representation list for national senators in 2006, when he also imposed a range of candidates of even more dubious ideological and even democratic credentials. Finally, AMLO openly stated that the PRD should assume a subordinate role to AMLO’s new institutions, the CND and the Legitimate Government. AMLO’s massive tour across Mexico has further blurred the divisions between the PRD and these new movement organizations, and members of the Legitimate Government openly admitted to enrolling thousands of members in the PRD just to vote in the party’s 2008 internal election. When AMLO’s candidate Alejandro Encinas called for a completely open vote, open to members and non-members alike, it was highly consistent with the logic of blurring the borders between these organizations.

4) **Semi-loyal anti-institutional orientation**: Personalistic movement-parties warrant this designation due to their contingent rather than absolute acceptance of the primacy of existing institutional setups in practice and in the abstract. This orientation also extends to the internal party structure: While a great divide persists within the party, for the movement-party advocates, acceptance of internal party rules and regulations are contingent upon their serving the “cause” of the movement (Linz 1978, 28-45). They can also be explicitly anti-system, in the sense that the party type openly advocates an entirely new system of government (Sartori, 1976).  

This does not mean the party type will be necessarily anti-democratic: It is possible to follow the democratic rules of the game, and still advocate an entirely new institutional setup. In the case of the three personalistic movement-parties investigated in this dissertation, the parties notably have made significant contributions to the upkeep of democracy. Moreover, if the system is not democratic, anti-system can moreover mean advocating a new and fully democratic setup to end with the old system. Yet when anti-system attitudes are professed in a system generally accepted as democratic, even if flawed, the road is short to consider one’s party the only true democratic option. Similarly, semi-loyal attitudes toward existing institutions may be indistinguishable from semi-loyal attitudes toward democracy itself. Finally, in power, movement-party leaders have empirically displayed a penchant for plebiscites and agenda, and presidential decrees.

De Gaulle and the personalistic movement-party he created is a clear example of an anti-system option that was nonetheless democratic, in the sense that he never rejected the primacy of democracy, yet assiduously sought to bring down the French Fourth Republic and what he

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22 Sartori observed that “an anti-system party would not change - if it could - the government but the very system of government” (1976, 133).
considered to be its discredited institutions. He notably refused the legislative representatives of
the Gaullist party to engage in any dialogue with other parties, denying them even their role and
function of legislating. Rather, he ordered the legislators to maintain what its critics called a
*Katastrophenpolitik* or *politique du pire*, or a systematic opposition to the regime, and to avoid
contributing to the reform of national institutions, as such attempts were deemed futile, and would
only maintain a regime he explicitly sought to bring down. When the deputies of the RPF –
initially designated by its critics an “extra-parliamentary league of political mystics” (Taylor
1951, 100) – eventually sought to end their policy of voting against every single bill and piece of
legislation, de Gaulle abandoned them. Later, he presided over a new constitutional setup that
drastically reduced the power of parliament, and as president continually reinterpret the
provisions of the constitutions to limit the role of legislators. Finally, he had a strong affinity for
plebiscites and referenda, yet it should be noted that when he eventually lost his first referendum,
he immediately stepped down as president.

Yet the anti-institutional orientation also extends beyond the party leader, and also to
within the parties themselves. In Mexico, AMLO had before the 2006 election agreed to accept
the decisions of the country’s electoral institutions, yet when the results did not favore him,
refused to do so, and was followed in this by the majority of the party, who physically sought to
block the inauguration of the declared winning candidate as president. Later, notably against he
decisions of the party’s official organs, he has commanded his loyal followers in the Mexican
Congress to physically block parliament and otherwise sought to stop legislative sessions from
passing legislation on which he and his followers were outvoted. This is best illustrated by the
2008 energy reform: Whereas the vast majority of the party elites hailed a reform they had greatly
influenced, AMLO organized a “movement in defense of the petroleum” that attacked legislators
of all parties, including the PRD, and demanded the inclusion of a dozen words in the final text.
Finally, personalistic movement-parties are notorious internally in that component groups, when
outvoted, rather than accept majority party decisions, regularly ignore them and/or deny their
legitimacy. Within the PRD, the “radical” sector around AMLO have walked out after losing
votes, hurled unsubstantiated charges of “fraud,” and, in the case of the recent internal election,
refused to accept the victory of the winning presidential candidate. They have resorted to
measures such as blocking the national council and occupying the party headquarters, denying the
legitimacy of institutions over which they had lost control.

5) **No dominant and/or clear ideological orientation.** While ideological differences exist in
most any party, the programmatic and ideological orientations of this party type are particularly
vague and/or heterogeneous. The party’s “doctrine,” originally espoused by its founder, tends toward eclecticism, and among party elites, no dominant ideological preference schedule exists. A shared elite consensus on the party’s programmatic outlook is lacking, or the applicability of the left-right dimension is greatly downplayed or even explicitly denied. A common party ideology is often very hard to distinguish in traditional left-right terms, as party elites demonstrate little consistent ideological and programmatic formulation across time, in favor of ideological pragmatism. Indeed, traditional ideologies are considered divisive, outdated, or not applicable to the particular national setting, and the party’s elite regularly dismisses the possibility of locating the party along this universally accept ideological divide. The type may also display a remarkable programmatic inconsistency, where the party type at times greatly shifts its positions and appears to incorporate both left- and rightwing views. The loyalty of the party’s elite is primarily tied to the ideas of its leader, rather than to a clearly established ideological identity autonomous from the party’s founder. The discourse of the party founder and many of the party’s subsequent elite tend to be highly populist in discourse (Knight 1998), as the party typically emphasizes appeals to “the people” and “the nation,” and shape its discourse and politics in highly dichotomous terms of “us vs. them.” While the party founder – or later strongmen – may be able to impose unity on a highly heterogeneous party, once the leader steps down, dies, or otherwise sees power reduced, the one element holding the disparate coalition together is removed, and organizational and programmatic chaos is more likely than not to ensue.

In France, de Gaulle from the outset dismissed ideologies as divisive, and refused to designate the party as either left or right. Its first deputies, moreover, refused to be seated at the right side in parliament, and the programmatic orientation of the party did display an odd mix of left and rightwing views. Observers soon criticized the “the ideological emptiness of gaullism” Hoffmann (1974, 217), as the gaullist “doctrine” was in many ways reduced to whatever de Gaulle said it was. De Gaulle actively sought to incorporate both left and right supporters in his movement, and managed to maintain relative unity until his death. His successor Pompidou sought to make the party’s appeal more homogenous, which saw the excision of leftwing gaullists, yet upon his death, the party still virtually folded over devastating fights over its ideological direction.

From its founding conference, when it also became the namesake of its de facto leader Juan Perón, the Peronist Party also explicitly claimed to be “beyond left and right.” This orientation left a lasting imprint on the party and even today a significant sector of the party still maintains that the party is unclassifiable in such terms. Just like in the gaullist case, the doctrine was, when he was still alive, whatever its founder claimed it to be, although Perón would notably
make drastic switches from left to right, e.g. from encouraging the formation of leftwing guerrilla-like youth formations of the far left, to later call for their destruction. For the party, the vagueness of the doctrine, when coupled with Perón’s encouragement of both the left and right wings, had tragic consequences, as the party descended into a vicious spiral of violence between ideologically opposed sectors that all claimed to represent “true” peronism. Under Menem, the party would undergo a drastic programmatic turn from state redistributive efforts toward neoliberalism; this course, in turn, was largely reversed under the Kirchner administration, which also notably reversed Menem’s amnesties for human rights violations. The PJ, however, far from achieved a dominant ideological and programmatic orientation, as witnessed by its dramatic splits and infighting in 2003-2007, which is moreover quite likely to be repeated in 2009. These splits, as the empirical chapters will detail, were far from being mere struggles for power, but went to the heart of what should be the future direction of peronism: toward the ideological left, or toward the right.

In Mexico, the PRD is today considered more clearly as a party of left, but it notably took nearly a decade from the party’s founding until it officially declared itself to be so. Only in recent years did its two historic strongmen, Cárdenas and López Obrador, accept this designation, and as will be detailed, massive disagreement exists on the party’s programmatic and ideological direction. Its programmatic documents, moreover, until recently remained very vague, and the party’s ideological referents remained above all the Mexican Revolution, the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), and the state-led development of postwar Mexico. While the party significantly declared itself to be “socialist and democratic” in 2007, allowing the party to be guided by ideological referents, this designation remains heavily disputed, particularly by the “radical” sectors around López Obrador, which finds it too restrictive.

Why do personalistic movement-parties not institutionalize?

Personalistic movement-parties make out a remarkable breed of parties, but not only due to their internal characteristics: while they make efforts toward institutionalization – building a stable bureaucratic party organization and subject to its rules, and forging a common ideological preference schedule – they only very rarely become institutionalized parties, but nonetheless persist in their uninstitutionalized states, in some cases for decades.

I argue that their failure to institutionalize is a product of a complementary logic that involves both the personalistic leader and a significant sector of the party elite: 1) The dominance of a leader who has contempt for the constraints of more traditional parties, and 2) a fundamentally different conception of the role of the political party and party institutionalization.
by a significant sector of the party elite, where a great divide exists on even the desirability and value of becoming a more traditional political organization. In sum, while the dominance of a party leader is a significant impediment to party reform, there is also massive disagreement within the party elites on the desirability of this reform.

1) **Anti-institutional personalistic leader**: That personalistic leaders eschew party institutionalization may appear a truism, but it is nonetheless remains imperative to tease of this particular logic of the personalistic movement-party. The dominance of the party leader and his contempt for party institutionalization is key. In line with the movement-logic and its mobilizational emphasis, the party leader has a clear and inherent interest in determining the directions of the movement, and to discourage the building of institutionalized paths of leadership succession, recruitment of candidates, and the drafting of detailed programs and clear ideological manifestos, as such mechanisms are likely to infringe upon the leader’s highly personalistic power, which originates in a direct relationship with the party or movement supporters and is more often than not unmediated by a strong party organization.

In addition, the lack of a dominant ideology and clear programmatic platforms further ensures that loyalties within the party will be based on personal ties rather than a common political project, as it leaves the party leader with a much freer rein in the formulation of policy. Indeed, at times the leader may be the only person capable of holding the disparate coalition together, through continually reinterpreting the party’s eclectic doctrine. Moreover, it ensures that loyalties to the leader are primarily personalistic and only secondary ideological. Together, the traits build upon each other, in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner:

![Diagram](image.png)

**Figure 2.1**: The cyclical logic of the personalistic movement-party
2) **Elite divide on desirability of party institutionalization:** Personalistic movement-parties are further characterized by a remarkable disagreement among its political elites not on how to bring about party institutionalization, but even more fundamentally on the very desirability of seeking to do so in the first place. This divide, notably, is not principally a product of conflict between the party’s “faces,” such as the party in public office, on the ground, or in its central office (Katz and Mair 1993), but runs through all aspects of the party organization, including their legislative groups.

Moreover, as the data gathered below illustrate, the divide also extends to a division over how – or even whether – the party should strive to define itself ideologically, and present a common ideological identity to its voters, as well as to its elites. While the number of cases particularly in the Argentine case is admittedly small, the correlation between such views is rather remarkable. Within the PJ, every single of the nine respondents who argue peronism is still más allá de la izquierda y la derecha, or beyond the possibility of locating itself on a left-right scale, favor a looser movement-type organization. Conversely, out of the 14 respondents who thought of peronism today as either left” or “center-left,” and were not opposed to defining it as such, only two favored a movement organization. The remaining 12 all advocated what was commonly referred to as a “European-style” party, or a more traditional organization:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future model of the PJ</th>
<th>Ideological definition of peronism</th>
<th>“Left” or “center-left”</th>
<th>“Center”</th>
<th>“Beyond left and right”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should remain a movement-party</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should become a European-style party</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3: Argentina: Connection ideology and preferred party formation.

In Mexico, the PRD, while today generally considered a leftwing party, was for the first years of its existence principally tied to cardenismo and the presidential candidacies of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who repeatedly refused to locate the party on a left-right line and principally drew inspiration from uniquely Mexican historical events and processes. López Obrador, the party’s 2006 presidential contender, and the de facto leader of the party, similarly long refused to designate the PRD as “left,” even when the party in 1998 finally declared it to be so in its party documents. Today, both party strongmen generally accept the use of these terms to describe the party, as does the party elite. However, in 2007 the PRD’s congress – the highest national organ of the party – voted to define the party as “socialist,” a designation considerably more disputed among the party elite. In a corresponding tapping of the elites’ preference for party
organizational form and ideological orientation, it was even more remarkable how the two dimensions of party institutionalization are linked, in particular given the significantly higher N of the survey.

Out of the 33 members who support the PRD’s ideological change, only seven wanted the PRD to continue its movement emphasis, with its preference for street mobilization over legislative work. The majority, 26, argued the PRD should seek to assume a more “traditional” or institutionalized party organization, and prominently mentioned the Spanish PSOE as a model to emulate. Conversely, a very high 18 out of the 21 who were either indifferent or did not support the definition as socialist, advocated the continuation of the PRD as primarily a movement organization with much looser organizational rules and party boundaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree with and support PRD declaration as “socialist”</th>
<th>Against or indifferent definition of PRD as “socialist”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRD should remain a “movement” or “movement-party”</td>
<td>7 (2)</td>
<td>18 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRD should assume a more “traditional” or “European” party organization</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td>3 (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=54

Table 7.4: PRD elites’ preferred future organizational and ideological model of the PRD

This does not mean, to be sure, that whose who opposed the definition of the PRD as “socialist” are of the political right, but rather that they feel the definition is much too limiting for a party that purports to represent the majority of the people.

Finally, the latter survey also tapped into another dimension: The respect for existing institutional setups. Seemingly paradoxically, it is within the latter group (in parentheses) – mostly opposing the “socialist” label – where we find the great majority of the PRD “radicals,” who are identified as such by their serious questioning of the purpose or value of pursuing institutional reform, rather than to work for the introduction of new institutions. Within this group are several members of the “pejebancada,” or national PRD legislators who nonetheless repeatedly seek to obstruct legislative initiatives through their actions. In other words, not one member of the PRD elite – national legislator, CEN member, or otherwise identified – who agree with the PRD’s definition as socialist and support a more traditional party organization, questioned the value of institutional reform. Correspondingly, out of the 18 elite members defined as “radicals,” 16 were both in favor of a movement organization, while unsupportive the PRD’s declaration as socialist. These two surveys demonstrate, then, in a comparative context, a notably high correlation between support for continued movement-emphasis and less defined ideologies,
on the one hand, and those desiring a more traditional party organization, and a clear ideological
definition, on the other. Crucially, they also demonstrate that two of the major parties in Latin
America, which I identify as personalistic movement-parties, are remarkably divided on the very
desirability of party reform.

In sum, personalistic movement-parties appear to exist in relatively stable equilibriums
when their leader has a tight grip on the party-movement. Yet this very control at the same time
keeps the party from institutionalizing, as the party leader appears not to be interested in such
reform, and may even explicitly demonstrate contempt for it. Any attempt at serious party reform
is thus predicated upon the leader’s demise, or a change of heart. Yet as detailed above, party
leader change appears only a necessary, but far from a sufficient condition. Among the party elite,
a remarkably divide exists where the lack of party institutionalization is a product of the lack of
desire by its party elite to engage in such reform in the first place. Taken together, these two traits
go a long way toward explaining why this party type can remarkably persist for decades, but
without fully institutionalizing. In some cases, however, significant moves toward
institutionalization has indeed been made, and it is a further task of this work to theorize when
party elites are willing to make that change and advocate the building of a party, which will be
tested in the three empirical cases of this dissertation.

**Party institutionalization and its indicators**

In the party literature, much emphasis has been put on the value of institutionalization. While concept lends itself too well to circularity, where it is hard to differentiate indicators of
institutionalization from its actual properties (Tilly 1973), it remains nonetheless clear that
institutionalization is a state, or characteristic, of some parties and not others. Its importance is
moreover acknowledged by virtually the entire literature on political parties, as well as that of
democratic consolidation. 23 Moreover, it also depends on where one looks, e.g. how well the party is organized internally (Michels 1958 [1911]), whether the party is “reified in the public mind” (Janda 1980), how easily a party can
undergo changes, and so forth. As a recent review of the concept further concludes, no combination or
recipe for party institutionalization is likely to exist that is suitable for all parties, under all circumstances
(Randall and Svåsand 2002, 15).

24 History tells us that democracy has at times broken down despite the existence of highly institutionalized
parties, while in other cases, institutionalized parties, rather than buttressing democracy, have at times even actively undermined it. Yet while some institutionalized parties have acted undemocratically, it would be a fallacy to assume that institutionalization does not matter. While “over-institutionalized” party systems
may under some circumstances also create problems for democracy (Kesselmann 1970, Roberts 2003), as
Diamond et al note, “the costs to democracy of weak, poorly institutionalized, incoherent political parties
have almost certainly been higher” (1999, 27). Where parties are non-institutionalized, executive-legislative conflict is often rampant and may result in policy ineffectiveness, and aspects of party institutionalization has been attributed to everything from democratic stability, to the very quality of
The concept of institutionalization here refers essentially, in Huntington’s classic formulation, the “process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability” (1965, 394) where the political party, rather than a means to an end, becomes an end in itself. Institutionalized parties value a stable organization, and have relatively clear and established mechanisms or routines for solving internal disputes, which are recognized by the party as a whole. There is an “existence of internal consensus over organizational rules and structures as much as over policies” (Gunther and Hopkin 2002). The party is not subordinated to any larger movement of which it is merely a component party, and the party’s de jure leader is also its de facto leader.

Hinich and Munger (1994) define a political party as activists that “hold in common substantial elements of a political doctrine identified, both by party members and outsiders, with the name of the party” (1994, 85). Given the variety of existing political parties, this would clearly exclude a range of formations including, though not restricted to, personalistic movement-parties from even being considered parties.

Yet while this definition may be too restrictive as a definition for a party, the emphasis on a common ideological focus is highly relevant. While many institutionalized parties are, of course, coalitions of actors who may live through recurring conflict over the party’s ideological and programmatic focus, what is particular about personalistic movement-parties is that they do not even share a common agreement on the party’s ideological position, and its programmatic focus is moreover highly diffuse, spanning a wide range of heterogeneous positions. I therefore include this element as a crucial property of a party’s level of institution, as an institutionalized party would contain a common ideological direction and converging programmatic orientation, and the party’s dominant position would be clearly identifiable in left-right terms. Party loyalty, in short, would be based on a party’s programmatic platform, rather than to its leaders. A clear representation itself. For instance, when politicians are elected on personalistic and vague platforms, a significant element of accountability is diminished as voters have few standards against which they can be judged. Unbound by party platforms or coherent programmatic declarations grounded in ideology, movement-party politicians may feel they have a much freer rein to represent the nation as they see fit. To be sure, it was President Menem’s behavior in public office that led O’Donnell (1994) to coin the term “delegative democracy” to describe a political leadership style that rode roughshod over political institutions, and in economic practice alone went against everything the PJ had historically stood for.

Levitsky (2003) is a detractor. Building on Selznick’s concept of “value-infusion” (1957), he argues that party cohesion entails two distinct qualities hitherto conflated: routinization, or traditional organization, with the PJ as a value-infused movement yet poorly organized party. Levitsky argued that the particular traits of the PJ as a weakly bureaucratized yet value-infused organization made it highly adaptable and capable of undergoing both drastic leadership and ideological changes. The party, despite its organizational chaos, was thus relatively institutionalized or, in Janda’s words, “reified in the public mind” (Janda 1980, 19). Subsequent developments, as will be explored, question the merit of this value-infusion, in particular the further break-up of the PJ into ideologically highly antagonistic parts.
manifestation of this would be the production of a common party program and platform clearly
distinguishable from that of other parties, to which a majority of the party elites would remain
faithful. While it may naturally still maintain many internal factions and disagreement on its
program, the party would in the end share agreement on one identifiable and coherent political
agenda channeled through existing democratic setups.

In the case of the personalistic movement-party, a further indicator of party
institutionalization would be a shared elite agreement on the value of existing institutional setups.
Abandoning any semi-loyal or anti-system stances would clearly be a highly relevant indicator.
This is not the same as making it a property of a party’s level institutionalization per se, as one
could well imagine situations where institutionalized parties would refuse to accept the validity of
existing institutional setups e.g. following a military coup. Taken to this extreme, an anti-system
party, then, might well be an institutionalized party. However, in a context of imperfect and weak
yet unequivocally democratic institutions, the abandonment of such stances appear a crucial
indicator of party change.

In contrast to institutionalized parties, within personalistic movement-parties, intra-party
relations remain a particular source of major conflict, as the decision-making processes often are
not recognized as legitimate by all party elites within the organization. Instead, the dictates or
“opinions” of party strongmen trump the preferences of the party’s legal organs, such as its
national executive committee and national council, or even the party’s de jure leader. While
institutionalized mechanisms for solving problems of collective choice may well exist on paper,
they are not respected by the party’s de facto leader and/or a significant sector of the party’s own
elite, who resist accepting the majority will. Moreover, within the personalistic movement-party,
the party itself is in addition downplayed in favor of a larger “movement” of which the party only
forms a part, and a larger “cause” of the party’s de facto leader takes precedence of any
autonomous party program. Personalistic movement-parties have not successfully transcended
their personalistic leaders, 26 and the party label – which has often undergone significant changes
– has not yet been fully imbued with a real meaning, autonomous from the candidacies of the
party’s strongmen.

The failure of personalistic movement-parties to institutionalize has real consequences. In
contrast with institutionalized parties, I argue that the particular traits of movement-parties may
have a debilitating effect on a country’s political institutions in general, particular in settings of

26 Mény in particular argues that “personalism taps an important criterion for assessing the
institutionalization of political parties: the depersonalization of parties and party competition (1993, 67). A
further parallel is Weber’s notion of the “institutionalization of charismatic leadership” (1947, 358-359).
weaker democratic institutions.\textsuperscript{27} The following sections will explain why the effects of the internal characteristics of this party type extend far beyond the party itself.

**Why party type matters: 1) Failure to serve as ideological anchors on mass levels**

Personalistic movement-parties in their non-institutionalized state are intrinsically tied to the stability and quality of liberal democracy in several crucial manners, manifested principally through the lack of a dominant ideological framework beyond pragmatic personalism, the resort to friend-enemy logics of political articulation, and, finally, their highly fluid and instable organizational structures. Figure 1 illustrates how the traits of this particular party type matter, in partly overlapping ways:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
**Party Level** & **Mass Level** \\
\hline
Personalistic over left-right appeals & i) Vote not anchored in ideology \\
Traditional ideologies seen as divisive & Voters do not know own left-right position \\
Disdain for traditional party organization & \\
If no leader or if leader’s authority wanes & \\
\hline
iii) Organizational instability & iv) “Us vs. them” \\
i) Party infighting/instability due to lack of ideological cement & \\
Disdain for existing institutional setup & \\
Enemy of movement must be defeated by institutional or non-institutional means & \\
Lower threshold for extra-parliamentary mobilization, possibly semi-loyal or anti-system & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Figure 2.2: Effects of non-traditional organization and orientation

The existing party literature generally agrees that political parties should be ideologically grounded, or have “clear, widely understood, recognizable, enduring positions on a conventionally interrelated set of issues” (Coppedge 1998a, 552), as ideology serves as a

\textsuperscript{27} For instance, while the PJ has taken power under situations of general political chaos –in 1973, 1989, 2001– its internally chaotic organization was as well a significant contributing factor to the same chaos. As Diamond et al note, in post-war Argentina, “the diffuse character of the Peronist party, containing numerous undemocratic and mutually contradictory tendencies, historically was especially damaging” (Diamond, Hartlyn and Linz 1999, 27).
shorthand for political communication between the elites and the masses (Downs 1957, Fuchs and Klingemann 1990, Hinich and Munger 1994). Historically, the most successful and universal dimension around which political competition has been organized is the left-right dimension. A significant “mechanism for the reduction of complexity” (Fuchs and Klingemann 1990, 205), the left-right dimension has served particularly well as a simplifier and organizer of political discourse and competition.

Linkage between politicians and masses can also be achieved through other mechanisms (Kitschelt 2000), such as clientelism, and personalism. Programmatic linkages, however, are much more stable; moreover, the left-right axis promotes and opens up for compromise in a way other programmatic linkages may not.

Huber and Inglehart, writing at a time the left-right distinction was under particular attack as an anachronism, in an examination of Western European electorates, asked, “Are the terms left and right still in use? The answer is an unequivocal ‘Yes’” (1995, 81). They also noted, however, that the left-right dimension is “an amorphous vessel whose meaning varies in systematic ways with the underlying political and economic conditions in a given society (1995, 90). While it can be found almost anywhere political parties exist, its precise content may clearly vary.

Yet at the same time, outside the developed industrial democracies of the West, the political distinction between left and right is notably weaker. On the mass-level, the left-right dimension is a much weaker predictor of the electoral vote than in the West (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006). Particularly in Latin America, the validity of the scheme has been questioned as a “European way of looking at politics” and “an imposition” on a very different political reality. While this anomaly has been ascribed to structural characteristics, particularly class composition (Dix 1989), as an alternative explanation I argue this is partly also the result of the failure of political elites themselves to clearly engage in left-right semantics, and to retain consistent ideological trajectories.

28 More than half a century ago, Lipset argued that, “By left we shall mean advocating social change in the direction of greater equality - political, economic or social; by right we shall mean supporting a traditional more or less hierarchical social order, and opposing change toward greater equality” (19541135). While this definition probably lies closer to how the political left would like its orientation to be perceived, its emphasis on equality is a highly useful starting point. Italian philosopher Norberto Bobbio, writing at a time when the value of the left-right distinction was particularly under siege, pointedly observed that to reduce left and right to abstract ideologies would be an “unjustifiable simplification: they indicate opposing programs in relation to many problems whose solution is part of everyday political activity” (Bobbio 1996, 3). Indeed, while the actual policy orientation of the dimension may vary greatly across time and space, Bobbio redefined its emphasis on equality: “When we say the left has a greater tendency to reduce inequalities, we do not mean that it intends to eliminate all inequalities, or that the right wishes to preserve them all, but simply that the former is more egalitarian, and the latter more inegalitarian” (1996, 65).

29 Confidential interview with, respectively, the leader of a PRD corriente, held Feb 12, 2008, and a FpV national deputy, held on March 14, 2007.
For the left-right context to be useful, both elites and the mass public must be aware of the scheme and its content. As political leaders, it is a fundamental part of party elites’ responsibility to shape political discourse around the left-right dimension, and to assign content to it in their particular national contexts. Within movement-parties, however, elites often fail to perform this role, and I posit this as one explanation for the left-right dimension’s comparative lack of utility, and the continued confusion of its context, both at mass and party levels.

Personalistic movement-parties, in their appeals, confound voters by their ideological pragmatism, the internal ideological contradictions of their message, or, in some cases, by their abrupt shifts from the left to the right, and back. Rather than stable ideological identities, personalistic movement-parties breed a loyalty first and foremost to a single leader. While personalistic linkages can clearly be strong, they are nonetheless inherently instable, as the linkage is first and foremost to the leader, and not to the party. This can work in several ways. First, the party may swim well with the leader, but also sink with him. If the leader becomes unpopular, he may easily bring the party down as well. Second, if the leader is no longer on the ballot or does not actively campaign for the party, its support may rapidly plummet as well, as the personalistic nature of the party’s appeal precludes it from building a separate and autonomous identity for the leader.

This latter point is particularly well exemplified by the Gaullist Party in France. When the personalistic leader was not actively working for the party, its support would plunge. For instance, in 1953, a year de Gaulle did not bother to campaign for the RPF – a party that had had a meteoric rise from its creation in 1947 – its support was effectively cut in half. By 1956, when de Gaulle in practice had fully abandoned party politics, the party that sought to continue promoting his ideas pulled less than four percent of the vote.

As the case study in Chapter 2 will demonstrate, the Gaullist Party eventually became a traditional conservative party. This was, however, a long and painful process. While Prime Minister Georges Pompidou managed to forge a party with a more homogenous identity that was moreover autonomous of de Gaulle’s person, the continued fragility of the project, and the difficulty of party transformation, remained painfully evident: While Pompidou won the 1969 presidential election, the party’s support was halved by the 1973 election, when Pompidou’s illness had largely removed him from party politics. Worse still for the party, by 1974, when both Pompidou and de Gaulle were dead, the Gaullist Party only pulled a third of its 1969 vote.
Table 2.1: Electoral support for “gaullism,” 1947-1974.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Type of Election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>Cantonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>Referendum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Referendum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>Referendum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>Referendum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>Referendum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>Legislative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the time de Gaulle entered national politics in France, the country’s electorate already did have a clear sense of the left-right dimension, which served to structure electoral choice. While de Gaulle in particular denied this political distinction, the Gaullist Party would in turn become a quite traditional conservative party with an unequivocal center-right ideology. The Argentine case in turn demonstrates the particular dangers when a major party enters the national political scene whose left-right structuration is only in its infancy.

Like the Gaullist Party, the PJ explicitly claimed to be beyond left and right, and to represent the national as a whole. While the party –and the country – was increasingly torn apart by fighting between the left and right in the 1970s, this never found an institutionalized expression in the country’s major political parties, which defined themselves primarily in relation to the other, and not on their respective left-right positions (Ostiguy 1998); consequently, political conflict on this dimension, was not expressed institutionally.

The consequences of the PJ’s refusal to define itself in left-right terms are remarkably apparent. A 2007 Survey by the Comparative National Elections Project confirmed that among the Argentine electors, 18.2 identified peronism as “left,” 36 percent as “centrist,” while nearly half – 44.8 percent – deemed it to be a party of the right.  

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31 Figures from CNEP III, provided by CNEP international coordinator Richard Gunther. N=799. Data from CNEP I and CNEP II are available at the CNEP homepage. [www.cnep.ics.ul.pt/index1.asp](http://www.cnep.ics.ul.pt/index1.asp)
than six decades ago, and while the Kirchner administration that came into power in 2003 is generally considered to have been a leftwing administration, the political elites in the PJ are clearly still not providing voters with a uniform programmatic identity. This is in marked contrast to neighboring countries such as Chile, or even Uruguay and Brazil, where left-right semantics were also long absent, but has resurfaced with the arrival at ideologically more coherent parties at the helm of power.

The failure of the PJ to clearly define itself ideologically must share a great deal of the blame for another effect: Despite a generally highly educated electorate, the same survey found that a massive 47.5 percent of the population still cannot define its own left-right position.

What are the consequences for the party’s support? The PJ’s abrupt ideological about-face in the 1990s has been well studied (McGuire 1997, Levitsky 2003), and its ideological inconsistency – or extreme pragmatism – has as well been attributed as main reason for the party’s very ability to perform ideological somersaults. Yet as will be explored, this flexibility comes at a price. While Menem had turned the PJ sharply to the right, in 1999, the party’s presidential candidate Eduardo Duhalde – whose electoral bid Menem did his best to sabotage – ran as the center-left candidate in that year’s presidential election. Yet in the country’s most important electoral district, the province of Buenos Aires, the PJ’s gubernatorial candidate notably ran as a hard right candidate.

In 2003, the internal ideological contradictions finally tore the PJ apart, and three self-declared “peronist” candidates clamored for the PJ vote, together garnering more than 60 percent electoral support. Yet to regard the result a victory for the PJ would obfuscate more than clarify the political reality, as the candidates represented intrinsically opposed ideological projects: Whereas Menem argued for the dollarization of the economy and deep neoliberalism, Kirchner favored nationalizations and Keynesian economics. To regard the results as a victory for the PJ would as well render the argument of PJ’s flexibility beyond falsifiability.32

32 In 2003, the two main presidential candidates, Menem and Kirchner, while both originating from Peronism, were in reality diametrically opposed ideologically. Yet if both – or three with provincial candidate Rodríguez Saá – were to be considered “PJ” candidates, it would not really matter who won: it would in any case have been a vindication of the superior organizational form of the PJ. This work has a different viewpoint: Rather than a victory for the PJ, by 2003 the party’s internal contradictions could no longer be contained, and that year’s election represented the first step in the “normalization” of Argentine elections, where finally clear alternatives were presented of the left and of the right. Other examples abound: In e.g. 2004, a large part of the PJ porteño went with Macri, a clear rightwing candidate, while Kirchner, a Peronist president, summoned the left and Peronists behind Ibarra. If the victory of either candidate could be interpreted a victory of Peronism, it becomes analytically impossible to falsify the argument.
Table 2.2: PJ presidential candidates

Kirchner, as president, would moreover run into ever increasing fights with his party. The PJ’s internal squabbles and failure to elect a national leadership led to its federal intervention; in 2005, the PJ ran divided in 11 provinces, including Buenos Aires, where Kirchner’s main opponent was the rightwing sector of the PJ which ran against its own government. In several provinces, Kirchner’s part of the PJ was in a minority, and the president often allied with other parties or factions of the center-left that were ideologically closer than many of the PJ’s provincial branches.

This had the very unfortunate effect for the voters of not knowing for what project they were voting. For one, the party label provided no signal whether the PJ was a left or a rightwing party; worse still, voters were even deprived of using the party label as a guide to ascertain whether the party supported the government or not. While many peronists who were beat electorally would quickly let bygones be bygones and reconcile with the national government, the 2003-2008 period is a story of intense intraparty infighting that went beyond opportunistic clamoring for power, but pertained directly to the ideological orientation of the party.

Mexico, finally, presents a somewhat different, yet in the final instance highly related story. While its founder Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas would officially amass 31.11 percent of the vote in the 1988 presidential election, the PRD, created the following year, would pull only a fraction of this vote when Cárdenas was not on the ballot. In 2006, the PRD would become the second largest party in Mexico, with a historic high of 29.70 percent of the vote, only slightly below that of its presidential candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. In the ensuing two years, the PRD’s vote share from the presidential elections would in most states similarly plummet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Candidate(s)</th>
<th>Party(S)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Carlos Menem</td>
<td>PJ (with UCeDé)</td>
<td>49.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Eduardo Duhalde</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>38.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Carlos Menem, Néstor Kirchner, Adolfo Rodríguez Saá</td>
<td>Front for Liberty/UCeDé, Front for Victory, Popular National Movement/Union and Liberty</td>
<td>24.45, 22.24, 14.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Cristina Fernández, Alberto Rodríguez Saá</td>
<td>Front for Victory, Front of Justice, Union, and Liberty (PJ split)</td>
<td>44.92, 7.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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33 Senator PR list.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>2006 %</th>
<th>State elections %</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Date of election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chiapas</td>
<td>38.98</td>
<td>46.98</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Aug. 20, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabasco</td>
<td>52.65</td>
<td>42.15</td>
<td>-10.5</td>
<td>Oct. 15, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatán</td>
<td>11.69</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>-9.03</td>
<td>May 20, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango</td>
<td>22.69</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>-16.99</td>
<td>July 1, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacatecas</td>
<td>36.94</td>
<td>31.38</td>
<td>-5.56</td>
<td>July 1, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baja California</td>
<td>18.79</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>-16.47</td>
<td>Aug. 5, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veracruz</td>
<td>35.67</td>
<td>10.47</td>
<td>-25.2</td>
<td>Sept. 2, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiapas</td>
<td>38.98</td>
<td>32.17</td>
<td>-6.81</td>
<td>Oct. 7, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michoacán</td>
<td>38.36</td>
<td>37.87</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>Nov. 11, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puebla</td>
<td>25.19</td>
<td>10.86</td>
<td>-14.33</td>
<td>Nov. 11, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaulipas</td>
<td>23.40</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>-17.35</td>
<td>Nov. 11, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tlaxcala</td>
<td>40.58</td>
<td>20.02</td>
<td>-20.56</td>
<td>Nov. 11, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baja California Sur</td>
<td>42.37</td>
<td>42.81</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>Feb. 3, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>34.05</td>
<td>19.82</td>
<td>-14.23</td>
<td>Feb. 17, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nayarit</td>
<td>38.75</td>
<td>23.71</td>
<td>-15.04</td>
<td>July 6, 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3: PRD Percentage of 2006 national vote, and 2006-2008 state elections.34

The poor electoral showing may well have reflected that AMLO was not on the ballot – his popularity in 2006 had clearly had a tailcoat effect of the PRD – but an alternative scenario holds that his post-electoral confrontational style had greatly diminished his electoral appeal, and consequently, that of the PRD. The close identification of the party with its former leader may have changed to become a liability. Whatever the cause of the PRD’s drop, both competing explanations testify to the high risk of tying a party’s fortunes to a personalistic leader, which AMLO indisputably is, and of the necessity to reinforce an autonomous identity.

Finally, in Mexico, ideological confusion regarding the PRD’s ideological position also persists. While AMLO by 2006 had dropped his earlier refusal to define himself in left-right terms, and while the 2006 contest was described as the first clearly between left and right since the coming of democracy (Moreno, 2006), much confusion persisted as to what these categories

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34 Source: Own calculations based on data from PRD secretariat of electoral affairs. Percent of valid votes to senator list. For more details on these state elections, see Chapter 6. While not always 100 percent comparable – sometime they are governor, sometimes they are only municipal elections, etc, the main point is to show absolute loss, but percentage lost since 2006. The 2006 results as well include the votes pulled by the PRD’s coalition partners PT and Convergencia, which are not always included on the state levels, as the coalition would quickly break down, though most of them include support from one or both of the parties, which in any case only attributed 1-2 percent to the coalition’s total.
entailed. For instance, an April 2005 opinion survey in Mexico City – the political and intellectual heart of Mexico – revealed that two out of five voters could not give any content at all to the terms of “left” and “right,” while those who could, merely resorted to value judgments or descriptions such as “Good,” “Corruption,” “Government,” etc. In other words, while voters in Mexico clearly differed on crucial political issues such as the death penalty, privatization of state companies, and abortion, they did not connect these to a left-right dimension (Estrada and Parás 2006).

The lack of meaningful left-right semantics in political discourse obstructs certain practices crucial for democracy. Without an ideological framework against which to judge political parties, voters must evaluate each proposal and each political event with no clear frame of reference. Voters are deprived of the opportunity to judge parties and issues based on their own left-right placement. When political elites fail to use left-right terms, this simplifying dimension of orientation fails to serve its function of facilitating communication between the elites and the general population (Catterberg and Braun 1989, 76-77).

While personalistic leaders exist who are also clearly ideological –even in clear left-right terms, such as Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez –personalistic leaders nonetheless have an intrinsic interest in having as free of a hand as possible in defining their political positions, and to avoid having to subscribe to limiting programmatic and ideological frameworks.

Yet, as Lipset noted, “Political parties require a base which is uncritically loyal, which will work or support them even when conditions go bad” (Lipset 2001, 8). The evidence suggests that personalistic loyalties remain far less stable than programmatic ones, as a party should not sink or swim merely based on the popularity of its current leader, but instead have an autonomous identity to fall back on. Voting will in the former case be much more susceptible to drastic changes, as personalistic loyalties appear to serve poorly as electoral stabilizing devices, particularly when the personalistic leader shows excessive pragmatism or engages in too many abrupt ideological volte-faces.

Recent research notably suggests that ideological polarization among party alternatives, rather than destabilizing the electorate, serves to anchor parties within relatively stable and differentiated electoral constituencies. In what Roberts and Wibbels deem a “surprise finding,” their comparative study of Latin American electorates indicate that,

ideological polarization tends to diminish rather than increase electoral volatility… Polarization may be a source of political conflict but does not cause electoral volatility; instead, it appears to distance parties, solidify their collective identities, and anchor them within differentiated voting constituencies, thus constraining individual voter mobility.35

In an even broader study, where Mainwaring and Torcal confirm that the left-right dimension is a much weaker predictor of vote choice outside of the industrialized democracies of the West, the authors also note that ideological/programmatic consistency within parties facilitates ideological structuring of party competition:

Where there is a weak linkage between voters’ ideological and programmatic position and their preferred party, voters are more likely to drift from one party to the next - that is, they are more likely to be floating voters.36

Ideological depolarization between left and right has been said to contribute to democratic consolidation (Remmer 1992-1993). Yet almost two decades after the fall of Stalinism and the threat of communist revolution, it appears far from clear that this holds true in all circumstances. Indeed, cases such as Colombia and Venezuela, with party systems in shambles, indicate rather that an inherent danger may lie not only in too much polarization but also in too little differentiation among extant political alternatives. In a context very different from earlier decades, with bloated and interventionist militaries, ideological polarization – or perhaps more accurately, ideological differentiation – may not be intrinsically be bad, as a party’s elite may more easily find a common programmatic project – and presents it to voters – that goes beyond pragmatic personalistic appeals.

The issue, in the final instance, may not even be of more polarization per se, but rather of ideological clarification, or channeling existing polarization along left-right lines and properly label issues along this political space. As non-left-right discourses propagated by personalistic movement-parties tend to be articulated in all-or-nothing terms rather than as opposing viewpoints on a path where the parties can meet half way, ideological clarification may even work in favor of compromise and negotiation, which will be explored below.

Political leaders, by definition, lead, and elites are more likely to think of politics in terms of the left-right continuum than the average voter (von Beyme 1985). If they fail to assign such labels, voters’ understanding of the true content of these terms will be greatly hindered, and they will be largely left to their own devices to grasp with these term. A unique responsibility for assigning real and consistent meaning to these labels ultimately then, lies with a party’s political elite.37

37 One cannot of course, guard fully against the potential “baiting and switching” (Stokes 2001, 196) of its leaders once in office. Yet while the party’s ideology may also be quite disparate, this is exactly the point: Whether any analyses can be made of the party’s ideology as a coherent aggregate, that is, whether an examination of party elites will allow us to make statements regarding the homogeneity, or coherence, of that party’s ideological reach. It is also noteworthy that the “switchers” in this tale ended up in rather sorrow state, from house arrests and legal trials (Menem and Fujimori), to exile and discredited irrelevancy (Carlos Andrés Pérez).
Why party type matters: 2) Personalism, not ideological “cement” at party level

The lack of a left-right guiding ideological framework has as well consequences internally for the party’s cohesion. While internal party instability may stem from many factors, and while most parties experience a level of disagreement on ideological and programmatic direction, the particular pragmatism and/or ideological inconsistency within personalistic movement-parties make them particularly susceptible to internal conflict, as the party at times may lack even a fundamental, minimum agreement on a common preference schedule. While a strong personalistic leader may manage to effectively put a lid on internal disagreements and the party may appear outwardly stable, once the leader steps down, the party may entirely lack a common program, or a minimum agreement on binding ideological “cement” to hold the party together beyond the adherence and loyalty to a leader. This makes personalistic movement-parties particularly susceptible to infighting compared to traditional parties where a binding ideology is present.

While staking out a party’s position on the left-right line is likely to work against abrupt policy changes, the lack of such semantics is conversely intricately tied to personalism. Personalistic leaders have an interest in vague ideologies, as it makes loyalties from other members tied to his or her person rather than to permanent ideologies and programs. This not only assures the loyalty of allies; it moreover makes the leader much freer to change policies. Locating the party in a left-right framework will, however, make such abrupt policy changes more unlikely, as the party will be held against an ideological framework – an internationally compatible standard – against which its positions can be compared.

Gerlach and Hine, in a pioneer study of U.S social movements, argue that if movements share a general agreement on a common ideology, “and if they submerge their differences in the face of opposition when crucial issues are at stake, the movement has great powers” (1970, 73). Levitsky (2003) in particular builds on Gerlach and Hine’s framework, and convincingly posits that the PJ’s fluid ideological identity, as well as its lack of organizational institutionalization, was the very trait that made it flexible and capable of adapting in the 1990s.

But if a common ideology – a common collective preference schedule – is missing, or if the cleavage(s) that originally formed the basis for the initial founding of the political formation is waning, the potential for instability and infighting is great. This scenario is particularly likely if the movement is held together principally by a unifying leader who may serve to contain the party’s internal ideological differences, but fails to further a party identity that goes beyond personalistic and/or clientelist loyalties. If the leader dies, steps down, or is simply discredited, the potential for instability far exceeds that traditional parties, and for two related reasons:
Personalistic loyalties are much less stable than programmatic loyalties, and as such it takes much less for members of a personalistic movement-party to ditch the party when their principal attachments are to the leader. Similarly, the party may as well become highly unstable if elites’ loyalty to their leader simply breaks down, as the party may lack a sufficient autonomous identity, and other ideological attachment to keep them from leaving the party itself may simply not exist. To borrow from Hirschman’s classic framework (1970), if ties to a personalistic leader break down, there may be little loyalty to the party itself, and exit will remain a highly likely strategy particularly when few institutionalized mechanisms of voicing dissent exist.

In sum, while fights over ideology and programmatic direction exist in near every party, opportunism and internal instability is particularly bred by the lack of a common focus or ideological cement that can retain elite loyalties beyond adherence to a leader.

Why party type matters: 3) Organizational characteristics prone to instability

Within the Left-Libertarian movement-parties in Europe, Kitschelt warned, a consequence of their attempt to avoid more traditional, bureaucratic structure was that “competing cliques with political entrepreneurs could quickly arise” and lead to debilitating conflict and disillusion among their rank and file (Kitschelt 1989). Conversely, within the new right, the lack of institutionalized structures for leadership selection or party program formulation also opened up for massive infighting, as the verticalist leadership structure allowed for very little dissent.

Within personalistic movement-parties, a similar danger of internal instability and infighting exists, due to the particular problems of internal coordination found within their organization. In particular, leadership successions have proven particularly debilitating, as well as the forging of common political positions and candidate selections, as no clear mechanism and procedures exist that are respected by the party as a whole for solving these internal conflicts. The latter point takes on a particular significance in countries outside of the industrialized democracies of the West, where democratic institutions may be significantly weaker, and is related directly to the party’s conception of itself as a movement first, and a party second. The parties may well have official rules and mechanisms for solving intraparty differences, but significant sectors of the party, such as in the cases of the PJ and the PRD, have repeatedly demonstrated a lack of will or ability to succumb to the majority decisions of the party’s official organs. Dissenters may conceive their loyalty to be to the wider movement first and the party second, and their adherence to the party is contingent upon its decisions furthering the “cause” of the movement. Externally, this contingent respect for rules and procedures takes on a particular
significance, particular when the movement-party sector controls the party or at least a significant part of it. As this group shows only contingent respect to institutionalized mechanisms for solving differences, externally, a disdain for traditional organization may be reflected in a similar lack of respect for existing institutional setups of the nation, which may be deemed either undemocratic or inefficacious – or both.

First, movement-parties have a much lower threshold for engaging in extra-institutional mobilization, which may be very harmful to democracy in contexts of weak democratic institutions, as they resort to extra-legal measures: A marked willingness to resort to extra-institutional mobilization in the form of e.g. massive street protests, the shutting down of roads, buildings, and so forth, may put a considerable strain on the durability of weaker political institutions.

Second, as the movement-party advocates’ lack of respect for existing institutional setups may stem from a clear denial of their very legitimacy, a significant sector of the personalistic movement-party may sharply question or even oppose the practice of engaging in institutional reform. An all-or-nothing approach to institutions effectively removes any rationale for seeking to improve or reform them, in favor of advocating a complete transformation or even transplantation of existing institutions in favor of a new institutional setup.

Historically, members of the Gaullist Party were torn over the question of whether to engage in reform of the institutions of the 4th Republic, or whether to advocate an entirely new set of institutions. This divide, or outright opposition to performing the prime party function of engaging in legislative reform, lasted until gaullism finally conquered the institutions of the state, and proceeded to drastically alter their setup. While it was clearly democratic, it is nonetheless noteworthy that the 5th Republic indeed did leave much less room for the national legislature or the input of other secondary institutions, in the formulation and execution of national politics. Similarly, in Mexico, the division within the PRD on whether to engage in reform of the country’s institutions or reject them altogether remains a crucial fault line within the party today. Recent attempts at institutional reform, above all in relation to the 2007 COFIPE electoral reform and the 2008 energy reform, have been the cause of major political conflict, as the party’s official leadership and a majority of its legislators have actively participated in the making of these reforms and enthusiastically advocated them, while a minority of the party resorted to tactics such as occupying the legislature to prevent them from being passed. In sum, it is therefore clear that party type matters, as the particular organizational nature of movement-parties lend themselves well to anti-institutional expressions.
Why party type matters: 4) Movement emphasis and discourses of “us vs. them”

When a political formation indulges in a self-understanding of representing society as a whole, the road is short toward considering one’s own movement the only legitimate political option in the country, as opposition can be regarded as intrinsically against the interest of the nation itself.

Such self-understandings, I argue, are intricately linked to a party’s organization and its ideological framework, in a rather circular fashion: The “non-traditional” organization of movement-parties lends itself well to equally unrestricted ideological expressions. As more traditional party types are regarded as obsolete or not relevant to the context, in other words, so are traditional ideologies, particularly the ideological organization of the party in terms of left and right.

In the Argentine context, Alberti et al identified the concept of movimientismo, or “movementism,” where “in the relation between movement and enemy there is no place for mediation, negotiation, and compromise” (1985, 17). Alberti (1996) expanded upon this concept, and defined movimientismo, as

a particular way of playing politics in which all major interests in society are expressed and loosely organized in movements led by charismatic leaders which claim to represent the ‘true’ interests of the nation, do not recognize each other's legitimacy, fight each other for the conquest of public power and identify personal leadership with State institutions.38

To Alberti, movimientismo is an expression of a general Latin American “political culture” that has been the main mode of political expression in Latin America since colonial times, and a legacy of both colonial and pre-colonial orders. Yet the explanatory power of the argument is greatly diminished when one takes into consideration that the level of movimientismo varies too greatly within the region to deem it a constant cultural trait, with the clear examples of the rather well-institutionalized party system of Chile, and also parties such as the PT in Brazil. The traits of this phenomenon, moreover, are clearly not limited to Latin America, but are found within the French Gaullist Party, and movementism has been well noted in the African context (Young 2001). Rather than addressing the peculiar characteristics of movement-parties as cultural traits, it appears more fruitful to regard them concrete manifestations of the particular set-up of a party type, namely personalistic movement-parties.

When the party’s policies are not shaped in terms of consistent policies left and right, but rather in favor of a “movement” in favor of the greater good of the “nation,” the road is dangerously close to engaging in Ersatz ideologies and discourses of “us vs. them,” where the very enemy of the movement becomes an enemy of the nation. As McGuire has noted, “a

movement that defines its own interests as inseparable from those of the nation has a duty to advance those interests as soon and as fully as possible” (1997, 4). Such an orientation certainly does not bode well for negotiations and compromise. As the movement regards itself the highest expression of the nation it may well conflate its own goals and desires with those of the nation, and its loyalties to existing institutional frameworks – be it e.g. the decisions of electoral courts, the separation of powers, or recognition of political opposition – for many becomes contingent rather than unconditional, thus breeching a fundamental precept of liberal democracy.

I argue that the personalistic movement-parties’ failure to organize politics along the left-right continuum promotes “us vs. them” discourses and, perhaps counter intuitively, promotes a dangerous polarization of politics. While in the past it is clear that polarized left-right and class rhetoric have contributed to the breakdown of democracy, structuring politics along this line today on the contrary opens up for more political compromise. Political struggle, clearly, must take place on some grounds, and when it is not organized in terms of left vs. right, discourses that claim to transcend this divide are very susceptible to such friend-enemy discourses. While left-right presupposes a space in politics where the contending forces can meet – halfway in a “third way” or otherwise – the with-us-or-against-us logic found within movements leaves very little room for compromise. Particularly if one’s opponents are not considered merely enemies of one’s movement but also of the nation, with which the movement is predisposed to confound itself, an intrinsic motivation is lacking to believe not only that compromises are possible, but that it should ever be desirable to attempt to engage in them in the first place.

What makes political elites push for movement-parties change?

In the party literature, much has been written about party emergence. What has tends to ignored, however, is the transformation in the nature of existing parties (Wilson 1994, 263). Given their particular characteristics, the subject of internal party change takes on a particular importance in the study of personalistic movement-parties. Kitschelt (2006) has argued that electoral pressures force movement-parties either to change toward a more traditional party organization, or to face the consequences, namely extinction. In the case of the French Gaullist Party, the former scenario arguably played itself out, as the Gaullist Party was able to move beyond its founding father(s) – a classic measure of party institutionalization39 – but in the process eventually assumed both a more traditional party organization, and a relatively unambiguous guiding ideology.

In the case of Argentina and Mexico, however, the personalistic movement-parties PJ and PRD remained for decades in non-institutionalized states, and despite massive internal turmoil appeared far from likely to retire from the political scene. Given the premium put on party institutionalization, it would be of particular value to explore what factors have promoted their institutionalization – that is, shifts away from the movement-party logic – and what factors have worked against it.

Change in a party’s external environment has long been posited as the major cause of party change (Katz and Mair 1992, 9). As parties exist primarily to win elections, electoral loss is often posited as the single most powerful stimulus for party change. Yet no single source has so far been identified as the ultimate cause of party change; rather, studies of change suggest that party transformation may more fruitfully be regarded as stemming from a combination of factors that include socioeconomic change (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), competitive pressures (Kirchheimer 1966), and the individual choices of party leaders (Rose and Mackie 1988).

Lipset and Rokkan’s classic work (1967), while heavily sociological in orientation, nonetheless also opened up the door for political agency. Lipset and Rokkan regarded political parties to be “translators” of social cleavages into political cleavages in a polity. Their work as such was hailed for ending the “sociological reductionism” inherent in much contemporary work, and subsequent work called for more attention to the actions and strategies of political agents warranted more attention, unless politics were to be regarded as nothing more than an epiphenomenon and reflection of social cleavages (Sartori 1969).

The empirical chapters put the focus on political elites as the main agents of change of a party’s organization, ideology, and tactical and strategic orientation. Political leaders have long been regarded key variables in party transformation (Wilson 1994), and Lipset himself concluded that the evolution of parties was principally the product of a “mix of elite behavior and fortuitous history” (2000, 54).

This does not mean external factors are dismissed as not relevant; they may indeed be crucial in affecting party change. Yet while it may be theoretically possible to draw the line between external and internal stimuli for change – whether the change comes from within or from outside the party – in practice it is rather a moot point, as it is the party leaders who in the end choose whether to react or not to these very changes, thereby functioning at the very minimum as intervening elites in the causal chain. Just like parties clearly do not operate in a vacuum, nor do they merely passively react to changes in their external environments. To borrow liberally from

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40 While winning elections was long seem as the single function of parties (Downs 1957), it is clear that there may be other, and competing, functions for political parties. Cf. Strøm (1990), Kitschelt (1988b).
Marx, while political leaders may not make decisions under the conditions of their own choosing, in the end, party leaders still make decisions. I believe a focus on political elites as the main agent of change is warranted, as while external events or conditions may prepare the political ground, we cannot assume a priori that they respond to external stimuli all in the same manner.

For these reasons, the focus on party change in this dissertation will be on the political elites as actors, and the question that will be sought answered is: When will political elites invest in the building of a traditional party organization, and engage in the task of forging a more homogenous and clear ideological identity? That is, when will political leaders propagate the movement-party logic, and when will they seek to invest resources in party-building? Even if we accept the premise that personalistic leaders, almost by definition, are likely to oppose party institutionalization, as the forging of institutionalized structures are likely to impinge on their power, this investigation further aims at uncovering factors that promote or inhibit their power within the party, and hence the possibilities of internal party change.

For practical reasons, the motivations of the actors who engaged in party-building – as well as those who fought against it – are hard to ascertain in the historic case of the Gaullist Party, although the party’s trajectory, detailed in Chapter 2, suggests at least four alternative, and likely complementary, explanations for party change. Similarly, the historical trajectory of the PJ and also the PRD suggest a range of factors that cannot be studied directly today, either because the actors are no longer available, or as the political conditions have changed, principally from those of political repression to today’s state of liberal democracy. Yet as both parties have made several important swings away from the movement-party genus toward that of more institutionalized party formations – and back again – identifying these instances and the circumstances under which they took place can nonetheless offer significant indirect evidence of the motivations for party change, particularly as lively internal debates on party change were indeed held. More direct evidence, however, will be gleaned directly from the current political elites in the PJ and PRD, and it is the goal of this comparative study to identify the motivations of both the proponents and opponents of the movement-party logic, and of the strategies advocated for making their view of the party prevail.
Propositions to be tested

A range of common theoretical propositions on party change have been gathered a priori, and will be examined throughout the next chapters.41 The findings will be present in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

1. If party leaders perceive that in order to win elections they must tone down radical anti-system rhetoric and/or behavior, they will move away from the movement logic.

   This proposition draws from what Kitschelt (1988a) originally identified as the competing pull of the “logic of constituency representation,” vs. the “logic of party competition” (1988a, 129). A movement-party change, then, could be seen as a result of the political elites’ changing emphasis on winning election rather than a limited focus on representing particular groups. The logic of party competition will then require changes in both organizational and programmatic dimensions. The proposition further builds directly on the concept of “elite convergence” (Burton, Gunther and Higley 1992, 24), which posits that political elites discover they need to abandon their semi-loyal (or directly anti-system) stances in order to gain the trust from an electoral coalition beyond its social base. As a result, they need to abandon the movement logic. This is not necessarily a zero-sum game – the movement-party is still likely to depend on its particular social groups, and party leaders may decide simply to temporarily moderate their discourse in order to compete in general elections. Nonetheless, whatever the degree of detachment from the original social base, this new emphasis may still induce changes to the movement-party, as non-movement leaders gain internal power and increased pull in setting the ideological and programmatic agendas.

2. Movement-party change is a direct consequence of electoral defeat.

   As electoral defeat has often been posited as the ultimate source of party transformation, this proposition as well regards changes within the movement-party to be a direct result of an electoral loss. This proposition is highly related to the previous one, but argues that changes come after rather than before: Electoral defeat induces party elites to change their programmatic

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41 The primary focus, as noted earlier, will be on the role of political elites as agents of party transformation. This clearly does not mean that other factors will be dismissed, only that the focus will be on how political elites respond to such stimuli as detailed in the ten propositions. As Wilson noted, “Parties do not make the transformations associated with party modernization unless their leaders will them…. The notion that parties are transformed by unforeseen socioeconomic, cultural, or political forces while their members remain unaware is misleading” (1980, 542, 544). One particularly important external explanation that has often been presented as triggering a reaction within parties is change in electoral rules. However, while electoral rules clearly have been demonstrated to exert a dramatic impact on political parties (Carey and Shugart 1995), there were no significant changes occurring with regards to electoral rules deemed to be relevant for consideration in the cases under investigation, and this will not be addressed in this investigation, whose main focus is on the action of political elites.
appeals and/or organization of their movement-party. While institutions are generally “sticky,” rather than inter-party conflicts, change within movement-parties is here posited to be brought about by what represents a clear external “shock,” namely electoral loss, which will induce political elites to engage in the forging of more coherent ideologies, and less fluid structures, as they reconsider their earlier party configuration not to be sufficiently electorally viable.

3. If a movement-party finally gains executive power, its leaders will desire a more institutionalized loyalty from their base, and end the movement-logic.

   This proposition regards party change chiefly a consequence of having gained power. Once power has been achieved, the rallying calls to mobilize against the “powers that be” may lose their force. To ensure continued support from the base, leaders may engage in party building and forge clearer programmatic profiles, and build more institutionalized career paths within the party. Particularly within the personalistic movement-parties, ill-defined rallies against the “establishment” or even “the system” may inevitably lose its appeal as the movement-party actually gains power of this very structure.

4. When the original founder dies or is displaced, or too much time has passed from the party’s founding so that the original “cause” is exhausted or no longer relevant, party leaders will favor traditional party structures over the movement-party logic.

   This proposition addresses the exhaustion of the relevance of the mobilizing discourse of the party as a source of party change. If the original rationale – be it to simply fight for the “cause” of a founding leader, whatever it may be, or to fight for a highly tangible goal such as party legality or the restoration of democracy – is no longer relevant, the justification for maintaining the movement-type organization may wither away. Even if the leader is not displaced or does not lose power, s/he may look for more institutionalized loyalty from the base as earlier formulas of success that rely on the mobilizing rhetoric of the “golden days” may no longer be adequate.

5. When repression from government ceases, party leaders will discard the movement-party logic.

   This proposition regards the movement-party logic to be a particular rational way of organizing a political formation in a non-democratic setting. If party cadres are still victims of repression from government or non-government forces – hired thugs, paramilitary death squads, et cetera – organization in a segmented and polycephalous movement appears a rational self-
defense measure rather than an institutionalized party formation. Party change may therefore be expected when such repression ceases.42

6. If political leaders believe institutional settings are permissive and that they have the possibility to achieve power, they will end the movement-party logic.

   Even if the democratic trappings are already in place, movement-parties may feel they will never be allowed to win and take power in free elections, and for the rationales discussed earlier will want to emphasize the anti-establishment movement-logic. Yet if democracy is truly implemented and democratic rights respected, the justification for maintaining a political formation with a “siege-mentality” will be greatly reduced.

7. If party leaders perceive existing national political institutions to be an effective arena for advocating and implementing their program, then they will favor traditional party structures over the movement-party logic.

   Party leaders must not only believe they will be able to gain executive power; they must also regard the institutional arena as an effective manner through which to advocate and implement their policies. However, if movement-party leaders believe their initiatives and policies will be blocked from other institutions – be it e.g. the courts, congress, or even the press – a contingent support for the institutional setups of the state may be maintained even if the movement-party gains power, together with the perceived need for maintaining their particular mobilizational base.

8. If party leaders no longer have a ready extra-party source of social mobilization, they will favor traditional party structures over the movement-party logic.

   This proposition posits that as movement-party advocates exhaust their social support – from extra-party sources or groups on the fringe of the party – their attention will be turned further toward their own party. A plausible scenario could be when the loyalty of extra-party groups is reduced, or when other leaders, from within or outside their own party, may gain control over them. As the elite can no longer take the loyalty and support of these extra-party segments for granted, leaders may lose an important rationale for advocating the movement-party logic within the party.

9. If party leaders perceive they stand to gain power within the party through its official organs, they will advocate the building of the party.

   This proposition regards support for party building similarly as a mere instrumental approach to solidify one’s own power within the party. If party leaders feel they are unable to

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42 Gerlach and Hine in particular argued that such organization adds to the survivability of movement, as such structures are “highly adaptive in that they promote the growth of the movement, prevent effective suppression of it, and facilitate the desired personal and social changes” (1970, 65).
gain power through official party organs – above all, through lack of support by a majority of the party base – they may advocate a movement-party logic that downplays the authority and even value of official party organs and may even work actively to undermine them: Loyalty remains contingent upon one’s own internal strength. If, however, they believe institutionalization will further their power – through their ability to gain control of official party organs – they might favor a traditional party model over the movement-party logic.

10. If opposition alternatives with clearly defined opposing ideological agendas appear as viable contenders for power, party leaders will favor traditional party structures over the movement-party logic.

As noted earlier, I regard institutionalization of movement-parties to include changes in both organizational and programmatic aspects of the party. As Samuels reminds us, “one party’s strategy is partly a function of what other parties do” (2004, 1005). While it is part of movement-parties’ appeal that they either seek to transcend left-right divides, present vague programmatic platforms, or both, if opposition parties appear with clearly identified ideological agendas – either of the left or the right – it may have a centrifugal effect on movement-parties. Political parties often define themselves in opposition to its main relevant electoral contenders; if the electoral contender similarly presents vague programmatic platforms and/or ideologies, the movement-parties will lack an incentive to change their own. Yet if the opposition rather define themselves in left-right ideological terms, the movement-party may respond with a similar ideological and programmatic clarification, as it now has a clear ideological “other” against which to define its struggle.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a new and theoretical construct that has not been addressed in the literature, but whose internal characteristics warrant a separate designation as a personalistic movement-party. I argue that the particular behavioral pattern and internal conflicts of this party type, which is highly mobilizational, personalistic, and anti-institutional in nature, can best be understood through the lens of the party construct outlined in this chapter.

While movement-parties are said to transform or disappear, this party type is all the more remarkable in that it has in several cases persisted in an uninstitutionalized state for several decades. This chapter argues that their failure to institutionalize is a product of a complementary logic of both the party’s personalistic leader, as well as a significant sector of the party elite: 1) The dominance of a leader who has contempt for the constraints of more traditional parties, and 2) a fundamentally different conception of the role of the political party and party
institutionalization, where the party’s elites are thoroughly divided on even the desirability and value of becoming a more traditional political organization.

Moreover, while the characteristics of the movement-party’s fluid organization and pragmatic ideology have been said to enhance the party’s flexibility and very survivability, not enough attention has been awarded to the possible negative effects of this unique blend of party and movement, the personalistic movement-party. I argue that this party species in its non-institutionalized state is intrinsically tied to the stability and quality of liberal democracy principally in four crucial and related manners: 1) A lack of a dominant ideological framework beyond pragmatic personalism prevents voters from recognizing the party in clear left-right terms, and its mass vote as such is not anchored along ideological lines. 2) The lack of a common ideological preference schedule also affects the stability of the party internally. Little ideological cement ties the party elite together, as loyalty is first and foremost to a personalistic leader rather than a developed and autonomous ideological platform. 3) The lack of respected mechanisms for solving intra-party differences, and an emphasis on movement mobilization rather than the building of the party structure, allows for a highly fluid and instable organizational structure, where the very value of an institutionalized party organization is questioned. 4) The disdain for “traditional” ideologies, above all those shaped in left-right terms, and for a more institutionalized party organization, opens up for friend-enemy logics of political articulation, where loyalties in favor or against the “cause” or “movement” are inherently biased against compromise.

Finally, the case of the French Gaullist party, which eventually changed to become a traditional political formation, suggests personalistic movement-parties are capable of moving toward more institutionalized party forms. With a focus on party elites as the main agent of change, I have suggested a series of a priori theoretical propositions for when these elites are likely to engage in party building. As the dynamics of these parties can be best understood, I argue, when approached through their designation as personalistic movement-parties, the investigation will be guided by this theoretical construct. It will then ask, when will party elites attempt to build a more traditional party organization, and not just treat the party as a means to an end, or an appendage of a broadly defined movement? What motivations facilitate, and what obstacles discourage, party elites from moving from advocating the movement, toward building the party? These are lines of inquiry to which answers can only be provided by the political elites themselves.
CHAPTER 2
AN HISTORIC CASE OF MOVEMENT-PARTY CHANGE:
THE GAULLIST PARTY

This party was founded to serve me… not to inconvenience me. It should keep quiet.43
- Charles de Gaulle.

In November 2008, an article in *The Economist* asked, “Is Sarkozy a Closet Socialist?”
The background for the rather peculiar headline was recent statements by the French president
where he railed against the “dictatorship of the market” and declared that “laissez-faire capitalism
is over.”44 While Sarkozy himself responded to the question with a coy “perhaps,” one would be
hard-pressed to put Sarkozy on the left side of the political spectrum. Yet the comment was quite
fitting given that Sarkozy’s UMP is the successor party to a party that for long bouts of its
existence indeed claimed to represent both the left and right, and at times denied the very
applicability of this ideological dimension.

While the “Gaullist Party” was never officially the name of the political formation
created by General Charles de Gaulle, it was for years so intricately tied to its founder and his
particularly eclectic national doctrine that it was most often simply known as his namesake, even
more so given the party’s “remarkable propensity to change its name at every election” (Cameron
and Hofferbert 1973, 78).

There were in reality various gaullist parties – on some occasions, several coexisted – and
they were moreover “unusual because they underwent a bewildering series of incarnations”
(Knapp 1994, 2). The first party created by de Gaulle in 1947, the RPF, was a large mass party
that folded rather drastically; its 1958 resurrected version was a much smaller party created from
government, which only later developed into a real party independent of the French executive.
The UNR went through several transformations until it fell apart in 1974; its 1976 successor,
RPR, was organizationally and programmatically quite distinct. While it harked back to the mass
origins of the 1947 RPF, its conservative profile became increasingly clear, though it was said of

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43 Quoted in Hartley (1971, 3).
its leader that the only “salient tendency of [Jacques] Chirac’s political philosophy is its inconstancy” (Knapp 1994, 451).45

Throughout its history, the Gaullist Party has more often than not resisted categorization. While it shared the critique of European Christian democratic parties against what was regarded as excessive personal and economic liberalism – Sarkozy’s recent praise of state intervention a case in point – it nonetheless lacks this party type’s emphasis on compromise and moderation in other spheres, and often demonstrated sharp nationalism and authoritarian tendencies inside and outside of government. Given the organizational metamorphoses of the Gaullist Party, and eclectic “Gaullist Doctrine,” the party was thus declared, “if not as sui generis, at least as defying any obvious Euro-categorization” (Knapp 1994, 399). As will later be explored, this chapter rather deems the party as a historic case of a personalistic movement-party. In line with the theoretical construct developed in Chapter 1, the party’s organizational and ideological characteristics, as well as its tactics and strategies, will be analyzed in the following section, as well as its final conversion into a more institutionalized party formation: The Gaullist party remains a clear case of personalistic movement-party change.

The Gaullist Party is declared into existence

The training of a soldier cannot be adapted to parliamentary practice.46
-Jacques Dumain

That Charles de Gaulle, a general and a war hero, would in 1947 actually create a new party was remarkable given his utter disdain for political parties. He had resigned from the provisionary French government in January 1946 in disgust at “party bickering (Cook 1950, 335), and he thought of parties as a barely tolerable “necessary evil” that “could not be turned into a permanently good and useful tool – at least in France” (Hoffmann 1974, 199). De Gaulle regarded parties as greatly responsible for the political turmoil that France had experienced in the interwar years, and the French party system would similarly be blamed on the problems of the 4th Republic (Wilson 1973, 488, Converse and Pierce 1986, 19).

Despite leaving the national government in 1946, de Gaulle would not retire from the political scene, but railed against political parties in a range of speeches, and advocated his own institutional philosophy, “so alien to the parliamentary tradition” of France (Charlot 1971, 145):

A new institutional system of a very powerful executive, where parties would be relegated to a very minor role. On June 16 1946, he gave his famous Bayeux speech, where he argued for an entirely new institutional setup:

… in our country the rivalry between the parties takes on a fundamental character which continuously throws everything into question, and which too often casts the higher interests of the country into the shade.. But it is vital for the future of the country and democracy that our institutions take it into account and guard against it, in order to preserve the credit of the law, the coherence of government, efficient administration, and the prestige and the authority of the State.

De Gaulle particularly lamented the apparent return to the parliamentary politics of the interwar years:

Once victory was achieved, however, and the people consulted through elections, the parties reemerged, impatient to be back in the driving seat, particularly as regards myself, and in agreement on only one issue, that the way was now open to them …only two possible solutions remained open to the man who stands before you today. One was to enter into the party game, a solution which would, I believe, have devalued to no profit the kind of national capital which, by the force of events, that man had come to represent and would have rapidly led to compromise on essential matters. The other was to allow the parties to carry out their experiment, although not without having first secured to the people the power of deciding by referendum on the regime to be adopted. I chose the second solution.

According to de Gaulle, “over and above political contingency, there needs to be a national arbiter capable of providing continuity in the midst of politicians' arrangements.” The call for a new “arbiter” – obviously de Gaulle – to step in and elevate himself above politics and parties, was intricately linked to the calling for a new institutional setup, with a strong executive:

The executive power must… flow from the Head of State, standing above the parties, elected by a college the encompasses the Parliament, but which is far vaster and made up such that he is the President of the French Union as well as of the Republic…. he would play the role of arbiter, standing above political contingency, either by proffering advice in normal circumstances or, at times of serious confusion, by inviting the nation to make known its sovereign decision through elections ; to him would fall the duty, in time of national danger, of guaranteeing the independence of the nation.

Finally, de Gaulle called for second chamber that would have some kind of oversight function of the first, and was moreover to be elected in a seemingly corporatist arrangement:

Clearly and naturally, the definitive enactment of laws and budgets lies with an assembly elected by direct, universal suffrage. But total foresight and serenity are not necessarily the first attributes of such an assembly. It is therefore necessary to invest a second assembly, elected and composed differently, with the task of publicly reviewing what the first has discussed, formulating amendments, and making proposals…It would be reasonable, moreover, to introduce into this chamber representatives of economic, family and intellectual organizations so that the voice of the country's main activities may be heard right at the heart of the State.47

Later, de Gaulle would add the “gaullist predilection for the plebiscite and referendum” (Cook 1950, 349), where in a kind of “plebiscitary democracy” the president in certain matters would be able to consult the electorate directly, and bypass the “régime of parties” completely. While the parties would remain as “frustrating barriers between the President and the people at

47 Full speech at www.charles-de-gaulle.org
elections,” they could then be ignored almost completely (Pierce 1954, 99). The center of political power would no longer lie with them, or the parliament.

A few months later, in August 1946, a “Gaullist Union” was organized to promote these ideas, and was led by former resistance man and left national deputy René Capitant. While it claimed to have obtained half a million followers in mere weeks, for the Nov. 10, 1946 national elections, it only pulled 3.1 percent of the total vote (Cook 1950, 339).

Then, however, in the Place the Broglie in Strasbourg, despite his loathing for political parties de Gaulle declared on April 7, 1947 the formation of the Rassemblement du Peuple Français (RPF), a political formation of which he himself would be president.

It is time for the men and women of France who think and feel this way, and that is, I am sure, the vast mass of our people, to rally in proof of it. It is time to form and to organize the Rally of the French People which, within the framework of the law, will overcome differences of opinion to promote and bring to fruition the great effort of common salvation and far-reaching reform of the state. So, in harmony of action and intention, the French Republic will build the new France of tomorrow. 48

**The RPF as a personalistic movement-party organization**

As its name indicated, the RPF was not to be a regular party, but a “gathering” or “assembly,” with the explicit purpose of “the salvation of France” and ending the “sterile game" of party politics (Cook 1950, 339). The contradictions in the party, however, were inherent from the start: It was to be “a sort of a super-party embracing all the patriotic elements of the nation” (Pierce 1954, 102), but its basis for existence was the very rejection of political parties. While the party claimed to represent national unity, it was all but conciliatory, and “stridently anti-communist, hostile to the parliamentary regime of the Fourth Republic, nationalistic and a structured, organized, well-financed mass movement” (Frears 1977, 38). The party scored early impressive electoral victories: In the municipal elections it won large cities such as Bordeaux, Rennes, Strasbourg, and Marseille. Having been created merely months earlier, it pulled almost 40 percent of the valid vote.

The party, or anti-party, had more a character of a movement than an autonomous political party, and was intricately linked to de Gaulle. Chariot noted that the “Gaullist Party…. is not in itself an object of respect, or fear, or needful of careful handling. Without de Gaulle it is nothing.” (1971, 36).

The complete dominance of de Gaulle over all aspects of the party has been noted by many observers. According to Cook, a contemporary observer, “The RPF is his creation, its

48 Full speech at www.charles-de-gaulle.org
philosophy is his philosophy, its policies and programs are his policies and programs; De Gaulle and the RPF are one and indivisible” (Cook 1950, 336).

After the 1947 election, a national executive committee was set up by de Gaulle in Paris, and a national council was added. The new formation was, however, highly vertical and top-down in character. The national council, to be formally appointed by a party congress, had no rights or control over the national leadership, and served for suggesting long-term policies rather than as an autonomous counterweight to de Gaulle. While a national party congress was later elected, in the local party organization, real power was held by departmental delegates, who were appointed directly by the executive committee, in turn appointed by de Gaulle (Neumann 1953, 253). Most of the top leadership came from the French Resistance; 34 of the 43 members appointed by de Gaulle to serve on the national executive committee had roots in the liberation struggle. In sum, as Hartley noted, “All power in the movement… stemmed from de Gaulle himself” (1971, 138).

The RPF had the character of a mass movement. At its height it reportedly had a million members (Charlot 1971, 89), and its meetings drew huge crowds. One mass rally on Oct. 5, 1947 in Paris, drew more than half a million people, and was an “occasion for symbolic pageantry” with massive use of flags and national symbols, above all the Cross of Lorraine, symbol of the Free French and before that of Joan of Arc (Hartley 1971, 138). The gatherings of the party’s national congress bore the “somewhat grandiloquent title of Assises Nationales,” or “national meetings,” and the first, held in Marseilles on April 16, 1948, drew more than two thousand delegates (Neumann 1953, 253). Charlot noted,

If we look at gaullism, it is clear enough that the RPF, founded in 1947 by General de Gaulle, is a “mass party”: it recruits its members in hundreds of thousands, places them in a framework of hierarchical and disciplined organization, moulds them in its officer-training schools and party assemblies [and] organizes huge meetings and enormous popular gatherings.49

Notably, despite a “tight authoritarian structure,” the RPF allowed and even encouraged a principle of “double-membership,” where members of the RPF were allowed to similarly belong to other parties, arguably “designed to infiltrate the other parties and to make defection easy” (Neumann 1953, 252), but also an expression of the RPF’s claim to be beyond traditional party organization. More extraordinary still, in parliament, many of its deputies were as well elected as members of other parties.

This seeming flexibility did not stop its critics from lamenting the “undesirable aspects of the gaullist movement: its authoritarian nature; nationalistic tendencies” (Cook 1950, 340, 352).

As Frears noted,

49 Charlot (1971, 63).
The demagogic language and style the violent behavior of some supporters, and the authoritarian character of the movement make the RPF the most discreditable and Bonapartist phase of gaullism.50

Negation of ideology and diffuse programmatic positions

Every Frenchman was, is, or will be “gaullist.”51
-Charles de Gaulle, 1950

The RPF’s non-traditional party setup similarly extended to its doctrinal orientation:

de Gaulle tirelessly reminds this public that the RPF is not another political party. It is a group of French men and French women of all classes and creeds, united by their determination to give first place to France and French interests… Unlike the political parties, it has a doctrine, a doctrine which calls for disciplined action and the regeneration of the French nation.52

Many contemporary observers noted the “extremely patriotic nature” (Cook 1950, 350) of the RPF, and De Gaulle himself called gaullism “the élan of our country, the rediscovered élan” (Hartley 1971, 300). Gaullism, and the RPF, was thus first and foremost seen as the reincarnation of the nation itself and therefore, “all categories of Frenchmen out to be gaullists in so far as they were Frenchmen” (Hartley 1971, 301)

Noteworthy as well was de Gaulle’s explicit “dismissal of ideologies” (Hoffmann 1974, 232) in general, and his refusal to designate the movement as either left or right.

The intention was, with a view to national unity, to gather all French citizens in single political movement, against the established political class, which did not see the needs of France, and with a people of which de Gaulle perceived himself as its reincarnation.53

Yet while he claimed to represent France as a whole, one relatively clear enemy was found in the “political class.” As Hoffmann noted, “De Gaulle’s distaste for French parties and pressure groups extended to all the ‘elites,’ the notables from whose ranks the representatives were elected” (Hoffmann 1974, 195). The enemy was therefore relatively clearly defined: “it was a struggle between a revolutionary doctrine, expounded by De Gaulle, and the forces of traditional French parliamentary” (Pierce 1954, 96). Arguably, this fell into a historic “Bonapartist tradition of nationalism and plebiscitary democracy” where “as an expression of nationalism gaullism could naturally be all things to all men”:

Gaullism, therefore, can be defined as French nationalism personified in the figure of a national savior and inheriting the streak of plebiscitary democracy which runs through French history from Bonaparte onwards and blurs the distinction between right and left.54

Following the 1948 election to the Council of the Republic, or senate, the new RPF councilors refused to take their designated place on the right side in the council and thus

50 Frears (1977, 39).
52 Taylor (1951, 102).
54 Hartley (1971, 302, 304).
symbolically acknowledge their ideology as rightwing, and were eventually allowed to sit in the center of the chamber (Cook 1950, 344). Moreover, its electoral support in several elections further denied any characterization of the RPF as a traditional conservative party; it achieved impressive gains in traditionally leftwing areas, while at the same time it failed to capture much of the traditional conservative ones (Cook 1950, 341; Neumann 1953, 264).

The RPF was expressly anti-communist in orientation, and de Gaulle presented himself and the party as the only bulwark against what was regarded the dangerous threat of international communism (Cook 1950, 347). Yet just as the RPF fought communist influence in the unions, it also launched “bitter attacks against capitalism” (Pierce 1954, 101). Already in the RPF’s foundational speech, de Gaulle had argued for some mechanism of worker-management cooperation to end the traditional class struggle:

Are we condemned to oscillate painfully between one system in which workers are no more than instruments of the company for which they work and another which would crush each and every one of us, body and soul, into an odious bureaucratic and totalitarian machine? No! The humane, practical, French solution to this overriding question lies neither in such abasement of one group nor such slavery for all. It lies in the dignified and productive association of those who would, within a single company, contribute either their labor or their technical skills or their capital, and who would share openly as honest stakeholders in both the benefits and the risks.55

Rather than the customary collective bargaining between unions and employers, however, he foresaw “contracts of association,” where elected representatives of workers, managers, and shareholders would on equal footing deliberate on wages and the sharing of profits and wages (Hartley 1971, 143, Neumann 1953, 258). Yet these “extraordinary attempt to create a political philosophy for the party and to push it toward a kind of Gaullo-Marxism,” which were pushed above all by the leftwing René Capitant, were never implemented, and gaulllsm as a whole would eventually move away from “labor contracts” and other associational mechanisms (Neumann 1953, 270).

The overwhelming focus on the gaulllist “pursuit of grandeur” has led many to comment on the doctrine’s “emptiness.” As Hoffmann noted,

one cannot fail to be struck by the ideological emptiness of gaulllism. Gaulllism is a stance, not a doctrine; an attitude, not a coherent set of dogmas; a style without much substance-beyond the service of France and French grandeur, itself never defined in content, only by context.56

This vagueness, however, undoubtedly left de Gaulle free to formulate – and change –the doctrine as he saw fit, and as such it appeared to be vague by design. As Neumann noted, gaulllism was “a personal movement in every sense of the word” (1953, 250):

The vagueness of the RPF objectives in the constitutional and all other fields is heightened by the fact that only General de Gaulle's stamp of approval can make an objective "official." Yet De

55 De Gaulle Strasbourg speech: April 7, 1947. Full speech available at www.charles-de-gaulle.org
Gaulle, like the Delphian oracle, likes to speak in highly general and often ambiguous terms, and often does not speak at all.\textsuperscript{57}

A more precise ideological formulation would therefore run the risk of belying gaullism’s claim to universality:

Those ideologists in the party who would like to force gaullism into an iron cage of doctrine… have little hope of accomplishing this because their success would ruin any hope that gaullism has of uniting the nation around itself. …The only article of the gaullist faith consists in the belief that ideologies pass away, but that nations remain and constitute the driving force behind all history.\textsuperscript{58}

The Gaullist Doctrine, therefore, “should be seen as the flexible combination of ideas rather than a consistent body of ideology” (Knapp 1994, 455); to some, “The gaullism of de Gaulle was above all a variety of nationalism” (Fysh 1997, 75). Hartley characterized the doctrine as the “single-minded concentration on France, the appeal for national unity, the use of history to engender myth, the quasi-religious atmosphere and [an] almost messianic sense of mission that informed de Gaulle’s utterances” (1971, 32), and its focus on nationalism was not without its critics:

His movement had also developed tendencies disturbingly reminiscent of some elements of fascism, tendencies which have not passed unnoticed by his opponents. Among these may be included De Gaulle's concept of his role as the savior of France and Europe; the development of an esoteric gaullist vocabulary (in which, for instance, followers are called ‘companions’); the general fuzziness and unrealistic nature of many of his projects; and, of course, the continued appeal to the masses for support.\textsuperscript{59}

De Gaulle, of course, was no fascist, although it is clear that the movement, as later events would demonstrate, surely attracted fascist elements. In the end, however, the RPF had “effectively awakened the French right from its post-war slumbers” (Cook 1950, 335), and gaullism would increasingly assume a more traditional position “on the right of the political spectrum” (Hartley 1971, 95).

\textbf{Anti-system Katastrofenpolitik, or reform: RPF folds over divide over strategy}

The Rassemblement wants today, just as yesterday, to change the regime.\textsuperscript{60} Louis Terrenoire, secretary general of RPF

De Gaulle and the RPF from the onset made clear their determination to end the 4\textsuperscript{th} Republic, and to introduce an entire new set of institutions modeled on the concepts expressed in the Bayeux speech. In parliament, the RPF “remained an extra-parliamentary league of political mystics… uncompromising in its hostilities to the present regime” (Taylor 1951, 100, 101), and was specifically banned from cooperating with any attempts at regime reform. This opposition led

\textsuperscript{57} Neumann (1953, 257).
\textsuperscript{58} Charlot (1971, 64).
\textsuperscript{59} Cook (1950, 347).
\textsuperscript{60} From party organ \textit{Le Rassemblement}, April 25, 1952. Quoted in Neumann (1953, 267).
the RPF to be labeled “the first anti-parliamentary bonapartist movement to grip the Fourth Republic” (Pierce 1954, 116).

Following the results of the Oct. 1947 municipal elections, where RPF pulled more than 35 percent of the vote, de Gaulle went to the extraordinary step of demanding the national assembly – elected only one year earlier – dissolved. When his call was not heeded, he instructed the deputies identified with the RPF to maintain a “systematic opposition” to government, except for those issues he agreed to” (Pierce 1954, 106). From 1947 on, the group of deputies elected in 1946 who declared to sympathize with the RPF,

was determined “not to co-operate” with the regime and to make its life miserable by persistent opposition. Therefore the group voted against every investiture and against practically every bill and proposition supported by the government.61

De Gaulle himself commanded the RPF to engage in “brutal destruction” in the parliament, as he saw any attempts to reform the institutions of the 4th Republic as useless:

Constructive acts can only be carried out after the whole constitutional framework is changed. It would be futile for the RPF's parliamentary representatives to try to work within the framework of the existing system. They would only become enmeshed in its unproductive machinations.62

As Taylor noted,

In General de Gaulle’s view, it is useless to talk of programs while the constitutional problem remains unsolved. Systematic opposition must be the RPF policy until the present parliament is dissolved or until it reaches the end of its term of office.63

In parliament, the RPF’s “insistence on internal party discipline” (Taylor 1951, 101) eventually led to the defection between 1948 and 1951 of particularly conservative deputies who had jumped on the RPF association for opportunist electoral purposes. For the June 1951 election, the RPF as a result abandoned the idea of a loose rassemblement based on double membership, and went alone without any alliances or common candidates with other parties. While the RPF’s vote return of 4.25 million, second only to the Communist party, landed it 121 deputies and the largest representation in parliament, its share of 21.6 of the vote was nonetheless a disappointment for a party that claimed to represent the totality of the French nation.

Yet despite the attempts of purging the parliamentary group of “opportunists,” the RPF’s group after 1951 remained heavily divided,

torn between job-seekers ready to be absorbed in the “system” and hyperbolic champions of la politique du pire, reduced to proving their existence through their capacity to destroy.64

Yet between the “opportunist job seekers” and the “mamelukes,” the men who are primarily gaullists, i.e. personal, often fanatical, followers of their idol, and who frequently hold

61 Neumann (1953, 264).
63 Taylor (1951, 104).
64 Hoffmann (1974, 25).
authoritarian ideas” (Neumann 1953, 268), were an increasing group of deputies who saw it as their very role of legislators to have some constructive impact on politics. The brewing crisis in the RPF’s parliamentary group came to a half on March 6, 1962, when 27 of the RPF’s deputies defied the direct orders of their party leader and voted for the investiture of Antoine Pinay, a conservative, as prime minister of France. While de Gaulle would force a showdown, when push came to shove a significant faction of the deputies abandoned the Katastrofenpolitik they were ordered to uphold. In the coming weeks, the group of dissident voting against the instructions of their leadership grew to 40 deputies. As Neumann noted,

The dissidents continued to avow their loyalty to General de Gaulle and the ideals of gaullism. But they warned against a “sterile opposition” and the politique du pire.65.

In an interview in Le Monde after the investiture vote, de Gaulle made it clear he would accept no dissidence. He declared that the RPF “is not, like other parties, a parliamentary enterprise,” and that no RPF member would be allowed to enter a government.66 Yet more schisms in the parliamentary group followed, until, notably, all but one of the RPF’s deputies broke with de Gaulle’s edict to vote for the investiture of René Mayer on Jan. 8, 1953 (Pierce 1954, 115). In its short history, the RPF had “uneasily wavered between intransigent opposition to the system… or joining the system” (Frears 1977, 38), yet had now settled for the latter. By supporting the majority alternative, while the RPF in the end did not participate in the Mayer government, the RPF, “had become a party like others” (Neumann 1953, 271).

**Regime change or nothing: The RPF loses its raison d’être.**

The Rassemblement wants today, just as yesterday, to change the regime.67 Louis Terrenoire, secretary general of RPF, 1953

Up until the vote on the Pinay cabinet, the RPF had been a very cohesive parliamentary force (MacRae Jr. 1967, 57), loyally following de Gaulle’s orders to carry out a politique du pire. This does not make de Gaulle undemocratic in itself – he never questioned the actual constitutional legitimacy of the 4th Republic – but he nonetheless considered the Republic to be fatally flawed, and ordered the RPF deputies to not take part in or back any government that he did not himself lead.

De Gaulle was not interested in reform. From the creation of the RPF he made no secret of his goal to bring down the Republic. In practice, he therefore denied the national legislators their basic function of participating in institutional reform and the basic legislative function of

65 Neumann (1953, 266).
67 From party organ Le Rassemblement, April 25, 1952. Quoted in Neumann (1953, 267).
passing laws. When it became clear that he could not command such loyalty in the long run, rather than meeting them half way, he was unwavering in his anti-system stance, and forced showdowns on votes where the deputies eventually abandoned him.

For the April 1953 municipal elections, he was conspicuously absent (Neumann 1953, 272), and the party’s vote plummeted to only 10.6 percent (Hartley 1971, 140). The following month, he declared that he would not permit any member of the parliament to speak in the name of the RPF, and “released” the deputies of their allegiance to the party. When his deputies disobeyed his order, he decided he did not want anything to do with them or the party at all, and the decision “marks the end of the RPF as an active political force” (Pierce 1954, 96).

De Gaulle did not allow the Gaullist Party any autonomy or life of its own, so it is hardly remarkable that the party did not possess any separate identity beyond support for de Gaulle. For the 1954 national elections, the party grouping that claimed to represent the doctrine of “gaullism” only pulled 3.9 percent. In the following years, while de Gaulle retained the right to the name of his movement for a future effort, “the organization did not exist as a political party, but more like a social movement” (Demker 1993, 20). Gaullism “would consist of small bands of faithful followers loosely connected and working for the gaullist cause by means ranging from study groups to conspiracy” (Hartley 1971, 135).

In 1946, when it became clear that de Gaulle lacked the necessary support in the national assembly, he had abruptly abandoned the provisional government of which he was in charge.

According to Neumann,

The General was not averse to democratic control. He never denied the right of the Assembly to turn him out of office. But he demanded that he should be left alone to govern while he was in office.68

His subsequent intransigent opposition to the participation of the RPF in the workings of the 4th Republic flowed logically from this attitude: If the RPF could not achieve a majority, it should not participate in the reform of the Republic, or do anything to legitimize it. Moreover, for de Gaulle, the RPF had only been a means to an end, and when it became clear that he would not win the required majority, he completely lost interest in the party, which soon demonstrated to have little reason to exist on its own

De Gaulle nonetheless remained waiting for a future opportunity. As Pierce presciently noted, “He is there, in other words, to be called upon if the system against which he has so bitterly fought should prove incapable of solving its problems” (1954, 119). Such a crisis would present itself in 1958.

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68 Neumann (1953, 251).
De Gaulle in power: Limitation on institutional intermediation.

I myself was the principal theoretician of the Constitution…it was a real impertinence to presume to challenge me on its meaning.\textsuperscript{69}

-Charles de Gaulle

The “Algeria problem” would be the crisis that brought de Gaulle back to executive power (Berstein 1993, 28). Following the apparent threat of a military rebellion from France’s colony to spread to continental France, de Gaulle was asked to assume the office of prime minister of the 4\textsuperscript{th} Republic. While he was given “near dictatorial powers” to contain the rebels (Converse and Pierce 1986, 21), he conditioned his assumption on the adaptation by France of a new constitution that drastically redrew the power relations between the country’s political institutions. After a national referendum gave a resounding victory to the proponents of the new constitution – 82.6 percent – de Gaulle assumed as the first president of the 5\textsuperscript{th} Republic, having been chosen by an 80,000-member electoral college of mainly municipal councilors.

Politics in the years 1958-1969 was characterized by very little intermediation by political parties or other secondary institution, “a sort of personal rule legitimized by recourse to public opinion” (Fysh 1997, 79). As Wilson noted of de Gaulle,

He conceived his role in politics as aloof from the divisions and disputes of the parties. He saw himself as the embodiment of the French national interest as opposed to the particular and partisan interests represented by the parties… He saw no need for a political party to support himself since he felt he could appeal directly to the people. He preferred such direct appeals to seeking support through intermediaries such as parties.\textsuperscript{70}

There was a clear institutional foundation for these practices, namely the 1958 constitution, which was drawn up largely by de Gaulle, and built directly on the ideas he espoused in his 1946 Bayeux speech for a strong executive. While the regime was called a semi-presidential regime, with the executive and legislative powers united, the balance was “heavily in favor of the former” (Hartley 1971, 161).

The new constitution followed the Bayeux doctrine almost to the letter. Significant provisions were:

- Art. 16: The president could evoke wide emergency powers whenever he deemed a grave crisis to threaten the nation, and take the “measures which the circumstances required”
- Art. 11: The president could call for a referendum on virtually any issue, bypassing parliament
- Art. 12: The president could dissolve parliament without consulting political parties
- Art. 8: The president appoints the prime minister
- Arts. 13-15: The president was granted extensive powers to issue ordinances and decrees, and to appoint ambassadors and a range of civil and a wide range military posts


\textsuperscript{70} Wilson (1973, 489).
Art. 18: The president did not have to address parliament in person, but could do so by messages
Art. 52: The president was granted power to negotiate and ratify foreign treaties
Art. 23: Members of government would have to give up their seat in parliament.

In effect, the constitution signified a drastic shift in power away from political parties toward the national executive. This was particularly evident four years later, when de Gaulle, against the objections of parliament, pushed through the direct election of president, and increasingly resorted to mass referenda to legitimize his rule. By bypassing almost completely the parliament, the regime looked increasingly like a purely presidential regime where the separation of powers usually inherent to presidential regimes was greatly diminished. The institutions of the 5th Republic, finally, were hardly static; De Gaulle “never ceased to fashion as he saw fit, with piecemeal additions and adjustments, both the letter and the spirit of its institutions” (Berstein and Rioux 2000, 3).

Plebiscite over legislature: The 1962 amendment

A strong presidency was clearly desired by the French people as well as de Gaulle, who had the cabinet instabilities of the 4th Republic fresh in mind. Yet while presidential systems contain various mechanisms of separation of powers, even these provisions were reinterpreted so as to drastically reduce the clout of intermediary institution. As president, in line with his long-standing dismissal of political parties and intermediary institutions, “de Gaulle went out of his way to show his lack of regard for parliament.” In March 1960, for instance, he reinterpreted a clause in the constitution to deny the parliament the right to hold extraordinary session, that is, denying the legislative power of its very ability to decide when to meet (Berstein 1993, 62).

In 1962, moreover, he advocated a change of the constitution to allow for the direct election of the French president. While one is hard pressed to argue against the intrinsic democratic quality of direct popular elections of the executive, the manner in which de Gaulle rode roughshod over the legislature to push through the 1962 amendment led observers to denounce the move as of “questionable constitutionality” (Converse and Pierce 1986, 21). It was also very in line with his desire to bypass the traditional parties in favor of a direct relationship with the “people.”

Already before the Algeria crisis had passed, de Gaulle had clashed with the national assembly, and the relations would only worsen. On April 14, 1962, he had angered legislators by replacing Prime Minister Michel Debré with Georges Pompidou without consulting them or holding new elections. He then declared, on Sept. 12, that he would hold a direct referendum on a

change in the constitution to allow for direct election of the president. The parliament on Oct. 5 voted 480-280 a motion of censure against the Pompidou government for not having been consulted (Hartley 1971, 191), and the referendum was pronounced illegal by parliament’s legal organ, Conseil d’Etat (Charlot 1971, 24). Yet the parliament’s demand for the right to vote on constitutional changes was met with its dissolution, which was interpreted as “a declaration of war by de Gaulle on the political parties and the parliament, the institution which was the forum for their existence.” Rather than even consulting them on the vote, he appealed “over the heads of the parliamentarians by a direct dialogue with the electorate…opposing two forms of democracy – direct and parliamentary” (Berstein 1993, 73). While all of France’s political parties, with the exception of the Gaullist Party, campaigned against the constitutional change, it was to no avail: On Oct. 28, 1962, of the 13 million who voted – 46.6 of the electorate – 62.25 approved the proposal (Charlot 1971, 24).

The move not only greatly reduced the clout of parliament; it also meant a change away from the use of the referendum as a consultative devise to something akin to a post-hoc approval of already implemented changes, or that is, for merely “obtaining a plebiscitary approval of his policies” (Hartley 1971, 160).72

Yet the end result of the direct election of the president and the continue assumption of powers of this office, was to reduce not only the prestige and power of the national assembly, but also of the prime minister. While in the past the president had appointed as prime minister the politician most likely to be able to form a majority in parliament, he now became a “policy executant” (Berstein 1993, 61), or merely the person most suitable of implementing the president’s edicts. As de Gaulle himself argued,

> Given the prime minister’s importance and range of functions, he must inevitably be my man. And so he is. He is chosen by me and entrusted with office for a long period; he collaborates with me constantly and closely.73

In 1967, he was even ambiguous about whether he would ever accept a non-gaullist prime minister, were the Gaullist Party to lose the elections that year (Hartley 1971, 262). De Gaulle thus became something akin to what Charlot deemed an “elected monarch,” given his assumption of new powers and bypassing of the national legislature:

> Our “elected” monarch, the President of the Republic, explains his policy and actions before the National Assembly only through his intermediary, the Prime Minister. Directly elected by the people, he is only responsible to them through the process of a referendum and general or presidential elections; he converses directly with the people when he makes official visits or during his radio and television broadcasts.74

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72 De Gaulle would use the mechanism of referendum (or depending on one’s view, plebiscite) five times.
74 Charlot (1971, 145).
Ahead of his 1965 election campaign, moreover, de Gaulle linked the stability of France’s political situation not to any party or project, but to his very person. In the Nov. 4, 1965, radio message where de declared his intent to run, he put France’s choices in stark terms: His continued rule, or chaos:

If the full-hearted and massive support of the people determines my continuation in office, no one can doubt that the future of the Republic is assured. If it does not, no one can doubt that the Republic will collapse and that France will once again suffer – but this time without any remedy – a chaos within the State even more disastrous than in the past.75

Yet the amassing of powers to the detriment of political intermediaries would in the end run the risk of provoking a “spontaneous combustion – the fire could spread without any resistance,” as the “exclusion of all ‘intermediaries’ had only increased their desire for revenge” (Hoffmann 1974, 240). That reaction would finally come in the form of the May 1968 student revolts, and his subsequent defeat in the 1969 referendum.

**UNR: Resurrection of a gaullist party**

The UNR has no value, no meaning, no legitimacy except insofar as its action to always follow the political directives of General de Gaulle.76

- Michel Debré, de Gaulle’s prime minister 1959-1962

It was said of the Gaullist Party that following de Gaulle’s return to power, “some ten telephone calls sufficed in June 1958 for the teams to re-form and réseaux to spring back to life” (Charlot 1971, 89). Yet the *Union pour la Nouvelle République* (UNR) was to be a quite different creation than the disbanded RPF. Above all, it was an “elite-led party organization” (Demker 1993, 24) that lacked the RPF’s mass base and penchant for mass rallies, and its ties to de Gaulle was much looser. As Charlot noted in a memorable phrase, the UNR was a party with an unusual destiny in so far as it was first a ministerial team, then a central committee to select candidates for a general election, then the strongest parliamentary group in the National Assembly, and finally - at last – a party.77

Like the RPF, however, it was clear the UNR was not to be an autonomous organization with an identity and agenda on its own, but was regarded by de Gaulle as merely an instrument to carry out his policies uncritically.

The UNR was officially founded on Oct. 1, 1958, just days after the referendum on the 5th Republic’s new constitution. It was founded explicitly to fight the upcoming parliamentary elections, where the reformed party in the end performed quite well, pulling 17.6 percent in the first round of voting, and 28.1 percent in the second.78 The new Gaullist Party had been

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75 Quoted in Berstein (1993, 195).
76 Michel Debré, in a letter to Jacques Soustelle, quoted in Hartley (1971, 267).
77 Charlot (1971, 90).
78 Charlot (1971, 190).
reassembled by historic gaullists such as Jacques Soustelle, René Capitant, Michel Debré, Georges Pompidou, and Jacques Chaban-Delmas. It was essentially a union of six different gaullist support unions, and Roger Frey was appointed secretary-general. On Nov 13-15, at the UNR’s first party conference in Bordeaux, an early confrontation arose between “Orthodox” gaullists and supporters of the Algeria rebels, yet the latter were quickly silenced. The party thus opted for the notion of “unconditional support of the government” (Wilson 1973, 494). As Knapp noted,

the UNR was also a parasitic party, living off the State that de Gaulle had captured for it and playing the rather passive (if necessary) role of supporting and explaining the policy of de Gaulle and of the government, and electing parliamentarians to support them. Its own influence in, for example, articulating interests... or making policy was slight.79

Unlike the RPF, the UNR had no president – no one, apparently, could take de Gaulle’s old role. Yet the party differed from the RPR in several further remarkable aspects, above all by de Gaulle’s apparent refusal to have anything to do with it. As Charlot observed, it was “a curious party indeed, this Union pour la nouvelle République; its raison d’être, General de Gaulle, does not on principle wish to acknowledge it” (1971, 132).

The UNR had no formal connection with the Gaulle (Demker 1993, 161). He never attended any party meetings, refused the UNR to use his name to describe its candidates, and was even said to have opposed its very formation (Wilson 1973, 490, 492). While de Gaulle had always been disdainful of parties, the near complete disregard of the resurrected Gaullist Party is stunning, and is arguably a significant cause of the de Gaulle’s and the UNR’s poor 1965 electoral results, where de Gaulle was even forced to a second round in the presidential contest.

The UNR, which preferred to describe itself as a “movement,” appeared to have little function except to carry out the de Gaulle’s agenda, and had no independent program beyond the “gaullist doctrine” to “defend national independence” (Frears 1977, 40). De Gaulle, who had long been hostile to parties in general, even regarded his own party as one that could possibly restrict him, and was wary of any assertions of independence (Hartley 1971, 267). The party’s general secretaries 1958-1967 served largely as figureheads, said to “control the party machine, but not the party” (Berstein 1993, 20), as the real leader of the Gaullist Party remained de Gaulle himself. While de Gaulle refused to endorse the party and showed no interest in its internal life and development, he was in the end “ready to interfere in the internal politics...in order to shape the party according to his desires” (1973, 491).

UNR ideology and organization: More liberal, yet continued ideological confusion

The UNR lacked the mass base of the personalistic movement-party RFP, but the party’s legacy of an unclear ideological orientation – beyond support for de Gaulle – remained.

In contrast with the RPF, the new UNR was not a mass party of militants, but became increasingly a party of notables (Hoffmann 1974, 25). Its candidates for public office were much more vetted, recruitment for party positions much more careful, and its overall membership much lower than the RPF’s one million-strong mass organization. The UNR reportedly had 24,000 members in 1959, 50,000 in 1962, and around 100,000 in 1967 (Charlot 1971, 90). The reason for the increased selectivity was not only a reflection of de Gaulle’s dismissal of the value of party organization; the UNR explicitly sought to avoid infiltrations from the extreme right in connection with the Algeria issue of the day. The continuity in its top leadership was relatively stable, and the UNR was run by a small circle of gaullist “barons.”

The legacy of the personalistic movement-party RPF, however, remained clearly visible. Just like the RPF, the UNR refused to adopt an ideological position and rejected the left-right classification. Michel Debré, a gaullist baron, described it simply as the “secular instrument of gaullism” (Berstein 1993, 64). Demker (1993) finds little discernible ideological change in gaullism between 1947 and 1958, though the UNR was arguably, if anything, a more liberal and even left party than the RPF, and adamantly denied the rightwing labels, and a review of its party documents does reveal an apparent shift from the more authoritarian conservative positions of its predecessors toward political liberalism (Demker 1993, 148, 161). While the RPF had emphasized the subordination of individuals to the “societal, national, and biological collective,” the UNR had more liberal stances where personal freedom was more emphasized (Demker 1993, 180). From 1958 to 1962, “the party was to shed some of its more conspiratorial and Bonapartist members and to exchange their support for that of the leftwing gaullist group (Hartley 1971, 186). In particular, leftwing gaullists of the Union Démocratique du Travail in 1959, joined with the UNR to form UNR-UDT for the Nov. 1962 parliamentary elections. By that time, the UNR “seemed less of a party of the radical right, but the dangerous crisis through which it had passed had made it more dependent than ever on its aging leader” (Hartley 1971, 187).

Jacques Baumel, the UNR’s secretary general from 1962-1967, claimed that gaullism – and the UNR – was much more than the thoughts of de Gaulle, and rather inaugurated a new kind of politics. Like de Gaulle, however, he insisted that France had had enough of ideologies, and
that left and rightwing positions “were out of date.” Since the UNR, like gaullism, represented national unity, it should not assume any particular ideological stances.

Watson (1998) in particular has argued against the notion of the UNR as a “monolith,” and points to the signs of independence of gaullist “barons” such as Albin Chalandon and Jacques Soustelle. Chalandon became the party’s secretary general in 1959, and while careful to underline his support for de Gaulle, argued that the UNR should maintain a certain degree of independence. While the government “could generally rely on the support of the UNR, it could by no means expect docility” (Watson 1998, 247, 248). Soustelle, moreover, clearly voiced his opposition to Gaulle’s decision to grant Algeria independence (Watson 1998, 250). The party, moreover, continued to struggle with organizational problems of defections, splinter groups, and internal tension.

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Yet while members such as Soustelle and Chalandon sought a certain degree of autonomy from de Gaulle’s government and the party might not have been a monolith, it was far from clear they, or anyone else, advocated any coherent alternative programmatic position. In any case, their attempts at autonomy failed miserably: Soustelle was eventually kicked out of the party, and Chalandon was quickly replaced as secretary general by Jacques Richard, who promptly declared that the role of the party should only be to support de Gaulle’s government and

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not seek to influence it (Watson 1998, 250). The opportunities for dissent and member input appear to have been greatly limited, which was indeed de Gaulle’s very intent:

The UNR had no democratic structures and no system for developing policy; its members willingly regarded themselves as the president's godillots (foot-sloggers), ready to carry out any order without question.\(^8\)

Finally, Berstein notes, “For all the existence of a gaullist left, the movement’s centre of gravity clearly lay to the right” (1993, 90). This shift toward a more conservative position would become ever more apparent under the Gaullist Party’s first major attempt at party building and renovation, carried out by secretary general Robert Poupjade,\(^8\) on the orders of the main sailing up as de Gaulle’s likely successor: Prime Minister Georges Pompidou.

**A case of party-change: Establishing autonomy and building the party**

The 1966-1976 decade saw the Gaullist Party embarking on a clear “attempt to create an own identity” (Demker 1993, 25). While the process was riddled with setbacks, which included the near collapse of the party following the loss of the presidency in 1974, clear changes can be delineated within the party which culminated in the refoundation of the party as the conservative RPR in 1976, led by Georges Pompidou’s protégé Jacques Chirac.

While the Gaullist Party had won the 1967 parliamentary election, its small margin of victory – it pulled less than half of all seats and with its allies had a majority of only two legislators – was an “awkward disappointment.” Charlot attributes the result as the starting point for a process of “radical change” (1971, 127) for the party, where Pompidou would assert his authority as leader of the party, and move toward building “gaullism without de Gaulle.”

Pompidou would initiate weekly meetings with the party’s official leadership and its parliamentary representatives, and every fortnight sat down with its entire 26-member executive committee:

The aim was clear: to give the movement a direct and regular means of access to the Prime Minister, thus giving the movement, as the parliamentary party, the possibility of influencing governmental action the aim was also to give the Prime Minister, in exchange, a direct hold on the party through its collegiate management.\(^8\)

New party statutes were drawn up, to be ratified at the party’s upcoming conference in Lille Nov. 24-26. The Lille conference, where the party also changed its name to Union des Démocrates pour la V République (UDVe), was to be the culmination of the “transformation of this charismatic movement…into a modern political party” (1973, 504).

\(^8\) Fysh (1997, 79-80).
\(^8\) No relation to Pierre Poupjade, it should be noted.
\(^8\) Charlot (1971, 127).
While the Lille conference saw unexpected resistance by the “barons,” such as leftwing gaullists Rene Capitant and Louis Vallon, who correctly sensed they would likely be the losers in the transformation, the conference marked the coming to power of a new generation of gaullist leaders. In the party’s top leadership, Jacques Baumel, a Resistance fighter and historic gaullist, was replaced as secretary general (a short-lived collegiate of five secretaries general was abolished) by Robert Poujade. The change “was undoubtedly both deliberate and symbolic” (Charlot 1971, 129), as Poujade was too young to have participated in the Resistance, and thus represented an infusion of new blood to the movement. Crucially, he was also fully loyal to Pompidou.

Lille also marked the end of the Gaullist Party as merely a tool of the moment, as a party that sprang to life before elections, but was otherwise functioning merely as a parliamentary party, given the earlier fear of infiltration from extremist militants opposed to Algerian independence. Now, Poujade argued for the building of a more permanent party structure, with local organizations, and for the Gaullist Party to overcome what he deemed in his report to the convention to be a dangerous “incapacity to exist” (Charlot 1971, 126-127). The party got a permanent and significant organizational backbone for the first time since 1958, and built local party organizations on the constituency level. It also set up a women and youth section, and launched a new drive for party membership, which would by the time of the 1969 presidential election rise to 160-180,000.85

Notably, the conference was marked by demands to the end of top-down appointments and dictates, and for calls for internal party democracy – inexistent in gaullism until that point (Demker 1993, 44). While the party had been completely dominated by gaullist parliamentary leaders – the godillots of de Gaulle – now the party’s executive committee would elect by its central committee, in turn elected by its national party congress, and would include non-parliamentary leaders. Poujade himself, the new secretary general, was duly voted upon and appointed by the party’s central committee. Together, the measures arguably “ended the fiction of a ‘union above parties’” (Knapp 1994, 445), although it did not stray completely away from the idea of a movement-party: It notably maintained the right to dual membership, to be approved by the central committee (Charlot 1971, 129).

Finally, the Lille congress saw a marked ideological change within the party toward more ideological homogeneity, and the decline of left gaullism. The Gaullist Party had throughout its existence to be “beyond left and right,” and among the party elites, several gaullist “barons,” such as Rene Capitant, secretary general 1959-1962, and Louis Vallon, had indeed “dreamed of

converting the left to gaullism, of changing the condition of the workers by the association of employers and workers” (Charlot 1971, 97). De Gaulle’s harangues against discredited parties and his advocacy of direct contact with the people had resonated with the sectors who hoped to implement a leftwing agenda. In return, the existence of left gaullists had served to support the gaullist’ claim to above the right-left divide (Knapp 1994, 441)

By the late 1960s, however, the once-considerable left gaullism had been steadily pushed out of the Gaullist Party, and the 1967 Lille conference – which Capitant and Vallon refused to attend – marked a clear shift to the right of the party. The left gaullists had led an uneasy existence within the Gaullist Party, particularly as de Gaulle himself had moved away from earlier schemes of worker-management cooperation and profit sharing and assumed more traditional rightwing positions.

“The tragedy of the gaullist left,” Charlot noted, “is that it always feels a desperate need to justify itself: to the left, that it is genuinely left wing; to the gaullists that it is more gaullist than all of them put together” (1971, 102). When Pompidou and Poujade asserted their control of the party, it was perhaps not surprising that they attacked Pompidou for not being a true gaullist – Vallon would be later expelled for calling later President Pompidou an “anti-De Gaulle” (Knapp 1994, 441), and similarly contrasted the Gaullist Party with gaullism itself (Charlot 1971, 107). In return, “Pompidou’s own relations with left gaullism varied from poor to poisonous” (Knapp 1994, 441).

In the end, following Pompidou’s takeover of the party, “gaullism threw itself in the arms of a traditional conservative ideology” (Demker 1993, 222). The leftwing gaullist party faction UDT, which had joined the UNR in 1962, left the party, yet failed utterly in reconstituting any independent left gaullism. Already in 1967, opinion surveys showed both the political elite of the party, as well as its electors, on average clearly placing the party on the political right: On a 1-10 scale, 10 being extreme right, the Gaullist Party was squarely marked as 7.66 From the RPF to the UNR, the Gaullist Party, reformed as the Union pour la Défense de la République (UDR), “From being a movement which claimed to unite Frenchmen of the left and the right gaullism became a political party of the right” (Hartley 1971, 304).

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66 See the massive study of French voters and elites by Converse and Pierce (1986, 116).
Georges Pompidou as party builder

I am not General de Gaulle.87
- Georges Pompidou, 1969.

In 1965, following the embarrassing results of the presidential contest where de Gaulle was forced into a second round against socialist François Mitterrand, de Gaulle had “permitted the Gaullist Party to use its full resources in the election” (1973, 493). Yet he remained aloof from the party, and was wary of his prime minister’s attempt at party renovation and the building of a more independent party organization (Knapp 1994, 445).

Pompidou had been a loyal ally of De Gaulle since the days of the RPF, and while he had left politics to be a banker from 1955-1958, and again 1959-1962, he became de Gaulle’s prime minister in 1962, replacing Michel Debré, an unpopular decision with the gaullist baron, given that Pompidou was not even a member of the party (Berstein and Rioux 2000, 53).

While he had remained a loyal executor of de Gaulle’s policies, a schism was growing between the two men as Pompidou did not show the “unconditional fidelity” to de Gaulle as expected by him (Hartley 1971, 288). It is equally clear that whatever Pompidou’s motivation, he manifested a strikingly different approach toward political parties than did de Gaulle: Whereas de Gaulle saw himself as an “arbiter” standing above political parties – “even the one which acted in his name” (Hartley 1971, 258) – Pompidou was to lead the first major attempt not only to renovate the Gaullist Party but even to build an independent party organization and establish an autonomous identity. A graphic example of this development was found in the 1968 campaign of the recently renamed UDVe: Ahead of the parliamentary elections, campaign posters bore neither de Gaulle’s resemblance nor the cross of Lorraine (Charlot 1971, 132).

Notably, as the student and workers protest of the 1968 spring were garnering strength, many old gaullists felt uncomfortable with the development, and built non-party sources of mass action presumably to be used in crisis situations (Wilson 1973, 493). Some, such as the Comités de défense de la République (CDR), were highly militant, and were by their detractors “often presented as fascist-style groups” (Charlot 1971, 132), though they strongly rejected this designation. De Gaulle, fearing an insurrection, had himself called for the creation of the CDRs, and gaullism itself appeared to stand at a crossroads:

“Is gaullism the U.D.R. or the C.D.R.?” Pierre Viansson-Ponté asked in Le Monde on January 10, 1969. It seems to us that unless something happens that is unforeseen and really dramatic, gaullism will be increasingly identified with the U.D.R. and decreasingly with the C.D.R., in so far as the gaullist past fades more and more into the past.88

87 An oft-repeated statement during the 1969 election campaign.
88 Charlot (1971, 132).
The 1968 May events appear to represent the watershed event that reinforced Pompidou’s control over a party increasingly independent of de Gaulle, and the decline of the movement-organizations hastily organized in the CRDs in favor of more traditional political party. Given his role in defusing the May protests, Pompidou was proclaimed a “hero of the crisis” (Hartley 1971, 280), and “widely regarded as the real hero of the recent hurricane” (Berstein 1993, 227), particularly when contrasted with de Gaulle’s advocacy, at the apogee of the crisis, of a national referendum on constitutional reform.

Whereas the UDV would score a massive 38.1 percent of vote and gain an absolute majority (294 out of 485) of seats in the parliament (294 out of 485) in the June 23/30 elections following the May crisis, the results still did not “repair the damage to the General himself” (Frears 1977, 42). Despite advice to the contrary, de Gaulle proceeded with the proposed referendum on senate and regional reform. While most were indifferent to his proposed regional reforms, which harked back to the ideas of his Bayeux speech, the proposed senate reform caused much controversy as it would have practically ended the senate as an independent legislative chamber (Berstein 1993, 231-233). In the end, 53.1 percent of voters voted no, and de Gaulle immediately retired from the presidency. In France, times had certainly changed. As Alexandre observed,

Three or four years before, it was the general who called all the plays. In those days, he could have insured the election of any heir of his choice. “Even his horse,” Pompidou remarked, “remember, even his horse.”

As prime minister, Pompidou had increasingly worked to transform the Gaullist Party into a modern conservative mass party. As opposed to de Gaulle’s dismissal of parties and ideologies as divisive, Pompidou saw the UDV (renamed UDR after the elections) as a centre-right force to be part of a future two-party system between left and right (Hartley 1971, 258). This change – “from a rassemblement toward a more orthodox conservatism” (Knapp 1994, 460) – was therefore a process primarily led by Pompidou, and had begun well before he reached the presidency. As Hartley noted,

his immediate aim was to transform the gaullist party into a modern organization, unencumbered with too many historical memories or too personal a fidelity to de Gaulle and firmly under his own control. This task was a difficult one.

While the spread of the cancer that would eventually take his life would gradually remove him from presidential or party politics alike, as president Pompidou appeared to keep up the interest in party building. According to Wilson, “Pompidou was very deeply interested and involved in party matters” (1973, 503) and, as opposed to de Gaulle, sent representatives to attend

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89 Alexandre (1972, 301).
90 Hartley (1971, 265).
UDR meetings, where they were “formally recognized, and sat in honored positions on the podium.” The president, before his illness, “remained an active and powerful voice in the politics of the Gaullist Party and coalition” (1973, 496, 503).

Under Pompidou, gaullism fully “abandoned its anti-party and anti-parliamentary tradition” (Charlot 1971, 157). In 1962, relations between the parliament and the prime minister had improved greatly when Pompidou replaced Michel Debré; similarly, as president, Pompidou put a premium on “dialogue rather than on arbitral decision” (Charlot 1971, 181) in relations with his own and other parties in the legislature. The contrast with de Gaulle’s dismissive attitude toward parliament was marked. Similarly, parliamentarians were showing increasing independence and were no longer content with being regarded as gaullist *godillots*:

> The gaullists’ concern was to define a viable role for themselves which was more than hero-worship of de Gaulle and yet which did not sacrifice stability to dynamism. In so doing, they abandoned the anti-party and antiparliamentary aspects of gaullism which had dominated the *Rassemblement du Peuple Français*.91

> “France,” Hartley observed, “is no longer governed by plebiscite. Politics in the party and parliamentary sense are coming to life again” (1971, 309).

**The particular challenges to personalistic movement-party change**

The 1967 process within Gaullist Party presents a relatively clear-cut picture of party change, where the UDVe and later UDR made great strides toward the establishing an autonomous and ideologically coherent Gaullist Party *après-de Gaulle*. According to Beyme, “it is very rare in any Western democracy for a party to be so dependent on an individual as the gaullists in France, but even this group has succeeded in becoming a permanent institution” (1985, 29). Similarly, Mený notes,

> The Gaullist Party provides a rare example of recent institutionalization for a major political party in the West. Its survival and force are the more remarkable in view of the fact that, at the outset, the “party” consisted of no more than a vast “gathering” cemented together by the personality of General de Gaulle.92

Yet events following the assumption of the Pompidou presidency nonetheless present much pause for thought regarding the difficulties inherent to this process, which despite watershed events such as the 1967 congress, nonetheless appears a long-term project fraught with arduous challenges. The legacy of the personalistic movement-party continued to weigh heavily on the Gaullist Party, which would virtually collapse following the infighting between its left and right components. Just as it was earlier clear that de Gaulle’s very presence had served to hold the gaullist coalition together, while the party would see massive gains in the 1968 and 1969

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92 Mený (1993, 90).

The period following president Pompidou’s debilitating illness and 1974 death has been described as a “difficult time for the UDR” (Frears 1977, 44). Pompidou had booted Prime Minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas, a “baron” who was regarded as too liberal and even left by the conservative gaullists – such as Pompidou himself – in July 1972, but continued infighting between gaullists would end the party’s hold on the presidency. While Chaban-Delmas was elected the UDR’s official presidential candidate, Jacques Chirac did all he could to make the Gaullist Party candidate lose: Open bullying tactics of gaullist party members to support Chaban-Delmas’ rival Giscard d’Estaing – a conservative but non-gaullist candidate – reportedly made Chirac the “most hated man in the UDR” (Knapp 1994, 41). Whatever the cause of D’Estaing’s victory, Chirac was clearly rewarded for his support when the new president appointed him prime minister. Frears noted, “Gaullism was never a particularly doctrinaire faith and, although it has principles, influence in the exercise of power remained a more appealing objective” (1977, 44).

Even if Chirac’s decision to sabotage its own party can be explained by pure opportunism, it should also be noted that Chirac was arguably much closer to D’Estaing than Chaban-Delmas ideologically; at any rate, the episode could also be read as a clear demonstration that the Gaullist Party had not yet produced a clear and dominant identity that would work against such defections. For this the party was to be punished: It would remain out of executive power for more than 20 years.

Jacques Chirac is a further case in point. As late as 1975 he proclaimed in Le Monde that “Nothing would be worse than the temptation to place ourselves on the right. It is clear that in the future the gaullist movement cannot be classified as on the right.”93 Chirac said he spoke for a “French-style Labour,” and that “gaullists under his leadership represented ‘the social-democratic tendency in French politics’” (Mený 1993, 60).

Nonetheless, when Chirac stepped down as prime minister in August 1976, he resorted again primarily to nationalist and anti-communist slogans. After winning a great victory in a November election in his constituency of Corrèze, as a former (and honorary) secretary general of the UDR he called a new party conference, where reportedly 50,000 party activists gathered to form the Rassemblement pour la République (Frears 1977, 44-45), and again refounded the Gaullist Party. While it clearly harked backed to the RPF – in addition to its name, Frears noted that “all came to worship a leader, and to hear the call to arms against Communism and national decadence” (1977, 44-45) – there were nonetheless significant differences. Like the RPF, the

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RPR would now have a president, but he was to be elected by the national congress – a “declaration of independence from the government” (Knapp 1994, 197). The party president would pick his own executive committee without “ex officio” or “reserved seats” for party elites, and the practice were gaullist “barons” imposed their own supporters in the party’s organs was in general abandoned. Henceforth, leadership renovations would follow institutionalized mechanisms outlined in the party statutes. Party members were also given a more direct role in debating motions at the national congress. The initial estimated party membership of the RPR was 60,000 (Knapp 1994, 191, 197). While the “Gaullist Doctrine” was not fully abandoned until the 1980s, the RPR’s changes under Chirac’s leadership essentially entailed that “the Gaullist Party had become a rightwing parliamentary party like the others” (Demker 1993, 24).

Why did the Gaullist Party change under Pompidou?

In the literature on the Gaullist Party, four motivations in particular have been identified as explanations for why Pompidou chose to act why he did, and engage in a significant – albeit fragile – renovation of the Gaullist Party.

As the Gaullist Party was virtually built around the identity of one man, it appeared ill equipped to survive a leadership transition. As Pompidou was clearly sailing up as a likely candidate to succeed de Gaulle, it is hard to separate his support for party building from this crucial motivation. This connection has been noted by a range of observers:

Against de Gaulle's better judgment, Pompidou built a strong gaullist organization during the mid-1960s, which helped the party sink relatively deep roots and survive the General's departure in 1969.\(^{94}\)

Similarly, Hartley noted,

His immediate aim was to transform the Gaullist Party into a modern organization, unencumbered with too many historical memories or too personal a fidelity to de Gaulle and firmly under his own control. This task was a difficult one.\(^{95}\)

Wilson (1973) in particular emphasized the agency of Pompidou in the Gaullist Party transformation, arguing that the party changed “not as the result of unseen socioeconomic or political forces,” but rather due to the efforts of Pompidou to serve his political ambitions (1973, 488). In addition, the inability of Pompidou to rely on the personal prestige of de Gaulle is posited as a prime motivation for the prime minister’s embrace of party building: “To compensate for his lack of charismatic authority, he concentrated on building a powerful political base in a well-organized and effective party” (1973, 503). Frears adds, “It was clear that simple reliance upon the General’s capacity to inspire would be insufficient to maintain gaullism in power” \(^{94}\) Hauss and Rayside (1978, 52).

\(^{95}\) Hartley (1971, 265).
Pompidou’s necessity to create an independent political base with a project that went beyond the personal ambitions of de Gaulle therefore appears a prominent motivation for his renovation of the Gaullist Party.

The suggestion that Pompidou’s party building was principally driven by electoral concerns has been supported by several observers. A quick look at the Gaullist Party – and de Gaulle’s – vote returns does reveal significant trends: Whereas de Gaulle had won the 1958 referendum with more than 80 percent, the 1962 referendum with 62.3 percent of the vote, when he was up for the first direct election in 1965, he only received 44.6 on the first ballot, and was forced into an embarrassed second round, which he won with 54.5 percent. In 1967, moreover, the Gaullist Party had gained only 32.1 (or 38) percent of the first-round vote, and the declining electoral value of de Gaulle’s leadership was apparent to many, and a likely incentive to build a more powerful electoral party: “The real reason for this reorganization lay in the fact that gaullism was henceforth on the defensive and that de Gaulle’s Republic now looked vulnerable at any moment” (Berstein 1993, 209). Demker (1993) similarly argues that the 1967 change was “a consequence of the losses to the left” in the 1967 election (Demker 1993, 199). External pressure may also manifest itself in a different manner, namely as an increased polarization of the electorate. Polls before the 1967 election demonstrated a clear rightwing bent of the gaullist voters: One IFOP February/March poll found marked differences between gaullist and “left” voters in their priorities, such as “Make France Respected” – 4 vs. 51 percent for gaullist voters; “Ensure political stability” – 13 vs. 40 percent; “Ensure distribution of wealth” – 26 vs. 17 percent; and “Fight against unemployment” – 19 vs. 39 percent. Gaullist voters, compared to earlier years, were therefore markedly different from left voters. Other studies find a growing polarity between gaullism and the left in legislative elections all the way from 1951 (McHale and Shaber 1976, 294). As the 1967 changes also involved the squeezing out of left gaullists and assuming more traditional electoral positions, it could be regarded as driven by external pressure to assume a homogenous ideological orientation more in line with its chore votes, and not the other way around.

A related line of inquiry relating to the apparent growing polarization in French society points to an “emerging pattern of bipolarity” with increasing consolidation of parties on the non-Communist left, as well as the non-gaullist right (Cameron and Hofferbert 1973, 82). From 1967 and onwards, the Gaullist Party did in fact enter into open electoral alliances with non-gaullist rightwing forces such as the Independent Republicans of Giscard D’Estaing, particularly as a certain threat as well existed in possible cooperation between the socialists and the communists.
The 1967 party-building process can, with Cameron and Hofferbert, here be regarded as motivated by the fear of a future left victory.

We place primary emphasis on the electoral changes manifested in March, 1967, and tend to view the internal party changes as after-the-fact adaptations to the new situation.\textsuperscript{96}

Finally, whereas from 1947-1958 the goal of gaullism was to achieve power and transform the regime, “preservation of the status quo was the prime motive in the period 1966-1976” (Demker 1993, 216). Gaullism’s shift from a radical emphasis on change toward a conservative ideology is here regarded as a product of retaining power and defending the existing, rather than seeking to overthrow the old. Particularly given gaullism’s decreasing electoral returns, the need for a stronger party to “defend” the 5\textsuperscript{th} Republic –the Gaullist Party’s official names in the 1967-1971 period were indeed \textit{Union des Démocrates pour la V République} and from 1968, \textit{Union pour la defense de la République} - is thus finally noted as a fourth major motivation for Pompidou’s decision to renovate and build the Gaullist Party.

\textbf{Conclusion}

When it appeared, the Gaullist Party defied “any Euro-categorization” (Knapp 1994, 399), and has traditionally been regard as sui generis in that it did not fit easily into existing party categories.

I argue that the party was part of a separate species of parties, namely the personalistic movement-party, and that this construct may be fruitfully employed in order to analyze the party’s particular behavior and internal dynamics.

The historic case of the Gaullist Party, which eventually transformed into a more traditional party form, offers intriguing insights in the difficulties of party transformation. Given de Gaulle’s lack of appreciation for the role of political parties, which he considered a (barely) necessary evil, it is hardly any wonder that the Gaullist Party struggled for years to establish its own autonomous identity beyond its leader. However, the case suggests that under certain circumstances personalistic movement-parties can change, although the legacy of a diffuse ideology and a poorly institutionalized party organization is likely to remain with a party for quite some time.

When de Gaulle failed in his first attempt to assume power, rather than concentrating on the building of a party to further his agenda, he fully abandoned the RPF, a classic personalistic movement-party, which upon the exit of its leader folded with relative ease. The resurrected UNR was a significantly smaller party, primarily due to de Gaulle’s fear of infiltration from the

\textsuperscript{96} Cameron and Hofferbert (1973, 94, fn 18).
Algerian rebels, but also as power had already been reached, and he envisioned a very little autonomous role for the party.

The legacy of ideological and programmatic indefiniton remained, however, and the party experienced recurring power struggles between left and right gaullists, until Pompidou in effect pushed out a large section of the gaullist left, and sought to turn the gaullist party into a more traditional party. While he succeeded in rescuing the party and instill in it a separate identity from its founder, upon his own death the party once again descended into a spiral of infighting, and eventual collapse. When later resurrected under Chirac, the RPR, despite its name, soon grew into a traditional and conservative party formation. The case of the Gaullist Party in the end does suggest that personalistic movement-parties can change, but that the process is more likely than not to be a highly arduous and protracted undertaking. Whether the emphasis is put on RPR’s continuity with the past, or of the party as a new creation, it was clear that by 1976 the Gaullist party as a personalistic movement-party was gone.
CHAPTER 3
PJ 1947-2003: THE RESILIENT PERSONALISTIC MOVEMENT-PARTY

Perón’s limousine reaches a fork in the road. The chauffeur asks, “Which way, General?” “The same as usual,” Perón replies. “Signal left and turn right.”

The Partido Justicialista has been the protagonist of the most profound social and political transformations in Argentina in the 20th century, and continues to hold the presidency in the 21st. Yet until the coming of democracy in 1983, for large bouts of its existence the PJ faced proscription. During the last murderous dictatorship (1976-1983), its cadres would literally be hunted down and killed by the military and its henchmen. Loosely based, with segmented, independent sub-units, the PJ went underground, yet peronism was kept alive as an identity and as a political formation, above all by the organized working class. Under such conditions of repression, the movement-party structure appears to have been a particularly optimal strategy. While the party suffered unexpected electoral defeats in the 1980s, it returned to power, and in the past two decades has been out of power for only three years.

The PJ’s remarkable ability to survive has been attributed to its particularly fluid organizational and ideological setups. This loose movement-party structure was not, however, a product of repression, as the party from the beginning sought to transcend traditional ideological divides, and to be merely a part of a wider movement under the control of Juan Perón. These characteristics have been credited not only with helping the party survive clandestinity; rather, the PJ’s underroutinized nature has been signaled as the principal cause of its ability to withstand great changes in personnel and programmatic orientation (Levitsky, 2003).

The focus on this chapter will be on the more negative aspects of the PJ’s particularly loose organization and ideology, and it aims to demonstrate that these characteristics, present in the PJ from the start, has also been a prominent cause of party instability, which at times have had grave consequences for Argentina’s general political stability. First, it will demonstrate the PJ’s fit with the species of the personalistic movement-party, and trace the development of these traits throughout the party’s history. Particular attention will be given to the PJ’s political developments after 2001. Yet rather than a historical rundown of the party’s trajectory, the goal is to

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demonstrate how the very traits of the personalistic movement-party were manifested through internal leader struggles and battles over the party’s programmatic direction. The party’s internal chaos – in its past as in recent years – are traced primarily as a consequences of its original setup and excessive ideological pragmatism and contradictions.

While the PJ did indeed score impressive gains in the 1990s, the party suffered increasingly from instability and infighting. This chapter argues that the same traits that allowed for the PJ’s flexibility at the same time were a principal cause of its later instability, which culminated in the party’s failure to present a presidential candidate in the 2003 election. This is regarded as a logical consequence of the party’s movement-party structure, which moreover has prevented Argentine voters from locating the PJ in any consistent manner in the traditional ideological spectrum of left and right. Crucially, the disagreement on ideological and programmatic direction is signaled as a main culprit for the party’s inability – or undesirability – to institutionalize.

Finally, the current literature on the PJ identifies two major attempts at party change where sectors of the PJ’s elite moved toward building a more institutionalized formation. In light of the characterization of the PJ as a personalistic movement-party and of the earlier postulated propositions on party change, this chapter will directly address possible explanations for these developments.

**The origins of the party**

The Partido Justicialista (PJ) has experienced long periods of repression and persecution of its members, including open prescription throughout half of its existence. Yet it was not born in an environment of repression. Its immediate origins lie in a military coup in 1943. Since the overturning of Argentine democracy in 1930, the country had been ruled by an assortment of civilian-military administrations, and on June 4, 1943, a group of military officers, among them Colonel Juan Domingo Perón, in turn overthrew a conservative dictatorship.

Perón’s very participation in what was deemed an “anti-imperialist” coup was later taken by the political left to as an indication of his supposed left leanings, yet it principally reflected military resentment with the pro-US and British stances of the existing military government (Corradi 1977, 106). It was from the beginning highly unclear what the coup really represented.

The military government implemented social and labor reform, and Perón went on to head the new Secretariat of Labor and Social Security, whose purpose was pronounced in Decree 15,074, of Nov. 27, 1943: “In doing so, national unity will be strengthened by the prevalence of
greater social and distributive justice.”¹ The government’s policies thus represented an attempt at social reconciliation and averting revolution, and was more reminiscent of the earlier corporatism of particularly fascist Italy than a manifestation of socialism.²

Due to the immense importance of this ministry, and his subsequent office as vice president, the administration was increasingly identified with the figure of Perón (Ciria 1974, 87). His ability to use his position to build loyalty and later a huge electoral organization must be seen in a comparative historical perspective: While in most other countries in the world, new government services and provisions had came about as a response to the world economic crisis of the 1930s, workers in Argentina had seen little improvement of their lot in these years (Beveraggi Allende 1956, 19). Strikes had produced almost no concessions from the conservative regimes (Corradi 1977, 110), and the political opposition had offered little more than “academic opposition” to the maltreatment of the working classes (Beveraggi Allende 1956, 21). In order to achieve true “national unity,” the new government therefore decreed massive salary hikes, union protection, labor courts, social security, bettered working conditions, and other provisions that had so far been lacking.

In this period (1943-1945), worker gains were massive (Murmis and Portantiero 1971). As secretary (later minister) of work and social services, Perón acceded to their demands, and was backed in this by the armed forces, and by industries of import-substituting industrialization. Perón was highly astute in recognizing the growing strength of the working class, which contrasted greatly with the backwardness of social and labor laws (McGuire 1997, 75), and in recognizing their pent-up demands. Many of the labor leaders would also participate in forging the policies of the government (Murmis and Portantiero 1971, 73). From the view of the military leaders, who were alarmed by dangers of social upheaval due to enormous disparity between the classes, the policies above all meant establishing and maintaining social order (Waldman 1981, 157-158).

The new regime, like the old, was still a dictatorship, without free courts and free parties. Eventually, a coalition of employers’ organizations and politicians, as well as officers resentful of Perón’s position and popularity, moved against it, under the mantle of liberal democracy with

¹ Reported in Ciria (1974, 83).
² Perón was often accused of fascism, and he clearly had expressed admiration for many traits of particularly the Mussolini regime. Lewis (1980) makes the case that Perón’s rule was indeed fascist, based on measures of government-imposed class corporation, corporativist economic institutions, and the increasing emphasis of a single party. However, while the regime moved increasingly toward ideological indoctrination (Waldman 1981, Plotkin 2003), most works tend to view this characterization as exaggerated, and points to the continued functioning of congress, the partial acceptance of opposition parties, the relative lack of violence and repression, and, above all, the highly pro-labor policies of particularly the early years of his administration. Cf. Rock (1987a, 285-286).
constitutional rights. After Perón’s eventual ouster, a rapid political polarization ensued. On Oct. 17, 1945 (later known as the Day of Loyalty), “an entire class would shed its invisibility” (Page 1983, 127) as the workers came out in support of the incarcerated Perón, achieving his liberation.

Elections were soon held. In great parts thanks the bumbling interference of the U.S. ambassador, who in a “Blue Book” denounced Perón as a fascist, Perón managed to shape contest in terms of “Argentina vs. the United States.” Perón notably tried to enlist members of the Unión Cívica Radical (UCR) as his allies and offered them the candidacies for virtually all the offices except for his own presidential candidacy, but was rebuffed and only drew in some minor radical figures (Luna 1969, 80-83). He also wooed a range of provincial leaders and their party machines, and these conservative caudillos became the first to accept Perón as their unconditional leader and candidate for president, and offered most of the medium-level cadres for what would eventually be his party (Ciria 1983, 151, Gibson 1997).

The electoral coalition was multiclass and highly populist, but it was also particular in that its mass base was labor (Di Tella 1998, 184, 190). Above all, Perón would rely on an already existing labor party, the Partido Laborista (PL) to summon the vote of organized industrial labor.

Argentina already had among the strongest trade unions in Latin America before the Perón era (Collier and Collier 1991, 95-99, Korzeniewicz 1993). While unions gained more under Perón than any previous administration, Perón also proved highly adept at co-opting them. When cooptation failed, he repressed them, particularly the communists, but also the socialists and anarchists (Horowitz 1999, 30-31). The pro-Perón unions, in turn, became highly anti-communist in orientation (Baily 1967).

The unions undertook many traditional party functions, above all recruitment and vote drives and they also had an already existing political organization in the PL. Examinations of this party remain divided. The PL has been described as an “ad hoc” movement that “confused tactics and ideology,” and that only emerged as a real force under the auspices of Perón’s secretariat. As Little has noted, “the failure of laborismo was not the tragedy for Argentine democracy that has often been maintained” (1973, 649).

To others, the party represented a clear expression of working class autonomy, whose dissolution represented their total loss of working class autonomy (Pont 1984, 37). The PL did

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3 The attack on Perón in the name of political liberalism thus also was at the same time an attack on the proletariat (Corradi 1977, 112). As Liberalism became the ideology of the oligarchy, “Peronism” thus from the outset became associated with anti-liberalism (Ostiguy 1998, 261).
5 Cf. Perón (2001 [1946]).
6 The word “radical” is here used to refer to members of the UCR. Lower case is maintained, in keeping with common Argentine usage.
advocate clear programmatic issues, such as feminine suffrage, nationalization of public services and natural resources, land reform, pension reform, and, eventually, making Perón’s decrees into law (Fayt 1967, 118-119). Yet Perón was in any case able to use the party divisions and infighting to his benefit and as pretexts for centralizing it under his control. For the 1946 election, the PL would deliver most of the votes, while conservative rural machines and a UCR splinter allied with Perón provided the rest (Torre 1990, 194-195).

On the very next day after the election, on April 5, 1946, Perón met with the members of his loose coalition, and ordered it dissolved. They did not all do so willingly. Above all, members of the PL resisted the move, and Perón would for the next months both threaten and cajole them, until most relented. On June 17, 1946, he finally declared the formation of the Partido Único de la Revolución (Gambini 1999, 106-107). As its name indicated, Perón wanted the new formation to be “the only party of the revolution,” and declared: “I do not accept other forces” (Blanksten, 1953, 334-335).

To a contemporary observer, the new party had “fascist overtones” and “sounded totalitarian” (Blanksten 1953, 334-335). Some PL members resisted the complete surrender of autonomy (Pont 1984, 50). But most went by, no doubt due to the very real gains achieved under Perón. Notably, the unions had also realized that direct contact with the Perón government had proved more effective than autonomous organization, and a party was in any case clearly not the only means through which the unions could improve their condition (Waldman 1981, 168).

Finally, seven months later, on Jan. 14, 1947, members of the Argentine national congress “persuaded” Perón to allow the new party to become his namesake, and the Partido Único became Partido Peronista, or the Peronist Party. A new “superior council” replaced the national executive junta, and the turnover in its top leadership was complete.

**PJ comes into being: Constituent assembly**

Despite its flaws, the PL, which had been modeled on the British Labor Party (Torre 1990, 153), had contained within it a great degree of internal democracy. The new Peronist Party would be a very different creation. Ahead of its constituent congress, the new superior council carried out a range of “interventions” where local party decisions were overridden and organs suspended and taken control over centrally. While the initial pretext was to rein in local caudillos, many of those interventions would last until the end of the peronist government (Pont 1984, 59).

It was also clear that the loose coalition of unionists, nationalists, local caudillos and other opportunists gathered in the party contained within it sharp ideological contradictions (Little 1973, 645-654). The process was filled with conflicts of interest and bickering among currents
forming the new party, especially between cadres of the now-defunct PL, and the faction of the UCR that had supported Perón. Organizationally, the UCR defectors were in favor of a more traditional party, but laboristas were skeptical after decades of fraud where parties moreover had offered little to the workers. Also, parts of the old labor guard had still had not quite given up on the idea of a party independent of Perón, above all Luis Gay, president of the PL and later secretary general of the General Labor Confederation (CGT), and labor leader Cipriano Reyes (Mackinnon 2002, 72).

Mackinnon (2002), in a rather revisionist account, regards Perón principally as a leader that stepped in to this chaos to end the bickering and disunity. Yet looking at the original setup of party institutions, Perón seem to have had no intention of creating a party where institutions existed for voicing dissent. The party was designed to be “thoroughly monolithic, with no differences of opinion,” and as such had very little in common with the PL (Little 1973, 653). Rather than internally democratic and autonomous, the new party would be highly verticalist, centralized, and subordinated to Perón, and was built from the state from above in order to support Perón’s program, where the working class did not have leadership positions (Pont 1984, 60).

In 14 out of 15 electoral districts in Argentina, internal elections were duly held on Sept. 21, 1947 to elect delegates to the constituent congress. Their task would be primarily to draft the party charter, and elect national authorities (Mackinnon 2002, 91). The PP’s Constituent General Congress was finally held Dec. 19, 1947, with more than 400 delegates attending. The opening speech was made by Admiral Alberto Teisaire, who presided over the superior council, and had been elected senator after an electoral fraud against the laborista Gay. As head of the Senate, Teisaire would personally lead numerous permanent interventions in provincial district, eliminate internal party decisions, and carry out purges (Ciria 1983, 151-152).

Notable was the PP’s claim to transcend earlier ideological divides. Teisaire declared,

The Peronist Party is neither of the left nor the right, not lateral, nor personal. It aspires to solve, settle, the grandness of the nation, not from one side, but from all. Our movement is characterized by its sense of universality.

In addition, the identification of the party with the Argentine state was present, as the PP, according to Teisaire, “more than a system of political ideas, aspires to be the loyal expression of the state of the national consciousness.”

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7 According to Mackinnon (2003), division persisted in the PP national council from Jan 1947 to March 1949.
8 Hugo Gambini: Las órdenes secretas de Perón. La Nación, May 27, 2002.
9 Quoted in Gambini (1999, 109).
10 Quoted in Mackinnon (2002, 97).
The Partido Peronista according to its statutes

The gist of Teisairé’s speech was reflected in key passages of the PP’s *Carta Orgánica,* or party charter. Article 1 declared:

With the name “Partido Peronista,” the Movement of National Revolution is now organized, and inspired in the doctrine of Juan Perón now puts itself at service for the Fatherland, the Republican Regime of government, and Social Justice. The party is a spiritual and doctrinaire unity, and will not accept in its midst positions of factions or groups threatening this unity.\(^{11}\)

Article 8, moreover, gave Perón unchecked power to modify party organs at will:

In the case where an affiliate would occupy the First Office of the Republic, regarding that the national constitution designs him “Supreme Chief of the Nation,” he will be recognized in the same quality within the party, and in its consequence can modify decisions of its organization, provide for the renovation of authorities through extraordinary elections, and put forth issues that he deems appropriate to the Party Congresses or to plebiscites of the affiliates.\(^{12}\)

A “Peronist Manual,” first published 1948, added to the charter by also including the “synthesis of the peronist movement” and the “theory of the peronist movement.” In its final edition before the peronist regime was overthrown, the 1954 party charter expanded on the role of the “Supreme Chief” of the movement, whose total control over any aspect of the party was now made official. Article 16:

The Supreme chief of peronism, its inspirer, creator, producer, and leader, General Perón. In this capacity, he can modify or annul decisions of party authorities, as well as to scrutinize them, intervene them, and substitute them.\(^{13}\)

The party demanded absolute loyalty of its followers, and Article 49a and b of the same charter explicitly declared that it was among the “duties of affiliates,”

a) To know and spread the Peronist Doctrine and the 20 Truths of peronism
b) To defend all actions of the peronist government, in every moment and circumstance.
c) To carry out and fulfill all the party directives, rules, and regulations.\(^{14}\)

Finally, the peronist *verticalismo* or verticalism, always present in practice from the beginning, was enshrined in the party charter, as Article 195:

No one can be a candidate for anything without the approbation of the superior authority. This is a matter of order and discipline. Nobody can commit oneself to anything until the Movement has given the last word.\(^{15}\)

In sum, the Peronist Party’s leader was awarded complete control over the party even in its own statutes. This would stand until the Renovation in the 1980s removed the phrase, though many of its traits would survive. In practice, it meant a rigid top-down verticalism with unquestioning loyalty to one’s superior, with complete absence of dissent. This hindered the formation of any intermediary structure between the leadership and the base units of the party:

\(^{11}\) Partido Peronista (1948, 29).
\(^{12}\) Partido Peronista (1948, 30).
\(^{13}\) Partido Peronista Consejo Superior (1954, 331).
\(^{14}\) Partido Peronista Consejo Superior (1954, 340).
\(^{15}\) Partido Peronista Consejo Superior (1954, 413).
The PP allowed for no mechanisms to resolve intra-party disputes, be it on program formulation, candidate selection, or actual policy output. It was from its very beginning, on paper and in practice, a personalistic movement-party.

In his classic three-volume study of peronism, Luna notes of the PP that “The entire complex organizational chart of the Peronist Party does not deserve the gesture of an analysis, not even a superficial one, because it never functioned. It was purely theoretical” (Luna 1984a, 59-60). While its charter certainly provided for an elaborate institutional setup, Perón had in practice unlimited control of all party organs. The general congress was elected for two years by the local branches of the party and would officially adopt the party platform and decide on its organization, but Perón was even by official party rules empowered to overrule or annul any decision of this and other party organs.

The inability to express dissent, the absence of standardized procedures and rules to regulate the internal life of the party not only hindered the formation of intermediary party cadres; by making the party utterly subordinate to Perón, it also became dependent on him to tie the disparate movement together. The negation of any further institutionalized bureaucratic party form gave him therefore extraordinary leeway. From his stints as military attaché in Italy and Spain, regimes he greatly admitted, he had plenty of inspiration for this concept of a party Duce, or an all-powerful leader.

The Peronist Doctrine

Every political project that claims to be revolutionary will need a legitimizing doctrine, and peronism was no exception. While the particular origins of peronism arguably made a broad and general doctrine necessary (Waldman 1981, 77), what would eventually be heralded as the doctrine of justicialismo16 – from justicia social, or social justice – appeared largely a mere post-hoc justification for Perón´s policies, and was vague to the extreme.

While the government’s policies were clearly geared toward labor, “justicialism” had an explicit multiclass appeal, and in its denial of class struggle it borrowed greatly from catholic social doctrine, above all Rerum Novarum and Quadragesimo Anno, which emphasized “just” distribution and class conciliation, with the state as mediator (Ciria 1983, 29).

Raúl A. Méndé, minister of technical affairs in Perón’s cabinet, was in charge of making the doctrine accessible to the people, and to produce a philosophical justification for peronism. “The Peronist Doctrine and Reality” declared immodestly justicialism to be “the solution of

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16 The first known use of the word justicialismo was made by Perón in April of 1949, at a congress of philosophy held in Mendoza. Cf. Blanksten (1953, 281).
humanity’s problem,” providing as it did for “the happiness of man in the human society through
the equilibrium of the material and spiritual, the individual and collective forces” (Mendé 1950
(est.), 57, 60) According to Mendé, “neither individualism nor collectivism give a real, decisive
and stable solution for the problem of society” – only justicialism, or peronism, did (Mendé 1950
(est.), 37).

The doctrine of the personalistic movement-party particularly claimed to transcend left
and right. While Mendé declared peronism a “Third Position,” between the “extremes” of
individualism and collectivism, this was hardly any endorsement of political centrism, and the
“Third Position” was remarkably sparse on details.

A report by George Blanksten, professor of political science at Northwestern University,
appears a first attempt to come to grips with justicialism. This acerbic observer argued Perón was
“primarily a successful political opportunist… the Third position is whatever Perón says it is…
[and] Justicialismo is whatever he does (Blanksten 1953, 294, 297). Noting that Perón was the
only element that held the centrifugal movement together, “in the sense that Justicialismo is
whatever Perón does, it is an ingenious ideological device. Perón gives and Perón takes away, and
the ‘Third Position’ likewise does both” (Blanksten 1953, 293, 297). The sole interpreter of
justicialism thus remained one man.

Internationally, Perón as well claimed a Third Position, and expressed particularly deep
admiration for Charles de Gaulle, but also Gamal Abdel Nasser, and Mao Zedong (Plotkin 2004,
54). Yet as prominent biographer of Perón Joseph Page notes, on the international scale the Third
Position was “little more than a slogan” (Page 1983, 185) belied by Argentina’s UN voting
record, where support for liberation movements and anti-colonial struggle was lukewarm at best.
After 1950, Argentina even aligned with the United States (Waldman 1981, 78), and despite
earlier anti-imperialist and nationalist rhetoric, Perón would eventually invite the Standard Oil
Company to extract Argentina’s petroleum resources (Corradi 1977, 122). Moreover, if one is to
be judged by the company of one’s friends, his international allies were anything but progressive:
Perón was on excellent terms with Alfredo Stroessner – the Paraguayan dictator who would
initially shelter him when he fled – and other cruel despots such as Marcos Pérez Jiménez
(Venezuela), Anastasio Somoza (Nicaragua), and Rafael Trujillo (Dominican Republic).

To Waldman (1981), the peronist doctrine was “fundamentally Christian, clerical,
authoritarian, traditionalist” (1981, 120). This does not mean it was static. While the authoritarian
traits remained throughout, toward the final years of the Peronato (1945-1955), the nationalist
and corporatist doctrine became more progressive, in the sense that it later advocated
secularization, as witnessed in legislation that allowed divorce, and ended mandated religious
education – ironically, ending provisions that were mostly put in place by the socially conservative 1943 military government of which Perón formed a part (Waldman 1981, 120). Notably, peronism also introduced women suffrage in 1949.

In sum, the doctrine in practice completely lacked specifics, and could indeed mean all things to all men (Corradi 1977, 106-115). Perón would “never sacrifice practicality on the altar of ideological coherence” (Page 1983, 89), and prominently refused to be classified as either left or right. Throughout his life, Perón often would note he had two hands, one left and one right, and that he used both (Plotkin 2004, 53). Often expressed through the slogan “Neither Yankees nor Marxists, Peronists!” it is a feature that is particularly emphasized by representatives of “Orthodox” peronism today, who continue to deny the applicability of the left-right dimension in Argentine politics, thereby carrying on an important legacy of this crucial trait of the personalistic movement-party.

**Peronismo: Emphasis on the movement and not the party**

The Peronist Party was not conceived of as a party in the traditional sense, and the idea of a larger “movement” rather than a party eventually became a “peronist tradition”: Peronism lacked “the essential elements of a traditional party organization” (Jackisch 1990, 74), and adapted the characteristics of a movement rather than of a party. The boundaries between the political party and the wider movement were highly unclear, and Perón relied on mass mobilizations by associated organizations, primarily the peronist labor organizations. He declared,

> We have said that in our organization, peronism is not a party: it is a movement, and it is a movement because it does not have an orthodox organization like the ones used by other political parties… Ours is not a conglomerate of men and women lined up behind a political banner. The peronist movement is a movement of national opinion that follows a doctrine, a doctrine that has pointed out the great objectives we want to achieve for the country and that has pointed out the route we must follow to achieve them.\(^\text{17}\)

Perón identified the fatherland and the people with himself. The doctrine therefore went hand in hand with the organization of the movement, which according to Perón “is the people, it is the nation, and it is the state” (de Riz 1986, 674). In a speech on Oct. 17, 1950, from the balcony of the presidential palace, Perón pronounced the famous “Twenty Truths of the Justicialist Movement,” commonly known as the “Twenty Truths of Peronism,” which contained phrases such as,

> Peronism is essentially popular. Every political clique is anti-popular, and therefore, cannot be peronist… For peronism, only one class of men exists: Those that work…There can be nothing

\(^\text{17}\)Confalonieri (1956, 157), quoted in McGuire (1997, 64)
better for a peronist than another peronist… In political action, the scale of peronist values is the following: First the fatherland, then the Movement, and then men.”18

The element of “with us or against us” was clearly present in peronist doctrine and discourse from the beginning.19 It meant a “zero-sum-game approach to problem solving” where the main purpose of the movement was to “defeat the enemy” (Manzetti 1993, 81), and where compromise was regarded as invalid in principle as in practice.

Yet the confusion of one’s movement-party with the nation contains within it several dangers that may be manifested in different ways. Movements find it desirable to establish full control, as they may find opposition to be illegitimate. What was to become a peronist tradition was thus a hegemonic vocation and “eclectic view of permissible roads to power” (McGuire 1997, 7). A party that does not conceive itself as a real party but negates the idea of a party system has the inherent propensity to regard itself as the only legitimate option. Political movements thus “aspire to full and permanent control of the state through the most readily available means, electoral or not” (McGuire 1997, 7). Once in power, this would also justify virtually any means for retaining that control.

A personalistic movement-party in power

As the peronist movement-party identified with the state, it is instructive to look at some of the measures enacted by the Perón administration, in particular as the PP grew from the state, as “a sub product of the regime, and not the other way around” (Ciria 1983, 204).

It is commonly argued that the enduring legacy of peronism has been a “mythical reading” of the period (Corradi 1977, 110). Yet this must not overshadow the fact that during Perón’s rule, workers’ gains were by all measures massive, in particular as before workers had received so little. A massive unionization drive led to new workers rights, state-sponsored social security schemes, the nationalization of key industries, and a general expansion of social welfare (McGuire 1997, 56-59).

Yet from the point of view of political liberty, the peronist state became increasingly illiberal. The first 1946 elections, in all essence democratic, had given Perón a majority of 109 (out of 157) seats that would be put to use quickly to buttress the regime. Initially, a larger group

19 There was a clear precedent in Argentina to confound one’s political movement with the nation. Already in the 1880s, the conservative Partido Autonomista Nacional ought to instill the idea that consensus was possible and opposition illegitimate (Coppedge 1998b, 186-187). Later, the UCR under President Hipólito Yrigoyen was no different, openly bragging over its lack of an ideological doctrine (de Ipola 1987, 368), and similarly pretending to be a total expression of the nation and the people (Rock 1987b, 5). Peronism would, however, take this identification of the movement with the state even further, with its claims of doctrinal hegemony and “plebiscitarian caesarism” (Portantiero 1987).
of deputies centered around PL deputy Reyes were unwilling to blindly follow the edicts of Perón, yet all but a very few – Reyes and his followers in the province of Buenos Aires (Little and Seibert 1979, 350) – succumbed to the intense pressure for “loyalty” and eventually became oficia
tistas, or loyal adherents of the government (Beveraggi Allende 1956, 43).

Yet even elections were eventually seen as only incidental evidence of a legitimacy that was more importantly derived from direct and unique contact with “the people.” The electoral opposition, moreover, would by extension become “the anti-people” (Plotkin 2003, 30). A dramatic example is the threats against opposition deputy Reyes, which culminated in an assassination attempt on his life. Reyes and other ex PL leaders were accused by Perón of being “lackeys of Wall street” (Beveraggi Allende 1956, 56), and he was subsequently imprisoned for the entire remainder of the regime.

While the Argentine Congress held the right to destitute Supreme Court Justices, peronism’s attack on the Supreme Court meant the end of an independent judiciary. In 1947, three Supreme Court judges were impeached, and many more lower-level judges were also removed, their places filled with uncritical supporters of the regime (Gambini 1999, 92-98). By the end of the regime, most judges would hold political positions, utterly blurring institutional boundaries (Waldman 1981, 65).20

In 1949, new laws were approved by Congress that would institutionally block the formation of new opposition parties, and prevent his own movement from dividing. Law 13645 effectively assured that new political formations would not be recognized as such until three years after their presentation of a party register and charter, political doctrine and electoral platform, and constituted party authorities. Also, the new parties could not adopt names similar to other parties (i.e., using “peronist” or “labor” labels) and party fusions or coalitions were forbidden. This aimed simultaneously at preventing new opposition from crystallizing, as well as its own divided movement from splintering (Mustapic 2002, 141). In any case, it clearly cemented the position of the PP as the dominant party.21

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20 For a study of the politicized post-1947 Supreme Court, see Abásolo (2005).
21 One particular disturbing feature was a bicameral commission established by congress to investigate opposition claims of torture. In 1950, the Visca-Decker commission, led by two loyalist lawmakers, made a tour of the country, yet rather than addressing the claims, imposed sanctions on disobedient regions, such as disrupting banking and commercial activity. In its attacks on political opposition it became somewhat of a modern inquisition, shutting down more than 150 newspapers and attacking the opposition. Cf. The Economist, May 27, 1950, reported in Plotkin (2003,79), and Ciria 1983, 324. Sirvén (1984) details how government control of media in a vicious spiral would speed the development of anti-Peronism, and further radicalize the already non-democratically inclined opposition to Perón.
By the end of the 1940s, most dissent was largely stifled. Deputies had by that year pretty much been reduced to rubber-stamping government initiatives, and what few debates existed centered merely on how to faithfully interpret the official doctrine (Waldman 1981, 64).

The regime was also highly intent on using institutional means to cement its power. For instance, it eagerly redrew boundaries to benefit its candidates. In the capital city of Buenos Aires, where opposition to the peronist project was strongest, from 1948 to 1954, the number of circumscriptions was changed from 20 to 28 to 14, and the continuous gerrymandering served squarely to benefit the Peronist Party (Little 1973, 283, fn10, Luna 1984b, 117-121).

“Peronification” of society sped ahead. Most public meetings began with open homologies to Perón, which maintained the fiction of political and ideological unity among the peronists (Gambini 2001, 146), and portraits of Perón and his wife adorned public buildings, in line with the strategy of conflating peronism with the Argentine nation (Waldman 1981, 123-125).

Propaganda for the PP was found in all public buildings. Teisaire, who ruled the party with an iron hand, particularly angered the middle classes with the order that all public employees had to enroll in the party (Luna 1984b, 120). A school of peronist thought (Escuela Superior Peronista) was established, and minister Mendé explained that its main function was “to teach how to love Perón… because Perón is never wrong, and can never be wrong.”

Argentine society mirrored the characteristic of the personalistic movement party as society rapidly was speeding ahead in direction of either with us or against us. The PP itself would “seal hermetically the path to any new political force… so that the people could declare themselves either on the one hand for Perón (and his unconditional servants), or on the other for the traditional parties” (Blanksten 1953). While earlier elections had been quite fair, the 1951 elections were marred by fraud, gerrymandering, repression of non-peronists, jailing of opposition, and curbing of the media (Blanksten 1953, 77-86). The PP itself became “increasingly authoritarian and personalistic” (Ciria 1983, 205). Its opponents labeled it “a parody of political organization,” and its leaders “personal servants of the president” (Beveraggi Allende 1956, 53). Party pluralism was denounced as pernicious trait of weak and disunited society (Cavarozzi 1989, 305). This was not limited to its discourse. A new constitution had been passed in 1949, and article 3 of Law 14.184, outlined,

For the purposes of a correct interpretation and effective execution of the present law, the “National Doctrine,” adopted by the Argentine people, the Peronist Doctrine or Justicialism, which has its final aim to achieve the happiness of the people and the greatness of the Nation, by

means of Social Justice, harmonizing material values with spiritual values, and the rights of the individual with the rights of society.23

In other words, the law identified the doctrinaire principles of peronism with the national doctrine, and therefore as the only legitimate expression of “Argentineness,” or what it meant to be truly Argentine. This conflation as well found its way to the PP’s 1954 party charter. By law, this now meant a negation of other parties and their very right to dissent – if the doctrine of the PP was the national doctrine, expressions of other parties would by definition be anti-national, and therefore illegitimate.

**The personalistic movement-party character of the PP deepens**

As the years passed on, the particular characteristics of the personalistic movement-party would become even clearer, in particular the increasingly unclear boundaries between the party and the wider “movement.” While Perón declared that “I cannot do without political parties, as they are a prejudiced, preconceived idea that still has not disappeared from our evolution,”24 the party formation was increasingly referred to as a “movement” of which the party only formed a party. In a July 1949 party assembly, the PP was divided into *ramas*, or branches, enshrined in Article 80 of its charter, which declared, “The Peronist Party is one of the parts of the Peronist Movement. The other parts are: The Women’s Peronist Party, and the General Confederation of Labor.”25

While the concepts of designated female delegates and regional representation were clearly party innovations (Mackinnon 2002, 143), the feminine branch would remain a mere political machine constructed and inspired by the dictates of Eva Perón (Ciria 1983, 182).26 Moreover, as with most of its statues, this system was never really put into practice. The *tercio* system, where the branches would receive a third each of party delegates, was hardly respected, in particular the women share.27

No clear rules on party membership existed. The PP accepted “opportunists from all sectors to its ranks” and later forced state employers to join it (Little 1973, 658). The party elites were unusually vulnerable, as they had no institutionalized power base of their own, but rather owned their appointment to Perón (Manzetti 1993, 101). Before Perón’s fall, Blanksten described the PP as “a sawdust monolith, a house of cards… its potential fragility is a dire threat to the government” (1953, 356). The enormous social diversity of its followers had no way of

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23 Quoted in José Carlos Corbatta: ¿Qué es el Justicialismo? www.analitica.com/va/hispanica/3663190.asp
24 Quoted in Ciria (1983, 205).
26 An examination of the PP Women’s branch is found in Bianchi and Sanchís (1988).
27 Not until 1993 would a new national law impose a *tercio* on all parties (McGuire 1997, 124).
expressing themselves through internal mechanisms of negotiation (Cavarozzi 1989, 305-306), just as no institutional escape valve existed for opposition to the government itself. When a coup against Perón succeed on Sept. 20, 1955, the new rulers had little problems in banning the party itself. Yet Perón’s advocacy of the wider movement rather than a party would have a crucial effect: It was exactly as movement and not a party that peronism would survive.

**Peronism proscribed, 1955-1972: A lid is put on internal contradictions**

The military coup that ousted Perón not only banned the PP: Executive Decree 1461 made it illegal to even mention Perón and Evita by name, in practice cementing the dichotomy of peronism-anti-peronism in quasi-legal terms. Over the next 18 years, peronist participation in elections was vetoed by the military, which often intervened when civilian governments permitted some kind of peronist participation.28

The open ban was a clear factor impeding further party building (Cavarozzi 1986, 147). Yet as McGuire notes, proscription was not the culprit of the party’s state, as the PP was very poorly institutionalized even before proscription (1997, 23). The new rulers had as such very little problems disbanding the actual party itself, as there simply was not much to ban.

The PP elites would remain very loyal to Perón, owing as they did their appointment directly to him (Manzetti 1993, 101-102). But it was above all in the unions peronism would survive. In lieu of a legal party, they became the “chief organizing force and institutional expression of peronism in the post -1955 era” (James 1988, 76). In 1957, a group of unions nominally representing 62 peronist groupings created *Las 62 Organizaciones Justicialistas*, which would spearhead the “resistance” to the regime, to prepare for the return of their leader. Driven by a “partly idealized, partly accurate memory” (McGuire 1997, 19) of the Perón administration’s gains, they revered the administration as a “golden era” where state-led national development had been accompanied by real gains in social benefits and recognition (James 1988, 89). Whatever anti-party sentiments existed in the working class were further strengthened during the period, largely reminiscent of the pre-1945 military-civilian dictatorships. A testimony to this is when the possibility of a legal recreation of the PP was discussed during the early years of the radical Frondizi administration (1958-62), the unions had little interest in re-establishing any party bureaucratic structure (James 1988, 156). Given what was at times a very real ban on participation, maintaining peronism as a “movement organization” (Levitsky 2003, 42) in the unions appeared a rational strategy.

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28 The PP was banned officially on Dec. 1, 1955, while the PJ was legalized Jan. 26, 1972 (Bittel 1983, 252).
Though hardly homogenous, the peronist union movement remained the dominant expression of the working class. Though it was a very “loose federation of different groups loyal to Perón,” this was also his strategy: Keeping the movement-party structure atomized and decentralized was a very efficient way to avoid any rivalry to power (James 1988, 185). Rather than organizing any party from the distance, Perón actively thwarted efforts at party building. In exile, heading the “resistance,” Perón issued directives to the movement, which thorough strikes and mobilizations were instructed to create as chaotic a situation as possible, in order to facilitate his return.

As no clear boundaries or hierarchy existed within the movement, virtually any kind of organizational activity was legitimate, as long as it swore loyalty to Perón. Many peronist “parties” existed, particularly on the provincial level. Yet while Perón would remain the leader of the larger movement, signs eventually grew that his power was waning. Peronists had faithfully followed his orders to vote for Frondizi in 1958, or vote blank in 1957 and 1960, although in certain cases, “neoperonist” parties were actually allowed to run. By 1963, the blank vote only reached 19.2 percent, showing that his orders were increasingly disobeyed. The leader of one such neoperonist party, the Movimiento Popular Neuquino (MPN) in Neuquén, declared that the peronist movement was no longer “an animal herd that could be led by remote control” (Arias and Heras 2004, 103-104).29

An attempt at movement-party change: The Vandor project, 1962-1966

McGuire (1997), in a particularly instructive study of the peronist unions, details how the efforts of one labor leader to detach himself from Perón in practice constituted a party-building project. As the years passed by with the leader in exile, an “appreciable sector of the movement [was] no longer willing to follow blindly the orders of Perón” (Snow 1965, 36), and a faction under Augusto Vandor, head of the metal workers union (UOM), wanted to build “peronism without Peron” by turning the movement into a political party outside its founder’s control. From around 1962 to 1966, McGuire argues, Vandor’s control of the Unión Popular (UP), which became the recognized peronist party, not only presented a real challenge to Perón’s control over the movement, but represented a genuine attempt at moving from the movement logic toward party institutionalization.

The UP had been founded just a few months after Perón’s ouster by his one-time foreign minister Juan Bramuglia (Potash 1959, 520). For a time it was just one of many “neoperonist”

29 The MPN eventually became a lasting rightwing party, though attempts to move beyond its provincial fiefdom of Neuquén has proved a failure, as witnessed by the mere 1.56 percent obtained by its 2007 presidential candidate.
parties, but it eventually become Vandor’s powerbase. Perón remained the head of the *Partido Justicialista* (PJ), which had been created in 1958 in an attempt at securing legal party status for the 1959 elections, which eventually failed (Potash 1959). In 1962 Perón had therefore instead offered the UP his blessing. Yet the UP gained a momentum of its own. By 1963 it had become the largest of the neoperonist parties, and in March it was granted legal recognition as it formally complied with new requirements of a new Statute of Political Parties, the most important of all requiring democratic internal candidate election (Snow 1965, 20).

By 1965, although Perón was its nominal head, the PJ was more a general label given to a coordinating body that wanted to organize all neoperonist parties, including the UP under its umbrella (Ranis 1966, 115, fn 9). Alarmed by Vandor’s increasing clout, Perón had ordered a Superior Council formed to reorganize the PJ and the “62,” and an intervening commission was launched. This coincided with his rhetorical turn to the left, in favor of the Cuban revolution, and some committee member such as Rubén Sosa openly lauded Fidel Castro, to the protests of union leader Vandor, who managed to block what appeared to be an attempt to wrestle power from him (Galasso 2005, 931).

For the March 1965 election, Vandor remained in control of the electoral side of the peronist movement (James 1988, 178, Manzetti 1993, 109). Vandor picked all candidates, and the UP impressively reaped 2,848,000 votes. Combined with a few other dissident parties, the total peronist vote came to around 3,721,000 voters, against a combined 2,628,000 of a divided UCR (Galasso 2005, 958). Following the victory of UP, Perón magnanimously declared,

> Since 1955, when I was overthrown by a coalition of domestic and international interests, I have had no other preoccupation than to institutionalize our movement … I have dedicated myself to the task of changing the personal into the institutional… party. Slowly I have handed over the total leadership to these specific organizations and this election [March 1965] has been entirely conducted by them.³⁰

Yet Perón’s actions belied his proclamations. His failed attempt to set up a reorganized PJ to counter the UP was merely part of a larger plan. As head of UOM, Vandor largely controlled the “62.” And if Perón could not gain control of the party, he provoked a split in the “62” that mirrored the PJ-UP fight. José Alonso, secretary general of CGT and a sworn enemy of Vandor, took charge of a new and rival “62.” Hostile to both political parties and liberal democracy itself, Alonso advocated a corporatist solution that included the church, armed forces, employers groups, and the unions. In contrast with Vandor’s alleged attempt to turn peronism into “a mere liberal political party, “Alonso declared,

³⁰ Quoted in Ranis (1966, 126).
Our entire struggle is oriented toward preserving the character of peronism as a movement. We are fighting those who want to convert it into a party. Vandor is the party, we are the Movement.\textsuperscript{31}

This battle was not merely a matter of organization, as witnessed by a document circulated by anti-Vandor peronist students:

What one is facing are fundamentally two conceptions of peronism. One… whose principal characteristic is the intent to displace the leadership of Perón toward a merely decorative role, and that is prone to the integration with the system through reformist and defeatist politics. The other conception defends the vertical leadership of the chief, rejects compromise with the regime, and promotes the revolutionary mission of peronism.\textsuperscript{32}

Despite pronouncements to the contrary, Perón would not allow any challenge to his leadership. Had he allowed Vandor to proceed with building a party from the movement, his own power would clearly have been reduced. In response, in the game of divide and conquer that he mastered so well, he allied with Vandor’s foes, most of them anti-party union leaders such as Alonso in order to provoke a final confrontation.

The showdown came in Mendoza. In what was nominally merely a by-election for a deputy, as the two leaders supported different candidates – Perón even dispatched his wife to set campaign for his preferred candidate – it really was a genuine measure of strength between the movement and the party. Ironically, due to the division of peronism, a third candidate of the conservative Partido Demócrata eventually won, but to Perón it was of much greater importance to beat Vandor’s candidate, who in the end won handily. Vandor from then on largely retreated to his union, abandoning the party-building project. The plans to create a union-based party with Perón as figurehead were definitely scrapped (James 1988, 186).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partido Demócrata</td>
<td>129,989</td>
<td>Emilio Jofré</td>
<td>Provincial candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Justicialista</td>
<td>102,514</td>
<td>Ernesto Corvalán</td>
<td>Perón’s candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movimiento Popular Mendocino</td>
<td>62,035</td>
<td>Alberto Serú</td>
<td>Vandor’s candidate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Mendoza congressional by-election, April 17, 1966.\textsuperscript{33}

**From insurrection to electoral participation: Why attempt at party change?**

As the UP never developed into a full-fledged national party, we cannot know how far the project would have gone toward building a genuine and depersonalized political party beyond the amorphous movement headed by Juan Perón.

McGuire forcefully presents the Vandor project as the movement’s first attempt at institutionalization, and the account is a highly intriguing one. Yet much information also casts

\textsuperscript{31} Quoted in McGuire (1997, 139).
\textsuperscript{32} Quoted in Galasso (2005, 980).
\textsuperscript{33} Figures from Bittel (1983, 247).
doubts on Vandor as a committed party builder – or even a democrat. As leader of the UOM, he
had repeatedly manipulated its internal election. To win the 1963 UOM elections, he arranged to
have the opposition to his leadership fired, and triumphed with only 10 percent of the votes. The
government accepted the result, in return for Vandor postponing a collective agreement that
would have cost employers hundreds of millions of pesos (González Janzen 1986, 42). In 1968,
when he was reelected secretary general, he had first sought to bribe and expulse opponents, and
when unsuccessful, impugned the opposition in court, most of whom withdrew from the election.
Out of 60,000 workers, only 2,500, a mere four percent, in the end cast their ballots for his
reelection (Gorbato 1992, 134). Such behavior appears not to have been restricted to the political
sphere, as Vandor “ran not only the UOM but also the Superior Council of PJ as he pleased”
(González Janzen 1986, 42). An example of this verticalism is the candidature of Antonio
Cafiero, on good terms with the labor leader, to head the UP deputy list in Buenos Aires province
in 1965. Despite the statute stipulating internal elections, Vandor in the last minute would simply
remove him for a replacement candidate (McAdam 1996, 240).

Abós notes,

One has talked about Vandorismo as an Argentine neolaborism, that is, as a party based in the
unions. But Vandor did not go beyond the traditional peronist doctrine which considered the
unions as the backbone of the movement: Not the brain nor the heart, but the spine.34

Cafiero, in a later interview, expressed strong doubts that Vandor wanted to create a new
party as a substitute or alternative to the PJ:

Despite the union power that he held, he did not believe – as one has attributed to him – in a
“Labor Party” as a substitute or alternative to the Partido Justicialista. He was not disloyal to
Peron… both finally reconciled.35

Given the context of the times, the Vandor project appears to have been more a question
whether to participate as a party or not, rather than as what type of party. Based on how he had
acted within the UP and UOM, one could argue Vandor was really creating a movement-party
from the movement, rather than building an institutionalized party out of the PJ. We are in any
case left with little hard evidence of attempts at creating stable internal mechanisms for leadership
selection or the formulation of policies, and the ideology remained as undefined and incoherent as
before. In terms of its programmatic and ideological orientation, neoperonism – whether of the
UP variant or most other provincial neoperonist parties – was not fundamentally different from

34 Abós (1999, 37).
35 Quoted in McAdam (1996, 240).
Orthodox peronism, and retained its nationalism and social conservatism (Arias and Heras 2004, 120).\footnote{A contemporary report noted of the PJ that its “ill-defined ideological position has permitted it to strengthen its avocation for power, which is second to none” (Ranis 1966, 127).}

Nonetheless, while the case may be far from a perfect one, it retains relevance in that it did in the final instance cover the dichotomy of insurrection, as propagated by Perón, or whether to participate in a more institutional configuration challenged through political channels.\footnote{Godio (1998) notes that the “Vandorist excision… threatened with transforming the movement-party into a political-syndical force to be integrated into the military-fundamentalist state” (1998, 171).} As such, the case is still highly relevant for this analysis: Why did a peronist union leader like Vandor risk confrontation with Perón in order to build the UP as a formation autonomous of the larger movement?

As we will never know how committed Vandor was to a genuinely institutionalized party had he achieved wrestling power from Perón, we must treat what little evidence exist with care, especially as very little material exists on Vandor’s own plans. Yet it appears nonetheless legitimate to posit some plausible scenarios.

The UP scored a range of impressive legislative and gubernatorial victories in March 1962, including the province of Buenos Aires, when it was allowed by the Frondizi government to participate. And although the military intervened and eventually forced the nullification of the elections, the party was in fact eventually granted legal recognition. By 1965, Perón had already been in exile for a decade. The hardcore repression of peronists had ceased, and the national government made several moves toward allowing for a peronist party variant to stand. Perón and Vandor therefore had clearly opposing interests: Perón called to resistance from the unions, and was driven by the motivation to return. A chaotic political landscape, it was hoped, would merely prepare the ground for this, forcing the military and/or civilian rules to accept his role in politics.

Yet by 1965 it looked increasingly unlikely that the military would allow the exiled leader back. The unions, despite their loyalty to Perón, eventually sought to enhance their own powerbase by being represented by a political party, to possibly gain elected office. To pragmatists such as Vandor, negotiation with the regime appears to have made sense. His most obvious motivation was therefore clearly to improve the lot of his union through access to policy-making (McGuire 1997, 112).

It appears therefore to have been a quite clear case of contrasting tangible short-term goals for uncertain long-term ones. As head of UPM and the “62,” Vandor clearly had a powerbase on his own that he moreover needed to keep happy with material gains, especially as his iron-hand leadership was based on highly dubious internal elections.
In terms of external factors, Argentina’s Statute on Political Parties provided an excellent excuse – and a means – to obtain this goal. Allowing for internal elections was clearly a way to reduce the power of Perón, who had always appointed his PP representatives in a vertical manner. The demand for parties to end verticalism was therefore an external imposition that could be interpreted as an independent variable in its own right – forcing the UP-PJ to change its internal structure – or as a means merely utilized by Vandor toward his end of obtaining party control. In either case, as Vandor eventually did win control of the PJ – until the Mendoza showdown reestablished Perón’s authority – it appears to have been quite effective.

In sum, the Vandor project, despite its limitations, appears a rather clear attempt for the PJ to transcend its founder and leader. Vandor had worked for the PJ to abandon its anti-party, anti-system stance, as the UP/PJ was increasingly committed to party competition, and not the launching of a revolution to bring back Perón.

By April 1966, the project to launch “peronism without Peron” was aborted. But even before, it is also clear that Vandor made no attempts at producing a more defined programmatic party platform, and as he abandoned the UP, it was clear the changes were not lasting. The proposition that his driving force remained a pure and instrumental quest for power remains rather than of a discovery of the virtues of democratic party politics, is buttressed by the events after the Mendoza election: Within a month, another military coup displaced the weak radical administration, and banned all parties indefinitely. Vandor did not lament the coup, but quickly sought accommodation with the new military dictatorship of General Juan Carlos Onganía (González and Bosco 1993, 50).

**Extreme ideological contradictions lead to internal party war**

After the 1966 coup, peronism was again forced underground, as its political forms – whether the UP or other neoperonist parties – were again banned. Yet the renewed ban would not act to unify the movement. At this time, there appeared a new cleavage that had been kept under control within the peronist movement but would now become its most violent division: The battle between the peronist left and right. While centrifugal tendencies had been latent in the movement-party since the beginning, this would now lead to an unparalleled level of infighting and division, as even its principal leader was incapable of containing the contradictions he had actively fomented.

While accounts of Perón’s political thinking often argue that Perón did not really change much ideologically (Plotkin 2004), to his movement, the taped and written messages he sent from his various exiles were increasingly confusing. From having expressed in the 1940s support for
the corporatism of fascism, by the late 1960s he now heralded communist Cuba as an example to emulate (Galasso 2005). In Argentina, radicalized youth formed armed groups, some leftwing, others catholic-nationalist, to fight the government, and were praised by Perón (Gillespie 1982, 29-46). For instance, Perón lauded the guerrilla group Montoneros’ assassination of General Pedro Aramburu in 1970 (Gorbato 1992, 145). Yet as Plotkin dryly notes, “neither did he have any difficulties waging war against them when the moment of definition arrived” (Plotkin 2004, 59) – that is, when he no longer needed them.

The peronist right was above all found in the labor unions, whose leadership had grown increasingly politically and socially conservative, and were often targets of the guerilla’s assassinations. While Perón would clearly opt for unionized labor, in order to minimize his dependence on them – Vandor’s UP had demonstrated a dangerous potential for organizational and financial autonomy – in his communiqués he also lauded the “special formations,” or the left and youth sectors of the movement (McGuire 1997, 161). While secretly assuring his loyalty to the unions, he promised the left a transvasamiento generacional, or a generational change (Gillespie 1982, 40), and the formation of a new and progressive leadership of peronism. His choice of Héctor Cámpora to run as his proxy for the 1973 presidential elections - electoral law first prevented him from running himself – appeared to buttress this promise, as Cámpora on his inauguration day was surrounded on the podium by Peronist Youth (JP) leaders, President Salvador Allende of Chile, and Cuban president Osvaldo Dorticós.

Yet the “left opening” would not last the two months of Cámpora’s presidency. Following Perón’s definite return from exile, when confronted with two very opposing tendencies – a conservative labor-movement, often highly rightwing in character, vs. the left-wing peronism above all propagated by the youth, he decidedly settled for the former, or “classic” peronism: “One must return to the Twenty Peronist Truths,” he said at time when various peronist tendencies were literally massacring each other. Any ideological reappraisal was clearly discarded (Plotkin 2004, 57).

During his exile, Perón had continually assured himself the position of ultimate arbiter of the movement’s fate (Manzetti 1993, 102). To assure that no part became too dominant, he deliberately stoked divisions. It is a testament to the effectiveness of this strategy that both the far left and the far right could read in him an ally. Yet the results would be disastrous. A mere taste of what was to come was the shoot-out at Ezeiza airport during his final arrival, on June 20, 1973,
which made it clear that the movement really was undergoing an internal civil war. At least 13 were shot dead immediately and 365 wounded.\footnote{For one account of this massacre, see Verbitsky (1985).}

Proscription had put a lid on the internal tensions of peronism, which had acted united in opposition to the military regimes (Cavarozzi 1986, 150), yet by now they had turned on each other. In the very name of peronism, the Montoneros would assassinate prominent peronists such as Alonso and Vandor, and UOM’s José Ignacio Rucci, whom they accused of having sold out workers for their own benefit (Manzetti 1993, 104). Right-wing groups, many from the bodyguards of labor unions such as the UOM, were in turn operating as virtual death squads against any real or perceived left “radicals.”

The PJ, while nominally incorporating all these, had no real protagonism beyond serving as an electoral machine: It did not serve as an institutional arena for the channeling of this political conflict. This was hardly a surprise: Peronism “during its entire… history had rejected party politics” (Cavarozzi 1986, 152). This would not change with the return of Perón, as both extremes of the movement shared a rejection of party building.

Perón returned to the presidential chair July 1973. In power, he tolerated massive institutional transgressions, such as the Navarrazo in Córdoba, where a left-leaning governor was overthrown by the provincial police after Perón said they “should settle their own problems” (Page 1983, 479-481). He also forced the ouster of a left-leaning governor of Buenos Aires, and the media were increasingly harassed (such as the daily Clarín), all of which had the effect of undermining the legitimacy and strength of political institutions (Cavarozzi 1989, 319). Anti-subversive laws enacted by the peronist-controlled congress – against the votes of eight JP Deputies – were so wide they could be used to stifle any dissent. As president, Perón did nothing to curb violence against the peronist left (Gillespie 1982, 152). While many left peronists to the end refused to believe Perón was not on their side, the final straw for many came on May 1, 1974, when Perón in a speech derided them as “stupid and beardless.” The peronist left, who were “trying to make peronism something it never was” (Page 1983, 489), abandoned the plaza.\footnote{Among them was Néstor Kirchner. Confidential interview, FpV national deputy, March 13 2007.}

Buchraker notes that Perón finally spoke against the dualism of the “people and the anti-people” before he died, acknowledging the need for political pluralism (1998, 14-15), and even of the need to organize and strengthen the PJ (Perón 1972, 93-101). Yet to his movement, it came far too late.\footnote{Looking at Perón’s past, one is hard pressed to accept the sincerity of Perón’s conversion. As Page notes, “he had advocated restructuring the movement for decades without ever lifting a finger to make it capable of existing, let alone functioning smoothly, without him” (Page 1983, 473).}
Verticalism prevents new leadership from developing

If Perón had been unable to keep contradictions in check when he was alive, little should it surprise that the worst was yet to come when the old “conductor” was gone. Perón had made the particularly poor choice of having his politically inexperienced wife as vice president. Following his death she assumed the presidency, yet real power was held by the peronist unions, and by “fascistic peronist cliques” led by the powerful welfare minister José López Rega, a kind of Argentine Rasputin who had been a “court jester” for Perón, and dabbled in the occult (Cavarozzi 1986, 154).

Following Vandor’s assassination in 1969, Lorenzo Miguel took over the UOM and the “62.” Hostile to the peronist youth and the left in general, he had no interest in building a party, but rather sought to exercise power from the state in a corporatist manner (McGuire 1997, 166). López Rega, the real power behind Isabel (McGuire 1997, 166) had his own union followers, and through his office personally armed bands of thugs to kill leftwing opposition. The notorious death squad *Alianza Anticomunista Argentina*, or Triple A, carried out at least 1,000 murders.41

While they had both banded together to displace left peronists and reformists, López Rega and Miguel eventually turned on each other, and the former was displaced by a coalition of the “62” and politicians. Yet it was clear that the plebiscitarian style of Perón had left no clear group of intermediary politicians with legitimate power, and the unions remained the main expression of peronism (McGuire 1997, 167). In line with peronist verticalism, nor did the unions replace Isabel as nominal head of the PJ.

The Argentine political axis had started to shift toward a line of left and right, but as no parties were able to channel the political conflict, the results became increasingly disastrous. This is a point that must be emphasized: The movement-party structure of peronism worked against this, as the rigid verticalism inherent to the PJ left a leadership unwilling or unable to make any concessions (Cavarozzi 1986, 153). As assassinations on both sides merely escalated, when the military in March 1976 stepped in to take power, most union leaders actually welcomed the military coup, as did large sector of Argentine society (Cavarozzi 1986, 153). Yet while the peronist leaders had often engaged in negotiation with earlier military governments, the 1976-1983 dictatorship, ominously known as the *Proceso*, would be of a very different kind: As part of its perverted ideas of “cleansing” Argentina for “subversion, peronist leaders and workers of the peronist left and right alike were soon target of military repression (Manzetti 1993, 105, McGuire 1997, 173). The military went on a murderous rampage against anyone opponent, real or imagined, against the regime. While an official commission puts the number of deaths to around

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41 For one account of the López Rega reign, see Feinmann (1987).
9,000 cases, most human rights organizations speak of 30,000 murders, including thousands of desaparecidos tortured to death but never found (Romero 2002, 218). While peronism did survive the dictatorship, it was in a clandestine “bottom-up, semi-anarchic manner” (Levitsky 2003, 51), in stark contrast to the massive union mobilization of earlier years. While the very level of repression was clearly partly to blame for its inactivity during the Proceso, there were other obstacles as well: Not only was its leader gone, but its disastrous performance in government now seriously questioned its moral authority to lead (Cavarozzi 1986, 155).

**Party builders and movement advocates draw diverging lessons of electoral loss**

Conventional wisdom argued that if peronism was allowed to run, it would win any election. The party, like the UCR, emerged with massive new voter affiliations: Out of a total of four million members, 1.5 million were new, which also made PJ the largest party in the Western hemisphere. Yet when democracy returned in 1983, the PJ’s defeat destroyed the myth of peronist invincibility at the polls (Manzetti 1993, 107).

In exile in Spain, Isabel Perón had remarkably kept her position as president of the PJ, although true power remained with UOM’s Lorenzo Miguel (Manzetti 1993, 106). His position as vice president of the PJ and control of the membership registry assured him the real power of the party (Romero 2002, 252). His dignified behavior under imprisonment and torture during the dictatorship had gained him new respect, yet beyond the union core he was still associated with the violent years leading up to the dictatorship, and was together with other union bosses blamed for creating the conditions that eventually led to the 1976 coup (Cavarozzi and Grossi 1992, 188).

Paradoxically, the PJ had retained close ties to many of the military leaders. According to news reports, the military was even “proposing an alliance with rightwing sectors of the peronist movement led by Lorenzo Miguel” where the PJ leader was asked to move against the “left” of his party. Adding fuel to the fire, the PJ was reported to have been in negotiations with the military regarding the granting of an amnesty to the repressors.42 Top PJ leaders such as Senator Vicente Saadi openly opposed the creation of the CONADEP, the national commission investigating the fates of the disappeared,43 and criticized the holding of human rights trials (Cerruti 1993, 334).

The behavior of other top peronists, such as the PJ’s candidate for governor in Buenos Aires province Herminio Iglesias, reinforced the public's impression that the authoritarian nature of peronism had not changed (Manzetti 1993, 106). A particularly crude and vicious campaigner,
Iglesias represented the extreme right of the party. His infamous burning of a coffin inscribed with the initials of the UCR during the 1983 campaign was merely the culmination of a type of behavior that left the public, beyond PJ’s labor chore, with a very bad image of the party.

Despite her disastrous rule, in line with traditional peronist verticalism, the Orthodox conservative peronists also shared a veneration for the figure of Isabel. For others, she represented the quintessence of reaction; behind here hid the most, nationalist, rightwing, authoritarian sectors of the party (Horowicz 2007 [1985], 312).

The PJ’s leadership emerged largely intact from the dictatorship. So did peronist verticalism. A primary was nominally held to elect the party’s presidential candidate, yet during the congress, held Sept. 5–6 1983, a handful of PJ leaders had already decided on Italo Luder, a lawyer with little base in the party, and Deolindo Bittel, the PJ vice president from 1976-1983, as official candidates. No opposing lists were presented.

Voters as well attributed great responsibility to peronism for creating the chaotic and violent conditions that legitimized the March 1976 coup (Cavarozzi and Grossi 1992, 188). The PJ’s often violent and unruly campaign rallies, organized chiefly by the unions (Levitsky 2003, 93), reminded voters of this tragic era. They finally ditched the PJ in favor of the UCR’s Raúl Alfonsin, who won in a landslide. And in the Province of Buenos Aires, the bastion of peronism, Iglesias faced an even heavier loss against his radical opponent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raúl Alfonsín/Víctor Martínez</td>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>7,724,559</td>
<td>51.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italo Luder/Deolindo Bittel</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>5,995,402</td>
<td>40.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Argentina, Oct. 30, 1983, Presidential election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro Armendáriz/Elba Roulet</td>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>2,805,023</td>
<td>51.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herminio Iglesias/José Carmelo Amerise</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>2,143,732</td>
<td>39.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Second attempt at party change: Peronist Renovation, 1983-1989

While Miguel and Iglesias hung on to power, opposition to their leadership and the dominance of the Orthodox was brewing due to the PJ’s shocking loss. While their opponents

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44 Even the lawyer Luder expressed support for the self-amnesty the military granted themselves before leaving power. Murió el dirigente justicialista y ex presidente Italo Luder. La Nación, May 26, 2008.
made out a very diverse group, they were united by one goal: “to democratize peronism by transforming it from a movement into a real party through the establishment of clear internal rules” (Manzetti 1993, 107). This was then a direct attack on verticalism, which had survived intact during the Proceso.

Between 1983 and 1987, the PJ experienced a range of ruptures, parallel congresses, change of alliances, and legal challenges that finally resulted in the victory of the Renovadores, or Renovators. Their greatest achievement was the establishment of internal elections for party and public offices. Their greatest failure was the inability to make these changes lasting, and to update the ideological underpinnings of the peronist doctrine.

The situation was extremely chaotic on the leadership level, where the verticalist authority of the Orthodox was increasingly questioned. Isabel, while refusing to return to Argentina, as nominal PJ leader acted as a further obstacle to reorganizing the party (Mustapic 1988, 24). In early 1984, she made an unexpected return to create a Superior Council “above all other party organs,” which lasted through the year as a parallel leadership (Levitsky 2003, 53), but it hardly resolved the PJ’s problems of leadership. When the PJ convened its national congress on Dec. 16, 1984, the conflict came fully out in the open.

At the Odeón theatre in the capital, the PJ’s highest organ met to elect a new party council, its primary executive leadership. Yet the Orthodox, just like they had handpicked its 1983 presidential candidates, made no concessions, but merely presented another “unity list.” Governor of Santa Fe José María Vernet, a close Miguel ally, would be vice president, the discredited Iglesias general secretary, and Miguel would keep the first vice presidency for himself. Isabel would be kept as nominal head of the party. In short, there was no renovation in the top leadership.

Yet this classic verticalism was out of touch with demands for reform, as well as the general democratic spirit of the times, and the Orthodox had to resort to violence and strong-arm tactics to trump through their victory. Demands of secret elections were rejected, in the words of an Orthodox leader, “so that we will know who the coward traitors are” and half the delegates of the party congress walked out – spat at and punched as they departed – denying the congress the necessary quorum for legal recognition.50

48 The congress could be considered the party’s “parliament,” with the national council the PJ “government,” charged with overseeing the daily activity of the party.
49 Quoted in McAdam (1996, 125).
50 McGuire (1997) uses the figures 414/656, another figure is 347 out of 670. Whatever the actual count, the party was clearly divided. Cf. Los congresos peronistas, entre rupturas y ensayos de unidad. La Nación, July 17, 2008.
The failed congress marked the official starts of the Renovation. The principal leader was longtime peronist leader from Buenos Aires province, Antonio Cafiero, and he was joined by La Rioja Governor Carlos Menem, Carlos Grosso, José Luis Manzano, and José Manuel de la Sota.\(^{51}\)

While it was unclear where they stood programmatically and ideologically, they shared one common position: Whereas Perón had been openly pejorative of party politics, their evaluation of the party institution was a positive one (Cavarozzi and Grossi 1992, 191).

The Renovators impugned the Odeón convention and convened another congress just weeks later. On Feb. 2, 1985, around 380 dissidents met in Río Hondo in Santiago del Estero province to elect a new leadership and reform the party structure. In a direct move against verticalism, the national council would now be made up by four delegates from each province, to be elected by vote of affiliates, and the council would democratically elect its executive board (Cafiero 1995, 43).

In stark contrast to the past, there was no violence at the conference, and the press had free access. The new leadership was duly voted upon, and reflected the party renewal: Renovator José Manuel de la Sota was elected secretary general, while the vice-presidencies went to Oraldo Britos, senator from San Luis, and union leader Roberto García. García represented a new labor ally, the Group of 25, essentially a left-wing peronist faction within labor that challenged Miguel’s hegemonic position, and were willing to subordinate itself to the party (Manzetti 1993, 108).\(^{52}\)

Notably, Perón’s widow was still kept as the nominal head of the party. While she would in any case soon resign from any PJ leadership position, there were clearly limits to the rupture with the past. However, electing the new leadership democratically was a huge leap forward for the PJ: In seeking direct election of all posts and candidacies, it would attack the very verticalism of the movement, upon which Orthodox power rested. The Orthodox leaders, in response,

\(^{51}\)Carlos Grosso: A Federal Capital politician, elected president of the local PJ after the Renovation won control of the party in 1985. Yet he quickly reconciled with Menem and was even appointed mayor of the capital (the post was until 1996 designated by the president of the nation), yet would get in massive legal troubles for alleged corruption. When he resigned from the mayorship Oct. 1992, he had more than 38 ongoing legal proceedings against him. José Luis Manzano: Former president of PJ’s parliamentary group, Manzano also reconciled with Menem and named minister of the interior in 1991. Resigned after corruption charges Dec 1992. Uttered the famous “I steal for the crown” (Romero 2002, 290), which became the title of a well-known book of the early years of the Menem reign (Verbitsky 1991). José Manuel de la Sota was a local politician from Córdoba, who would later become governor of the province. He remains (June 2008) one of the most ardent opponents within the PJ to the leadership of Néstor Kirchner.

\(^{52}\)The “25” included the railway workers, pharmacy workers, auto workers, state workers, teachers, miners, rubber workers, truckers, naval workers, and shipyard workers (Levitsky 2003, 108).
claimed it “would violate peronism’s movementist tradition” and “convert peronism into just another political party” (Levitsky 2003, 114).

Key to the Renovation was displacing the Orthodox unions from power. Ending the tercio system was part of this. Within the PJ, the unions had often gone beyond their allotted third, filling the spots reserved for the “party” as well as the “feminine” branch of the peronist movement (McGuire 1997, 209). Organizationally, as both McGuire (1997) and Levitsky (2003) detail, there had been an ongoing process to move away from the complete reliance on the mobilizational capacity of the unions for quite some time. After 1983, the PJ had built patronage machines increasingly outside the unions, with money coming from the state through the control of 12 of Argentina’s 22 provinces.53

The attempt to move away from excessive reliance on unions was hardly unique to the era, as witnessed in Spain by Felipe González’s renovation of the PSOE. What adds another twist to the Argentine tale, however, is that the union leadership – and a significant part of its base – was ideologically very conservative and rightwing, and often highly authoritarian.

No one represented this better than Herminio Iglesias, who earned the label “neofascist” (Manzetti 1993, 107). Iglesias was an “abysmally brutish and boorish politician who could not conjugate properly in Spanish, owned a network of brothels in his fief of Avellaneda [and] had a criminal record that made American Teamsters leaders look tame by comparison” (Ostiguy 1998, 109). As mayor of Avellaneda in the 1970s,54 he was accused of ties to the Triple A. Throughout the dictatorship he was backed by the “15,” or the collaborationist wing of labor (Cavarozzi and Grossi 1992, 190).

The Renovators still agreed to attend a “unity conference” in Santa Rosa, La Pampa, just four months later, but the Orthodox were not accommodating: Their proposed list was reserved for particularly objectionable candidates, such as senators Vicente Saadi (Catamarca) and Alberto Rodríguez Saá (San Luis) and the despised union leader Alberto Triaca as vice presidents, while Iglesias would retain the post of secretary general.55 When the congress moreover rejected the

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53 At this point, Tierra del Fuego did not have provincial status, while the maximum authority of the city of Buenos Aires was appointed directly by the president. This would change with the Olivos Pact of 1994
54 The term intendente in Spanish refers to the executive municipal leader in Buenos Aires province, which is divided up in partidos. While partidos also cover rural territory, the term “mayor” will here be used for consistency.
55 McGuire (1997, 227) writes, “Triaca had been the most prominent member of the conservative and conciliatory wing of the union leadership. His relationship to the unions had begun in the mid 1960s, when his father had served as co-founder and treasurer of the plastics workers’ union. It had solidified in the early 1970s, when he ascended to the union’s assistant secretary generalship—without ever having worked in a plastics factory. Fortunate to have married into a wealthy family, Triaca had acquired a huge mansion with a swimming pool in the elegant residential district of La Horqueta, a three-story chalet in the beach resort of Pinamar, a house in Miami, and fifty racehorses.”
voting credentials of many Renovators seeking to attend, the rupture was finally complete (McAdam 1996, 127).

Yet the weakness of the Orthodox was soon exposed in the ultimate test: national elections. For the subsequent midterm elections later that year, the party would split in two, as Iglesias repeatedly refused to hold internal elections for candidates for national deputies. While the UCR won the elections overall, Antonio Cafiero’s *Frente Renovador* more than doubled the votes of Iglesias’ PJ.56

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unión Cívica Radical</td>
<td>2,381,787</td>
<td>41.46</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Renovador</td>
<td>1,549,724</td>
<td>26.98</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Intransigente</td>
<td>574,285</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista de Liberación (PJ)</td>
<td>563,269</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alianza del Centro</td>
<td>229,485</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Buenos Aires province, Nov. 3, 1985, national deputies election.57

After this massive demonstration of power, Cafiero was now sailing up as the leader of the PJ *bonaerense* and by extension, as a serious contender for the national PJ leadership. No newcomer to peronism, Cafiero rather represented its classic era. He had known Perón before the latter came to power, and had been his minister twice, in 1951, and when Perón returned in 1973. During Isabel Perón’s government, he was ambassador to the Vatican.

Within the party, Renovators such as Cafiero put emphasis on “modernizing the political discourse, respecting the rule of law and ethics, and criticizing the antidemocratic path taken by peronism since Perón’s death” (Manzetti 1993, 107). Also, in many senses the Renovation appears not to have just been about positions within the PJ, but also at least partially reflected a left-right divide. The Renovators favored progressive social issues such as right to divorce – still illegal – and were against further payments on foreign debt, massively expanded under the incompetent military dictatorship. They also spoke out strongly against the US involvement in Nicaragua in the 1980s. By contrast, Orthodox peronists lauded the Contras – and must surely have been the only labor organization in Latin America to support the illegal U.S.-led war to topple the Sandinista regime. The Orthodox were also highly socially conservative, and teamed

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56 For creating the Renovator Front and running outside the PJ, Cafiero was expelled together with other Peronists such as mayor of Lomas de Zamora, Eduardo Duhalde, who had joined forces with the renovators following the defeat of Iglesias. See El senador que es una de las leyendas vivientes del Peronismo. *La Nación*, Aug. 28, 2000, and López Echagüe (2002, 109).

up with the Church against legislation permitting divorce. In terms of ideology, UOM leader Lorenzo Miguel openly announced that he was "anti-Marxist and anti-leftist" and opposed to "foreign ideologies" including social democracy. When president Alfonsín produced the End Point and Due Obedience Laws, Orthodox peronists went even further and voted with the right for a complete amnesty.

The last congress dominated by the Orthodox was held Nov. 1986 in San Miguel de Tucumán, led by Catamarca caudillo Vicente Saadi. Already then, however, there were splits among the Renovators’ ranks. Some, like Cafiero, refused to attend. Others, like Carlos Menem, did, and actively lobbied for a further change in party charter. For the election of its presidential candidate, Menem wanted the country to be treated as a single district. While Orthodox union leaders had earlier opposed this “liberal fiction,” the Orthodox congress surprisingly passed it.

Cafiero, meanwhile, was actively pursuing the governorship of Buenos Aires Province, and on Sept. 6, 1987, with Frente Justicialista Renovador won 46.48 percent of the votes. Two months later, with Cafiero’s standing reaffirmed, the Renovators arranged a party congress in the Bambalinas theatre in Mar del Plata where the Saadi national council was displaced, and Cafiero proclaimed party president. The new leadership was still only the product of another “unity list” proclamation rather than competitive elections. The list also included Orthodox members, yet only 17 of the 110 posts on national council went to the unions, and it was not specified that it had to be from the “62.” The list was confirmed at a national reunion of PJ governors in January 10, 1988. The PJ had new authorities, and a new party charter. Cafiero was president, and Menem Vice president. It was the high mark of renewal peronism.

Cafiero had barely settled in as governor of the most important province in Argentina, when he set his sights on the greatest of all prices, the presidency. To do so, he had to win the internal elections of the party for presidency through the direct election of party members, a result of the initiative of Menem, who would be his main competitor. Elected governor in 1973, Menem had been displaced and imprisoned by the military dictatorship. In the PJ, he was considered a traditional and authoritarian verticalist yet by 1983 he had joined the Renovators, arguing for

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60 Punto Final: Passed late 1985, established time limit of two months of law suits against the military, after which a statute of limitation would apply. Obedencia debida: Exonerated en masse lower-ranking officers for crimes committed during the dictatorship (Romero 2002, 263).
63 McAdam (1996, 150).
direct election, and horizontalizing the movement. Yet when Cafiero sailed up to be the PJ’s presidential candidate, Menem quickly reconciled with the most Orthodox sectors of peronism. The very day after Cafiero’s victory as governor, posters had appeared in Buenos Aires province proclaiming “Menem Presidente.”

In La Rioja, one of the poorest provinces in Argentina, Menem had built a power base through patronage, which he sought to replicate on a national level. Yet he also made a pact with Orthodox labor and provincial caudillos such as Saadi. Crucially, in Buenos Aires, mayor of Lomas de Zamora, Eduardo Alberto Duhalde – also a Renovator, but a long-time rival of Cafiero in the province – had approached Menem shortly before Cafiero’s victory in 1987. The Renovators were now apparently fighting among themselves, as Duhalde joined on the vice presidential ticket, and helped Menem grow in this crucial province.

While Menem proved adept at portraying himself as the true heir of Perón, Cafiero had troubles differentiating his proposals from the Alfonsín wing of the UCR. When Cafiero talked of transforming the PJ into a Christian democratic party – an attempt to separate himself from the center-left leanings of Alfonsín - Menem downplayed ideology. When Menem derided Cafiero as a “social democrat,” it was meant as “the worst of all insults” (McAdam 1996, 159).

Menem advocated a distinct image as a leader outside and above politics, and adroitly presented the primaries as a competition “not between Menem and Cafiero but between the movement and the party, adding that the latter notion was alien to peronism” (Manzetti 1993, 109). The transformation from an advocate of the party to a movement politician was rather stunning: Little remained of his earlier positive appraisals of the institution of the political party. As Nún (1998) notes, Menem “recovered the most plebeian aspects of peronist rhetoric, added a strong religious overtone, in the fashion of a televangelist, and located himself beyond the ‘liberal partidocracia’ responsible for almost all the ills lashing the country” (1998, 63).

In his campaign, he urged his supporters to “follow me!” He was heavily backed by the Orthodox’ resources and organization (Manzetti 1993, 108), and in the internal elections, out of the 4.1 million registered members of the PJ, an impressive 1.7 turned out to vote, and 53 percent of them did so for Menem. The conurbano, or industrial belt of greater Buenos Aires where the unions were strong, brought the margin of victory (McGuire 1997, 210).

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64 See Godio (1998, 46) and Cafiero et al (1986, 104). He also spoke out against the “concept of liberal philosophy in the economy” as practiced by the military government (Cafiero et al 1986, 107). Yet soon, Levitsky notes, he “undertook a series of alliance shifts that took him from the far left of the party to the far right” (2003, 169).
67 Wynia (1990, 13).
Menem’s victory “signified a reversal of the Renovators’ project of making peronism a true party” (Manzetti 1993, 103) and the Renovation, by some described as “a simple political scheme driven by opportune eagerness for power” (López Echagüe 2002, 114) fell apart. Despite his earlier role as a Renovator, Menem fell well into the conservative tradition that had previously characterized the peronist movement in the provinces. The PJ would again rely on movimientismo and conservative populism, through the reinclusion of Orthodox labor and right-wing groups in his coalition. In a speech to the CGT, Menem declared,

We don't want to turn peronism into just another liberal-democratic party. Why does this worry us? Because we view peronism as an expression superior of the **partidocracia**. We see it as a national liberation movement that goes beyond the formal democracy that the Europeans are trying to sell us. Of course, the fact that we are a movement doesn't mean that we shouldn't defend the party as a way of channeling the process of liberation, because in talking about a party we aren't renouncing our movementist conception of politics.69

The triumph represented the victory of “plebiscitary democracy over institutional consolidation,” and the PJ was after five years of Renovation arguably “back to square one” (Manzetti 1993, 109). The party’s second attempt at institutionalization came to a screeching halt.

**The extent of the peronist Renovation: Aborted move toward institutionalization**

How far did the Renovation go? In many ways, the process directly aimed at changing the idea of peronism as a movement and not a party. By accepting the idea of party, the peronists needed to give up conceiving themselves as the national-popular movement that sums up all demands and that was not subject to any institutional constrictions… and accept the legitimacy of parties and competition among parties” (Novaro 1999, 106-107). To a large extent this was indeed achieved. Verticalism was the direct and explicit target of the renewal effort (Ostiguy 1998, 305), and with the various changes in party statutes, this was largely achieved. The establishment of a party primary was perhaps the most outwardly tangible achievement of the Renovators, and Cafiero duly stepped aside when Menem became PJ’s presidential candidate. The Renovation therefore directly struck at the idea of the PJ as a movement more than a party. If successful, it would have meant the triumph of shared rules and regulations, of compromise and negotiation, rather than the highly amorphous state of a movement that in the PJ’s case had been particularly plagued with internal strife. Party organs such as the national council met more

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68 The *conurbano* refers to the (post) industrial belt around the Capital Federal but in the province of Buenos Aires. The term *Gran Buenos Aires*, or Greater Buenos Aires, refers to the *conurbano* and the Federal Capital together. Traditionally the heart of working class Peronism, the *conurbano* includes the 24 districts Almirante Brown, Avellaneda, Berazategui, Esteban Echeverría, Ezeiza, Florencio Varela, General San Martin, Hurlingham, Ituzaingó, José C. Paz, La Matanza, Lanús, Lomas de Zamora, Malvinas Argentinas, Merlo, Moreno, Morón, Quilmes, San Fernando San Isidro, San Miguel, Tigre, Tres de Febrero, and Vicente López.

frequently, the party bureaucracy began to keep internal records, and a much greater effort was made to adhere to party statutes (Levitsky 2003, 56). To some, such as historian Luis Alberto Romero, the Renovation was a highly significant process of party change, as it meant a new “scrupulous respect for republican institutions, modern and democratic initiatives” (Romero 2002, 281).

Yet while concrete organizational changes had been made, it was very unclear where the Renovation really stood on programmatic issues. Cafiero, when first outlining what the Renovation entailed, declared it

a moment of our development as a movement, a time of changes, of ruptures, of creative fidelities, of bold heterodoxies. To renew peronism is also to rechannel it in its path, to recover its insolence, to not give in face of the powerful, to return to raise our own awareness in the love of the humble.70

The proclamations are strikingly vague for any party faction, in particular for one clamoring for a full party renovation. Ideologically, as noted, there were moves toward a more politically liberal discourse. But the Renovators really refused to reappraise or critique the “doctrine” of Juan Perón. Cafiero remained hostile to defining peronism in terms of left and right, and beyond certain chore issues, a real ideological renovation was lacking, a fact lamented even at the height of the period (de Ipola 1987, 334). Cafiero declared that “now is the moment to terminate with ideological-programmatic confusion,” but offered little concrete advice on how to do so.71 The emphasis on the exceptionality of Argentina remained. “What is the doctrine?” Cafiero asked. “It is the adaptation of ideological values in a particular situation in time and space. Doctrines are not universals, they are national” (1995, 122); the Peronist Doctrine was considered “humanist, national and popular” (1995, 128). Cafiero said, “We don’t want to decant (transvasar) ideologically, because, moreover, there are no models in the world capable of containing the complexity and singularity of the Argentine case” (1995, 59).

In a book-length series of interviews with Cafiero, Grosso and Menem, one is hard pressed to deduct any concrete program or examples of what the Renovation entailed, let alone find any common position among its three main actors, all remarkably vague on the actual policy content of the Renovation.72

Also, there was very little self-criticism among the Renovators: “We are not ashamed peronists who need to give a critical account of our own history,” Cafiero wrote in the “Founding

70 Cafiero (Cafiero 1995, 53).
71 In a course on the Peronist doctrine, Cafiero argued that no party in history of Latin America that had been so concerned with the doctrinaire formation of its leaders and militants – quite a bold statement. Cf. Cafiero (1995).
72 At several points, the interviewer asks - in vain - for more precision of what the Renovation actually entails. Cf. Cafiero et al (1986)
Document of the Peronist Renovation,” on Dec. 21, 1985 (Cafiero 1995, 50). Nor did the
Renovation clearly disassociate itself from its movement-party past. As he was preparing to
assume as PJ leader, in a plenary of the Renovation in Parque Norte, Cafiero still called PJ “a
party that does not lose its movementist conception,” explicitly looking at past models: “In short,
what we call Renovation is nothing more than the actualization of a tradition” (Cafiero 1995, 55,
57). In 1988, he still felt it necessary to underscore that he was not advocating the end to the
movement in favor of the party: According to the PJ president, “the movement will be necessary
if legal possibilities do not exist to express in party form.”

Yet despite the unclear break with the past, this statement does contain a very important
point: The movement was now only seen as necessary if the party was proscribed. This was a
sharp restriction when compared with earlier conceptualizations. Maintaining the movement logic
during the times of repression and proscription had appeared a quite rational logic. Now, the PJ
had further broken with the most Orthodox, who after 1983 still argued for maintaining these
characteristics even in times of democracy.

In the final instance, the Renovation process therefore reflected, despite its flaws, the
dichotomy of a movement vs. party, and the Renovators did make decisive moves from one to the
other. Even as Menem would greatly dismantle its gains, Renovators terminated with the most
extreme traits of this logic, as manifested by its most noxious verticalism, anti-democratic and
authoritarian attitudes, and the dominance of thugs such as Herminio Iglesias.

Why change?

The Renovation appears clearly motivated by its shocking 1983 electoral loss. The PJ
could no longer rely exclusively on labor to bring it to power, and as such the Renovators clearly
wanted to change the PJ’s image. They therefore had to strike directly at the unions for several,
interconnected reasons.

The unions had been the most avid proponents of the movement-strategy. Not only had it
served them well up until the last leadership, but the verticalism characteristic of this strategy had
helped them maintain power through the advent of democracy. Attacking verticalism could
therefore be seen, independently of any programmatic renovation, as purely a means for the
Renovators to wrest control of the PJ from the unions.

Yet the Renovators also clearly realized they needed to reach out to a wider audience, and
to rid the PJ of the most objectionable traits of violence and authoritarianism. Under its Orthodox

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73 Quoted in Mustapic (2002, 153).
leaders, the party appeared utterly out of touch with the atmosphere of the era, which after the murderous dictatorship – and the violent period leading up to it – had had enough of intolerance.

Electoral loss is generally considered to be the driving force of party change, particularly of ideology. Yet how a party eventually takes lesson of defeat is a variable. The Orthodox remained in control of the PJ for several years after the electoral loss, and clearly were neither willing nor able to heed the lesson from the urns. Change only came about as the Renovators gradually wrested the party from their control. As such the process appears to have been more case of leadership renovation rather than of change within the leadership itself.

The commitment of many Renovators to genuine change within the party was furthermore far from obvious, and the case of Carlos Menem is paradigmatic. Menem had been a typical movement-party advocate, but when democracy came in 1983 – when repression ended – he appeared to wholeheartedly embrace the Renovation movement. He became a strong advocate of democratic change and the building of a genuine party, yet as soon as he stood to gain by returning to the movement logic, he immediately did. Menem and Eduardo Duhalde – another erstwhile Renovator – defined themselves explicitly against Cafiero in those terms: The movement vs. the party. Following their victory, Manzano, de la Sota, and Grosso would quickly accommodate with the regime as well (Mustapic 2002, 155). Just as they joined the Renovation wagon, they readily abandoned it when it came to a halt.

Yet even among those who appeared more genuine about the Renovation, such as Cafiero and a large number of lesser known leaders, rather than really wanting to transform peronism, many departed from the notion that things had only gotten on the wrong tracks following the death of Perón. To them, the Renovation was merely a means of returning peronism to its origins. Yet as detailed above, the very traits they were fighting – verticalism, anti-democratic culture – were crucial traits of the party from the very beginning. Menem’s victory in 1988, moreover, came about through the very mechanisms of plebiscitarianism, of the downplaying of ideology in favor of the “national and the popular,” and through calls to organize in a wider movement, rather than a “European-style” divisive party.

The Peronist Doctrine, produced during the “golden era” that the Renovators longed for, was imminently suited for movement-party appeals. Its programmatic indefiniteness had indeed provided the party with an extraordinary “agglutinative capacity” to adapt to changing times (Mustapic 2002, 161), where both sides could easily find in peronism both support and opposition for their positions. On a mass level, this was demonstrated through the ease with which Menem not only was able to take over the party, but particularly how he could do so by advocating against most of what the Renovators fought for. On the elite level, then, rather than finding
together in a common doctrine, loyalties become highly opportunistic, and the about-faces of even the most prominent of Renovators on their political position at times defies credulity.

While the assertion that that Renovation “was not more than a breath of fresh air of which no traces remain” (López Echagüe 2002, 101) seems overtly harsh, the easy triumph of Menem over Cafiero certainly reversed the PJ’s move away from personalism and the movement-logic. And the ease with which many of the ex-Renovators eagerly joined Menem’s project, question the extent of their commitment to a democratic transformation of peronism in the first place.

**Menemismo: Drastic programmatic volte-face**

As president, Menem would in line with the movement logic almost completely sideline the PJ. To build support for his drastic programmatic switch, mimicking Perón’s mass rallies he turned the Plaza del Mayo into a “Plaza del Sí” in April 1990, where he relied greatly on non-party networks to mobilize a huge quantity of people expressing their support for his reforms, bypassing the PJ (Palermo 1994, 322; Novaro 1999, 99).

Most observers of this era agree with McGuire that Menem “deinstitutionalized the PJ” (1997, 217), although given the incompleteness of the Renovation process and a tradition of weak formal institutions, Levitsky notes that Menem “should…be viewed as perpetuating the PJ's underroutinization rather than causing it” (Levitsky 2003, 57). Yet when compared to the real gains achieved during the Renovation, the damage done by Menem should not be downplayed. Under Menem, the PJ would experience the dismantling of all mechanisms for dissent and mediation. While the party was nominally led by Cafiero, Menem quickly became the PJ’s de facto president. As president, he abruptly shifted the PJ’s programmatic and ideological orientation.

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74 One notable detractor is Novaro, who argues the PJ did not become institutionalized, but that Menem represented the “prolongation and deepening of the renovation, more than its retraction and regression” (Novaro 1999, 108).

75 Although on paper, the structure from the Renovation was kept: This included direct election of delegates to the congress, which was supposed to elect the party’s candidates, as well as its executive organ, the National Council. The national congress of the party – to be convened every year – is the highest organ of the party. It is the equivalent of a parliamentary assembly, in that it elects the executive organ, the National Council. While varying in size, it had up to a 1000 members on paper. Every electoral district elects 3 delegates, and one for every 5,000 affiliates. It defines the political line of the party, and elects candidates for executive and legislative posts. It also determines the composition of the electoral council, responsible for party lists and overseeing elections. Its members are elected every four years, and the council is to be elected at the same interval. Only PJ party affiliates can vote for these internal elections. Party leaders in provinces are supposed to elect candidates. Women’s, Youth, Union branches, and each member of the Council supposed to represent a province, preferably as head of provincial party. During the Menemato, by contrast, many members of council held no provincial posts, and at times did not even reside in the provinces they were supposed to represent.
Cafiero gradually lost control between 1988 and 1991 of all important decision-making positions within the party (Ostiguy 1998, 212). A plebiscite to allow another term as governor had failed in August of 1990, yet he had long lost control of the PJ, and stepped down before his term expired in 1991. As Vice President Duhalde expressed it, “nobody cares who the presidency of the party is... the conductor of the movement is Carlos Menem.”

Menem, as the PJ’s vice president, was next in line, yet appointed his brother Eduardo – a senator from La Rioja who had only joined the PJ after the dictatorship – as first vice president, and took a leave of absence, leaving the party in his brother’s control (McGuire 1997, 245). From then on, contravening the PJ’s statutes of democratic nomination, the council would simply be handpicked by the Menem functionaries Eduardo Bauzá and José Luis Manzano (Levitsky 2003, 166).

Dissent within the party was crushed. A survey reported that among its members, already in 1992, 9 out of 10 party members felt the PJ should increase its level of activity, and that the party needed to get closer to intermediate organizations. While in the provinces, contested internal elections within the PJ often challenged the national leadership, by March 1993 the PJ had intervened every provincial party organization except for three, crushing the possibility of any dissent on the government’s direction (McGuire 1997, 248). As for the PJ’s national organs, “not once did the council publicly oppose a position taken by President Menem” (Levitsky 2003, 149).

As president of Argentina, Menem resuscitated much of the style that the Renovators had sought to transcend, above all the party’s verticalism. His was a top-down leadership, “plebiscitarian, conservative, neoliberal, and populist, similar to Reagan and Thatcher” (Pinto 1995, 86), with virtually no input for negotiation from dissenting party elites. His personal style had “a ‘Caesarist tendency,’ speaking in the name of ‘the people,’ addressing his speeches to his ‘brothers and sisters,’ invoking God, and sustaining that his was a peronism for the epoch of the end of ideology” (Nún 1998, 73-74). He ruled excessively by decree, and at one point contemplated the shutting down of congress (Romero 2002, 296). When UCR initially balked at his quest for reelection, he threatened to simply pass a new constitutional law, which would undoubtedly have been upheld by the Supreme Court, which he enlarged and stacked with loyalists.

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76 Quoted in McGuire (1997, 246).
77 Reported in McGuire (1997, 246).
78 It was to remain one of the most questioned institutions in the Menem era due to its docility: It did not rule against Menem on any controversial issue (Romero 2002, 296, 304, Godio 2003, 43).
Peronists, it is argued, remain loyal to the party not such much based on specific programs, but rather on values such as social justice and on a certain leadership style – a combination of loyalty and effectiveness, charisma and pragmatism – introduced by Perón and replicated by Menem (de Riz 1998, 136). In terms of their leadership style and rejection of party politics, the parallels between Menem and Perón are indeed many. A debate exists whether Menem’s rule represented an “ideological reconversion” of the PJ (Nolte 1995, 34). Pragmatism had after all been a historical characteristic of the party since the beginning, and Perón’s policy underwent many rather abrupt shifts such as his relations with the church and with the United States (Pinto 1995, 84, de Ipola 1987). Some find clear ideological commonalities between Menem and Perón, labeling both regimes a form of “popular conservatism” (Floria 1995, 184, Portantiero 1995, 106). Menem’s drastic economic reforms, moreover, were initially highly popular and supported by the public in their desperation to end the economic chaos left by Alfonsin. Yet as the Menem years went by, an increasing number of peronists would complain that his policies eventually went against all the PJ had stood for, and that the party had allied with its traditional enemies (Ostiguy 1998, 193).

Menem had campaigned on a traditional platform, with vague promises of “social justice,” a “revolution in production,” and a *salariazo*, or wage hike – in sum, representing what seemed like a return to the peronism of the golden era (Romero 2002, 287). Yet in power, Menem “pretty much realized all the platform of UCeDé” (Di Tella 1998, 189) or the rightwing party of Alvaro Alsogaray, with which he duly allied.79

Under laws of Economic Emergency and State Reform, the government first suspended subsidies and other economic privileges to state business, authorized the laying off of state workers, and eventually promoted the wholesale privatization of publicly owned companies (Romero 2002, 288). The selling off of oil, telephone, gas, and electricity companies was followed by the highways, television, and most railways. Many of the privatized companies had truly been inefficient and the move was at first quite popular. Yet the program went much further. Menem scrapped export taxes, raised the sales takes, and ended restrictions on import, currency transactions, working hours, and state-set prices on e.g. medicine and bread. The most dramatic measure was the pegging of the Argentine currency to the dollar, which effectively ended

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79 An ultraliberal, in the classic sense, who strongly supported the dictatorship, claimed “there was no torture” at ESMA, and in 1991 wanted a national monument for Videla. Alsogaray had founded UCeDé in 1983. Alsogaray no llegó al invierno. *Página 12*, April 2, 2005.
inflation under the plan of Minister of Economy Domingo Cavallo,\textsuperscript{80} in April 1991. While the GDP growth was high the first four years (McGuire 1997, 218-219), economically it would eventually lead to “a brutal concentration of wealth” (Portantiero 1995, 105). Ostiguy argues that “it is correct to say that Menem undid everything Perón had done, and that in terms of ‘class alliance’ he allied with the rich-and-powerful instead of the workers” (1998, 193). His foreign minister spoke of “carnal relations” with the United States, and Menem duly sent troops to Iraq (Nolte 1995, 44). To many, Menem’s appointments were particularly galling. Not only were members of UCeDé and big business strongly represented in government; their corruption and nepotism moreover was rampant. According to Romero, “Technically, the country was governed by a gang, by a coterie of corrupt and unscrupulous officials” (2002, 298). Soon, functionaries such as Jorge Triaca and María Alsogaray were investigated for illicit enrichment.\textsuperscript{81} The overvalued peso, while stabilizing the economy, made Argentine exports expensive while allowing a flood of cheap imports that destroyed local industries (Romero 2002, 293-294). From Cavallo’s convertibility plan to May 1995, unemployment rose from 6.9 to 18.6 percent, while underemployment rose from 8.6 to 11.3 percent (McGuire 1997, 222). Menem pushed laws outlawing strikes in a range of sectors. Bogged down due to resistance of some peronist deputies, Menem simply imposed it by decree on October 17, though he fittingly backdated it by 24 hours in order to avoid the added provocation of signing it on the peronist Day of Loyalty (McGuire 1997, 224).

**PJ unable to serve as brake on power**

As Levitsky notes, “What is more puzzling than Menem's decision to pursue a radical adaptive strategy was his capacity to get away with it,” as “few party leaders shared the PJ neoliberal strategy” (2003, 150, 148). Given the PJ’s excessive reliance on a personalistic leader, and its failure to produce a coherent and autonomous identity, one answer lies with the party’s particular organization as a personalistic movement-party.

Arguably, Menem did make some efforts to “sell” his drastic reforms to the PJ elites. On March 16, 1991, the party held a summit in Mar del Plata, called the “Justicialist Mobilization for

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\textsuperscript{80} Domingo Cavallo, among many appointments not affiliated with the PJ, “first cut his teeth as a high-level functionary in 1982 when, as president of the Central Bank, he had rescued business by converting private foreign debt into public debt” (Romero 2002, 292).

\textsuperscript{81} Initially minister of privatization, she would later become Secretary of the Environment during Menem’s second term, despite on trial for corruption in the privatization of the state telephone company during the first term. She would receive first sentence May 2004 for illicit enrichment – her wealth grew from 400,000 to 2.5 million dollars during her tenure. She was locked up 639 days, and still has cases against her (July 2008). Maria Julia sigue presa para evitar que se fugue. Página 12, Aug. 27, 2004; Del esplendor de los noventa a la acumulación de causas penales. Clarín, May 11, 2005.
Political and Doctrinal Update,” which sought to make peronism compatible with the Menem reforms (Corrales 2002, 171-173). The ideological changes, moreover, eventually trickled down to the party platform as well. The PJ’s 1995 platform advocated a reduced role for the state and curtailing of labor rights, and flat out declared that the state should end subsidies to industries and deregulate remaining industries to reduce employers’ expenses (Seligson 2003, 467).

Yet the level of dissent among the PJ elite was remarkably low. In a highly instructive study, Levitsky (2003) looks particularly at the PJ’s very lack of more institutionalized party structure as an explanation. Due to “lack of stable recruitment patterns” – that is, candidates and officials alike were appointed from above – opponents were never secured stable careers, which ensured their cooperation. As the lack of clear institutional mechanisms within the PJ left them with few opportunities to challenge Menem, verticalism clearly worked to Menem’s advantage. Arguably, it was also beneficial to the party as a whole – in terms of votes – as the PJ’s flexible structure allowed it to retain its voters, through its informal (and most often clientelist) and decentralized wider organization, while Menem at the same time carried out his reforms: The loose structure of the PJ allowed it to withstand the changes in a way a more institutionalized party would not.

It is clear that the majority of the PJ’s elite did indeed remain within the party, with few exceptions. The first sign of outward dissent was the Group of Eight, which had advocated more dialogue within the party and was critical to Menem’s policies and alliance with the rightwing UCeDé, and the alignment with the United States (Jozami 2004, 55). Most of their members hailed from left peronism of the 1970s, though not from any of the armed group (Godio 1998, 46-47). When Menem in December 1990 Menem pardoned the leaders of the dictatorship, the Group of Eight finally left the parliamentary group, and then the PJ. Deputies such as Carlos “Chacho” Álvarez, future vice president of the Alianza government (1999-2001) and Juan Pablo Cafiero, son of Antonio Cafiero, left the PJ. In 1993, together with other leftwing politicians the dissidents established a new opposition party, the Frente Grande (FG). Three-quarters of its leaders came from the PJ, and, pointedly, most had been part of the peronist Renovation (Abal Medina and

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82 Levitsky argues it was unimportant; in 1997, when he interviewed several of the participants, few remembered it. Yet this should perhaps not be surprising, as seven years is a very long time, particular within a party such as the PJ.

83 Menem also recruited several non-PJ political candidates. For governorships of Tucumán, Santa Fe, and San Juan, he recruited Carlos Reutemann, a race-car driver; “Palito” Ortega, a folk singer, and Jorge Escobar, a business executive. None had any ties to the PJ, nor any other relevant political experience (McGuire 1997, 243).

84 Levitsky separates two dimensions of party institutionalization often confounded - Selznick’s “infusion of value” (Selznick 1957) from the more traditional concept of routinization. His central argument is that the low level of organizational institutionalization enhanced the party’s flexibility and made it more capable of changing under “periods of crisis,” of which the Menem administration is a clear example of.
They were soon joined by senator José Octavio Bordón (Mendoza), also a Renovator, and in 1994 formed the *Frente País Solidario* (FREPASO), or Front for a Country of Solidarity, which attracted socialists, members of the left-leaning *Partido Intransigente* (PI), some UCR dissidents, and others. Yet within the PJ, dissent had gradually died down as it was clear that Menem, following the Olivos Pact, would be allowed to stand for another term. While FREPASO candidate Bordón did get a respectable 29.30 percent of the votes, Menem in the end easily won reelection in 1995. The FREPASO experience did therefore not represent a significant fracture within the PJ itself (Jozami 2004, 37).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Menem/Carlos Ruckauf</td>
<td>PJ alliance</td>
<td>8,687,319</td>
<td>49.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Octavio Bordón/Carlos Álvarez</td>
<td>Frepaso alliance</td>
<td>5,995,402</td>
<td>40.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horacio Massaccesi/Antonio María Hernández</td>
<td>UCR alliance</td>
<td>2,956,087</td>
<td>16.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5: Argentina, May 14, 1995, presidential election.85

**The 1997 election: The beginning of the end of the PJ dominance**

By 1997, as a result of rising unemployment from the closing of uncompetitive industries, social protests were on the rise. A new phenomenon, *piqueteros*, saw the light of day, where laid-off workers would stage vocal protests, such as the blocking of highways (Silleta 2005, 38). While it had allowed the Argentine middle class to travel abroad with at times more spending power than European and Japanese tourists, the costs of the overvalued peso and Menem model were now increasingly felt.

The logical heir to Menem in the PJ was his former vice president, Eduardo Duhalde. Duhalde was elected mayor of his native Lomas de Zamora in 1974, and it was a post he would return to hold in 1983. At the time, he had been a principal opponent of Herminio Iglesias. He was elected national deputy from the province in 1987. A Renovator at first, he would nonetheless join Menem’s presidential ticket, although he stepped down to become governor of the province in 1991, succeeding Antonio Cafiero, a post to which would be reelected with a majority of votes in 1995. Duhalde was therefore a natural candidate to succeed Menem, though the Buenos Aires “curse” would catch up with him as well.86 Not only would Menem secure a second term through the Olivos Pact; his unwillingness to cede power and on-and-off quest for an unconstitutional third term severely curtailed Duhalde’s presidential ambitions.

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86 Despite being the country’s most important electoral district, no governor of Buenos Aires province has ever been elected president of the nation.
Despite his Renovator past, Duhalde’s own political current, *Liga Federal*, created in May 1990, “revindicated the *movimentista* sentiments of peronism” (Otero 1997, 75). As governor and eventual leader of the PJ *bonaerense*, he explicitly advocated strengthening the “the movement” with extra-party figures, rather than consolidating the PJ’s traditional structure (McGuire 1997, 243). His control of the provincial PJ was near absolute. In 1995, the local party congress simply cancelled the gubernatorial and legislative primaries altogether, authorizing Duhalde to make the lists. He would repeat the practice two years later, when he put his wife, Hilda “Chiche” Duhalde, as head of the PJ’s list for national deputies, without even consulting the party.

Duhalde had created an immense political machine in the province of Buenos Aires, and had put his wife in charge of an extensive social welfare organization called the *Manzaneras*, essentially neighborhood female workers (Horowitz 1999, 41). The network numbered at least 27,000.87 Technically, they were “volunteers” who lived in zones of deprivation and were to receive no pay for their distributing of foodstuff, yet the system was accused of strengthening rather than diminishing clientelism, and was said to cost at least 140 million pesos yearly.88 Nonetheless, the limits to PJ’s formidable apparatus were seen already in 1997. Even with “Chiche,” popular among the region’s poor, heading the party ticket in 1997, the PJ lost. The winner, Graciela de Fernández Mejide, moreover ran on a newly created ticket, the *Alianza para la Justicia, el Trabajo, y la Educación*, simply known as the *Alianza*, essentially a merger of the FREPASO with the UCR. The defeat of Duhalde’s wife in the PJ bastion of Buenos Aires was particularly noteworthy, as the seemingly invincible peronist machine had been dealt a serious blow.

The loss in Buenos Aires Province reflected a national trend: With all votes counted, the *Alianza*-UCR won both more votes and deputies than the PJ, which lost in all of Argentina’s main districts, and saw peronist bastions such as Entre Ríos and Santa Fe switch to the opposition.89

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of party list</th>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graciela de Fernández Mejide</td>
<td>Alianza</td>
<td>3,315,703</td>
<td>48.28</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilda Duhalde</td>
<td>PJ alliance</td>
<td>2,846,238</td>
<td>41.44</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6: Buenos Aires province, Oct. 26, 1997, national deputies election.90

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89 In some provinces, the UCR ran on its own label, in others on the Alianza ticket.
Table 3.7: 1997 total vote for national deputies election.\textsuperscript{91}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alianza</td>
<td>7,633,769</td>
<td>45.78%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>5,990,191</td>
<td>35.93%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR-ND</td>
<td>656,330</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial/ Other parties</td>
<td>2,131,965</td>
<td>12.79%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.8: 1997 vote for national deputies, five main provinces.\textsuperscript{92}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires</td>
<td>Alianza</td>
<td>3,315,703</td>
<td>48.28%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>2,846,238</td>
<td>41.44%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Federal</td>
<td>Alianza</td>
<td>1,090,843</td>
<td>56.80%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>345,466</td>
<td>17.99%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AR-ND</td>
<td>327,542</td>
<td>17.06%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>Alianza</td>
<td>573,551</td>
<td>45.46%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>412,597</td>
<td>32.70%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demócrata Progresista</td>
<td>159,035</td>
<td>12.61%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Córdoba</td>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>538,961</td>
<td>38.11%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>437,446</td>
<td>30.93%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PAIS</td>
<td>175,649</td>
<td>12.42%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>125,864</td>
<td>8.90%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendoza</td>
<td>Demócrata</td>
<td>228,291</td>
<td>29.65%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>219,962</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>186,159</td>
<td>24.18%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the PJ, however, Duhalde was still edging forward. In the 1997 national party congress, held Dec. 19 in Obras Sanitarias, to the surprise of Menem’s allies, Duhalde was elected president of the congress, with Carlos Reutemann as his vice president.\textsuperscript{93} More than 600 out 1,090 accredited delegates attended, and 500 voted for Duhalde. It was a clear change in the correlation of forces in the PJ.

Menem had for years sought to make inroads in the province through local allies, yet Duhalde had remained head of the still-powerful PJ Bonaerense.\textsuperscript{94} Due to the weight of this very delegation alone to the PJ party congress, Duhalde had held veto power in the party, and due to skillful alliance building now became head of the congress. Pointedly, Duhalde refused to endorse a declaration in favor of Menem’s government.

\textsuperscript{91} Figures from Godio (1998, 195).
\textsuperscript{92} Election data from Andy Tow archive. \url{http://towsa.com/andy/totalpais/index.html}
\textsuperscript{93} Only these two offices were elected.
\textsuperscript{94} The coordinator of Menem’s activities in Buenos Aires Province was Juan Carlos Rousselot, mayor of Morón 1987-1989, and 1991-1998, until removed from office and deemed unfit for public service forever. Originally from Chacho Province, in the 1970s he had been linked various times to the Triple A and López Rega himself (López Echagüe 2002, 125). Charges of corruption led several times to Rousselot’s suspension as mayor of Moron, but the courts repeatedly reinstated him (McGuire 1997, 332, fn 116). He would later flee to the United States, and an international arrest warrant issued.
Yet the PJ congress was not able to come up with a final document, and no self-criticism of its recent and worst-ever electoral defeat was made. This stoked criticism by Duhalde’s dissenters within the party, such as governor of Santa Cruz, Néstor Kirchner, who refused to attend the congress. Yet as Menem suddenly the following March declared his intent to seek a third term, Kirchner was the first PJ governor to announce his support for Duhalde’s presidential candidacy.

**Traumatic attempts at leadership transition in a personalistic movement-party**

July 17, 1998 was far from a “Peronist Day.” In the middle of the Argentine winter, it was raining and overcast, symbolic of the gloom within the PJ’s extraordinary congress, which Menem had convened that day. Duhalde’s assumption of the PJ congress and Menem’s attempt at a third presidential term had now brought the aborted transition of leadership into an open war. In a strong echo of the Orthodox practices in the 1980s, when the PJ *bonaerense* delegation arrived, they learned that many of their delegates would not be let into the building. The PJ’s Santa Fe delegation, whose leader Reutemann was otherwise on friendly terms with Menem, also pulled its representatives, as did Néstor Kirchner. So few delegates in the end showed up that the embarrassed organizers in the end simply whisked people in without checking any credentials.

During its short plenary, the congress meekly “requested” that Menem run for a third term. As the daily conservative *La Nación* noted, “the indispensable requisites was to say ‘yes, sir,’ lift ones hand according to the presidential desires, sing the famous party march, and go home as quickly as possible.” The delegates hastily approved the changes to the party charter, and convoked internal elections to elect the presidential formula, despite the absence of the president of the congress, Duhalde. The *menemistas* deemed his absence “treason.” Yet, stunningly, only a few days later, 12 out of 14 PJ governors, who were summoned to the presidential residence Olivos, in an impressive display of peronist verticalism, declared their support for a third term. Only Duhalde and Kirchner were missing.

After Duhalde in July in desperation called for a referendum on Menem’s proposed third bid, Menem declared he would desist from it; however, he would now go for the control of the

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party. Nominally, Menem had taken a "leave of absence" as president of the PJ council, yet he would the coming November try to reassume as president of the party. As head of congress, Duhalde got a court order that initially stalled this attempt. Five months later, in April 1999, Menem still forced through his reelection as PJ’s president. Despite calls from Duhalde to desist – a valid court order backed him up – Menem in a show of strength convened a massive conference of 2,500 people, who proclaimed him the “undisputed” party leader, to the chant of “Duhalde to government, Menem to Power.” Menem’s answer to the court order was curt. “Some justicialists are caught up in juridical questions. But I am above of all these political trickeries, and I dedicate myself to govern Argentina for all.” Despite the apparent illegality of the move and what it signified – the blessing of still a large part of the PJ for Menem’s continued leadership – seven PJ governors posed with the president on the podium.

Menem would occasionally weather the idea of seeking a second reelection, yet as his bid nonetheless started to lose momentum – the public was massively against it – he eventually pushed the candidacy of Ramón “Palito” Ortega, the folk singer who had led a disastrous governorship in Tucumán (Romero 2002, 313). As the general election was merely a months away, and the Alianza candidate Fernando de la Rúa had been chosen in orderly internal elections, one can hardly overestimate the difficulties faced by Duhalde, who still had not established himself as the final PJ candidate.

The candidature was finally sealed in May, by a show of strength. Cafiero, in a display of the power play and opportunism so inherent to the PJ, had accepted to again run for the candidacy of PJ governor of Buenos Aires province, and had entered an alliance with his earlier nemesis, Menem. Yet so far had the discrediting of Menem come that in internal elections for the PJ bonaerense, the formula Carlos Ruckauf-Felipe Solá won more than 80 percent of votes against Antonio Cafiero-Federico Scarabino (Silletta 2001, 204-206). More than 1.4 million voted, and of those, 400,000 were not even affiliated with the PJ.

Despite Menem’s prodding, Ortega had by then to declined in order to assume the vice presidential ticket. This demonstration of force in the most important district in the country finally sealed Duhalde’s candidacy, and internal elections were not deemed to be necessary. “We

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100 Duhalde amaga con un plebiscito antirreelección. La Nación, July 9, 1998; Menem desistió de la reelección. La Nación, July 22, 1998.
101 This was a variation on the 1973 PJ slogan “Cámpora for President, Perón to the power,” yet a rather distorted one – in 1973, Cámpora was a willing proxy for Perón, while in 1999, Duhalde and Menem were bitter enemies.
102 Desafiante reasunción de Menem en el PJ. La Nación, April 27, 1999.
have made official the presidential formula of justicialism,” Ruckauf declared. Yet it was far from a coronation of a new supreme chief of justicialism.

**Toward party collapse: Conflicting programs of candidates in 1999 election**

The neoliberal policies of the Menem administration are often contrasted with what would later be much more state-centered policies of Duhalde. Kirchner and his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, ardent opponents of Menem, were among the first supporters of Duhalde’s 1999 candidacy. Yet in some spheres, there were many similarities between them as well. Like Menem, Duhalde had been a Renovator who later turned his back on the Renovation, project, and he also blamed the *partidocracia* on the ills of the country. According to one biographer, Duhalde does not believe in political parties; they are, in his judgment, decrepit structures that only cause problems and hinder development; they form part of a time passed, a result of ideologies that no longer exist, and that have driven the country to a long succession of failures and confrontations.

As Menem’s vice president, Duhalde did little to protest Menem’s policies. Now, however, he would assume the position as a candidate of the left. The *Alianza* had steadfastly built up support since the 1997 elections, and time had now to come to wrestle the presidency from the PJ. It has often been noted that the Argentine electorate is distinct in that only a minority is capable of defining in left-right terms (Catterberg and Braun 1989). To be sure, they receive little cues from their political elites as to what the left-right division entails, and the 1999 elections are instructive in this regard, as they also show the internal ideological contradictions of particularly the PJ but also the *Alianza*. In Buenos Aires Province, the battle was quite identifiable as a contest between left and right. Graciela Fernández Meijide, who won the 1997 midterm elections, now ran for the governorship, and faced vice president Carlos Ruckauf as her opponent. Against the center-left Meijide, Ruckauf would lead a very clear rightwing campaign (Morales Solá 2001, 20). He attacked his opponent in crude TV spots for being “an abortionist,” atheist and anti-Christian. Duhalde did not say a word; his wife merely stated she was against abortion as well. The vice-president received full support from the PJ, but also help from the UCeDé. The PJ’s alliance with this neoliberal party under the Menem government was therefore

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106 Ruckauf entered national politics in 1975, when he joined the Isabel Perón government as minister of work. He was later ambassador, interior minister, and then vice president under Menem’s second period 1995-1999. Ahead of the 1999 contest, he had, however, distanced himself from Menem.
hardly a fleeting event. In addition, the 10 percent pulled by a new party of Domingo Cavallo’s party (AR) tipped the balance in Ruckauf’s favor.

Yet on the national level, the ideological divide between Duhalde and De la Rúa was exactly reversed. Many had flocked to the Alianza as an ideological alternative to Menem’s neoliberalism. Yet against conventional theories of party placement (Downs 1957), the two presidential candidates would now leapfrog ideologically. The historical context is here worth nothing. The PJ was a labor-based party that initially instituted policies that caused drastic gains for the working classes. Yet Menem had in the 1990s implemented a drastic neoliberal program, allied the PJ with the rightwing Partido Popular (PP) of Spain, and achieved observer status with the International Democratic Union. The UCR, on the other hand, was founded as a party of the middle class and excluded elites in the late 19th century, and had become associated with the Socialist International under President Alfonsín, whose administration was generally considered a socially liberal, center-left government.

Now, however, it was de la Rúa who promoted continuity with the neoliberal policies of Menem, while Duhalde, earlier regarded a “conservative populist,” now explicitly bypassed de la Rúa on the economic left. Fernando de la Rúa, while presenting himself as a “progressive,” duly hailed from the conservative wing of the UCR. Yet in an annual meeting of the Socialist International, held in Buenos Aires June that year, he argued “the world needs to have a political consideration of the subject of external debt.” Duhalde went even further, and demanded western countries “forgive” part of Argentina’s increasing debt. De La Rúa immediately clarified that Argentina would “honor its obligations.”

Due the Buenos Aires’ position as the most populous of Argentina’s provinces, Duhalde’s control of the PJ bonaerense meant that he had held veto power most legislation, particularly during Menem’s second administration (Levitsky 2003, 175). Yet he had never managed to move significantly beyond his native province, and despite his local strength, remained somewhat of a provincial caudillo. His candidacy, moreover, had an exceptionally unfavorable start due to the uncertainty of Menem’s possible third term.

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109 Argentine law allows parties to present separate lists for e.g. national or provincial legislators, yet still share the top candidate for the governorship or presidency with other parties.
111 The PJ had already in 1998 achieved membership in the Christian Democrat International, which after 2001 was known as the Centrist Democrat International.
112 The UCR achieved full member status in the SI in 1999, particularly ironic given that the party ran to the right of PJ during that year’s presidential campaign.
113 Quoted in Silleta (2005, 26).
Duhalde’s campaign now harked back to the halcyon days of peronism (Jozami 2004, 41). He pushed issues such as the reduction of VAT to 15 percent of basic foodstuffs, tax breaks for small and medium business, refinancing of debts, and no tax on minimum wage. In classic peronist lore, he declared, “I will not be president of a depraved government that keeps adjusting the belts of workers… we are not slaves of the international organizations” (Silletta 2001, 211-213). Yet voters wanted otherwise: De la Rúa gained nearly a majority, beating Duhalde by more than 10 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eduardo Duhalde/Ramón Ortega</td>
<td>PJ alliance</td>
<td>7,253,909</td>
<td>38.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando de la Rúa/Carlos Álvarez</td>
<td>Alianza</td>
<td>9,167,261</td>
<td>48.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.9 Argentina, Oct. 24, 1999 presidential election.

For the legislative elections, the PJ pulled in even less – 32.83 percent – which translated into a net loss of 22 representatives. From Menem’s reelection in 1995 until 1997, the PJ had even supplied their own quorum, with 130 deputies. Now, the party’s deputies were at a historical low; moreover, for the first time in history, a sitting PJ government had lost.

The very next day after the election, “Menem 2003” posters popped up in the city of Buenos Aires. Yet to achieve this, Menem needed to regain the control of the party. Again, the battle turned to control over the PJ’s highest organs, as Menem set his aims on continued control of the PJ presidency.

**Peronism out of power: Lack of common project leads to internal chaos**

The years of the Alianza administration (1999-2001) can be characterized as a seemingly eternal battle between Menem and Duhalde over control of the PJ. The anti-institutional orientation of its competing elites – where party institutions were hailed or rejected depending on whether it served the candidate or not – prevented the PJ from escaping from its already debilitated state.

While Menem remained president of the national council, Duhalde presided over the PJ congress. Also, he was the undisputed chief of the PJ *bonaerense*. Relations between the two camps had clearly been tense from even before the election, and during the 1999 campaign, Duhalde denounced a “boycott” of Menem against his candidacy. In the Argentine congress, a

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burgeoning fracture within the PJ group soon became apparent, where the two caudillos controlled around 30 legislators each.

The split became also evident in terms of how to deal with the new Alianza government. While Duhalde and his group announced willingness to cooperate, Menem was openly confrontational, and created an opposition “cabinet of light,” ready to take power.117

Menem tried to convene the council to cement his leadership, but out of power, it was clear that verticalism had lost its sway. Prominent former allies like de la Sota, now governor of Córdoba,118 Reutemann, and Ruckauf now refused to automatically align behind Menem.119 Particularly vocal was Santa Cruz Governor Kirchner, who called for a party renovation: “The time when [Menem] set the peronist line through talking on the radio in the morning has now passed,” he declared.120 Duhalde argued for a collegiate leadership of the party, and said “when there is electoral defeat, justicialism has no interlocutors.”

Yet the drawbacks of lacking any respected institutional mechanisms for solving internal disputes within the PJ became apparent. The national council, for instance, was convened and postponed at least three times within the month. Duhalde openly denounced the convocations as “attempts to return to the old scheme, with a verticalist leadership and the force of order, with one uniformed jefe.”121 It should be noted, however, that the in the PJ bonaerense, under his absolute leadership, things were hardly different.

**PJ collapse in the Federal Capital**

The Federal Capital, or the city of Buenos Aires,122 has rarely been friendly territory for peronism. Following the return to democracy, only in 1993 did the PJ win this second most important district in the nation, when its list for national deputies headed by Antonio Erman González came in first with 32.59 percent of the vote.123 Yet no election in history would be as disastrous as the May 7, 2000 election for mayor and city legislature. The PJ’s candidate for

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117 Among its members were Víctor Alderete (ex head of PAMI) and María Julía Alsogaray, who ranked among the most questioned of the former Menem functionaries. Notes McGuire, “The failings of the judicial branch go a long way toward explaining why dozens of Menem's appointees who resigned under the shadow of corruption managed to evade conviction and imprisonment” (1997, 257).

118 Elected governor of this important state in the Dec. 1998 elections. PJ got 33.90 percent to the UCR’s 35.87, but thanks to alliance with rightwing UCeDÉ, which provided 8.6 of votes, his electoral alliance won 49.59 and the governorship.


121 Los gobernadores postergaron la reunión del PJ. *La Nación*, March 1, 2000.

122 The official name of the capital city is *Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires*. However, “Federal Capital” remains the most common designation in practice, and will be used here.

mayor was its local party leader, Raúl Granillo Ocampo. A fellow native of La Rioja, he held
major posts during the Menem governments, including minister of justice and ambassador to the
U.S. Yet in 2000, PJ governors were increasingly reluctant to be associated with the Menem ally,
as opinion polls showed it was becoming a losing campaign. PJ elites such as Carlos Reutemann
were openly sympathetic of the candidacy of Domingo Cavallo, as was Duhalde. Governor
Ruckauf would, moreover, repay Cavallo’s favor in the October election,\(^{124}\) breaking with
tradition where the PJ \textit{bonaerense} traditionally would pitch in for its Federal Capital ally.\(^{125}\) Nor
did it help Ocampo’s credibility that he had become the candidate in a controversial internal
election, filled with violence and irregularities, which led to the resignation of many peronists
from the party.\(^{126}\)

In the Oct. 1999 national elections, the PJ had scraped in at 9.18 percent, landing only
one seat out of 12, for Menem ally Miguel Ángel Toma. Yet on the night of May 7, as the results
ticked in, for many they defied belief. With a vote return of 30,096, or barely 1.68 percent of the
vote, it was the “worst defeat in history” for the PJ, as it had never reached such historic lows.\(^{127}\)
Granillo Ocampo, as well as the entire 28-member executive board, stepped down, and the branch
was finally intervened by the national PJ branch.\(^{128}\) The party would not be capable of holding
internal elections for five years, until the Federal Capital branch was finally reestablished as such
in 2005. The loss further underlined the state of the party, which had now lost two elections in
less than six months.\(^{129}\)

\textbf{Peronism out of power: Where is the leader?}

The particular characteristics of the personalistic movement-party, where loyalty is
particularly contingent on unquestioned leadership and/or electoral victory, could be witnessed as
the PJ suffered even further defeats, and defections from the Menem camp. After the May 2000
disaster in the Federal Capital, Menem could now only count the loyalty of about 20 deputies, and
of the 12 governors who swore their loyalty one year earlier, only Ángel Maza of his native La

\(^{124}\) He was himself, however, embroiled in controversy due to his appointment of the earlier coup maker
Aldo Rico as his hardline minister of security, a position from which Rico would soon resign.
\(^{125}\) En el PJ se esfuerzan por despegarse de la derrota. \textit{La Nación}, April 26, 2000.
\(^{127}\) Al PJ se le cayó un candidato a presidente. \textit{Página 12}, May 8, 2000. Only one PJ candidate, Mario
O’Donnell, entered the city legislature on the official PJ ticket, however, ironically, 14 others claimed to be
Peronists, but were spread on other lists. A prominent Peronist, Juliana Marino, who would be one of the
first to support Kirchner for the 2003 election, openly stated that her group would support the center-left
Aníbal Ibarra, under the slogan of \textit{Voto a Ibarra desde el peronismo}.
\(^{129}\) One national FpV deputy who left the PJ in 1999, noted, “with the PJ of the city, they were always
looking to see if you were applauding or not, how many times you called out ‘Menem!’… this killed me, it
really killed me.” Confidential interview, FpV Buenos Aires city legislator, March 14, 2007.
Rioja and Rubén Marín of La Pampa could be counted on. While the PJ council finally met, few showed up, and Duhalde openly stated that whatever happened in the Council “has no importance at all,” as the party organ “lacks representativeness.” The PJ governors, among them de la Sota, Reutemann and Ruckauf, were now positioning themselves for the 2003 presidential race, and demanded that Menem “retire.” Menem’s response was classic and unequivocal: “When a peronist starts to attack another peronist, it is because he is moving over to the ranks of the enemy.”

As the new Alianza government set up an Office of Anti-Corruption, the true extent of the massive corruption that permeated the Menem government was now seeping to the surface. Yet more bad news was to come. The outgoing Menem administration had hidden the true extent of deficit – it had said it was 4.5 billion dollars, but it was closer to ten billion. The economic situation, already grave before de la Rúa took power, was rapidly worsening. According to official figures, employment reached 15.4 percent, with further 15 percent unemployed. The real figures were like much higher.

Yet as voters become disillusioned with the Alianza government, increasingly regarded as a mere continuation of the Menem government, the loss in popularity did not benefit the PJ: A Gallup poll found that only 2 out of 10 Argentines considered the PJ to be a “constructive opposition party.” Moreover, an alarming 9 out of 10 said they had no trust in parties overall.

The infighting within the PJ showed no signs of abating, and it was very unclear who the real head of the party was. As Joaquín Morales Solá noted,

For a year and a half… the Alliance leaders went on debating whether the future negotiation with peronism would be through Menem, the unions, the governors, or all of them together. The different theories and their rejections overwhelmed politicians and journalists… one could not decide on anyone.

For the lack of national leader one locus of power was found within the PJ senators. Augusto Alasino had for years led the PJ’s senatorial group, when during the Menem years no one had shown any interest in this position. As Menem allies such as his brother now made moves toward the leadership of this group, Alasino publicly vented his anger, shouting at

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131 Dura réplica de Menem a Ruckauf. La Nación, July 2, 2000.
132 Prominent examples of former functionaries currently (June 2008) under investigation: Víctor Alderete, María Julia Alsogaray, Manuel García Solá, Claudia Bello and Gerardo Sofovich.
133 Notably, the reported 4.5 – a blatant lie – was the maximum allowed under the government’s own law of convertibility (Morales Solá 2001, 24-26).
135 La mayoría cree que el PJ quiere obstruir. La Nación, July 7, 2000.
Eduardo Menem, “You enriched yourselves in government, and now you want to be real politicians!”^138

Menem convened the full national council, and this time managed to summon 87 out of 110 members, an impressive achievement that appeared to break a trend, as the council ratified his leadership of the PJ. Yet then a massive corruption scandal was unveiled in the Senate that involved at least eight PJ senators and three UCR allies, among them Menem allies Eduardo Bausá and Ramón Ortega.

Argentina, increasingly indebted, had been pushed by the International Monetary fund (IMF) to further liberalize its labor law. Law 25.250, in response, limited collective bargaining, made firing easier, and reduced severance pay. Yet in order to get sufficient support, government representatives had offered bribes that went all the way to the PJ senate leadership, including PJ group leader Alesino. This meant the collapse of the one sole national power group in the PJ that was still independent of strongmen Menem, Duhalde, Ruckauf, Reutemann, and de la Sota.

The Senate bribe scandal followed increasing disappointment with the Alianza government, and is often regarded the beginning of the end for the UCR-FREPASO alliance. Earlier, voters had seen in the Frente Grande and FREPASO a clear alternative to Menem, but as the Alianza demonstrated a complete lack of ability to improve economic affairs, their support was plummeting. After one year on the job, de la Rúa’s approval rate was a mere 26 percent. Members of the FREPASO and UCR accused Menem and other peronists of intending to “destabilize” the government through a hidden golpismo, or a coup-maker mentality. Ruckauf had ominously noted that PJ “was ready to govern.” Yet it is noteworthy that only 26 percent of voters after a year of the Alianza considered the PJ a constructive alternative.^144

^140 The controversial labor law was remarkably enough left standing, despite some senators openly admitting the bribes. Under pressure from President Néstor Kirchner, parliament derogated the law in February-March 2004.
^141 The scandal itself leads to the resignation of Chacho Álvarez as vice president on Oct. 6, 2000. The Alianza government had campaigned on an anti-corruption platform, and further schisms had developed between the alliance partners due to the economic policies of the government, and its highly conservative appointments to the cabinet. An omen of things to come, a poll by Graciela Römer showed that after the scandal, only 1 in 10 had confidence in Argentina’s national legislators. Sólo una de cada 10 personas confía en los legisladores. La Nación, Sept. 3, 2000.
^142 El oficialismo sufre una grave caída de su imagen pública. La Nación, Nov. 5, 2000.
As the dollar peg eventually halted Argentine exports stop and money fled the country, the government in desperation asked for a “pact of governability” with the PJ governors, to freeze federal and provincial public spending until 2005. The only governor not to sign was Kirchner.\textsuperscript{145}

As part of his early opposition to Menem, Kirchner had been among the first to support Duhalde for his 1999 candidature. Yet relations soured when Duhalde, according to Kirchner, hesitated to make a final break with Menem.\textsuperscript{146} Now, the focus was on Kirchner’s own candidature. On Dec 15, 2000, he launched the \textit{Corriente}, or “current,” in the Federal Capital. It attracted in particular independent peronists who did not respond to a particular sector, such as Alberto Fernández, Mario Das Neves, and the vice governors of Jujuy and of Tierra del Fuego, Rubén Dasa and Daniel Gallo. It caused a stir when Hugo Moyano, head of the truck drivers union (SCC) and leader of a rival CGT, and Juan Manuel Palacios, head of union of bus and subway drivers (UTA), surprisingly attended the event.

Kirchner criticized the PJ for its inability to make self-critique after its electoral losses, which he claimed was a result of having become “a replica of the Republican Party in the United States, neoconservative and liberal,” and he attacked the \textit{Alianza} for failing on promises of transparency and a more equitable distribution of wealth.\textsuperscript{147} The project from the beginning sought to attract FREPASO leaders disillusioned with their UCR alliance.\textsuperscript{148}

The deadlock within the PJ was near complete. Just as sectors of the party refused to acknowledge the authority of its council, Duhalde failed in his attempts to convene the party congress. The PJ’s governors signaled they would not attend, and rejected calls for internal debate on the party’s direction. Yet signs appeared that the debate was not solely about power, but also about the PJ’s programmatic direction. Duhalde now accused Menem of having “betrayed peronism.” According to Duhalde, “\textit{Menemismo} has propitiated a very serious ideological contraband… Our adversaries are not even those of the \textit{Alianza}, but ultraliberalism.”\textsuperscript{149}

In an ironic twist, de la Rúa now hired Domingo Cavallo, and Menem’s old minister was given superpowers to deal with the increasing economic emergency. In order to placate the IMF and keep Argentina’s credit rating, the government made a further deal with the PJ to balance the

\textsuperscript{145} Los gobernadores firmaron el pacto. \textit{La Nación}, Nov. 21, 2000. During the Duhalde government (2002-2003), Kirchner would again be the only one of 14 governors not to sign a similar agreement with Duhalde as well.

\textsuperscript{146} To the complaint of Kirchner, Duhalde included Menem’s ex secretary of state Julio César Aráoz as head of his campaign. Kirchner se lanza a la pelea de 2003. \textit{La Nación}, Nov. 26, 2000.

\textsuperscript{147} Kirchner lanzó su corriente nacional para construir un modelo alternativo. \textit{La Nación}, Dec. 16, 2000.

\textsuperscript{148} Early supporters of Kirchner’s project were, in addition to his wife, ambassador Mario Cámpora, nephew of the former president, Mario das Neves, from Chubut, Oscar Parrilli, from Neuquén; Eduardo Rosso, from Río Negro, and city legislator Alberto Fernández. Kirchner quiere restar clientela a Álvarez. \textit{La Nación}, Oct. 23, 2000.

budget, which froze wages mainly for retirees and state employees, such as teachers, university workers, and members of the armed forces, and civil servants.\textsuperscript{150} It proved extremely unpopular. Increasing talks of a government of unity merely added to the dramatic climate, as one by one the FREPASO members of the government was abandoning it. Even former president Alfonsín called for a government of “national salvation,”\textsuperscript{151} as social protests were dramatically rising.\textsuperscript{152}

**Electoral gains Oct. 2001 but no real resurgence**

In the midst of the growing crisis, Argentina went to the electoral urns. The PJ’s chaotic situation was underlined by the fact that its national president, Carlos Menem, was put in house arrest, charged with illegal sale of weapons during his government.\textsuperscript{153} At least 36 former Menem functionaries had been detained the preceding weeks with open cases against them,\textsuperscript{154} and undeclared bank accounts belonging to Menem were discovered in Switzerland, and dated back from his time as governor of La Rioja.\textsuperscript{155}

In its leader’s absence, PJ leaders held a brief meeting to define the party’s program for the upcoming elections. Redacted mainly by José Manuel de la Sota, the document was remarkably short on proposals, beyond calls for “reindustrialization” of the country, “reprogramming” foreign debt, and the reduction of all national taxes by 30 percent.\textsuperscript{156}

For the election, the PJ again joined old rightwing allies AR and UCdE. In the Federal Capital and in Córdoba, the second and fourth most important electoral districts, PJ and AR had an electoral front; likewise, in interior provinces such as Formosa and Santiago del Estero AR members entered directly on the PJ’s list.\textsuperscript{157} In Santa Fe, the third largest district, the PJ the allied with the conservative UCdE.

The particular context must here be noted: A party that on the national level had switched positions to run to the left of the Alianza in 1999, now again appeared on its right. Argentina’s main parties therefore very poorly fulfilled the crucial party role of providing voters with clearly

\textsuperscript{150} Preguntas clave para entender el ajuste. *La Nación*, July 31, 2001.
\textsuperscript{152} El 36.5% de los vecinos de La Matanza vive por debajo de la línea de pobreza. *La Nación*, May 23, 2001.
\textsuperscript{153} Menem’s former minister of defense Erman González was arrested, among several others. As Menem refused to give testimony, he himself was detained and put under house arrest. Erman González quedó preso por contrabando. *La Nación*, May 24, 2001; Menem está detenido en una quinta. *La Nación*, June 8, 2001. At the time of writing (June 2008) the case was still ongoing.
\textsuperscript{154} Desfilan por la Justicia 36 ex funcionarios. *La Nación*, June 24, 2001.
\textsuperscript{157} Cavallo privilegia los acuerdos con el PJ. *La Nación*, Aug. 24, 2001.
defined and distinguishable platforms, and even worse with providing a semblance of ideological and programmatic consistency.

Yet on the surface, the elections appeared to be landslide for the party. The PJ won overall in 17 out of 24 electoral districts, and of 127 legislative seats up for grabs, it captured 65. Also, it captured 40 of 72 senatorial seats, which were now elected directly. However, the PJ’s victory was misleading. The real “winner” of the election was the “negative vote,” as the elections see an explosion in the number of spoiled or blank voted. Compared to the 1999 elections, 5 million more voters simply abstained from voting, despite voting being compulsory. Combined with the null and blank votes, this amounted to a stunning 41 percent of the population.\(^{158}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>PJ vote in %</th>
<th>Combined Spoiled-Blank Vote in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires Province</td>
<td>37.59</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Capital</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>35.97</td>
<td>42.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Córdoba</td>
<td>26.93</td>
<td>20.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendoza</td>
<td>27.98</td>
<td>19.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.10: 2001 PJ vote vs. spoiled and blank vote, senatorial list five main districts.\(^{159}\)

In the Federal Capital and in Santa Fe, the blank and spoiled voted “won” and it pulled second in Buenos Aires Province.\(^{160}\) Crucially, for the first time in history, the PJ-UCR binary now showed clear signs of breaking down: Together, the two historic parties only represented about 30 percent of the electoral roll.\(^{161}\)

While the PJ would gain more than half of all seats up for grabs, it did so with only 34 percent of the national vote and only capitalized on the fragmentation of the opposition and the moderate majoritarian effect of the D’Hondt electoral system. In absolute numbers, it had lost 1.12 million voters from the previous election.\(^{162}\) In the Senate, where the rules stipulate two seats from each province from the largest party and one from the minority, the price was even greater – with less than 30 percent of the senate votes, the PJ still obtained 55 percent of the seats.\(^{163}\)

Post-election polls not only show a deep discontent with politicians; only 15 percent expressed any trust in political parties, which occupied the last position on the list.\(^{164}\) Crucially, a


\(^{159}\) Based on election data from Andy Tow archive. [http://towsa.com/andy/totalpais/index.html](http://towsa.com/andy/totalpais/index.html)


majority desired an end to the traditional alternation in power between peronism and radicalism. The old identities, which for half a century have covered Argentina’s political space, now no longer seemed sufficient.

**Internal party war in times of national crisis**

The political and social crisis facing Argentina did nothing to abate the internal PJ war, which had only exacerbated following the elections. According to its statutes, the PJ is required to hold a yearly congress, which by now it had already breached: Duhalde had not been able to convene the PJ’s highest authority for two years, which jeopardized its legal status as a party.

In November, Duhalde was finally successful. With 457 out of 916 accredited delegates present (the PJ bonaerense alone brought 273), including Governors Carlos Ruckauf, Adolfo Rodriguez Saá, and Kirchner, Duhalde in his opening speech promised to “the end the stage of confusion within the PJ.” The main task was clearly to displace Menem from the PJ leadership, through any means possible. As quorum was reached according to the party charter, the congress stripped the council of its power, and in its place designated a “Commission of Political Action” (CAP), to be headed by the PJ governors, union representatives, and leaders of the PJ parliamentary blocks. The PJ’s legal representatives, Menem allies Carlos Corach and César Arias, were also sacked, and in their place appointed Jorge Landau and Jorge Casanovas, close to Duhalde and Ruckauf respectively.

Importantly, the PJ voted to disaffiliate the PJ from its observer status in the International Democratic Union. Menem had shocked many by seeking affiliation with the “liberal international” where parties such as the U.S. Republican Party, the Conservative party in England, and the Spanish PP were members. This represented the beginning of an ideological relaunching and redefinition of the party, and prominent among the advocates of a “new model” was Kirchner.

Yet the Menem counterattack was not late in coming. From his house arrest he convened the PJ council. Moreover, the Supreme Court – stacked with his allies – finally absolved him of all charges. After 166 days in house arrest, Menem immediately launched his bid for the 2003 presidency. Again, he managed quite a feat: Despite its official displacement by the council, eight

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governors showed up at the PJ party headquarters in the Once district, although in private, most expressed they were there only to avoid a complete fracture within the party.\footnote{168}

The council was held in an extremely chaotic environment. Scuffles and fistfights broke out between supporters and opponents of Menem and journalists present were harassed.\footnote{169} The interjection by a Catholic priest who broke into a prayer for Menem’s continued liberation merely added to the surreal situation, as the council members joined in the prayer.

While the main purpose of the council was clearly to reestablish Menem’s authority vis-à-vis Duhalde and the party congress, among its few concrete proclamations was the rather bizarre prominence given to a pronouncement against human cloning, declared to be “contrary to divine law, and to the basic principles of our doctrine.” While Argentine society was ready to explode, and the government’s fall appeared imminent, the council made no specific policy calls, merely urging Argentina to “recover its protagonism in the world.”\footnote{170}

With 118 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, the PJ was the largest party in the country, and the election of duhaldista stalwart Eduardo Camaño as president of the chamber underscored Duhalde’s clout in congress.\footnote{171} Yet President De la Rúa clearly regarded Menem as the interlocutor of peronism, and held ever more frequent meetings with the PJ leader, whose economic views he largely shared. In one of the last meetings with Menem and his PJ allies, held on Dec. 13 2001, Menem demanded from dela Rúa complete dollarization of the Argentine economy, a policy vehemently opposed by the rest of the party.\footnote{172} Kirchner was one such opponent, and declared “It is a completely isolated idea … I see the government as very close to the positions of Menem.”\footnote{173}

Just as Argentina was entering a state of siege, Menem’s power in the party was boosted by a ruling from federal judge María Servini de Cubría, who ruled that Menem was still the legal president of the party, basing her legal decision on the fact that the CAP had yet to convene.\footnote{174}
Yet within just a few days, even the PJ’s internal battle was for a moment overtaken by an external even: The renunciation of de la Rúa.

14 days, five presidents: A country hostage to the internal battle of peronism

Despite the state of siege, chaos reigned in Argentina, as banks and supermarkets were plundered. Clashes between demonstrators and the police were commonplace, especially in urban areas such as the conurbano, La Plata, Santa Fe, Córdoba, and the Federal Capital.175 Following three years of recession, people finally marched on the Casa Rosada, demanding that de la Rúa sack Cavallo. In a last desperate attempt to halt the capital flight,176 on Nov. 30 the government had implemented the corralito banking curb,177 which froze bank accounts and banned withdrawals from dollar-denominated accounts, to a general outcry. A general strike by the CGT on Dec. 13 paralyzed the country, and as lending institutions such as the IMF froze further payments to Argentina, Cavallo stepped down. A few days later, on Dec. 20, the president fled the Casa Rosada in a helicopter, probably the most emblematic image of the chaos, which claimed at least 27 dead, 530 wounded, 3,800 detained and 846 shops ransacked in the worst social crisis since 1919.178

Institutionally, De la Rúa had not even fulfilled half his term. The government had maintained the economic orientation of Menem and had done little to alleviate the exploding social misery. Elected on promises of “clean government,” the Alianza had also proved to be extremely corrupt (Jozami 2004, 25).

While streets echoed with cries of ¡Que se vayan todos! or “Get rid of them all,” as the largest opposition party, it became clear that the PJ would have to assume responsibility for the government. While it eventually did so, the events leading up to the assumption of Duhalde saw a party acting in a highly bizarre and erratic manner, where presidents came and went, and where the power struggle within the PJ took precedence over the well-being of the nation.179

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175 Rige el estado de sitio después de los saqueos; renunció Cavallo. La Nación, Dec. 20, 2001.
176 According to one estimate, at least 24 billion dollars left the country from March-December 2001.
177 The term was first used by broadcast journalist Marcelo Longobardi. In effect, it meant that people could only withdraw 250 pesos/dollars weekly. All else had to be paid with debit/credit card, but as few held them, many were unable to pay basic necessities. For those who had savings accounts in dollar, the value would depreciate until finally stabilizing on a rate of around 3.2 to the dollar.
179 It is usually reported that Argentina had five presidents. Technically, however, Puerta and Camaño were only exercising the executive function as part of the Ley de Acefalía, and thus the title “president” is technically incorrect in these two cases.
As Carlos Álvarez had resigned as vice president, next in the presidential line was Senator Ramón Puerta.\(^{180}\) Puerta was “acting head of the executive” for only two days, until he resigned, declaring he did not want to appear as a *golpista*, or a coup plotter. A more intrinsic and less flattering motivation was his own presidential ambitions; he did not want to be president unless he was to complete the entire period, a move opposed by De la Sota and Kirchner (Silleta 2005, 63).

What followed was really the enactment of a peronist internal battle, yet taking place against the backdrop of a leaderless country, held hostage to paltry party infighting. The selection of a new executive president was held up as the peronists fought over how to choose the next president, as it was expected elections would be held rapidly. The party’s contenders were accused of putting their own presidential ambitions ahead of those of the nation. Many pushed for the highly dubious *Ley de Lemas*, where if several PJ candidates went to the election, the candidate who got the most would receive the votes of the others. Considering the obvious ideological differences between them, from the standpoint of representative democracy, this was intolerable. The PJ group demanded reform of electoral code before being able to agree on new president, effectively holding the country hostage to their fight for power.\(^{181}\)

Finally, a joint session of congress elected Adolfo Rodríguez Saá as president. “El Adolfo” was a caudillo of the Rodríguez Saá dynasty in San Luis, which had controlled the region since 1983. He was also a multimillionaire, and while he was credited with developing his native province, was also accused of massively expanding his own wealth, estimated at 22 million dollars.\(^{182}\) His first move was to declare a default, an act popular with Argentines, although it was discovered that he had in secret still paid the IMF. Moreover, his appointment of Carlos Grosso, one-time peronist Renovator and disgraced former (appointed) mayor of the Federal Capital proved extremely unpopular, as protestors were unwilling to tolerate appointees so blatantly involved in corruption scandals as Grosso. When Grosso hinted that Rodríguez Saá, in breach of his promise to call for new elections, might extend his mandate until December 2003, Kirchner, de la Sota, and Ruckauf – all with presidential ambitions – reacted strongly, and Rodríguez Saá stepped down.\(^{183}\) The power struggle within the PJ had claimed yet another president.\(^{184}\)

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\(^{180}\) Governor of Misiones province 1991-1999, and a highly successful businessman and millionaire, he had been elected to the Senate in 1999. *La Nación* declared him the “best alum” of the IMF, and he was closer to the neoliberal wing of the party, and Macri. Cavallo, de salvador a enemigo del pueblo. *La Nación*, Dec. 21, 2001.


\(^{183}\) The power struggle also appeared to take its toll on Rodríguez Saá; according to Duhalde he also suffered from panic attacks. Curia (2006, 159).
As it became clear that Rodríguez Saá would be forced out, Puerta resigned his senate seat to avoid becoming acting executive again. The mantle now was passed to the president of the lower house, Eduardo Camaño, who convoked parliament to vote for a new president. With an overwhelming majority of 262 against 21 votes and 18 abstentions, Eduardo Duhalde became president of Argentina.

**Return to power exacerbates internal party conflict**

Upon taking office, Duhalde renounced his positions within the PJ – president of the party congress, and president of the all-powerful PJ Bonaerense, taken over by Reutemann and the old caudillo Manuel Quindimil respectively. But the official renunciation belied the reality of the internal struggle, as the battle within the PJ would intensify, and Duhalde as president would spend increasing time and energy fighting his arch enemy, Menem.

Given wide authority from a Law of Economic Emergency, President Duhalde proceeded to devalue the peso. The convertibility peg, after 10 years and nine months, was finally abandoned. Despite its unpopularity, bipartisan consensus existed that the *corralito* should be upheld. Even the PJ council decided to endorse the government’s initial economic and social policies, and distanced itself from Menem, who demanded complete dollarization of economy.188

Menem, sensing the government’s fragile standing, offered it no support. Rather, from a 1000-dollar-a-night hotel suite in Puerta Vallarta, Mexico – incidentally, the same amount that Argentines were now allowed to withdraw monthly – he declared Duhalde and the new administration “inept to govern,” yet the criticism alienated even his own supporters.189

As noted, the Supreme Court had been stacked with Menem appointees, and it had been a major campaign promise of the Alianza to start impeachment proceedings against various functionaries, which never materialized. After a new Commission of Impeachment was launched, the “automatic majority,” or the five-six judges regarded as very close to Menem, within hours produced a ruling in one particular case against the constitutionality of the *corralito*, which now

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186 Aprobó Diputados la pesificación de deudas hasta 100.000 dólares. *La Nación*, Jan. 6, 2002.
190 In April 1990, Menem submitted a bill to expand the court from five to nine members. The new ones would be named by him. The manner in which the bill was passed was beyond the pale: As UCR deputies were leaving their seats to avoid providing the required quorum, the PJ called a sudden vote. As the deputies of UCR delegation scrambled for their seats, the bill was passed eight seconds later.
opened up for thousands of more court cases – and complete economic and political chaos. The court’s decision was seen as another front in the Menem-Duhalde dispute, and Menem was openly accused of wanting to destabilize the government.\textsuperscript{191} Although many within the PJ group, as well as deputies of the UCR and centre-left, wanted to sack the court, deputies loyal to Menem and reluctant \textit{duhaldistas} for now shelved the attempt.\textsuperscript{192}

Further fissures within the PJ group related to the government’s economic policy. Following pressure from the IMF, the government agreed to reform Argentina’s bankruptcy laws, passed in order to block foreign capital from rushing in to buy Argentine companies, and as a condition of further aid to end the “Law of Economic Subversion,” which could have penalized banks sending money out illegally. The PJ senate group was divided, and only approved the law after massive pressure. Most PJ governors in the end supported it, except two: Alicia Lemme, who was fulfilling Saá mandate as governor of San Luis, and Néstor Kirchner of Santa Cruz.

Candidates were now clearly moving into position before the 2003 election. An opinion poll, however, demonstrated that 68 percent of Argentines had a negative view of peronism, while the UCR scored even worse, with 76 percent.\textsuperscript{193} In an attempt to address the crisis of parties, congress passed a new law that would force open primaries and make them obligatory to party members. Yet Kirchner denounced this as trick (\textit{engañapichanga}, in La Plata slang), as “the political apparatuses and old methods of political clientelism will continue to prevail over the popular will.”\textsuperscript{194} Rather than forcing parties to become more democratic, it would arguably give even more power to the PJ’s \textit{punteros}, who through clientelist networks were capable of gathering masses of people. Alberto Fernández, a legislator of the Federal Capital and a key \textit{porteño} ally of Kirchner, responded, “What do we do to win against the corporation, against a government that hands out two million jobs, runs the congress, and the PJ council?” Kirchner by now spoke openly of running outside the PJ for the 2003 presidential contest.\textsuperscript{195}

\textsuperscript{192} El tema genera conflicto en el PJ. \textit{La Nación}, March 8, 2002. The Commission of Impeachment finally issued its report seven months later, yet Duhalde’s deputies did not heed its call to impeach the Supreme Court. While more than 20 deputies voted with the opposition, the required 2/3 to start the proceedings were not reached. Con dificultad, el PJ alcanzó el quórum. \textit{La Nación}, Oct. 10, 2002.
\textsuperscript{193} Diputados y senadores, con la peor imagen. \textit{La Nación}, May 19, 2002. A June Gallup poll, moreover, showed that a massive 87 percent of Argentines did not regard themselves as supporters of any party. 52 percent declared they were independent of any party identity in general, and of those that did declare some loyalty, only 23 percent said they were Peronist. En política, la mayoría es independiente. \textit{La Nación}, June 30, 2002.
\textsuperscript{195} Due to his cordial relations with Duhalde, Fernández would be particularly important as right-hand man of Kirchner, and would function as the nexus between Kirchner’s group and the PJ \textit{bonaerense}. His dilemma was obvious: Were internal elections to be held, Menem, through his control of the voting registry
The dynamics of the political game changed when two protesters were killed execution-style by the police, prompting Duhalde to push forward elections to March 30, 2003. While Kirchner had made inroads with some PJ leaders in the province of Buenos Aires, he was still far from Duhalde’s favorite choice.

In 2002, Carlos Reutemann, Senator from Santa Fe, was acting head of the PJ congress, and as a former race car driver was popular within and outside the party as well. Yet despite much prodding from Duhalde, Reutemann finally declared he would not be a candidate in 2003. Rather theatrically, he added “I saw something that I didn’t like, and I will never tell,” without elaborating. Observer interpret the cryptic message as a fear the internal elections would be rigged. Kirchner quickly responded, “If he has seen dark things within peronism. I think it would be a patriotic gesture on his part to reveal them.” He didn’t.

Kirchner was particularly critical of the PJ apparatus, which he denounced as clientelist, and coined the term pejotismo (“PJ-ism”) to describe it. Also, he advocated an “ideological redefinition” of the party, and the creation of broad coalition beyond the PJ, “with progressive sectors, and of very strong ideological antagonisms.” His wife warned that the PJ leaders “want us to believe that peronism is pragmatism, and nothing else!” To the couple, the structure of the party was merely divided between two clientelist apparatuses, those of Menem and Duhalde, which in practice were all but identical.

A judge supported Menem’s demand that only PJ affiliates could vote for the internal elections, yet the competing candidates questioned the validity of current PJ membership lists, controlled by Menem. On top of this, the electoral board that would validate the electoral lists and appoint electoral overseers was set up during the highly questioned 1998 congress, and in any case had an expired mandate. Kirchner deemed it a “political suicide” to compete under those conditions, and created the Partido de la Victoria (PV) in response.

The battle over the control of the PJ would even move beyond the party arena, and seriously affect Duhalde’s ability to govern the country. Despite the continued crisis – the IMF and the council, would likely win the PJ’s nomination. Yet if Kirchner could secure the PJ nomination, the party would certainly contribute with a lot of logistics and organization.

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196 Reutemann decidió no ser candidato presidencial. La Nación, July 11, 2002.
197 Kirchner analiza competir por fuera del peronismo. La Nación, July 14, 2002.
198 Kirchner amaga con competir por fuera del justicialismo. La Nación, July 7, 2002.
199 Kirchner pide limpieza en la lucha justicialista. La Nación, Aug. 3, 2002.
200 No voy a pactar con los aparatos. La Nación, Aug. 10, 2002.
202 To achieve party status on a national level in Argentina, it must be recognized in at least five provinces, with the support of at least 4 percent of registered voters. He did so quickly in Santa Cruz and Río Negro, and expanded north, including to the all-important province of Buenos Aires.
reported the situation to be worse than the US depression in the 1930s – the internal PJ battle was reported to make up the principal activity of his presidency.\footnote{Duhalde, consumido por la pelea interna. \textit{La Nación}, Nov. 3, 2002.}

Within the PJ, the tug-of-war between its principal institutions continued. The managing board of the PJ congress declared the electoral board expired, and tried to convene a new party congress.\footnote{El PJ realizará el 29 de octubre un Congreso Extraordinario. \textit{La Nación Line}, Oct. 22, 2002.} Menem, however, obtained a court ruling that suspended it, although, in an even-handed ruling, the electoral judge as well temporarily suspended the party’s internal election, and ordered a “conciliation meeting” set up.\footnote{El duhaldismo redobla su apuesta. \textit{La Nación}, Oct. 29, 2002.} Yet the PJ rupture had by now even spread to the Chamber of Deputies, where around 30 legislators loyal to Menem openly refused to vote with their own government.\footnote{Se quebró el bloque de diputados del PJ al irse el menemismo. \textit{La Nación}, Oct. 31, 2002.}

A PJ leader loyal to Duhalde in any case convened an extraordinary national congress a week later. Held Oct. 29 in Lanús, Buenos Aires Province – quorum was easily reached with more than 600 delegates present – the PJ congress proceeded to invalidate all the previous decisions of the council, postponed internal elections for January, and formed a new electoral board. For the first time in PJ’s history, the congress was headed by a woman – Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (CFK).\footnote{Reutemann and Jorge Busti, governor of Entre Ríos were vice presidents, but did not attend.} The congress elected the head of Chamber of Deputies Eduardo Camaño and Jorge Alberto Hammerly as new president and vice of the congress, although media now talked of a complete fracture in the party.\footnote{Le pusieron otra fecha a la interna y se fractura el PJ. \textit{Clarín}, Oct. 30, 2002.} To comply with the legal ruling, a new congress was convened only days later, on Nov. 5 in the Obras Sanitarias stadium, where finally the CAP was set up to take over most of the national council’s functions.\footnote{According to the party rules, quorum was reached if a third voted to hold a new council meeting, a number easily reached.} There, CFK, Gildo Insfrán (governor Formosa),\footnote{Like Kirchner, reformedit constitution to allow for reelection. The “eternal Insfrán” has been governor since Dec. 1995, and before that was vice-governor for two terms. He was close to Menem, then Duhalde, then Rodríguez Saá, and is now with Kirchner, who he decidedly helped during the 2003 presidential campaign.} Ramón Puerta (Misiones) and Hugo Curto\footnote{Hugo Curto was a loyal \textit{duhaldista}, until he became a loyal Kirchner ally, and is one of the few remaining long-time barons, following Quindimil’s loss in 2007, who managed to maintain power.} were elected to the congress executive board, the PJ’s highest organ.\footnote{Todos los hombres del Presidente. \textit{Página 12}, Nov. 6, 2002.}
### Executive Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Eduardo Camaño (Buenos Aires Province)</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Vice President</td>
<td>Alberto Hammerly (Santa Fe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Vice President</td>
<td>Jorge Busti (Entre Ríos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Vice President</td>
<td>Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (Santa Cruz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Vice President</td>
<td>Angel Maza (La Rioja)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Gildo Insfrán (Formosa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Ramón Puerta (Misiones)</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Carlos Juárez (Santiago de Estero)</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Juan Carlos Romero (Salta)</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Jorge Montoya (Córdoba)</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Guillermo Amstutz (Mendoza)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Hugo Curto (Buenos Aires Province)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Official spokesperson</td>
<td>Juan Carlos Mazzón (Mendoza)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Official spokesperson</td>
<td>Dante Doven (Santa Cruz)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Official spokesperson</td>
<td>Jorge Roca (Federal Capital)</td>
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<td>Official spokesperson</td>
<td>Carlos Carranza (Santa Fe)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Official spokesperson</td>
<td>Osvaldo Del Grosso (Jujuy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substitute spokesperson</td>
<td>Antonio Ciaurro (Santa Fe)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substitute spokesperson</td>
<td>Susana Beatriz Llambí (Neuquén)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substitute spokesperson</td>
<td>Víctor Cisterna (Chubut)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal representative</td>
<td>Jorge Landau</td>
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### Electoral Board

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>President</td>
<td>Rafael González (Chaco)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>José María Díaz Bencalari (Buenos Aires Province)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Antonio Guerrero (Tucumán)</td>
</tr>
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Table 3.11: PJ congress leadership, 2002-2005.\(^{214}\)

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\(^{213}\) The *apoderado* is the party’s legal representative before the country’s judicial, electoral, or administrative authorities. Landau is the long-time *apoderado* of both the national and the PJ *bonaerense* branch.

\(^{214}\) Compiled from a variety of news sources.
Duhalde increasingly spent his energies on trying to find a suitable PJ candidate. He failed to persuade Reutemann to be his candidate, and with other candidates unwilling or trailing in opinion polls, he finally met with Kirchner. On Dec. 14, using the occasion to celebrate the anniversary of the Río Turbio mine Duhalde flew 14 to Santa Cruz for a final meeting. As the New Year sets in, it became clear that Kirchner would now be Duhalde’s official candidate.215

Yet it was a candidature opposed even by his own troops. In the PJ bonaerense, Hugo Curto, a caudillo in the Tres de Febrero district, famously declared that to put the Patagonian as a candidate would be the same as to taking a dead dog for a walk, and prominent duhaldistas confessed they were “ideologically diametrically opposed” to Kirchner’s candidature.216 In turn, Kirchner’s own leftwing allies in the province were skeptical of his alliance with the bonaerense turned national president.217 Enrique Reutemann, brother of the Santa Fe governor, denounced Kirchner as a candidate who “represents the center-left in peronism and is tied to the Montoneros.” Kirchner angrily responded that “in Argentina 30,000 were disappeared with this type of declarations.”218

The confluence between Kirchner and Duhalde had taken a loose organic form with the Calafate Group, originally created around 1998 when Kirchner supported Duhalde in his fight against Menem, and then for the former’s 1999 candidacy. It was formally launched in October 1998, as a direct response to Menem’s attempts at further reelection. The group had first met in the Calafate, a small resort town in southern Santa Cruz, with the idea to “recover the practice of debate, lost by peronism in the 1990s” (Di Mauro 2004, 159). It included many of the original Renovators from the 1980s, as well as several setentistas, or disgruntled left peronists who had

215 At the last minute he is said to have offered the candidacy to Felipe Solá, who refused, believing it was a ploy for Duhalde to regain power in the province. Confidential interview, central PJ bonaerense member, Feb. 12, 2007. One government functionary involved in the process noted, “To be sure, the first option for Duhalde, who himself couldn’t be a candidate, was Reutemann – it had nothing to with Kirchner. Kirchner arrived by default. First, Duhalde wanted it to be Reutemann. Reutemann said no, and he then went for De la Sota, another man close to the right, and De la Sota didn’t rise in the polls, and that is when Kirchner appeared for Duhalde. That is, more than just about the person, what Duhalde expresses is a PJ or Peronism that is predominantly pragmatic – of the center. But not one you would call left.” Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, March 8, 2007.
217 In Buenos Aires, Kirchner was also supported by two prominent ex-Frente Grande politicians of the left, Eduardo Sigal and Aldo San Pedro, who are skeptical of Kirchner’s alliance with skepticism of this alliance, as does Eduardo Luis Duhalde (no relation), a prominent human rights activist who resigns as a judge in the Federal Capital to aid Kirchner. He brings a lot of political capital, had been defending Montoneros in 1970s, and his lawyer associate, national deputy Rodolfo Ortega Peña, was assassinated by the rightwing terrorist death squad Triple A.
been active in the 1970s, and regarded Duhalde as more progressive than de la Rúa. Yet relations were never too warm, especially due to Duhalde’s hesitation to take on board prominent Menem allies such as Eduardo Bauzá on his 1999 campaign. They were also particularly upset by the rightwing turn of Carlos Ruckauf in Buenos Aires Province (Curia 2006, 133). As Duhalde himself would later acknowledge, “the truth is that there were no ideological communion… the only point of coincidence was to end with the model: To end with Menem.”

Yet by January 2003, Kirchner was Duhalde’s candidate, and the PJ bonaerense finally agreed to the formula Kirchner for president – Solá for governor of Buenos Aires. On Jan. 16, 2003, Kirchner was officially consecrated as Duhalde’s candidate in Quinta San Vicente, Perón’s country house in Buenos Aires Province. For the event, an impressive array of cabinet ministers and PJ notables were present, yet it was also clear that prominent members of PJ bonaerense, such as Eduardo Camaño, José María Díaz Bancalari and Lorenzo Pepe, were less than enthusiastic of Duhalde’s choice. Kirchner in his speech compared the economic project of the 1976 dictatorship to the Menem years, deeming Menem the “best pupil” of a project of “structural corruption” and a “grave economic concentration and unsustainable distribution of income for a government calling itself peronist.” He received polite applause from a crowd where many had held key positions during the Menem decade or had followed the president with little protest.

To counterbalance the perceived left leanings of Kirchner, Daniel Scioli sailed up as Kirchner’s vice presidential candidate to pull in the center-right voters. The irony was lost on few: Menem had been described as Scioli’s political godfather, and it was him who had brought the speedboat racer into politics in the 1990s. He would now join the ticket of what was declared an “anti-menemista project,” behind which the PJ bonaerense now appeared to fall in line.

As Menem was reported to declare himself the PJ’s official candidate in a meeting of the council, the PJ congress was again hastily convened to forestall this. This time the Menem

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219 The variegated group included both new and “historic” Peronists, such as Alberto Fernández, Jorge Argüello, Julio Bárbano, Mario Cámpora (nephew of the former president), Julio Vitobello, Estaban Righi, ex minister of interior of Cámpora, Miguel Talento, ex montonero, Héctor Timerman, Cristina Álvarez Rodríguez (a relative of Eva Perón), Dante Gullo, Julio Bárbano, Alberto Iribarne, Roberto Digón, and Carlos Tomada.
221 Felipe Solá took over as Buenos Aires governor when Ruckauf became Duhalde’s secretary of state.
222 They included interior minister Jorge Matzkin, minister of production Aníbal Fernández, head of customs Mario Das Neves, and secretary general of the presidency José Pampuro (also Duhalde’s personal doctor), governors Felipe Solá (Buenos Aires), Eduardo Fellner (Jujuy) and Gildo Insfrán (Formosa) secretary of tourism Daniel Scioli, and prominent law makers such as Jorge Capitanich, José Luis Gioja, and Jorge Busti.
223 Kirchner quedó consagrado como el candidato de la renovación peronista. La Nación, Jan. 16, 2003.
delegates showed up. On paper, the congress consisted on 921 delegates, and of those, Menem’s allies were calculated to be around 247. Duhalde’s delegates from Buenos Aires province alone were thought to make up a similar number, and the congress was to be a show of strength.225

In her speech, CFK declared, “Whatever differences we have, let us not return to the days of Herminio Iglesias,”226 but was booed and insulted by the menemistas.227 Menem’s allies had threatened to swamp the congress with “ten thousand demonstrators,” but in the end only a few dozen showed up. The congress, due to the “exceptional moment,” announced it would annul the internal elections. The delegates loyal to Menem loudly withdrew as they claimed fraud, but only numbered 150. More than 500 remained, and quorum was reached for the crucial vote that would definitely annul the PJ’s the congress suspended the elections.228

The congress was unusual in that it many of the speakers, such as CFK, but also traditional PJ leaders such as Carlos Soria, José María Díaz Bancalari and Lorenzo Pepe, made it a pivotal part of their discourse to discuss the “ideological antagonisms” within the PJ. Commentators note that this had not really been heard since at least the early 1970s.229 One could no longer maintain the fiction that despite its differences, the PJ would eventually align behind its leader – and that despite their differences, peronists all shared one grand strategy. While splits in the larger peronist movement had been a constant, it had always managed to rally behind its presidential candidate. Now, the only surviving national party would go to the national elections split, and three candidates would claim the peronist mantle. On its front page the next day, Página 12 in bold type declared: “Peronism Divided in Three.”

Conclusion

The struggles over the control of the peronist movement and party apparatus may prove more crucial to the future of Argentina than the avatars of all other parties and coalitions.230

- Juan Corradi, 1995

Throughout its history, the PJ has displayed a remarkable ability to survive proscription, repression, and great personnel and programmatic changes. The party has, moreover, on three

225 With the bonaerense delegates calculated to range between 220 and 260, Duhalde had almost a third of all delegates. Quorum would be reached by 461, yet if this number would not be reached, the congress could be convened a second time, with quorum established by a third of the group, or 307 delegates.
226 As Menem was making inroads in Buenos Aires province, among his allies were many of the old “orthodox” peronists such as Iglesias. Menem’s allies also included Luis Abelardo Patti, mayor of Escobar, accused of torture and murder during the dirty war. Patti was imprisoned Nov. 2007 on charges of kidnapping and torture, and is now under investigation for murder. Patti, procesado por asesino. Página 12, March 1, 2008.
228 “Autoritarismo castrense” fue lo menos que dijeron los menemistas. Página 12, Jan. 25, 2003.
229 Duhalde impuso su mayoría y logró bajar la interna del PJ. Clarín, Jan. 25, 2003.
major occasions – in 1973, 1989, and 2001 – assumed political power and responsibility under conditions of political crisis, where no other credible alternative to the PJ appeared to exist.

Yet this chapter has sought to emphasize the negative consequences of the PJ’s organization as a personalistic movement party, which have also been a cause of general instability in Argentine society as a whole. Even when the party appeared to be unified under one supreme jefe, this stability was highly tenuous, as the party elites’ lack of agreement on the PJ’s programmatic and ideological direction meant that the party lacked a common element to tie it effectively together beyond the vertical caudillo. This meant above all that outside of power, the PJ as a party tended to collapse.

However, even when the party did hold power, political stability within the PJ was hardly ensured. In all three cases noted above, bitter infighting within the party had in its own right been an important cause in its own right for Argentina’s recurring political instability.

In the 1970s, the infighting between the leftwing part of peronism and the rightwing Orthodox pushed the country on a path to virtual civil war. While the military coup and the murderous 1976-1983 dictatorship clearly cannot be blamed on the PJ, the behavior of the party – certainly its extreme wings – did contribute to a climate of violence that was later used to justify the coup.

The PJ’s flexible structure and doctrine did allow it to survive the drastic programmatic shifts under Menem. Yet it must also be emphasized that the party was unable to serve as a corrective organ to the excesses of the Menem organization. It was unable to block or negate most legislation, and as the majority party, failed to serve as an adequate check on power. For too many years, the PJ’s elite did not speak out against the excesses of the government. When Menem stacked the courts, ruled by decree, and other de-institutionalizing moves, the party elite meekly accepted it. Few were the ones who broke away. The lack of any genuine intermediary opposition in the party – the same lack of “tenure” that allowed Menem to carry on his reforms - utterly prevented the PJ from serving as an institutional brake on power.

Seemingly a paradox, Levitsky argues that Menem’s power within the party was not as big as earlier seen, and provides evidence that orders from the top were often ignored further down. The very segmented structure of the party – and the nature of Argentine federalism – allowed its local branches a great deal of autonomy to even defy the orders from the top. Yet at the same time, this should not be confused with serving as a real constraint on power, as evidence is much more limited that the local branches actually had influence in the other direction – that is, influencing the Menem government. The same party structure that allowed for autonomy, therefore allowed for virtually no mechanisms to voice dissent.
The decentralized structure of the PJ actually served a double negative purpose. Once Menem was out of power, a debilitating tug-of-war between –and within – its party organs ensued, and as no efficient mechanisms for enforcing party decisions existed or were considered legitimate by the party as a whole, an extraordinary amount of energy was spent on intra-party fights.

The PJ fell out of power in 1999, when the Alianza took power. Yet the Menem-Duhalde fight was in full force even before Menem stepped down. When the party came back following the resignation of de la Rúa, the struggle for power rather intensified. While Duhalde initiated the recovery of the Argentine economy, observers took note that the principal activity of presidency often appeared not to be Argentina’s economic crisis, but rather fighting Menem.\footnote{Duhalde, consumido por la pelea interna. \textit{La Nación}, Nov. 3, 2002.} The internal PJ struggle was clearly a serious distraction for the president, and in any case tore the PJ further apart.

Leadership transitions are often difficult and damaging for political parties. Indeed, the manner in which a party selects its leaders is a very good measure of its institutionalization. By such a standard, the PJ in 1999-2003 was in a terrible shape. In personalistic movement-parties like the PJ, leadership transitions are infinitely debilitating, given the movement-logic’s opposition to institutionalization of rules and procedures. The party must spent an inexorable amount of resources to resolve internal conflicts and negotiate power-sharing agreements, as a substitute for any institutional authority and process. Nowhere is this clearer than in the fight for the party’s leadership following the end of the Menem decade.

Within the PJ, when one caudillo becomes dominant, the party quickly falls in line. Yet there is a price to pay for this acquiescence. The verticalism makes it particularly hard to establish a genuinely democratic culture within the party, with real genuine competition and the toleration of voicing of dissenting opinions. With the exception of 1988, the PJ has proven incapable of holding a genuine internal election. When verticalism breaks down – when there is more than one major figure claiming leadership – the party has been utterly unable to resolve its differences: A personalistic movement-party cannot have more than one \textit{jefe}.

While Menem’s authoritarian leadership style found plenty of continuity in the PJ’s history, his relatively clear break with the PJ’s programmatic past appear in the end to have had the rather paradoxical effect of debilitating the tradition of verticalist leadership, as the turn to the right exposed the myth of a common peronist ideological and programmatic project. Moreover, while the PJ’s internal institutions were often described as “empty shells” during the Menem years, the horrific battle unleashed within the PJ from the late 1990s until 2003 over the control of...
its national organs further indicated at the very least a reappraisal of the value of the party’s institutions, as all groups now fought to control them.

In 2003, however, the PJ was very far from establishing party unity, and was unable to present a common ideological and programmatic project to Argentine voters. Its internal contradictions ensured that various candidates would assume the peronist mantle for projects that spanned from the center left to the right. Verticalism had broken down, and as the party split over greatly diverging ideological projects, it was far from clear it could ever be reestablished even with a peronist win in the presidential election. This chapter has argued that this development can best be understood when examining the PJ as a personalistic movement-party, whose particular characteristics were anathema to the process of party institutionalization, or the forging of a more organized, autonomous, and programmatically consistent political party.
CHAPTER 4
THE PJ 2003-2008: PARTY COLLAPSE AND FRAIL RESURRECTION

But be careful; don’t be mistaken. It’s been a long time since I stopped being one. 1
-Néstor Kirchner, Nov. 2005, responding to the title of a new biography: “The Last Peronist.”

I am a peronist, for sure, but today to be a peronist defines absolutely nothing! 2
-Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 2007

Throughout the tumultuous history of the Partido Justicialista, it had become somewhat
of a “peronist tradition” that various PJs at times fought against each other, yet when time came
for a national election, once the party’s presidential candidate was chosen, the PJ had always
manage to unite.

In 2003, however, for the first time in its history, the PJ would contest a national
presidential election divided. The uninstitutionalized nature of its leadership and candidate
selection process, which had completely broken down given Menem’s loss of power, now came
back to haunt the party.

From the ranks of the PJ, three candidates would among them gather more than 60
percent of the vote. While peronist Nestor Kirchner from Santa Cruz province would eventually
assume the presidency after former president Carlos Menem ignominiously dropped out of a run-
off, the representation of the 2003 electoral results as an outright victory for peronism is a
simplification that serves to misrepresent the true extent of the PJ’s internal division. In the
presidential election, the three candidates fighting for the peronist mantel represented three vastly
different projects and interpretations of the old doctrine, with the national PJ apparatus equally
torn between the contenders. Subsequent events after the election confirmed that a common
national party project no longer existed within the PJ, and as subsequent events would
demonstrate, not even the victory and coming to power of a peronist candidate would bring about
national unity.

This chapter aims to do the following: First, it will track the continued wrangling over
control of the PJ and of peronism, which in a break with peronist tradition did not come to an end
with Kirchner’s victory. Notably, the party’s failure to agree on a common direction led to the

2 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 13, 2007.
unprecedented collapse of its national authorities – the party congress and council – and their “intervention” by the federal government.

Moreover, the years 2003-2008 demonstrate that the party’s internal ideological divisions – it utterly lacked a common ideological orientation – had reached a point where the tensions between its component parts could not be resolved. This was most dramatically witnessed in a series of electoral confrontations with the brunt of the PJ, where Kirchner in a range of high-profile provincial elections at times sided with the PJ’s electoral opponents. The PJ’s local branches spanned greatly in ideological orientation from the center left to the far right, and as Kirchner found himself unable to rely on a large part of the PJ’s congressional delegation, he supported dissident peronists or even non-peronist candidates principally of center-left forces. Kirchner’s fight with his own party would persist throughout his presidency, but culminated in the October 2005 “mother of all battles” in the province of Buenos Aires, where his electoral front Frente para la Victoria fought the official PJ directly in its traditional stronghold.

The confusion of the PJ’s position was well reflected in Argentine voters’ assessment of the party’s ideological position: In 2007, a survey indicated that while 18.2 identified peronism as “left,” 36 percent as “Centrist,” while nearly half – 44.8 percent – deemed it to be a party of the right.3 Notably, this continued confusion remained after nearly four years in power of a government that was generally regarded to be of the center-left.

The PJ’s failure to provide voters with clear ideological clues of its ideological position was hardly a new development. But given the opposition of several local party branches to the national Kirchner government, where the president and his allies would several times face what was nominally his own party as the government’s main electoral opponent, the PJ label could not even be used as a cue whether the local – or national – PJ was in favor of the government, or not. This chapter will therefore also detail the PJ’s internal division, and through interviews with peronist elites both allied and opposed to the Kirchner government, tap into the party’s principal internal fault lines, above all the elite’s diverging views of the PJ’s optimal ideological orientation and organizational model.

Finally, the chapter will analyze a recent ambiguous yet nonetheless significant attempt at party change. After four years of a highly contentious relationship with a significant part of the PJ, Kirchner in late 2007 announced he would embark upon the task of rebuilding the PJ, a development hailed as positive by a majority of Argentines.4 Kirchner’s refusal to assume the

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3 Figures from CNEP III, provided by CNEP international coordinator Richard Gunther. N=799. Data from CNEP I and CNEP II are available at the CNEP homepage. www.cnep.ics.ul.pt/index1.asp
4 Al ex presidente lo ven como “el más apto.” Clarin.com, Jan. 27, 2008.
leadership of the PJ for four years was part of a general strategy to redraw the Argentine party landscape in terms of left and right, rather than along the old classic lines of PJ vs. UCR, or, given the collapse of the UCR, peronism vs. non-peronism. This plan was, however, vehemently resisted by significant sectors of the PJ that were opposed both to Kirchner’s left-wing views as well as attempts to assume a more traditional forms of party organization. While Kirchner’s victories over the peronist right over a protracted period from 2003-2007 eventually ensured that the brunt of the party lining up behind the president, given the lack of ideological conviction this loyalty remained highly tenuous, and his leadership over the PJ was far from accepted by large sectors of the party. However, I regard it as a significant attempt at party change that not only resurrected its national organs, but moreover ambitiously sought to redefine the PJ’s ideological position as one of the center-left, and to imbue the party with a trait it had never contained in the past: A clear and consistent ideological position in terms of left and right.

**Historic PJ failure to agree on presidential candidate: Two, three, many PeJotas**

On Feb. 11, Argentine justice acknowledged that the PJ was irreconcilably divided, and annulled the legal requirement to hold internal elections. All peronist candidates were free to compete, but none could do so on the PJ label. This was quite extraordinary from a historical perspective as well. As the electoral judge in charge noted, it was the first time a national party had split in Argentina since 1958.

While Kirchner by 2003 had become the official candidate of President Eduardo Duhalde and would be backed by the formidable electoral machine of the PJ bonaerense, a Clarín commentator summed up a commonly held view: “The ideological and methodological proximities [of Duhalde] with the candidate are little less than invisible.” A sign of tension to come, when the PJ bonaerense held internal elections in March, Kirchner had no influence on the selection of candidates, a clear signal that Duhalde had plenty of interest in retaining significant power over the new administration. United in their opposition to Menem’s neoliberalism, the marriage of convenience between Duhalde and Kirchner remained fragile.

For the national election, Carlos Menem, Néstor Kirchner, and fleeting president Adolfo Rodríguez Saá had all sought the PJ nomination, and would now compete for the mantle of

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6 In 1958, the UCR went to elections split in two factions, the UCRI and UCR-P. No habrá puja interna y el PJ se dividirá en tres listas. *La Nación*, Feb. 12, 2003.
8 Votantes ausentes por la lluvia y la indiferencia. *Página 12*, March 30, 2003; Filigrana de poder. *Página 12*, March 1, 2003. Interest in the internal election was unusually low. While potentially 9.5 million members could have voted in the election, the number of people showing up at the polls was “scarcely higher than the number of candidates” (Godio 2006, 25).
peronism in the April election. One Kirchner functionary summed up the peronist candidates like this:

Justicialism presented three candidates, who all self-titled themselves peronists, but they embodied projects that were in many characteristics very antagonistic. Rodríguez Saá, who had been president for a week, represented a more ancient world, a much more folkloric peronism, from the 1940s, when we are now all living in the 21st century. And then, there was a liberal peronism, liberal in the Argentine style, which we understand as an indiscriminate opening of the market, an absent state, which embodies what in Argentina is defined as the centre-right, and this was Menem. And then there was Kirchner, with progressive ideas of the centre-left... for sure, with the historic banners of peronism, which are social justice, economic independence, and political sovereignty, and which we all believe were betrayed in the 1990s. But beyond this one needs to bring it up to date to the world that we live in now, and that is what he did.9

Kirchner’s program was essentially that of Keynesian expansion of consumption and investment spending and he argued for the reversal of many of Menem’s policies, such as the privatization of railroads.10 Menem presented a neo-liberal austerity program, and argued for the complete dollarization of the economy. In the event, Menem still pulled the brunt of the PJ voters, and came in first in the first round. Kirchner, on the other hand, drew most of the UCR-FREPASO voters, or most of the centre left, but also those who had voted blank in 1999, or who had not voted at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Total Vote</th>
<th>From PJ</th>
<th>From Alianza</th>
<th>From AR</th>
<th>From blank votes</th>
<th>From new voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Menem</td>
<td>24.45</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Néstor Kirchner</td>
<td>22.24</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricardo López Murphy</td>
<td>16.37</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolfo Rodríguez Saá</td>
<td>14.11</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elisa Carrió</td>
<td>14.05</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: April 27, 2003, presidential election vote transfer from 1999 presidential election.11

The 2003 elections were as well a worthy testament of the democratic preferences of Argentine voters, as turnout was an impressive 78 percent, and the null and blank votes together only totaled 2.72 percent.12 It also signaled that they perceived clear differences between the candidates. Yet the results also demonstrated a growing federalization, where the candidates varied greatly in strength according to region, and it was another indication that the PJ had lost articulation as a national party.13

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9 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 14, 2007.
10 Kirchner, el neokeynesiano. Página 12, Jan. 13, 2003.
13 This development was first noted in Calvo and Abal Medina (2001).
Menem’s strongholds were in the impoverished north, above all his native La Rioja (81.93), but also Catamarca (49.52), Salta (44.80), and Santiago del Estero (41.65). Rodríguez Saá scored massively in his native San Luis (87.39 percent), and also did well in Mendoza (36.76) and San Juan (35.68). Kirchner, not surprisingly, did best in the Patagonia region. In his native Santa Cruz he pulled 78.69 percent, and did well in Chubut (50.22 percent), although he barely scraped by Menem in Neuquén (25.27 percent). He also won the northern provinces Jujuy and Formosa with 42.42 and 41.11 respectively, helped by governors Gildo Insfrán and Eduardo Fellner, who were early allies.14

Yet Kirchner’s real margin of victory would not come from these relatively sparsely populated provinces, but from the most important district of all, Buenos Aires Province. There, Kirchner-Scioli won 25.72 percent and 1.9 million votes, or 400,000 more than Menem. The weight of Duhalde’s apparatus was crucial to get the difference that landed him on second place. PJ stalwarts such as Hugo Curto (Tres de Febrero), Manuel Quindimil (Lanús), Jorge Villaverde (Almirante Brown), and Juan José Mussi (Berazategui) were crucial vote getters, as was Alberto Balestrini, mayor or the all-important Matanza district since 1999, and former frepasista Eduardo Sigal in Lomas de Zamora.15

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14Within the PJ, Governor Eduardo Fellner of Jujuy was an early Kirchner ally and his coordinator of his campaign in the interior of the country. Gildo Insfrán, governor of Formosa, was also an early supporter. El que va segundo se mueve más. Página 12, May 4, 2003.

15 El gran elector, los fiascos y las sorpresas. Página 12, April 29, 2003. The results were also a spectacular collapse for UCR: Leopoldo Moreau pulled in a mere 2.34 percent of the vote, though UCR defectors Elisa Carrió and López Murphy, who each had launched their own parties, did better.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Menem-Romero Votes</th>
<th>Kirchner-Scioli Votes</th>
<th>Rodríguez Saá-Posse Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Capital</td>
<td>16.05</td>
<td>19.46</td>
<td>8.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires</td>
<td>20.40</td>
<td>25.72</td>
<td>13.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catamarca</td>
<td>49.52</td>
<td>13.64</td>
<td>11.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaco</td>
<td>28.42</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>19.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chubut</td>
<td>35.02</td>
<td>26.39</td>
<td>5.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Córdoba</td>
<td>35.15</td>
<td>19.14</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrientes</td>
<td>18.66</td>
<td>50.22</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entre Ríos</td>
<td>29.77</td>
<td>20.74</td>
<td>14.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formosa</td>
<td>26.35</td>
<td>41.11</td>
<td>9.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jujuy</td>
<td>18.59</td>
<td>42.42</td>
<td>17.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Pampa</td>
<td>27.81</td>
<td>17.77</td>
<td>20.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Rioja</td>
<td>81.93</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendoza</td>
<td>19.07</td>
<td>9.66</td>
<td>36.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misiones</td>
<td>38.91</td>
<td>22.96</td>
<td>8.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuquén</td>
<td>25.02</td>
<td>25.27</td>
<td>8.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Negro</td>
<td>17.53</td>
<td>35.39</td>
<td>7.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salta</td>
<td>44.80</td>
<td>13.19</td>
<td>6.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan</td>
<td>26.94</td>
<td>20.25</td>
<td>35.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Luis</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>87.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>78.69</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
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<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>25.26</td>
<td>16.11</td>
<td>8.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santiago</td>
<td>41.65</td>
<td>39.83</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tierra del Fuego</td>
<td>31.36</td>
<td>24.05</td>
<td>12.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucumán</td>
<td>21.80</td>
<td>47.60</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>24.45</td>
<td>22.24</td>
<td>14.11</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 4.2: Argentina, April 27, 2003, presidential election, peronist candidate vote by province.\(^{16}\)

\(^{16}\) Source: Partido Justicialista. [www pj org ar](http://www.pj.org.ar)
While Menem won the first round, his drastic negative approval ratings suggested that more than 65 percent of voters would not vote for him in the ballotage, or second round.\footnote{Menem tiene el mayor índice de rechazo para llegar al ballotage. \textit{Página 12}, April 2003.} Menem repeatedly issued statements such as “not even if I were crazy would I step down from the candidacy,” yet eventually he did, alleging fraud and a “conspiracy” against his candidacy.\footnote{Menem declinó y quedó junto a Sobremonte. \textit{Página 12}, May 15, 2003.}

Néstor Kirchner was now president of Argentina by default. While a resounding victory in the second round have given him a massive momentum for change, he now appeared poised to live under the eternal shade as the president of the infamous 22.2 per cent.

A Menem defeat would not only have allowed Kirchner to make a move against menemista leaders in general, \footnote{Tenemos la oportunidad de cerrar el ciclo inaugurado en 1976. \textit{Página 12}, May 4, 2003.} Also, it “would probably have completely ended his career within the PJ, yet now allowed for some time more to endure the myth that he (Menem) had never lost an election” (Epstein and Pion-Berlin 2006, 13). An even more cynical reading of Menem’s withdrawal might regard it a direct attempt at undermining Kirchner’s legitimacy. In any case, it demonstrated an utter lack of respect for the democratic and institutional rules of the game, and provided the winning candidate with a seemingly weak mandate for reform.

Following Kirchner’s default victory, CFK declared,

\begin{quote}
The messianic, fundamentalist, exclusionary, personalistic, and hegemonic leaderships have ended. There is a new institutionalism which the people are demanding… I think the political parties in general need to examine themselves… leaders who permanently jump from one party to another.\footnote{Di Mauro (2004, 50).}
\end{quote}

\textbf{Néstor and Cristina Kirchner: Left peronist opposition}

While Menem had often asserted in the campaign that Kirchner was once a Montonero, the new president was never a member of the 1970s guerrilla group.\footnote{Di Mauro (2004, 50).} Yet his political origins clearly lay with the peronist left.\footnote{Godio (2006, 315) writes that Kirchner was a Montonero 1974-1976, yet this was not confirmed by any other source.} During his law studies at the University of La Plata, he joined the “University Federation of National Revolution” (FURN) which eventually became part of the leftwing \textit{JotaPé} (JP), or Peronist Youth (Curia 2006, 37). Among the FURN founders was Carlos Kunkel, later secretary general of JP of La Plata, who became Kirchner’s political mentor.\footnote{Bonasso (1997, 129).} Other members, such as Marcelo Fuentes and Carlos Julio Moreno would later become close Kirchner allies. Despite clearly belonging to the political left, their peronist identify remained. As an

\begin{flushright}
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\end{flushright}
Kirchner not only got his political education from La Plata; it was also where he met his future wife, Cristina Fernández. Upon his graduation in July 1976, the couple left for a safer haven in Kirchner’s native Santa Cruz – 1,600 miles away from the Federal Capital. Briefly detained during the dictatorship, the couple avoided politics until Kirchner opened a peronist Unidad Básica, or Base Unit, in April 1982, the start of his career within the PJ. In 1987 he successfully campaigned to be mayor of Río Gallegos, the provincial capital of around 110,000 inhabitants. Kirchner’s administration, characterized by much public investment, was highly successful, and in 1989 he established what would be his provincial political structure, the Frente Para la Victoria (FpV), or “Front for Victory.” While based on peronism, his wife insisted the party should be called FpV Santacruceña, and not Justicialista, in order to reach beyond the traditional PJ voters. This was in line with what would later be dubbed transversalidad, or “transversality,” where ideological allies, within or outside of the PJ, would be summoned to his project. According to an early Santa Cruz ally, the FpV began in 1989, when president Kirchner at the time was mayor of Río Gallegos, and for the internal elections the FpV was formed as a structure within the PJ, and when Kirchner won the governorship in 1991, it is as head of the list Frente para la Victoria. It began as a structure within the PJ, kind of like an internal line. But Kirchner always had the particularity of attracting people not from our party, both for government functions, and for political functions. First as mayor, but this became more profound when he became governor of the province. Then, he incorporated many people from radicalism, from different parts of the Partido Intransigente, parties tilting more to the left.

In 1991, Kirchner won the governorship of Santa Cruz, yet notably without the control of the local PJ apparatus. His main opponent was another peronist, Arturo Puricelli, who was close

23 Confidential interview with FpV national deputy, March 13, 2007. Kunkel and Negri were among the JP deputies in parliament who were ejected as they objected to a change of the penal code under the last Perón administration (1973-1974). They were: The eight JP deputies were: Amando Croatto, Santiago Díaz Ortiz, Jorge Glellel, Aníbal Illiríeta, Carlos Kunkel, Diego Muñiz Barreto, Roberto Vidaña and Rodolfo Vitta. Croatto and Muñiz Barreto were later murdered. While Negri went into exile, Kunkel would remain imprisoned both before and during the military dictatorship. He would later form Michelángelo, named after the San Telmo restaurant in the Federal Capital where members of the 1970s left peronism met, which included Carlos Tomada, Jorge Taiana, Pedro Guastavino, Hugo Perié, and former JP leader Juan Carlos Dante Gullo. All of them would become prominent allies of the Kirchner government.


25 That same year, when Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet called for a referendum on his continued leadership, Kirchner provided buses that would bring back hundreds of Chilean exiles to vote from Río Gallegos to Santiago de Chile. It was a gesture that Chilean socialist Ricardo Lagos would not forget. As later president of Chile, he was highly supportive of Kirchner’s candidacy in 2003.

26 Garrone and Rocha (2003, 68)

27 Confidential interview, Kirchner political operator, Feb. 25, 2007.
to then-president Menem. Kirchner’s task as governor was seemingly a comparatively easy one, due the regions petroleum and mineral reserves. Yet in 1991, the province was literally bankrupt. Kirchner turned a massive deficit into a surplus, and the province would among the highest social indicators in the country. Measured by the GINI index, Santa Cruz had the most equitable distribution of income in the country: 0.3758, against the average of 0.4627 for the rest of Argentina.29

While Kirchner maintained cordial relations with Menem at first, by 1994 they would turn highly acrimonious, precipitated by disagreements about the province’s share of federal taxes.30 By the 1990s, Néstor Kirchner was “one of the few active and relatively important figures of peronism on the center-left” (Ostiguy 1998, 212), and he increasingly established himself as a national opponent of Menem.

Yet until the PJ started losing elections, verticalism remained in full force. As Kirchner noted, “I remember a PJ congress in Parque Norte in [February] 1996 when I asked to speak, and I said all that I felt. When I finished talking, they even gave a standing ovation, but when it became time to vote, I lost 599 to one!”31

Though the natural reserves of Santa Cruz provided its governor with a certain level of independence from the national PJ government, Kirchner’s increasingly critical attitude toward Menem had its costs. As one of his early Santa Cruz allies note,

Kirchner, around 94-95, started to really distance himself from Menem. This had real costs for [Kirchner’s] government. Some very important programs for the Santa Cruz Province were exhausted, because of Kirchner’s position against Menem, but later this was what allowed him to be consistent, and to achieve power. Menem articulated neoliberalism, and Kirchner had nothing do to with this. What happened with Menem was very strange, because peronism had never contained this political aspect, it had always been opposed to it, in whatever form.32

Notably, Kirchner as well was very critical of the national state of the PJ, which he increasingly referred to as pejotismo. In a later interview, he noted,

The Justicialism led by Menem was turned into an empty shell. I had no ideas, there were no discussion, there were no cadres, and in its place one set up the perverse patron-client logic…..What [Menem] wanted to do was to put the bureaucratic pejotismo at the disposal of the neoliberal sectors. This is a term I coined. Do you know what I call pejotismo? To me it defines the deformation that Menem brought to the PJ, a power apparatus empty of content, without ideas…Peronism… was distorted by Menem, who converted it into a replica of the American Republican Party, or the Conservative party in England. Note that Menem [in 2003] was about to legally inscribe his electoral front with the same name as the Spanish PP, that of José María

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31 Quoted in Kirchner and Di Tella (2003, 134).
32 Confidential interview, Kirchner political operator, Feb. 23, 2007.
Aznar, another admirer of the politics of Bush, and of the few who joined him in the war against Iraq.33

The charge that the PJ had betrayed its ideological heritage was a recurring theme in interviews held with peronists close to Kirchner. As one prominent leader of PJ porteño and early Kirchner ally stated, “I believe peronism ended with Menem…Peronism of the most stale, minimum expression of bureaucratic structure, which is the PJ.”34 Leading peronists were also critical of what they labeled as the “excessive pragmatism” of the Menem years:

I don’t really think that there was an ideology in menemismo, it was an expression of conservatism, of the Washington Process and so forth, but not because of ideological conviction, but out of convenience, and for business purposes.35

In the 1990s, however, the most nationally known Menem critic within the PJ was CFK. She had reached national stature before her husband, principally as a highly vocal critic of Menem and of much of the official PJ, to the point where she got kicked out of the PJ group in the Senate.36

CFK entered professional politics in 1989 as a provincial deputy in the Santa Cruz legislature. Together with Kirchner, she used the 1994 Constituent Convention to launch harsh attacks on Menem for the increasingly inequitable distribution of income in Argentina. In 1995 she became a senator – next to Graciela Fernández Meijide, the only woman in the Senate – where her criticisms of Menem’s privatization earned her reprimands for “excessive individuality” by her PJ peers. She particularly angered the PJ by calling for the renunciation of minister of defense Oscar Camillón, who had also held the portfolio during the dictatorship, and was now involved with the illegal sale of arms to Ecuador. For her PJ peers, the final drop came when she voted against Menem’s project to change the Council of Magistrates in favor of a parallel project put forth by opposition. Removed from all commissions, she was subsequently kicked out of the PJ bench, but noted “Peronism will get tired of Menem before I get tired of being a peronist.” 37 CFK launched repeated attacks on Menem’s ideological positions. According to the senator,

Menem was never a statesman; he only had the vision of an opportunist. An opportunist who thought that ideologies had died and that the fall of the Berlin Wall mean that one had to subscribe with body and soul to the savage capitalism preached by the United States.38

33 Quoted in Kirchner and Di Tella (2003, 131).
34 Confidential interview, PJ porteño leadership, Jan. 30, 2007.
36 During the 2003 campaign, the couple in jest used the slogan “buy one, get one free,” as a Kirchner victory would bring not just one but two capable politicians to government. Di Mauro (2004, 226).
38 Quoted in Di Mauro (2004, 170).
An increasingly popular politician, in 1997 CFK ran for a parliamentary seat in order to stem the PJ’s apparent losses. As a deputy, she would receive the price for best parliamentarian. In 2001 she would again run for the upper house, where the seats were by now up for direct election.

While often compared with U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton, whom she is said to admire, the parallels only go so far: Hillary was first lady, and then became a senator, yet CFK was senator first, and then became primera ciudadana, or “first citizen,” as she insisted to be called. When her husband became president, she did not resign her senate seat; on the contrary, she became instrumental in securing senate support for some of the government’s key policies. Above all, her 2005 candidature for a senate seat in Buenos Aires would prove instrumental in winning power in the province – and wrest the PJ bonaerense from Duhalde.

By 2003, CFK was an active asset for her candidate husband, and shared his support for a more active state:

Kirchner denounced this shame, the trains. So, don’t come here and tell me that the model of state railroads is of the past. Without doubt, some are getting very nervous because of our declarations, and they say that we are returning to the past. But one needs to call the things by their name, and this present is the past, because, what more are things of the past than misery, hunger, and oppression? What more of the past than an absent state? This is the past, and we represent the future.

Ahead of the national election, a prelude in Catamarca, March 2, 2003, particularly demonstrates the fault lines within the PJ ahead of the presidential vote. When CFK campaigned for Kirchner in Catamarca, she was met with a hail of eggs from the local PJ, led by Luis Barrionuevo. There was a long history of tension between the Kirchner couple and Barrionuevo. His record of corruption was quite legendary, and he was the author of phrases such as, “we need to stop robbing for a couple of years” and, in explaining his wealth, “I did not make it working because it is very difficult to make money by working. In this country, nobody makes money working.” Head of the union of food workers for over 20 years and one of the gordos or “fat ones” within the CGT, Barrionuevo represented the far right of the PJ and its most retrograde and anti-institutional orientation. An historic ally of Herminio Iglesias and Jorge Triaca, he was long involved in violent clashes for power within his union. He was made general secretary by the military of the food workers union in 1979, though he had never worked in that industry. As

40 From a 2003 campaign speech, quoted in Di Mauro (2004, 228).
42 The name refers to the size of the unions rather than the waist sizes of its leaders. They were: Armando Cavalieri, Carlos West Ocampo, Gerardo Martínez, José Luis Lingeri, Rogelio Rodríguez, Andrés Rodríguez, José Pedraza, Domingo Petrecca, Reynaldo Hermoso and Luis Barrionuevo.
head of Chacarita Juniors, he had often used the club’s soccer hooligans as shock troops for CGT conferences.43

In 2003, as senator, he sought the governorship of his native Catamarca, yet he was denied candidacy as he had not passed the residency requirement. In response, thugs under his command created havoc by intimidating voters, stealing or burning ballots, which led to the cancelling of elections. For this conduct, CFK as president of the Commission for Constitutional Affairs, sought to have him kicked out of the Senate. Yet thanks to his connections – his wife Graciela Camaño was minister of work in the Duhalde government – Duhalde’s and Menem’s deputies prevented the necessary 2/3 support, and the vote failed. 44 The “62” denounced CFK as “haughty” and a “pseudo peronist.”45 After the vote, Barrionuevo immediately declared his support for Menem’s candidacy.46 It would not be his last clash with the Kirchner couple.

During the same campaign, commenting on the state of peronism, CFK noted, “The PJ is fractured. There are antagonistic models. When the Menem hegemony breaks apart, there is no leadership that can substitute for it.”47 Yet as Kirchner came to power through a default victory, the question remained highly open whether he could become its new leader.

**The Kirchner administration: From right to left peronism**

Kirchner assumed the presidency under the double weight of not only having the lowest mandate in history, but of owning much of his margin of victory to Duhalde’s PJ in BA. Many analysts assumed he would end up being, in Menem’s derisive characterization, Duhalde’s *chirolita*, or puppet.48 Yet a hyperactive agenda quickly turned the predictions to shame, as the new projects of the Kirchner administration rattled the PJ and the Argentine political system as a whole.49

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44 El PJ optó por la impunidad. Página 12, March 27, 2003.
45 Quoted in Di Mauro (2004, 297).
48 Duhalde impuso su mayoría y logró bajar la interna del PJ. Clarín, Jan. 25, 2003.
49 A senior functionary of the Kirchner government, when asked to what extent Kirchner government represented a rupture or continuity with the past, outlined, I believe both, depending on the area, and the point of comparison: If the point of comparison is the 1990s, of the entire neoliberal era, well, there are many aspects of rupture, such as paying the IMF debt, having ended the IMF’s permanent monitoring of the Argentine economy, which was really a headache for the entire country. Nonetheless, he did not revise the majority of the privatizations, so on this regard there is continuity…In other areas, the effect of rupture is greater, above all in the area of human rights. Here it is very clear that the attitude taken is a very decisive one, and I believe it marks a qualitative step in relation to what one was doing before… and there is also an important rupture with the installment of the new Supreme Court. Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 27, 2007.
The new Kirchner administration notably included a significant number of setentistas, or left peronists like Kirchner, who came of political age during the 1970s. Many of them had been part of the failed attempt at renovation within the PJ in the 1980s. Mario Wainfeld, a writer in the left-leaning Página 12 and a Renovator, declared, “The line-up [of the government] evokes two political projects that never came to be, or more precisely, that were defeated in their time by Menem: The peronist Renovation, and the FREPASO.”

Perhaps the most drastic change first visible was the area of human rights. As late as 2001, former dictator Videla, on whose watch the brunt of the murders during the dictatorship took place, could still go out on his balcony on the March 24, to be lauded by a small but vocal group of supporters. The Kirchner administration from day one signaled its willingness to take concrete steps to end this impunity. The prominence of the human rights agenda was something particularly stressed by interviewees close to Kirchner, who at several occasions pointed to these new policies as a rupture with the peronist past. As one political operator of Kirchner argued,

Peronism had here a very strong conflict with the subject of human rights, in spite of having had the majority of the victims of the state terrorism, the majority was peronists. Peronism as a whole did not assume the defense of human rights.

One FpV deputy said the issue of human rights was “an incorporation uncommon to the political profile of peronism…the subject of rarely took a privileged space among the peronist leadership, despite the fact that peronists were those that suffered the most from the human rights violations.

Another FpV deputy pointed to the change even within the peronist unions: “The year 2005 was really the first year that the CGT paid homage to the disappeared ones – after so many years!” She also drew a link to the defense of human rights and ideology:

It is extremely important that peronism is active in this field [of human rights], because it is the only framework within which we will be able to resolve the crimes of the last dictatorship and to settle off debts, not only in ethic-moral terms, but also in ideological terms.
Kirchner administration policy breaks with previous peronist administrations

Human Rights: A mere ten days after assuming power, Kirchner met with Hebe de Bonafini, leader of one faction of the Mothers of the May Square, who gained fame defying the military regime by protesting the disappearance of their children in front of the Casa Rosada during the dictatorship. De Bonafini said that after the meeting that the Mothers were “moved.” Referring to the new president who had barely assumed power, she stated, “We were wrong. They are not all the same, like we used to believe.” Eventually, in 2006, the Mothers would hold their last regular march in from of the Casa Rosada, after 25 years and 1,500 marches. The justification was, according to Bonafini, that “we no longer have an enemy in the government house.”
Kirchner made further gestures charged with symbolism. On March 24, anniversary of the 1976 coup, he publicly had the portraits of the coup leaders removed from the War Academy, and offered an official apology for the state repression. He declared: “I come here to ask for forgiveness on behalf of the national state for the shame of having remained silent about these atrocities during twenty years of democracy.” In July, the government ended a de la Rúa decree that rejected the extradition of repressors, leaving open possibility of sending those accused of human rights abuses to face trial in other countries. More significant still was the scrapping of the “End Point” and “Due Obedience” laws of the Alfonsín administration. Both Kirchner and CFK had been vocal opponents of the laws since the beginning, and worked in tandem to have them annulled (Di Mauro 2004, 312). On Aug. 20, 2003, following pressure from Casa Rosada, the Senate finally scrapped the laws, which had protected former military officers from prosecution over human rights abuses during military regime. The lower house had signed them one week earlier. The event led Kirchner to enter into a spat with his own vice president, who said that “in a serious country, Congress does not annul its laws.” Considered a centrist, Vice President Daniel Scioli also criticized the revision of privatization contracts of 1990s. Kirchner, and through his spokesman retorted that “in a serious country there are no disappeared, nor laws and decrees of impunity.” Also, despite intense pressure from the church and from the opposition, the government also approved the CEDAW, the UN convention on women rights, which explicitly obliged the government to take steps to end discrimination and protect status of women.

Judicial Reform: While passed by both houses of Congress, the scrapping of the End Point and Due obedience, which now opened up hundreds of new cases of human rights abuses, was not unexpectedly blocked by the country’s Supreme Court. Highly discredited in the eyes of society, many of its members still faced many legal charges. And while Duhalde had initially signaled his willingness to impeach the judges during his presidency, most of the PJ deputies eventually voted with members of the AR and a few minor conservative parties in the lower house to dismiss the trials. Kirchner, however, pushed congress to restart the process, and the first to go was Julio Nazareno, who had 22 open cases against him, as well as hundreds of more charges against him.

58 “No todos son lo mismo, como habíamos creído.” Página 12, June 4, 2003.
60 Quoted in Curia (2006, 183).
61 El decreto que anuló el decreto. Página 12, July 26, 2003.
62 The phrase en serio also referred to the slogan of Kirchner’s 2003, campaign, “For a serious country.”
64 The opposition consisted mainly of deputies from Macri’s PRO, and dissident Peronists of the groups Justicialismo Nacional and Peronismo Federal, Paola Spatóla of the one-person Guardia de Hierro, and a few others. El voto que venció al lobby de la Iglesia. Página 12, Nov. 17, 2006.
He appointed in his place Eugenio Zaffaroni, a highly respected human rights defender, and as more judges resigned under pressure, two women judges. All appointments had earlier been male, and most had been strongly Catholic, and highly conservative. His choice of Carmen Argibay, in favor of legalizing abortion – still a highly sensitive subject in Argentina – led the arch bishop of La Plata to publicly denounce Kirchner as “left” for this appointment. All in all, five judges resigned or were impeached by the Senate, and the “automatic majority” that reigned for almost 13 years was now history. The main proponent of the move was reported to be not Kirchner, but CFK (Di Mauro 2004, 308). Later, ex army chaplain Christian von Wernich was condemned to life in prison for his role during dictatorship, where he had participated in torture and denunciations. It was the first sentence against any member of the church for its participation in the dictatorship. When Kirchner’s minister of health advocated the right to abortion, army bishop Juan Baseotto called for him to be thrown in the ocean and drowned, a sinister echo of the “flights of death” when the military threw its opponents alive from planes to their death over the Atlantic. The bishop was immediately sacked. Kirchner’s relations with the church were in general less than fluid. Responding to criticism of his government, he would criticize the Church for its role during the dictatorship: “In those times, they were not there, and there were even some who took confessions of the torturers.” The new Supreme Court now moved on to declared that crimes against humanity – which is the deaths of the dictatorship were now regarded – had now expiration, and on June 14, 2005 finally endorsed the parliamentary decision to scrap the “End Point” and “Due Obedience laws.” For Kirchner, this campaign promise was now finally fulfilled, and he would later rank it among the “decisive moments” of his presidency. While criticized by some smaller parties of the left for his refusal to annul the amnesties decreed by the Menem administration, Kirchner argued it was unconstitutional to do so as president. On several occasion, however, such as the 30th anniversary of coup in 2006, he publicly called upon the Supreme Court to do so. Finally, in July 2007 the court overturned Decree 1002/89, announced by Menem shortly after taking government. It immediately affected only around 30 former members of the armed forces, but they included coup leaders Jorge Videla and Emilio Massera, and as such considered a very significant act. Like the repeal of the Alfonsín laws, the end of the amnesties opened up a range of new cases. In July 2007, there were at least 950 open cases, and 250 detained accused of murder and torture.

Reforms in the military and in the police: Immediately upon his May 25, 2003 assumption, in a drastic restructuring of the high command of the Argentine armed forces, Kirchner sacked 52

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66 A notable exception was Carlos Fayt, a member of the Socialist Party.
67 In Argentina, the term zurdo, literally meaning left-handed, is used derogatively by some members of the political right to describe people who hold left views.
68 Julio Nazareno resigned before he was to be impeached; Eduardo Moliné O’Connor was kicked out; Antonio Boggiano, an Opus Dei member, was kicked out by Senate Sept. 2005; Guillermo López, resigned; Adolfo Vázquez, resigned. Triste fin del último de los automáticos. Página 12, Sept. 29, 2005. Currently (June 2008), two seats remain vacant, and its seven members are Ricardo Luis Lorenzetti (president), Elena Highton de Nolasco, Carlos Fayt, Juan Carlos Maqueda, Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni, Enrique Santiago Petracchi, and Carmen María Argibay.
70 Adiós al obispo que pidió el submarino. Página 12, March 19, 2005.
71 “No me van a excomulgar por esto.” Página 12, Nov. 17, 2005.
72 “Las leyes no tienen ningún efecto.” Página 12, June 15, 2005.
73 Kirchner con los intelectuales. Página 12, July 14, 2008.
74 La inconstitucionalidad de los indultos en un fallo de la Justicia. Página 12, March 27, 2006.
75 Alcanza a 30 ex militares la anulación de indultos. La Nación, July 14, 2007; Sin trabas para hacer justicia. Página 12, July 14, 2007.
76 Al anular los indultos, la Corte habilita otros juicios a represores. Clarín, July 14, 2007.
high military officials. They included generals Ricardo Brinzoni, head of the army, and Juan Carlos Mugnolo, head of Joint Chiefs of Staff, and initially counted 25 more generals and 13 admirals.\(^77\) He also carried out the most extensive reform in history of the federal police, which included the sacking of the chief of federal police Héctor Prados, and 107 senior police chiefs, including 10 commissioners-general. More than 600 lower-ranking officers were also removed from the same force.\(^78\) He also carried out two major purges of the Bonaerense, the police force of Buenos Aires province, notorious for its human rights abuses and involvement in organized crime.\(^79\)

**IMF negotiations:** On Sept. 9, 2003, Kirchner ignored a payment due of 2.1 billion dollars on its IMF debt. This was the start of a long battle with the fund, where Kirchner would in the end manage a highly advantageous debt swap and renegotiation of contracted debt. Reduced interest rates, a longer payback time, and the canceling of more than 20 billion in interest rates were the first concrete results of this process, where his wife was one of the lead negotiators behind the scenes (Di Mauro 2004, 273). While Kirchner had reduced the country’s debt to the IMF by 76 percent,\(^80\) the renegotiation of other private debts would catch more attention still. In March 2005, minister of the economy Roberto Lavagna announced that total debt, which at the end of 2004 had stood at 191 billion dollars, was renegotiated down to 125 billion – a massive saving, and a highly popular achievement.\(^81\) In January 2006, Kirchner moreover, paid off the entire debt it had with the monetary fund. At 9.53 billion dollars it only made out 6.9 percent of the total renegotiated debt, and while the act would save a substantial 800 million dollars in interest payments, the decision above all demonstrate Argentina’s growing independence from international financial institutions. It was, moreover, a regional decision coordinated with close allies President Luiz Inácio da Silva of Brazil and Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez.\(^82\)

**Intervention of PAMI:** Kirchner had earlier denounced PAMI,\(^83\) the social services retirement fund of retirees, as a curro patronal y sindical.\(^84\) Founded in 1971, PAMI manages considerable money due to health and medication contracts, and had long been a stronghold of Barrionuevo and Duhalde, yet had throughout its history been mired in corruption scandals. In June 2003, Kirchner fired their representatives, and put federal interventor Graciela Ocaña in charge of restructuring of the fund. A highly competent deputy from the newly founded Afirmación para una República Igualitaria (ARI) who had lead numerous corruption investigations in congress, Ocaña was, however, denied permission by party leader Elisa Carrió to join the Kirchner administration. While her party appealed to many of the same progressive voters of the center-left, and while the Kirchner administration had much in common with ARI’s own program,

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\(^80\) Cambio de pantalla y Argentina sigue en juego; ¿Record para el libro Guinness? *Página 12*, March 4, 2005.

\(^81\) Argentina post-default: Lavagna anunció que la deuda bajó a US$ 125.000 millones. *Clarín*, March 4, 2005.


\(^83\) PAMI is an acronym for Programa Asistencial Medical Integrada, or the important state integrated medical assistance program. Witter tongues have suggested *Peor Atención Médica – Imposible!*

Carrió soon became a fierce and vocal opponent of Kirchner, to the point of denouncing the governments of “fascist” on an increasing number of occasion. Ocaña, was notably kicked out of the ARI, and would go one to become one of the principal transversal allies of Kirchner.

Renationalization: Kirchner during the 2003 campaign had often called for the renationalization of railroads, which had been broken into many private companies. His government ended many of the privatization contracts of the Menem government, perhaps most notably the San Martin railroad. He also withdrew the concession given to the Macri Group to run Argentine mail after its privatization; ended the concessions given to the French Thales group of the control of public airwaves, and withdrew the concessions given to Suez, the largest water company in the world, for their lackluster privatized service and incompletion of contracts. In its place was created the new state-owned company Agus Argentinas (AySA). Other examples include the nationalization of the large privatized Hospital Francés.

The movement-party refuses to follow Kirchner: 2003 elections

The PJ would remain leaderless through the year. As a graphic example of its lack of protagonism, in its party headquarters in Matheu 130, where the national council has its permanent offices, phone lines were cut in July due to non-payment, and its personnel went unpaid for months. Technically, the party was headed by Political Action Committee, created first at the 2001 Lanús congress, but it had been virtually dormant ever since.

Finally, the CAP was convoked in an attempt to establish authority, and to attempt to bring the party together. On July 10, 2003, the CAP retook official control of the PJ, and again declared the council displaced. Its executive board was headed by Eduardo Fellner, a Kirchner ally, while Eduardo Camaño, Liliana Gurdulich and César Arias were also given positions in an attempt at reconciling the PJ’s divided parts.

A sharp division existed on whether peronists would be allowed to support other candidates running outside the PJ seal. In an attempt at compromise, the CAP granted the local party branches the authority to make to make their own decisions. The issue was not merely academic: This would particularly pertain to the PJ porteño, which although still intervened had maintained its alliance with center-right candidate Mauricio Macri. More conflictual still was the

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85 In one of the earlier occasions, she called Kirchner “s small Julio Roca-type neofascist. “Es un pequeño Julio Roca neofascista.” Página 12, May 31, 2005.
87 She would join several former ARI members such as former head of the Federal Capital branch Fernando Melillo, who like Ocaña criticized what they perceived to be Carrió’s move to the right. During an earlier (April 28, 2006) interview with a prominent ARI leader, a rejection of the validity of these concepts in Argentina today was prominent. Ocaña left PAMI to take up the post of minister of health in the new CFK government December 2007.
88 Vagón que marcha a una nueva estación. Página 12, June 24, 2004.
89 Concesión que se fue por el caño. Página 12, March 22, 2006.
92 Ahora Néstor Kirchner va por el poder dentro del justicialismo. Página 12, June 10, 2003.
case of Misiones province, which would hold gubernatorial elections in September. Duhalde openly supported Ramón Puerta, who challenged sitting governor Carlos Rovira. However, while Puerta would run as the PJ’s candidate, Rovira was increasingly seen as a Kirchner ally. There were clearly expressed fears that a Kirchner-Duhalde divorce would come earlier than expected.93

As opposed to Menem’s triumph in 1989, Kirchner’s assumption of the presidency had not lead to a massive realignment behind the figure of the president, and the famous peronist verticalism appeared in a state of hibernation. In particular, despite pronunciations that he would retire from politics, Duhalde clearly expected to retain much power behind the throne. Their tacit power sharing agreement was a highly unstable equilibrium, particular in parliament, as Kirchner had to rely on the loyalty of Duhalde’s deputies.94 Many of them expressed in private strong misgivings about the president’s policies.

The year 2003 would see a massive 18 elections that could potentially provide more congressional seats for the PJ and the president. Yet with the exception of the province of Buenos Aires, the PJ’s party organizations were often dormant or ridden with division. Moreover, while the PJ was now really the only remaining party on a national level, having weathered the recent crises relatively well compared with the UCR (Torre 2003), it had still lost a massive 1.5 million voters since the 1999 elections. As the year progressed, it became clear that Kirchner’s candidates were not always those favored by the PJ, and in many cases the national divisions of the party were mirrored in its branches. In several highly significant cases, Kirchner chose to side with the PJ’s opponents. The extremely variegated composition of the 2003 alliances reveals this process.

**2003 elections: Political alliances transcend the PJ**

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<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Unidad Provincial (UCR alliance)</td>
<td>Jorge Colazo/Hugo Cóccaro</td>
<td>25,783</td>
<td>52.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ-UCeDé</td>
<td>Carlos Manfredotti/Daniel Gallo</td>
<td>23,081</td>
<td>47.20</td>
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In the first elections held since Kirchner came to power, the PJ lost. In the southernmost province of Tierra del Fuego, Governor Carlos Manfredotti, a former Menem ally, loses to UCR’s Jorge Colazo in a close run-off. Throughout the election, Kirchner notably kept the distance, and avoided intervening on behalf of the PJ candidate.96 Later, despite his radical extraction, Colazo would later declare that he considered himself a Kirchner ally rather than an opponent.97

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94 Cheresky (2004, 2).
In Tucumán the same day, the PJ fared better, as José Alperovich returned the province to the party. A former radical turned peronist, he had joined the PJ only in 2001, when he was elected senator, and was an early Kirchner ally.\(^{98}\) Notably, *Fuerza Republicana*, the party created by the caudillo Antonio Bussi, a general accused of human rights crimes, only pulled in on third place.\(^{99}\)

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**Catamarca, Aug. 24, 2003 gubernatorial election**

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<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Cívico y Social</td>
<td>Eduardo Brizuela del Moral/Hernán Colombi</td>
<td>82,446</td>
<td>50.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista</td>
<td>Liliana Barrionuevo/Oscar Vera</td>
<td>72,302</td>
<td>43.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In August 2003, the PJ lost decisively to the *Frente Cívico y Social* in Catamarca, based on the UCR and a few minor allies. The radical Eduardo Brizuela del Moral won against the candidacy of Barrionuevo’s sister, as he did not comply with residency requirements.\(^{100}\) Yet while a crushing defeat for the PJ, for Kirchner it meant a hard blow to one of his archenemies within the party. Moreover, Brizuela del Moral would soon become part of the *Radicales K*, or political leaders nominally belonging to the UCR but aligned or directly allied with Kirchner.

---

**Río Negro, Aug. 31, 2003 gubernatorial election**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UCR-MID</td>
<td>Miguel Saiz/Mario De Rege</td>
<td>78,202</td>
<td>32.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ-Provincial party</td>
<td>Carlos Soria/Salvador Durán</td>
<td>72,498</td>
<td>30.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FG-ARI-Demócrata Progresista</td>
<td>Julio Arriaga/Graciela Di Biase</td>
<td>48,790</td>
<td>20.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this Patagonian province, which Kirchner won in April, his popularity was not transferred into support for the PJ. While governed by the UCR since 1983, it was still a surprise win for its candidate Miguel Saiz, who edged by a divided PJ.\(^{101}\) Kirchner, however, was said to be on much better terms with Saiz than with the official PJ candidate, and the new governor would in turn become a close a close political ally as a *Radical K*.

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**Federal Capital, Aug. 24, chief of government election**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compromiso para el Cambio</td>
<td>Mauricio Macri/Rodríguez Larreta</td>
<td>660,748</td>
<td>37.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuerza Porteña-de la Ciudad-PRD</td>
<td>Aníbal Ibarra/Jorge Telerman</td>
<td>590,050</td>
<td>33.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Kirchner had tacitly favored Miguel Saiz in Río Negro over the PJ’s candidate, for the elections of chief of government of the Federal Capital his support for the PJ’s opponent would be highly vocal and moreover in open defiance of the PJ’s CAP, which had just established that members of the PJ were bound to support the candidate of the local branch in each district. For the Federal Capital elections, pollsters found a political scenario with an increasing polarization.

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99 General Antonio Domingo Bussi ruled the province during the worst years of the dictatorship, and was elected governor Oct. 1995-Oct. 1999. A beneficiary of the “End Point” law, he was later arrested for murder. Ricardo Bussi, his son, was elected senator in 2003.
between progressive voters of the left and centre-left on one hand, and the political space of Peronism and centre-right on the other. Menem ally Miguel Ángel Toma had won internal elections within the party in February, an important step toward the normalization of the party from its intervened state. Yet the PJ porteño would lose its candidate for chief of government literally overnight as Daniel Scioli stepped down from the candidacy to become Kirchner’s vice presidential candidate, and the PJ was therefore left with no candidate of its own. The famous peronist verticalism did not apply to the current peronist president, as Kirchner rallied behind the candidate of the left, Aníbal Ibarra, while Toma and most of the PJ supported Macri. These elections thus represented the first time Kirchner actively competed against the candidate of the PJ, Mauricio Macri. Heir of the Macri business empire, and owner of the legendary soccer club La Boca, Kirchner adamantly campaigned against what was also an ideological opponent of the right, with potential to become a future national rival as well. Following the collapse of the UCR and the stagnant state of the PJ, the fragmentation of the political scene in the Federal Capital was stunning. The PJ remained intervened, and therefore could not present its own list for legislature or chief of government, though its leadership was clearly in favor of Macri, who won the first round. Macri was also on great terms with Duhalde. In the city legislature, which renewed all 60 seats, a record 38 different ballots were presented. The UC was reduced from 11 seats to one, and was now bordering on extinction in the national capital of Argentina.

### Sept. 28, 2003, Misiones gubernatorial election: First internal PJ battle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Renovador</td>
<td>Carlos Rovira/Pablo Tschirsch</td>
<td>184,214</td>
<td>47.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista</td>
<td>Ramón Puerta/Rodríguez</td>
<td>124,190</td>
<td>32.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the Federal Capital is the country’s second largest electoral district and the outcome of obvious national importance, the first open battle between Kirchner and Duhalde for control of the PJ would begin in an impoverished province in the far northeast, Misiones. Governor Carlos Rovira, a peronist, had over the years grown increasingly distanced from the official PJ. On the very next day of Kirchner winning the presidency, he had travelled to the capital for talks, where he told the president, “I am thinking about running outside [of the PJ].” Kirchner answered enthusiastically, “This is what needs to be done!” Kirchner would construe the electoral fight as a contest between the new politics and the old, or what he derogatorily denounced as pejotismo, or the clientelist and purely pragmatic apparatus of the PJ. Duhalde, however, was a long Puerta ally and sensed the battle as a wider threat against the PJ. Kirchner’s increasingly open support of dissident peronists or even non-peronists was regarded not only a threat to Duhalde, but a threat to the PJ apparatus, which while battered had survived the 2001-2003 crisis. Rovira, on the other hand, summoned support from a varied group of allies from the left, for which he was duly expelled from the PJ. For the election, most of the PJ lined up behind Puerta, and Duhalde himself traveled to the province to campaign for the PJ candidate. A Kirchner noted in response that “In Misiones we are going to win over the PJ bonaerense.” It was said only half jokingly: The outcome of the fight would be a direct measure of the value of the PJ label and the strength.

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105 As part of new electoral rules, 2003 was the last year the entire local legislature was renewed. From then onward, half the seats would be renovated every two years.
of its apparatus. In the end, Misiones turned out a resounding victory for “transversality.” While the PJ’s CAP explicitly did not approve Kirchner’s choice,\textsuperscript{108} Rovira’s Frente Renovador, based on dissident peronists, the UCR, and various left groupings, won a massive 48 percent of the votes, and he declared himself “the first transversal governor.”\textsuperscript{109} The blow to the PJ, which had supported Puerta allied with various conservative parties such as the UCeDé, was hard

\textbf{Federal Capital, Chief of government election, Sept. 14, 2003}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fuerza Porteña-Partido de la Ciudad-PRD</td>
<td>Aníbal Ibarra/Jorge Telerman</td>
<td>928,056</td>
<td>53.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromiso para el Cambio</td>
<td>Mauricio Macri/Rodríguez Larreta</td>
<td>807,385</td>
<td>46.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

September would also see a final round in the Federal Capital, as well as gubernatorial elections in Buenos Aires Province, Jujuy, and Santa Cruz. In a surprise result, the center-left candidate Aníbal Ibarra managed to revert the results of the first round, as he beat Mauricio Macri in the second round of the Federal Capital elections. Kirchner had campaigned massively for Ibarra, and presented the election as an electoral fight between the left and the right. Kirchner declared the triumph over Macri to be his greatest triumph since the presidency, together with the similar defeats of rightwing opponents Luis Patti and Aldo Rico in the province of Buenos Aires. “A progressive model won,” he declared.\textsuperscript{110} Duhalde, while he had kept a low profile, had clearly been supportive of Macri, and his wife, in response to Kirchner’s activism, declared that “Macri is not the past. Macri is not Menem.” Macri was also supported by another prominent PJ politician, the president of lower chamber of congress Eduardo Camaño, soon to become an open enemy of Kirchner. In the capital, Kirchner’s personal involvement would in the end win the day.\textsuperscript{111}

\textbf{Sept. 14, 2003, Buenos Aires province gubernatorial election}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Felipe Solá/Graciela Giannettasio</td>
<td>2,563,136</td>
<td>43.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAUFE-AR-Celeste y Blanco</td>
<td>Luis Patti/Silvia Barreiro</td>
<td>733,262</td>
<td>12.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial alliance</td>
<td>Aldo Rico/Juan Carlos Pellita</td>
<td>684,176</td>
<td>11.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Buenos Aires, Felipe Solá had taken over Carlos Ruckauf’s mandate in 2002, and he now

\textsuperscript{108} Nunca abras esa Puerta (menemista) \textit{Página 12}, July 12 2003.


sought to be directly elected for the governorship. While not a close ally of Kirchner, he would nonetheless greatly celebrate his victory as it also meant the political defeat of two declared political enemies, Luis Patti and Aldo Rico, who were merely relegated to their bastions of Escobar and San Martin and respectively. The PJ, moreover, won big for national deputies: with 40.73 percent of the vote, PJ got 19 out of 35 seats at play. Yet this was a very qualified victory for Kirchner, as Duhalde had earlier refused him to put any of his personal allies on the PJ list, which was again headed by his wife “Chiche” Duhalde. Many of the 19 would in turn become open opponents of the president.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal deputies list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Hilda González De Duhalde</td>
<td>2,317,483</td>
<td>40.73</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>Carlos Francisco Dellepiane</td>
<td>600,832</td>
<td>10.56</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>Federico Teobaldo Storani</td>
<td>556,339</td>
<td>9.78</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARI-PI</td>
<td>Marta Maffei</td>
<td>541,873</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAUFE-AR-Provincial</td>
<td>Guillermo Eduardo Alchourron</td>
<td>433,369</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the province, PJ moreover recovered many of the mayorships lost in 1999, such as Quilmes, Lomas de Zamora, and San Nicolás, and even former UCR bastion Bahía Blanca. In total, it obtained 75 out of 134 mayorships. Duhalde could now in parliament boast of the loyalty of more than 40 deputies, and he remained dominant in the province, as Kirchner and Governor Felipe Solá had virtually no influence over the choice of PJ candidates. Solá was particularly upset over the inclusion on the PJ list of people such of Ruckauf, whom Solá blamed of having “fled the province” and left it in disastrous conditions for his vice governor. Prominent journalist Mario Wainfeld, in Página 12, described the open tension between the former and current presidents as a “time bomb.” Duhalde was alarmed by Kirchner’s lack of interest in conducting PJ and his advocacy of transversality. While he publicly asked Kirchner to assume as figurehead of the PJ, Kirchner showed no apparent desire to do so. The same day, in Jujuy, Kirchner ally Eduardo Fellner won reelection with 55.84 percent, or 134,869 votes, while in Santa Cruz, Sergio Acevedo, who had been Kirchner’s foremost ally in congress and earlier also his vice governor, won the governorship with the FpV Santacruceña, amassing 70.85 percent, or 61,007 votes.116

Córdoba, Oct. 5, 2003, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputies list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unión por Córdoba (PJ alliance)</td>
<td>Jorge Luciano Montoya</td>
<td>444,080</td>
<td>33.34</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Nuevo-FG</td>
<td>Raúl Guillermo Merino</td>
<td>410,340</td>
<td>30.81</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR alliance</td>
<td>Mario Raúl Negri</td>
<td>287,898</td>
<td>21.62</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Córdoba province, dissident peronist Luis Juez had founded the Partido Nuevo, and he won the mayorship of the capital city in a landslide over the PJ candidate. De la Sota had been reelected governor with a comfortable margin in June 2003, in the alliance Union for Córdoba although the PJ had only provided 27.58 percent out of the total 51.84 percent obtained, the rest secured by an alliance of rightwing and provincial parties. In the city of Córdoba, Juez won about 60 percent over de la Sota’s candidate Alfredo Keegan. Juez had been head of the office of anticorruption, until he was kicked out when investigations turned to people in the governor’s circle. Kirchner’s relations with de la Sota were, moreover, quite strained, while Juez appeared on very friendly terms with the president. For the Oct. 5 elections for deputies, his Partido Nuevo ran in alliance with FG and two minor parties. However, Kirchner’s attempt at transversality increasingly

113 La amistad y las listas no se tocan Página 12, July 9 2003.
114 Confidential interview, central PJ bonaerense member, Feb. 12, 2007.
angered the PJ, and due to the balance of forces, the president had to tread carefully in building his new alliances.\textsuperscript{117} In Córdoba, moreover, while losing the capital city, the PJ still dominated the rest of the province, and won four deputies and both of the majority senator seats. Juez’ coalition obtained one senator and 3 congressional seats, and signaled clear willingness to work with Kirchner.\textsuperscript{118}

### San Juan, Oct. 2, 2003, gubernatorial election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV-PI</td>
<td>José Luis Gioja/Marcelo Lima</td>
<td>41.36</td>
<td>124,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movimiento Vida y Compromiso (provincial)</td>
<td>Roberto Basualdo/Alberto Hensel</td>
<td>30.75</td>
<td>92,768</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In San Juan, where the PJ ran on the label \textit{Frente para la Victoria} in an electoral coalition with three minor parties, José Luis Gioja returned the province to the peronists. Detained and tortured during the dictatorship, Gioja was a national deputy 1991-1995, a senator 1995-2003, and head of the PJ group after 2000 when senator Alesino stepped down amid corruption allegations. He was regarded a clear ally of Kirchner.\textsuperscript{119}

### Mendoza, Oct. 26, 2003, gubernatorial election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UCR alliance</td>
<td>Julio Cobos/Juan Carlos Jaliff</td>
<td>42.89</td>
<td>326,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ alliance</td>
<td>Guillermo Amstutz/Félix Pesce</td>
<td>35.71</td>
<td>271,470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mendoza, the fifth most important electoral district in Argentina, saw the defeat of the PJ against the radical Julio Cobos, an engineer and dean of the National Technological University. Yet while Kirchner had supported the PJ candidate, who ran in a coalition with left parties PAIS, FG and PV, the winner Cobos early on declared he did not want to be regarded an active opponent of the national administration.\textsuperscript{120} Later, he would also figure among the \textit{Radicales K}, for which he would be duly expelled from the UCR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputies list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UCR alliance</td>
<td>Roberto Raúl Iglesias</td>
<td>278,430</td>
<td>37.16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ alliance</td>
<td>Alfredo Cesar Fernández</td>
<td>264,651</td>
<td>35.32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### La Pampa, Oct. 7, 2003, gubernatorial election.\textsuperscript{121}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Carlos Alberto Verna/Norma Durango</td>
<td>77,051</td>
<td>49.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Alternativa Pampeana</td>
<td>Francisco Torroba/Guillermo Di Liscia</td>
<td>40,087</td>
<td>25.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV-ARI-MID-Acción Desarrollista</td>
<td>Néstor Ahuad/Adriana Garcia</td>
<td>31,089</td>
<td>19.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last two elections of the year, however, saw big gains for two of Kirchner’s most ardent opponents within the PJ. In La Pampa, the PJ’s Carlos Verna was a close ally of former president Menem, who actively supported his candidature. As a senator, Verna was involved in the 2000 bribery scandals, and was not on friendly terms with Kirchner, who openly supported Néstor.

\textsuperscript{119} Una buena más para Kirchner. Oct. 6, 2003; Gioja, un enemigo de la corbata, el 1º será presidente por un día. \textit{Clarín}, Dec. 28, 2002.
\textsuperscript{120} El PJ se quedó con las ganas en Mendoza. \textit{Página 12}, Oct. 27, 2003
\textsuperscript{121} Election data from Andy Tow archive. \texttt{http://towsa.com/andy/totalpais/index.html}
Ahuad. A former ambassador, Ahuad only came in third, after a UCR alliance.

Salta, Nov. 16, 2003, gubernatorial election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista</td>
<td>Juan Carlos Romero/Walter Wayar</td>
<td>206,081</td>
<td>49.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovador de Salta</td>
<td>Andrés Zottos/Fabián Vittar</td>
<td>101,288</td>
<td>24.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Salta, Juan Carlos Romero had been the governor since 1995, and formed part of a family dynasty whose father had as well ruled the province. In the presidential elections a few months earlier, Romero had been Menem’s vice presidential candidate, and his relations with Kirchner were lukewarm. He scored an easy victory in his reelection bid against Andrés Zottos.

2003: Does the PJ support or oppose the national president?

While the year 2003 had been a successful year for Kirchner, this was only partly true for the PJ. In many provinces the party was deeply divided, and the sense of a national party was breaking down. In many of the provincial elections held that year, Kirchner would support rival peronist candidates, or even non-peronist, and it was increasingly hard to make out the true nature of the relationship between the president and his party.

In the Argentine Congress, it became clear that Kirchner could not rely fully on the PJ, as he only had the unconditional support from a very small group of deputies outside of the party. Led by Ricardo Falú and Gerardo Conte Grand (whose law studio’s location gave the name to the group), Talcahuano was the group of a dozen legislators in the lower house, among them several peronists opposed to the head of the PJ block Humberto Roggero.\(^\text{122}\)

The Chamber of Deputies was initially led by a triumvirate of Menem ally Manuel Baladrón, Duhalde ally Diaz Bencalari, and Reutemann ally Obeid, which corresponded to the actual forces of power within the PJ. Diaz Bencalari eventually became the sole boss of the group, representing the clout of duhaldismo, whose group of at least 40 legislators held an effective veto power on most legislation.\(^\text{123}\)

Over the course of 2003, Kirchner’s group in the parliament grew steadily, as new deputies elected in the many state elections that year entered parliament.\(^\text{124}\) To the dismay of the PJ, the group formed its own parliamentary block, which prompted Diaz Bencalari to sarcastically declare, “Fine – if your group of 15-20 deputies represents the government, then me

\(^\text{122}\) Also, Eduardo Di Cola, Julio Gutiérrez, Arturo Lafalla, and Gerardo Conte Grand. They accused Roggero of bribing legislators.

\(^\text{123}\) Los diputados kirchneristas van buscando su lugarcito bajo el sol. \textit{Página 12}, June 17, 2003

\(^\text{124}\) They included Dante Canevarolo (Santa Cruz), Héctor Cavallero (Santa Fe), Gerardo Conte Grand (Capital Federal), Alberto Briozzo (Buenos Aires), Adriana Bortolozzi (Formosa), Ricardo Falú (Tucumán), Pablo Fontdevila (Buenos Aires), Ricardo Gómez (Buenos Aires), Julio Gutiérrez (Santa Fe), Guillermo Johnson (Córdoba), Mónica Kuney (Santa Cruz), Arturo Lafalla (Mendoza), Blanca Osuna (Entre Ríos), María del Carmen Rico (Buenos Aires) and Luis Sebriano (Formosa).
and the other 110 [PJ deputies] will then pass for the opposition.” While the PJ had so far voted with the government, a great part of the party’s congressional delegation distrusted Kirchner’s intentions, and tensions were brewing. The Kirchner government, on the other hand, was equally uncomfortable with having to rely on the goodwill of the PJ bonaerense, whose loyalty could not be taken for granted.

As the 2003 election cycle came to a close, Kirchner’s group was strengthened with the inclusion of several non-PJ deputies as well. The 40-plus group counted members of the Michelángelo, Confluencia, and Talcahuano, and a few candidates Kirchner had been able to place on some of the provincial lists.

For now, the PJ group voted with the government in parliament, though in private its legislators expressed increasing opposition to the national government. In the provinces, moreover, it was clear that while Kirchner had assumed the national presidency, there was no automatic realignment behind his leadership – and he, in return, showed little inclination to work for the unification of the party. As the year 2003 drew to a close, Kirchner’s future relations with the PJ were therefore highly unclear. The PJ clearly believed the president would stay with the party. Yet, as the conservative La Nación, noted, “the transversals, on the other hand, do not doubt that sooner or later, Kirchner will rid himself of at least part of the PJ structure, and lean on them. Time will tell who is right.”

In sum, toward the end of 2003, the PJ was nominally the dominant party in Argentina. Having secured the presidency, it was the largest party in both houses of congress, and controlled 16 out of 24 provinces. At the same time, Kirchner continually ignored calls to assume the leadership, and stated he was too busy governing. According to one report, he “even sabotaged its normalization” (Cheresky 2004, 6). On several occasions in 2003, he would side with “transversal” candidates rather than the official PJ candidates, a practice that had proven extremely unpopular with most PJ leaders of a national standing. The obvious question remained: Why would he do so?

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125 Las andanzas del presidente K que ponen nervioso al justicialismo. Página 12, July 20 2003.
127 The group of “transversals” made out a diverse group, and included Miguel Bonasso,Mario Cañiero (ex ARI), Francisco “Barba” Gutiérrez (Polo Social), Lucrecia Monteagudo (PI), José Roselli (ex Autodeterminación y Libertad), Juliana Marino (ex PJ and Ibarra ally) as well as legislators from Luis Juez’ Partido Nuevo.
Non-PJ support: Transversalidad

In order to understand Kirchner’s strategy of allying with either fringe parts of the PJ or even historic enemies of the party, the concept of transversality warrants further explication.\(^{129}\) While recruiting non-PJ supporters to his side appeared a clear movement-party trait, Kirchner followed a different logic, as he principally recruited those who were ideologically compatible from other parties, rather than scorning the concept of the political party itself.

Already in the 1990s, despite the PJ’s turn to the right, Kirchner had drawn the attention of several key leaders of the Frente Grande, largely a center-left offshoot of the PJ. According to one of its principal leaders,

The president’s proposals were very much in touch with the idea of the Frente Grande in the 1990s…and because of this, a large sector of the Frente Grande decided to support him from the beginning, not from when he won in 2003, but from the beginning of 2001. Don’t forget that the Frente Grande in the 1990s had a very strong component of peronists.\(^ {130}\)

In 2003, Kirchner therefore quickly drew prominent members of the FG to his government, such as its national leader Eduardo Sigal (undersecretary of integration), Dario Alessandro (ambassador to Cuba), Nilda Garré (later minister of defense), and ex-vice president Carlos “Chacho” Álvarez, who was reported to regularly stop by the Casa Rosada for talks with the president.\(^ {131}\)

“Chacho” Álvarez, as former head of the Group of Eight, was also among the few to defect from peronism in the 1990s, and already then argued for a new “transversal alliance” (Jozami 2004, 123) formed by progressive forces, as a response to the decade’s “crisis of representation” where no clear political alternatives existed (Ollier 2001, 56-57). Álvarez already then advocated adding a strong pata peronista or peronist component to the new political formation, although FREPASO ended up allying with the UCR. Yet with the UCR in shambles in 2003, this scenario was unlikely to be repeated. Rather, the new Kirchner administration appeared particularly bent on summoning a variety of center-left politicians beyond traditional party divides. According to one PJ city legislator, given the collapse of both the PJ and the UCR, this was a rather natural progression:

The antagonism between UCR and PJ of the past was not there anymore. FREPASO was fundamentally a breakaway from peronism that was against the politics of Carlos Menem. Later other sectors were added, but its founders came from peronism… and from this experience on, that radicals and peronists now work together does not appear to be that crazy.\(^ {132}\)

\(^{129}\) For an early academic discussion of transversality and Kirchner, see Natanson (2004), especially pp. 85-114.

\(^{130}\) Confidential interview, Frente Grande leader, March 20, 2007.


On March 11, 2004, Kirchner participated in a massive rally in the Parque Norte, a historic rallying place of peronism. Yet this time it was not a PJ party meeting, but what the media called a “transversal act.” More than 7,000 people participated in the event, which coincided with the anniversary of the triumph of onetime president Héctor Cámpora, still revered by peronist left, and was therefore hardly a coincidence. Criticism of the PJ abounded, especially of the sectors aligned with Alberto Rodríguez Saá and José Manuel de la Sota, seen as the most ideologically opposed to Kirchner’s project, as well as of the gordos within the CGT such as Barrionuevo. Also present were Hugo Moyano, head of a dissident CGT, and Edgardo de Petris, head of the leftwing but non-peronist rival labor federation CTA.

During his speech, Kirchner declared, “We didn’t come here to examine lists or membership records [of the PJ]. We came here to discuss ideas as much from peronists as from non-peronists.” CFK continued in the same manner, and declared that “peronism itself is not sufficient for explaining the reality of this country.” She drew parallels from the 1940s, when peronism became a national phenomenon, to the present, but emphasized, “We have learned from the forces of tragedy of our dead, that to divide the world into good and bad is not useful when the time comes to approach and resolve the problems.” While some PJ governors loyal to Kirchner participated, such as Solá, Fellner, Das Neves, Acevedo and Rovira, the majority of those present belonged to the Michelángelo group of Kunkel and Dante Gullo, Confluencia of Marcelo Fuentes, and the Corriente Federal of José Salvini. From the PJ bonaerense came only a token delegation, a sign of its increasing displeasure with the president.

A follow-up act was held on Oct. 12 the same year, where social movements allied with Kirchner were particularly prominent. While a headline in the conservative La Nación pronounced that “Kirchnerismo Filled the Luna Park with Unemployed,” it was in reality a manifestation of the broad support the administration was receiving from the new social movements. Luis D’Elía, leader of the piquetero group Federation of Land and Housing (FTV) declared, “We are working well with a lot of people from the PJ, but they must know that our limit is the corporative mafias of the old Argentine politics, the specialists in winning elections.”

Yet while many of the groups were quite independent of the PJ, many had clear ties with or origins within peronism. While transversality clearly reached out for new allies beyond the PJ,
it was not a real break with peronism itself. According to Torcuato di Tella, Kirchner’s first secretary of culture, transversality never meant completely abandoning the PJ, but rather to incorporate within it other forces and in the long run create a new political formation (Di Tella 2005).

Yet peronists were clearly divided in their appraisal of the concept of transversality. One national legislator of peronist origins declared that “Without his own force, Kirchner is going to end up a hostage of the peronist apparatus.”138 Peronists close to the Kirchner government were highly positive of the concept, in particular those operating outside of the PJ. Not unexpectedly, members of the more Orthodox sectors were highly opposed to it, as it implied a move away from relying on the PJ apparatus. One prominent member the “62” leadership dismissed it outright as a mere quest for power.

DM: There are many people with Kirchner who do not come from peronism.
I: Many people have joined from radicalism, from socialism.
DM: This appears to be a new development.
I: Yes, it is something new, but it is of no consequence, it is only about the opportunity to join power, because power seduces, right? But there is no consensus; it is like mixing water with oil, oil with water.139

Other peronists clearly saw in transversality a rupture of the PJ’s past and a manifestation of the ideological divide within the party. According to one peronist member of the FG,

I believe this process is on, but from my personal point of view, I believe that the old has not finished dying, and the new has not finished being born, and this is what this expresses, this transition of transversality. There is great discontent with traditional politics, but still there is not yet one capacity through which a new proposal can be expressed… but I believe this is the result, almost logical, of the political experience that we are living through with Kirchner. The result should be a new system of representation, where one peronist part, of the centre-left, progressive, however you want to call it, will converge with other [political] cultures, other identities, with leaders from other parties. And on the other hand, another part of peronism, of radicalism, and the traditional conservative parties, will converge in new expressions of the right and centre-right, like Macri.140

Many peronists, however, rejected outright the concept of aligning with non-PJ but ideologically compatible forces. Veteran Renovator Antonio Cafiero declared himself in strong opposition to the project of transversality, and further rejected the suggestion the Kirchner should take over the PJ leadership. He noted, “They should remove the idea from their heads because it is a little sick – this will not progress in justicialism.”141 Notably, Cafiero drew a strict line between the Renovation he led in the 1980s, and the transversality of Kirchner. While most of Cafiero’s political positions during that era could be described as of the center-left, he was highly

opposed to transversality which he read as a proposal “to associate us with parties of the left.”\textsuperscript{142}

Similarly, from the UCR, Alfonsín attacked transversality as “cooptation of determined persons of different political parties… [and] it conspires against the great parties.”\textsuperscript{143} And as transversality did in fact aim to go beyond the old party identities, Cafiero and Alfonsín were essentially correct.

**Kirchner coalition: “March of the penguins” and left peronism**

“What is Kirchnerismo?” Página 12 asked in an attempt to map the “nebula” of Kirchner’s allies. The daily summed it up as “a complex puzzle of justicialists, radicals, ex-duhaldistas, ex-FREPASO, ex ARI, social leaders, union leaders.”\textsuperscript{144}

As president, it was to be expected that a large part of the new government would consist of allies from Santa Cruz province. As part of the “march of the penguins” to the Federal Capital, the most loyal allies of Kirchner grouped together in the Compromiso K, a group officially established in 2005.\textsuperscript{145} It was described as a parallel organization to the PJ, and one of its main purposes was to recruit traditional non-peronists to the Frente para la Victoria, the name of Kirchner’s wider electoral front in 2003.

According to one its principal members,

> It is a national current of support and defense of the government’s policies, and it attracts people beyond their… political sense of belonging. If they are in keeping with the ideas of the president, we open the doors for them.\textsuperscript{146}

Key operators of Compromiso K included Carlos Zannini, who held the post as legal and technical secretary of the presidency, and Olaf Aaset, a fellow Patagonian and important political operator of the president, and moreover his personal attorney. All of them were very close to Kirchner – most were fellow Patagonians – and kept a very low political profile.\textsuperscript{147} The “political strategist” of the group was Zannini.\textsuperscript{148} Originally from Córdoba and member of the Vanguardia

\textsuperscript{142} Parrilli y Cafiero recrearon la pelea entre Kirchner y Duhalde. Página 12, May 5, 2004.


\textsuperscript{144} Guía práctica para entender la nebulosa del kirchnerismo. Página 12, Feb. 12, 2006.


\textsuperscript{146} Confidential interview, Kirchner political operator, Feb. 25, 2007.

\textsuperscript{147} Other important members included Rudy Ulloa Igor, Kirchner’s former private secretary and driver, later turned media businessman, Damián Barjoff, a lawyer, José Ottavis, leader of the La Cámpora youth section, Jorge Di Cola, intervener of the postal service, José Luis Esperón, vice-president of the Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Industrial, Carlos Vilas, who was instrumental in the government takeover of Aguas Argentinas, Armando “Bombón” Mercado, formerly married to Alicia Kirchner, the president’s sister, and Roberto Porcaro, of UCR extraction, and an important maker of political alliances.

\textsuperscript{148} Some sources, such as (Wornat 2005), use the spelling Zanini. The correct spelling is “Zannini.”
Comunista, Zannini was imprisoned for four years during the dictatorship, a fate common to many of Kirchner’s allies. In 1982, he relocated to Rio Gallegos, capital of Santa Cruz, where he joined Ulloa Igor and Daniel Varizat in the peronist base unit Los Muchachos Peronistas in 1982, which would serve as the base for Kirchner’s later bid for the mayorship of the city. He went on to become president of the Supreme Court in Santa Cruz during Kirchner’s last term as governor. Zannini was also a prominent adviser to the president on international affairs, and was a strong advocate for what would become the close political and economic ties between Kirchner and Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez.

Compromiso K, also closely tied to the Michelángelo group, was particularly active in the March 2007 elections in Catamarca, where it assisted Eduardo Brizuela del Moral in a new challenge from Kirchner’s old opponent, Luis Barrionuevo.

Confluencia was the name of another group headed by Eduardo Luis Duhalde, who was summoned to become Kirchner’s secretary of human rights. It included members such as Marcelo Funtes, a functionary of the ministry of exterior, minister of the exterior Rafael Bielsa, and also former FREPASO members Aldo San Pedro and Eduardo Sigal. Many of its members were peronists who had left the PJ, as opposed to Kunkel’s group Michelángelo, which was still operating more or less within the official PJ structure.

Kirchner also attracted several members of the Partido Socialista (PS), which was to become increasingly divided over whether to support the government, or remain an opponent. The “K socialists,” many of whom would assume positions in the Kirchner government, included Raúl Puy, head of the Federal Capital branch, Jorge Rivas, a PS leader in Buenos Aires Province, who became vice chief of cabinet, Ariel Basteiro, a national deputy and president of the bonaerense branch, and Oscar González, for two decades secretary general of the party.

Yet Kirchner’s transversal allies also extended beyond traditional political forces, and included some of the largest of the piquetero groups of unemployed workers. An early disagreement between Kirchner and Duhalde stemmed exactly over how to deal with these social organizations, with Duhalde expressing a much more critical attitude. Eventually, most of the largest piquetero groups allied with government, such as Movimiento Evita led by Emilio Pérssico, Barrios de Pie led by Jorge Ceballos, Federación de Tierra y Vivienda of Luis D’Elía, and Frente Transversal of Edgardo Depetri, and the wider umbrella organization Libres del Sur of Humberto Tumini. In early 2004, the government made an agreement with piqueteros where they ended

150 Another setentista who had been tortured and imprisoned for 7 years during the last dictatorship.
their tactics of blockading roads, which had become extremely unpopular among virtually all layers of Argentine society.\textsuperscript{153} However, some piquetero groups of the far left, such as the Polo Obrero of Néstor Pitrola, and Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y Desocupados (MIJD) of Raúl Castells, remained vehement opponents of the Kirchner governments, and continued utilizing this tactic.\textsuperscript{154}

**New party labels signify move beyond the traditional PJ**

It is not pure coincidence that in reality the party that supports the president is not so much the PJ as the FpV.\textsuperscript{155}

- National secretary of Kirchner Administration.

Due to the failure of presenting a unified PJ candidate for the 2003 presidential election, Kirchner, Menem, and Rodriguez Saá all created temporary political formations. Kirchner went to the ballot on the new label *Partido de la Victoria*, and his electoral alliance was called *Frente para la Victoria*.\textsuperscript{156} According to Argentine electoral law, electoral fronts must be established 90 days before an election, and will expire 90 days after. However, both the PV and the FpV achieved an unexpected level of permanence. Throughout 2003, and increasingly the following year, most candidates supported by Kirchner continued to run on the FpV label, which in many cases included the PJ, but in other cases ran directly against it. From late 2005 onward, the parliamentary group would be known as the FpV-PJ, in order to accommodate the many non-PJ allies of Kirchner. The idea to go beyond the PJ does not appear to have been merely a result of improvisation. Immediately following the April presidential election, CFK declared the FpV to be distinct from the PJ or even peronism.

CFK: It is something much wider…

I: Peronism?

CFK: It is much more than peronism. In this space there are people from our current, but also compañeros from the PJ who followed us in the provinces and the districts. This is the *Frente para la Victoria*. People who come from FREPASO, radicals, Gustavo Béliz. We don’t ask for certificates of origin.\textsuperscript{157}

To some peronists, just like the concept of transversality, the PV-FpV was a quite controversial and thorny issue. For instance, during an interview in the Federal Capital, one peronist leader became visibly upset when the subject was first broached:


\textsuperscript{155} Confidential interview, Kirchner administration secretary, Feb. 28, 2007.

\textsuperscript{156} The first PV branch was created in Santa Cruz, but it became close to a national party in 2003. It was officially started in five districts, including Santa Cruz, Province of Buenos Aires, and Corrientes. And it is with this party that K presents himself as a candidate in 2003.

\textsuperscript{157} Menem es mucho más que una patología. *Página 12*, May 17, 2003.
DM: Is there a difference between the FpV and the PJ, or is it the same?
I: They are the same. The FpV is like a fantasy brand of peronism, of one sector of peronism. It is the kirchnerista group that didn’t manage to break peronism; qualitatively they were not able to. The entire FpV are kirchneristas who are ex peronists.
DM: Ex peronists?
I: They are people who wanted to put this together, but it doesn’t exist. What is the FpV? The PV, it doesn’t exist, it doesn’t exist anywhere, it has no identity! The day Kirchner leaves, the PV will disappear!
DM: It has no program on its own…?
I: Certainly not! It has no tradition, no people, it knows nobody. Nobody knows what it is, and it has no point of reference beyond Kirchner.
DM: Exactly. And because of this….
I: But this is decisive. Who many people did you meet from the party?
DM: In Congress...
I: How many! How many people on the street would tell you, “I am from the PV”?
DM: But some deputies…
I: Do you see anyone? 99 percent of them come from peronism!158

While journalistic accounts would often confuse the two, the PV and the FpV were in reality two distinct concepts. In the simplest of terms, the FpV was the electoral front, which consisted above all by parts of the PJ, and the PV, though its setup varied from province to province.159

According to an FpV city legislator, “we needed a party, because menemismo had the PJ. We needed a party and all that, but the Frente eventually acquired a different look, where the president feels more comfortable.”160

Most peronists close to Kirchner shared the belief that the FpV was “much wider, much more than simply the PJ.”161 This in particular extended to its parliamentary group. According to a peronist deputy of the congressional leadership,

The Parliamentary block is called the FpV-PJ, and the PJ is the principal articulator of this electoral alliance, which allows that other parties as well can align and also allows independent leaders or leaders not with peronist shade to participate with us.162

Just like people’s understanding of transversality was colored by one’s political preferences, analyses of the FpV and the PV in sum varied greatly. Kirchner supporters on the margins of the PJ or outside of the party all together, in particular described the FpV as a new and wide entity, where the PJ would form part of it, rather than the other way around. People still within the PJ, in particular more Orthodox peronists, on the other hand were dismissive of its importance. Their different descriptions could be interpreted in two related manners: 1) Within

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158 Confidential interview, Buenos Aires city administration functionary, Jan. 23. 2007.
159 The FpV, moreover, often varied significantly in its makeup. In the Federal Capital in 2007, for example, it consisted of the PV, the newly reorganized PJ porteño, and Nueva Dirigencia, the party of former minister of Justice Gustavo Béliz.
the PJ, there was clearly a reluctance to accept that the existence of the FpV as a more permanent organization, as it represented a threat to the integrity of the PJ, such as its subordination to this larger superstructure. 2) People of the left who allied with Kirchner, whether peronists or not, were eager to present the FpV as a different formation than the PJ, a party with which most of them were clearly dismayed. Yet while clearly colored by one's own wishful thinking, it also appeared to represent a genuine confusion of what the FpV-PJ really was, and what Kirchner truly wanted.

The FpV was indeed wider than the PJ. It included groupings previously seen as being quite critical of the PJ, of which many had once formed part but since left. For instance, it attracted former peronist Renovators, members of the FG, ex ARI, and also representatives of the many social movements allied with the Kirchner administration. According to one peronist leader, the FpV was therefore maintained, “in order to keep the support of people who left the central PJ and don’t want to return, don’t feel like a part of the structure of the Partido Justicialista.” The PV, then, was maintained as well, “so that the Frente para la Victoria wouldn’t only consist of the PJ or parties originating in the PJ.”

While the overlap between the FpV and the PJ was often extensive, some drew a line between the two, especially in relation with the Oct. 2005 “mother of all battles,” where the FpV contested the midterm elections in several provinces, above all Buenos Aires, in direct competition with the PJ.

According to a peronist leader allied with Kirchner, “the Frente Para la Victoria was formed by the Partido de la Victoria and the piquetero movements, because the PJ had gone with Chiche Duhalde.” The PV was considered Kirchner’s “own party,” and consisted of “an important sector of society that perhaps doesn’t have the cultural tradition of peronism, but more of the centre left tradition, some people dabbling in political liberalism, and some who also include parts of peronism.”

While many of the PV’s members had a background in peronism, none were currently members of the PJ. The PV ranked among its principal leaders Vilma Ibarra (FG senator and sister of mayor Aníbal Ibarra), Graciela Ocaña (ex-ARI deputy, PAMI interventor and, and later minister in the CFK government), and Diego Kravetz, president of the Federal Capital Branch.

165 Confidential interview, PV central member, Jan. 30, 2007.
and leader of the FpV group in the city of Buenos Aires legislature. Kirchner’s chief of cabinet Alberto Fernández, close to Federal Capital mayor Aníbal Ibarra, was originally the national leader of the PV, but stepped down in order to take over the presidency of PJ porteño. In Buenos Aires Province, key personnel included Aldo San Pedro and Marcelo Bellotti, both with a past in peronism.

The PV was further characterized by having a very clear identity of the left. Five central members of the PV interview all expressed “center-left” political leanings, and saw the party as part of Kirchner’s stated desire to create a new left-right ideological cleavage in the Argentine party system. According to one, “This is exactly what we are trying to do with the PV. Further down the road, we are going to have more contact points with the system of principles of European social democracy.” In 2007, the party was established or was in process of being legally being established in 15 provinces. Yet most PV members expressed uncertainty as to what the future course would be of the party. According to one member of the PV in the Federal Capital,

It is Kirchner’s party, and I don’t know if it could last on without him. In the beginning it was supposed to be “the” place, “the” party of the president’s project. Today this still remains to really happen, because if the old parties don’t exist, the new ones exist even less. The truth is that in the dynamics of governing and in the midst of facing electoral challenges, one still has not fully molded the PV.

**Disastrous attempt at peronist unity: Parque Norte 2004 party conference**

Kirchner would start the year 2004 with very high approval ratings. One poll revealed the president maintained a massive 89.5 percent positive image, as well as a 76.2 percent approval of his government. Yet within the coalition backing him, brewing tensions would come to a head as the PJ prepared to hold its party congress, and attempt to elect a new leadership. Far from a process of healing, the congress would be used as a forum where dissident peronists publicly vented their anger at Kirchner. It was a remarkable change from years past, where peronist verticalism had always ensured its troops would rally behind the executive.

The backdrop was a speech held in front of ESMA, the former navy school where thousands of detainees were tortured and murdered during the last dictatorship. It was now to be converted into a “Museum of Memory “on the anniversary of the coup military coup.

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166 Its vice presidents were: Juan Manuel Abal Medina, secretary of political administration in the national government, Eduardo Hecker (national commission of values) and Beatriz Baltroc (Buenos Aires city legislator).

167 Confidential interview, PV central member, Jan. 30, 2007.

168 Confidential interview, PV central member, March 14, 2007.

Ahead of the March 24 event, Hebe de Bonafini declared she would not attend the ceremony if several named PJ governors were present, whom she accused of having repressed social movements during the 2000-2003 crisis.\footnote{Most of them had actually been imprisoned during the 1976-1983 military dictatorship. In the end, only Sergio Acevedo, Julio Cobos, Carlos Rovira, and Federal Capital mayor Aníbal Ibarra attended.}

During his speech, Kirchner offered an apology for the repression in the name of the Argentine state. Yet many peronists expressed dismay at what they regarded as a one-sided event. De la Sota of Córdoba, above all, drew Kirchner’s ire with his concept of the dos demonios, literally “two demons,” or two evils, where he as well attributed part of the blame for the 1970s violence on the peronist left. Yet what particularly drew controversy was his suggestion that many of the deaths were a result of that “‘the mothers did not look after their children.’\footnote{Pelea que remata en el gran faltazo. \textit{Página 12}, March 26, 2004.} To many, the phrase sounded all too similar to the ominous “Do you know where your children are?” propaganda of the dictatorship.\footnote{Conservative writer Joaquín Morales Solá, an ardent critic of Kirchner, similarly claimed the ESMA speech was “charged with omissions and injustices.” He also hailed Duhalde’s wife as a leader “who knows best the social conflict of the country.” \textit{Una apuesta a todo o nada}. \textit{La Nación}, March 27, 2004.}

Yet the issue of struck at the chore of peronist identity, and also of its current political identity, where many of the wounds suffered from the infighting between its faction in the 1970s, apparently were from healed. The attempt to come to grips with the past thus reopened them.

For the PJ’s 2004 congress, around 646 delegates were reported to attend, with Duhalde’s allies in a clear majority, although many of the delegates arrived with their mandates expired, as the years of PJ infighting had repeatedly led to the cancellation of many of the provincial congresses.

Any hopes that the PJ would establish unity and rally behind the national president were soon shattered, as the congress became a rather notorious media event, due to its very public fights. Far from having recovered from its 2003 division, the PJ was exposed as extremely fractured and feudalized, and in desperate need of some unifying project.

Eduardo Camaño, a close Duhalde ally, presided over the congress, yet made no attempts to facilitate a genuine political discussion the days the conference lasted. CFK, in her speech, expressed a desire for an internal self-critique of the PJ, and for the party to accept part of the blame and responsibility for the “economic and social crisis of 1990s.”\footnote{Se profundizó la división entre Kirchner y el PJ. \textit{La Nación}, March 27, 2004.} Yet the president’s wife was repeatedly interrupted and insulted, until she exclaimed, “It is not the first time you won’t let
me talk, but perhaps it will be the last time that we meet.” The audience responded with cries of “traitors! infiltrators! long live Perón!”

Sergio Acevedo, a Kirchner ally and governor of Santa Cruz, similarly demanded some self-criticism of the passive role of union leadership during the 1990s, which saw labor rights severely curtailed. Interrupted by cries of “long live Rucci!” Acevedo retorted, “In the name of peronism in this country even state terrorism was justified. I don’t understand how you can talk about Rucci. He would not have permitted that you voted the [1990s] labor laws.” Yet like CFK, he was unable to finish his speech amidst shouts and insults.

When a reporter inquired why his sector was opposed to a political debate of the PJ’s role, Luis Barrionuevo, archenemy of President Kirchner and now a PJ spokesperson, answered, “Because the PJ, before a party, is a movement.” Hardly an ingenious reply, it nonetheless revealed the incapacity of a large sector of the PJ to engage in serious self-criticism.

In an attempt at reform, the congress decided to trim the national council from more than 110 to 33 members, and appointed a new executive board. The new council, however, was not the result of a vote, but of negotiations. While lead by Kirchner ally Fellner, and first approved by Kirchner, more PJ leaders were added who were openly hostile to the president. In a sign of things to come, CFK would in particular spar verbally with Olga Riutort and Hilda González.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position in Council</th>
<th>Political office</th>
<th>Relations with Kirchner</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eduardo Fellner</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Governor Jujuy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe Solá</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Governor BA Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jorge Obeid</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Governor Santa Fe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juan Carlos Romero</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Governor Salta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mario das Neves</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Governor Chubut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eduardo Camaño</td>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>President Chamber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Busti</td>
<td>Political Secretary</td>
<td>Governor Entre Ríos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gildo Insfrán</td>
<td>Interior</td>
<td>Governor Formosa</td>
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<td>José Luis Gioja</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
<td>Governor San Juan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José María Bancalari</td>
<td>Parliamentary Affairs</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilda González de Duhalde</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olga Riutort de De la Sota</td>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Córdoba politician</td>
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<tr>
<td>José Manuel De la Sota</td>
<td>Official Spokesperson</td>
<td>Governor Córdoba</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luis Barrionuevo</td>
<td>Official Spokesperson</td>
<td>Union leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>María Angélica Torrontegui</td>
<td>Official Spokesperson</td>
<td>San Luis politician</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 4.3: PJ national council executive board (partial), Parque Norte 2004.

175 Assassinated by Montoneros, José Ignacio Rucci was re vindicated as a martyr by particularly the more orthodox sectors of Peronism.
176 Quoted in Godio (2006, 161).
178 Source: A variety of news articles and interviews.
Asked why the PJ congress ended in failure, one veteran PJ politician from Buenos Aires said,

It is a very good question, and one that I have asked myself many times, because I was one of the organizers of this congress, and never had a congress been as well organized as this one. I think it principally was because of confrontation between Duhalde and Kirchner, which was evidently already surfacing in this congress. ...Duhalde pulled a trick there, a very belligerent attitude on part of Chiche Duhalde, and a lot of confrontation and a lot of vehemence against Cristina, and well, this fight turned complicated, traumatic.

While mudslinging and the calling of names was hardly a new practice within the PJ, they were unusual for what they represented at this stage: By attacking the president’s wife, leading members of the PJ were at the same time attacking President Kirchner as well.

According to one of the organizers, the ongoing Duhalde-Kirchner fight also took place outside of the public’s view. Without consulting Kirchner or the new council, Duhalde reportedly set up an “institute of party indoctrination,” to function as a further parallel leadership of the party.

In reality, [Duhalde] wanted that they set up a new leadership in the party, and by placing himself “in the floor below” he wanted to be the real power within the party. And this Kirchner would not tolerate...It was not because of the fight with Cristina or what happened in the actual congress. I think it was because Kirchner saw Duhalde’s trick (jugada), and it made him angry.179

Kirchner apparently underestimated the continued opposition within the PJ, which showed no signs of aligning behind his policies. In addition, despite the repeated declarations from Duhalde that he had “retired” from politics, he appeared far from willing to cede control over the party to Kirchner.

In an attempt at consolidating the PJ under his leadership, Kirchner was also reported to be behind a proposal to give amnesty to those who had had competed outside of PJ. Yet while it is a considered a peronist tradition to let bygones be bygones, in a break with the past the PJ refused to issue such a declaration, particularly aimed at Kirchner’s non-PJ peronist allies.

The next day, Acevedo was the first to renounce from the new PJ council, which soon saw the stepping down of most PJ leaders aligned with the president.180 The centrist Clarín, the largest daily in Argentina, noted that the PJ congress exposed “an evident crisis that cannot be concealed,”181 and that “The party is today a powder keg.”182 La Nación asked in turn, “Does Kirchner want to renounce from peronism and found his own party from the presidency?”183

180 Fuerte jugada de Kirchner para disolver la nueva cúpula del PJ. Clarín, March 28, 2003.
181 El congreso partidario agravó el conflicto entre Kirchner y el PJ. Clarín, March 27, 2004.
183 Una apuesta a todo o nada. La Nación, March 27, 2004.
Kirchner had attended a massive transversal event only two weeks earlier, and it was expected he would at least attend the closing of the conference. In the end, as the extent of opposition within his own party became clear, Kirchner noted he had “more important worries” to take care of than the PJ Congress. In the impoverished province of San Juan, he opened a biscuit factory.

While no provincial or national elections were held in 2004, which had lead to so much friction in 2003, the tensions that surfaced in its recent conference showed few signs of abating. In April, Kirchner ordered a federal intervention in the province of Santiago de Estero, after grave accusations against governor Mercedes Aragonés de Juárez - nicknamed the Black Widow - and her husband, the local caudillo and former governor Carlos Juárez. The Juárez had dominated the province for more than half a century. While arrested for corruption, what had provoked the intervention was a wave of human rights violations by the local police and abuses of power.

Throughout the year, Kirchner refused to officially take over the PJ presidency, although reports surfaced that key operators Juan Carlos Mazzón and Oscar Parrilli were in secret tying alliances to displace the old powers from the party. “This saga has barely started,” declared Felipe Solá in public declared the PJ to be “in a crisis, and a very strong one: It has a void within, and does not know how to resolve this.” Kirchner, however, continued to dismiss the “old structures.”

A group of PJ leaders, including Duhalde, Obeid, De la Sota, but also his own vice president, Daniel Scioli, held a meeting in Perón’s country house San Vicente, for the purpose of establishing a mausoleum to the old leader. They complained that Kirchner spent too much time meeting with “transversals” such as Aníbal Ibarra, Luis Juez, mayor of Rosario Miguel Lifschitz, and mayor of Santa Fe, Hermes Binner. One disgruntled governor declared, “It is the third time that he receives them, while we, who are [PJ] governors, are only there in official acts.”

While Kirchner’s intentions were far from clear, PJ veterans such as Antonio Cafiero continued to rail against transversality and of Kirchner’s supposed turn to the left. According to

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184 Interna del PJ: Kirchner dijo que tiene “preocupaciones más importantes.” Clarín, March 26, 2004.
185 Lanusse juró como interventor con aplausos y “que se vayan todos.” Página 12, April 2, 2004.
189 In response to the criticism, Kirchner would derogatorily refer to the PJ leaders as the “Mausoleum group,” an intended pun. La idea “ridícula” que en realidad sí existió. Página 12, May 16, 2004.
the old Renovator, “This thing of associating us with parties of the left, this thing of making the Partido Justicialista a variant of social democracy, there is no room for any of this in Justicialist thought.”

Kirchner in turn, rallied against the “caciques of the party,” and declared, “it can’t be that that old fight among the party caciques takes us away from fight for dignity for the fatherland.” In response to accusations of being a social democrat – the gravest of peronist insults – Kirchner noted, “They say that I am of the left, as if that were a disqualification… the transversality is very simple: It is about constructing an alternative to the powers that want to prevent a better distribution of wealth.”

Newspapers noted many “contradictions” in Kirchner’s actions. While he did not want to lead the PJ, he moved closer to some peronist union, although only some. He shunned meeting with the Gordos, in his eyes discredited for their acquiescence during the Menem decade, but moved closer to Hugo Moyano, head of the union of transportation workers, and now head of a “rebel CGT.” In July 2004, the CGT was finally unified under Moyano’s leadership. As media commented on a “return to peronism” and even heralded the “end of transversality,” more than anything it appeared to represent a misunderstanding of the very meaning of the concept. In an interview, Carlos Álvarez noted that Kirchner was highly “uncomfortable” with the PJ: In the words of the former Alianza vice president, “one only breaks with the party if one has the force to replace it.”

Following the ill-fated party conference in April, Kirchner was already by then planning the final confrontation with Duhalde, given his apparent failure to relinquish his quest for party leadership. In May 2004, his one-time political mentor Carlos Kunkel alluded to a possible future showdown with Duhalde with the phrase “mother of all battles.” Such a battle would have to be fought in Buenos Aires province, the stronghold of the PJ leader, where the PJ’s provincial organization was still the most organized party expression in the country.

Duhalde reaffirmed his power over the PJ bonaerense, as he was proclaimed president of the council after a plebiscititarian vote Nov. 21, 2004. There was no opposition. In only 34 of 134 districts were internal elections held, mostly between supporters of Duhalde and governor Solá.
whose power to contest Duhalde was still very limited. A few days later he officially stepped down in favor of José María Díaz Bancalari. It was a near perfect example of the movement logic: While Díaz Bancalari would assume the formal reins of the party, real power would clearly remain with Duhalde, who less than a year later would order the PJ president to join his wife on the ballot against Kirchner.

As the year 2004 came to a halt, tensions finally came to a blow as the provincial Buenos Aires legislature, dominated by duhalistas in the PJ, refused to pass the budget of governor Solá.

2005: PJ splits to become Kirchner’s main electoral opponent

For 2005, the Kirchner government had centralized most of the provincial elections for October, to avoid the scenario of 2003, where a whopping 18 separate elections had to a certain extent distracted attention from governing. Even more than in 2003, the 2005 elections would demonstrate the centrifugal tendencies of the PJ.

The year would start with two PJ losses, in Catamarca and Santiago de Estero provinces. Yet Kirchner would dismiss the defeats as “not his,” as the losing peronist provincial branches represented the PJ opposed to his administration. In Catamarca, which elected provincial deputies, the PJ was divided by the local faction still controlled by Luis Barrionuevo, and another faction controlled by the old Saadi clan. Kirchner supported neither; rather, he was an ally of Governor Eduardo Brizuela del Moral’s Frente Cívico, based on radicalism, which captured a majority of seats at play. Barrionuevo, in turn, accused Kirchner of having “divided peronism so that it lost, and his associates in the Civic Front won.”

Santiago de Estero, Feb. 27, 2005, gubernatorial election. Party List Head of list Votes %

<table>
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<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td>Frente Cívico por Santiago</td>
<td>Gerardo Zamora/Emilio Rached</td>
<td>156,301</td>
<td>46.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>José Figueroa/Humberto Salim</td>
<td>133,874</td>
<td>39.81</td>
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201 Cuando se termina el disimulo. Página 12, Dec. 30.
202 Except for a few provinces whose constitution designated separate dates, all elections were moved to October, and the election can therefore be regarded a “true” midterm election - and by implication, a vote of confidence in Kirchner.
204 Pase de facturas a la catamarqueña. Página 12, March 8, 2005.
For more than half a century, the real power in Santiago de Estero had rested with the Juarez family, who had run what La Nación called a “caricature of a democratic state.” Despite Juarez’ support for Kirchner in the 2003 elections, the president had the previous year decided to intervene all provincial institutions. National deputy José Oscar Figueroa headed the PJ’s list, yet the election brought to power Gerardo Zamora, whose Frente Cívico por Santiago included radicals, but also peronists and socialists. Yet Zamora, like several other UCR governors, would become closer to Kirchner than to this own party, and he would soon be considered one of the most loyal of the Radicales K governors.

Meanwhile, in Buenos Aires province, the rupture between governor Solá and Duhalde was now complete. Although the latter held no official post, he was by far the most powerful politician in the province. When Solá had sought to assert his independence from the peronist caudillo, the Duhalde-controlled legislature had refused to approve his budget. Solá, while he had never established good rapport with the Kirchner, would now join the president in his battle against Duhalde. He accused the PJ bonaerense of preventing him from governing, in particular as the legislature, led by Osvaldo Mércuri, stripped the governor of many of his powers, such as over the budget, forcing him to seek the approval of the legislature for a wide array of decisions. The legislature had weeks earlier denied an increase in Solá’s proposed budget, yet now increased the legislature’s own discretionary funding with 33 million pesos, which Solá called a “black box” for the internal elections of the party. Deputies loyal to Solá then created a separate group in the provincial legislature called Frente Peronista para la Victoria.

When Duhalde’s wife in a mass meeting of their Loyalty faction exclaimed that their “patience was exhausted” and that “We were wrong with Solá,” it was a clear demonstration that despite holding no elected office in Buenos Aires, the couple still demanded to be the final arbiters in the province. Exasperated, Solá declared on public national radio,

> There are two Duhalde. One stands above the fray. The other directs meter by meter the peronist internal battle from his house in Lomas de Zamora, where punteros, legislators and mayors pass by. Duhalde will have to define where he stands and what his true role is.

In an echo of the past, a May 29 congress of the PJ bonaerense threatened to expel from the party anyone running outside the party label for the upcoming October elections. Hosted by the octogenarian Manuel Quindimil, and presided over by Osvaldo Mércuri and vice Governor Graciela Giannettasio – a Duhalde ally – the congress spoke in veiled references of “impure

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206 Un traspié simbólico para el Presidente. La Nación, Feb. 28, 2005.
207 Final para 50 años de dominio juarista. Página 12, Feb. 28, 2005; Santiago del Estero se tiñó de radical. Página 12, March 1, 2005.
208 La gente no quiere un gobierno títere. Página 12, Jan. 18, 2005.
211 Ahora Felipe estrena tropa propia. Página 12, March 5, 2005.
K responded with irony, saying “there are impure radicals and impure peronists… like myself!”

In March, following nearly five years of intervention, Kirchner’s cabinet chief Alberto Fernández was elected president of the PJ porteño. The moves to normalize the party branch had started the previous September, when it was decided to greatly reduce the size of the party organs, with its congress down from 300 to 100, its council from 70 to 30, and its executive board now consisting of 16 members. The preceding two months had seen a great recruitment drive, which had attracted 38,000 new members to the branch. For its internal elections, more than 20,000 members voted. While elections were only held in 14 out of 28 circumscriptions – in the remaining the Fernández list was not challenged – old menemista stalwarts such as national deputy Inés Pérez Suárez, Cristian Ritondo and Raúl Padró, all allied with Macri – were defeated.

The importance attributed to the renovation of the party branch, whose organization had been long dormant, was apparent not only due to the role of Fernández – one of the president’s most trusted men – but also of other heavyweights on the list. Elected to the new PJ porteño was also two government ministers, Daniel Filmus and Carlos Tomada, as well as union leaders Víctor Santa María (SUTERH) and Omar Viviani (SPT).

Halfway through his mandate, Kirchner’s future relations with the PJ were very much in a limbo. As political analyst Mario Wainfeld of the left-leaning Página 12 noted, “He didn’t marry the PJ, whose ideological drifting he detests, yet he hasn’t managed to break with the concubinage.” Yet in the otherwise chilly Argentine winter, the temperature was rising in the Duhalde-Kirchner confrontation. While Duhalde had taken up post in Montevideo, Uruguay, as president of Mercosur, it was clear he had not abandoned politics in Buenos Aires province.

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212 Con una amenaza y mucha cautela. Página 12, May 30, 2005. The party congress was presided over by Osvaldo Mécuri, Graciela Giannettasio, Díaz Bernal, and mayor of Hurlingham, Luis Acuña. Also, as congress authorities were the ex carapintada Aldo Rico, Senator Mabel Müller, the new head of the resurrected “62, Gerónimo Venegas, and Eduardo Camaño. Criticas del Gobierno al congreso duhaldista. Página 12, May 31, 2005.
215 Its official figure stood at more than 130,000, yet following five years of inactivity this was clearly inflated.
216 Alberto Fernández, en el PJ porteño. April 19, 2005; “Para acompañar a Kirchner.” Página 12, April 18, 2005.
217 Following its normalization, the PJ council would meet at least on a monthly basis, while its congress would convene every six months. Several interviewees noted that the party branch had made a relative smooth transition to normalization. In the words of a council member who had left the PJ but now rejoined, “we even have the [financial] accounts in order, which for justicialism of the city is a marvel!” Confidential interview, PJ porteño central member, March 16, 2007.
There, real leadership of the party remained with him and not with his political operator Díaz Bancalari.

It became clear that the looming battle was not merely about positions of power; it was also partly a question of the very identity of peronism. Ahead of the election, several prominent duhaldistas made exclamations such as those of Díaz Bancalari, who called the idea that Kirchner wanted to lead a PJ of the centre-left a “fairy tale”:

> Peronism is us; they are another thing that I don’t really know what is… We are two parties. One is the PJ, which is ours. And on the other side there is something that I don’t know what is, a combination of radicals, socialists, and piqueteros.219

President of the Chamber of Deputies Eduardo Camaño, a hardcore Duhalde ally called a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” by the president,220 went as far as to charge that “Kirchner wants to destroy justicialism… Not even in the worst moments between Duhalde and ex president Carlos Menem were there such levels of aggression.”221

On June 7, CFK, whose mandate in the senate would end, announced she would run as a senator for Buenos Aires, her native province. Many still believed some deal could be made with Duhalde, where Kirchner and Duhalde would present a common PJ list, yet when Duhalde in the last moment increased his demands, Kirchner broke off negotiations. From the White Salon in the presidential palace, where the most important announcements are made, he declared, visibly upset, that “We are going to let us be extortioned nor pressured by any of the traditional political sectors of politics or any other sectors of society that have already acted against the country.”222

In a massive display of strength, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner launched her campaign in an event in La Plata, the provincial capital that saw the attendance of 14 governors, 12 of them from the PJ, and almost the entire national cabinet. Yet rather than the massive portraits of Perón and Evita, who usually adorn peronist events, only Argentine flags were present, in an event remarkably free of peronist folklore. She declared,

> When someone creates obstacles for others, they say it is typical of the peronist playbook. I say that this is the script and direction of Francis Ford Coppola and it is not from the “Peronist Manual” but from the film The Godfather!

In the words of La Nación, it was “the act that sealed the rupture of the party.”223 Two days later, the PJ bonaerense launched its campaign. The candidates for the two senatorial seats were Hilda Duhalde and José María Díaz Bancalari.

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220 Fuerte pelea entre Kirchner y Camaño. La Nación, July 30, 2005.
221 Camaño: “Kirchner no podrá destruir el Partido Justicialista. La Nación, July 24, 2005.
222 Personal observation. Also reported in, Cuando se acercaban a un arreglo, Duhalde pidió más. Página 12, June 30, 2005.
223 Cristina Kirchner le apuntó a Duhalde. La Nación, July 8, 2005.
Judicial intervention a result of peronist infighting: National PJ “ceases to exist”

In a surprise move ahead of October contest, on Sept. 9, Argentine justice ordered the national branch of the PJ to be intervened for its failure to elect a national leadership. In practice, this meant that the PJ on a national level had ceased to exist.

Technically, the mandate of its council expired in 2003, following Menem’s highly controversial resumption of the party leadership in March 1999, yet as discussed in Chapter 2, the years from 1999 onward would be characterized by a prolonged battle between the council and its congress. In 2004, the PJ failed to elect a new national council. Yet now the national PJ also saw the intervention of all its national party organs, including the congress.

Judge María Servini de Cubría designated Ramón Ruiz as interventor. She had previously intervened the PJ porteño, which by March 2005 was now successfully operating, and he was ordered to do the same work for its national branch. As most provincial branches were not intervened – above all the powerful PJ bonaerense – the national branch was said to only have real relevance for the election of national president-vice president. More than 80 percent of all campaign funds went to the provincial branches, which kept functioning on the local levels.

Yet to some Kirchner critics, such as national deputy Adrián Menem, the federal intervention was part of “a strategy of the government to destroy the party.” The president of the party congress, moreover, was Eduardo Camaño, and the annulment of this party organ was in any case regarded a blow against Duhalde.

Ruiz was ordered to return the party to normalcy and convene elections at the earliest possible date. The year 2006 was the target date, which would have allowed the PJ to present a candidate for national president in the upcoming 2007 election. Yet by remaining intervened, this possibility was denied – as was the possibility that the party would present a rival candidate to Kirchner.


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<td>Frente de Todos</td>
<td>Arturo Colombi /Rubén Pruyas</td>
<td>261,073</td>
<td>60.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frente Unidos por Corrientes</td>
<td>Carlos Rubin/Estela Robaina</td>
<td>139,821</td>
<td>32.43</td>
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In the last off-schedule election before the Oct. 23 test of strength, Corrientes held gubernatorial elections. Here, the PJ’s candidate Carlos Rubin was duly supported by Duhalde, while Kirchner aided the radical

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Arturo Colombi, considered another Radical K. Colombi was swept to power with more than 60 percent of the votes. Frente de Todos was primarily an alliance between the UCR and peronists aligned with Kirchner (the candidate for vice governor was a national PJ deputy allied with the president), while Rubin received the support of parts of the PJ and various conservative parties. Rubin was also supported by the old caudillo Raúl Romero Feris, a former governor and mayor of the capital who had been imprisoned for three years and deemed unfit for public office.228 His wife Nora now ran for reelection as mayor of the capital, but lost to Carlos Vignol, the provincial minister of education. The results thus represented a significant victory for Kirchner and his political renovation, while it was a decisive blow to the old dynasty.229

The “mother of all battles”: Buenos Aires province, Oct. 23, 2005

There is an old phrase that you will hear in the PJ bonaerense, “I will walk with you to the gates of the cemetery, but I will not enter with you.”

By June 2005, the internal battle of the PJ had again led to the paralyzation of the country’s political institutions. The Argentine congress saw very little legislative activity. Not only were deputies and senators busy organizing elections, but relations between the PJ block led by Duhalde and Kirchner’s own allies were becoming increasingly acrimonious. Duhalde’s Bloque Federal could count on at least 45 legislators, with allies from other provinces.231 In a new development, the deputies still loyal to Menem now expressed support for Duhalde. The old arch enemies now joined forces in the battle against the sitting peronist president. When Kirchner’s allies demanded that José María Díaz Bentalodi must step down as head of the PJ group, Menem ally Alejandra Oviedo accused Kirchner of wanting to “destroy peronism.” In La Nación, Joaquín Morales Solá wrote of a “brutal division of peronism.”232

Jorge Villaverde, a close Duhalde ally who would head the PJ’s list, expressed the classic peronist attitude that despite of the differences, “we are justicialists, and because of this one election changes nothing.”233 Alberto Balestrini, who headed the FpV’s list, indicated that some kind of arrangement could be made after the election with the duhaldistas, though he carefully added that the invitation to rejoin Kirchner’s coalition after the elections would not apply to all of the current opponents.234 Alberto Fernández, however, immediately declared that there would be no agreement made with Duhalde’s allies.235 The electoral showdown went deeper than the

228 Raúl Romero Feris was governor 1993-1997, and a longtime mayor of the capital. He was later sentenced for abuse of authority. Gobernará Corrientes un radical aliado de Kirchner. La Nación, Oct. 3, 2005.
233 Con el duhaldismo, ni a la esquina. Página 12, Oct. 11, 2005.
234 Me interesa que vuelvan sólo algunos compañeros” Página 12, Oct. 9, 2005.
235 Con el duhaldismo, ni a la esquina. Página 12, Oct. 11, 2005.
traditional peronist infighting,\textsuperscript{236} and Kirchner himself criticized Balestrini for his remarks.\textsuperscript{237} The tension between the two groups, the PJ \textit{bonaerense} and the FpV of Kirchner, had by now even led to the first incidents of violence between their supporters.\textsuperscript{238}

The idea that the October elections were first and foremost a battle between Duhalde and Kirchner was above all demonstrated in the PJ’s and FpV’s choice of senatorial candidates: For the two majority seats, the PJ \textit{bonaerense} presented Duhalde’s wife Hilda Duhalde,\textsuperscript{239} and her running mate was the hapless José María Díaz Bancalari, who despite being on good terms with Kirchner would be removed from the PJ group leadership for this action. CFK ran on the FpV list, accompanied by another heavyweight candidate, minister of defense José Pampuro.

The FpV list for national deputies – a total of 35 seats were up for grabs – incorporated important functionaries such as Carlos Kunkel, very close to the president and then undersecretary of the presidency; Jorge Taiana, vice minister of foreign affairs, and Sergio Massa, head of ANSES, the national social security administration. The list was headed by Alberto Balestrini, mayor of the hugely important La Matanza district (the largest population of any municipality in the province), but also included non-PJ entries such as Diana Conti, a prominent FREPASO Senator, and Edgardo Depetri, leader of the social movement \textit{Frente Transversal}. The list was drawn up jointly by President Kirchner and Governor Solá.\textsuperscript{240}

Duhalde’s list was headed by national deputy Jorge Villaverde – former mayor and strongman of Almirante Brown – and included ardent opponents of Kirchner such as Jorge Sarghini, Mabel Müller (alter ego of Hilda Duhalde), and the multimillionaire businessman Francisco De Narváez, a strong ally of Menem in 2003 and, as it were, with a penchant for collecting peronist memorabilia.\textsuperscript{241}

The results went beyond even the most optimistic projections of President Kirchner. For the congressional seats, the FpV pulled 2.8 million votes, against just below a million votes for the PJ. In the even more charged competition for the Senate, the president’s wife won a stunning 45.77 percent, or 3 million votes, against Hilda Duhalde’s 20.43 percent – more than the double. Two years before, “Chiche” had achieved 40.73 percent, or more than 2.3 million votes, and the PJ had sent 19 deputies to the Chamber of Deputies. Her share of the vote was effectively cut in

\textsuperscript{236} As an old Peronist joke goes, the party could be compared to cats on a tin roof – when it sounded like they were fighting, they were in reality only reproducing.

\textsuperscript{237} Balestrini conversó con Kirchner y bajó su entusiasmo por un acuerdo. \textit{Página 12}, Oct. 12, 2005.

\textsuperscript{238} Condena a la guerra de los afiches. \textit{Página 12}, Oct. 15, 2005.

\textsuperscript{239} This would be her third run in less than a decade for the PJ – she ran for a senate seat in 1997, and in 2003 led the PJ’s ticket for national deputies.

\textsuperscript{240} Confidential interview, PJ bonaerense central member, March 7, 2007.

\textsuperscript{241} In 2003 he bought Perón’s uniform and library for $93,000 and 148,000 respectively.
half. CFK won in districts historically allied to Duhalde such as his pago chico Lomas de Zamora, Lanús, Avellaneda, Almirante Brown and Berazategui, as well as in the all-important La Matanza. The only district where CFK lost was, quite symbolically, Presidente Perón, bastion of the Mabel Müller-Oscar Rodríguez couple.

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<td>FpV</td>
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<td>1.364.527</td>
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<td>Luis Patti</td>
<td>394.398</td>
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Table 4.4: Province of Buenos Aires, Oct. 23. electoral results.242

**Clear left-right divide between the FpV and the PJ elite and supporters**

In the 1990s, Menem had made some inroads in the province, but even as president he had not been able to break the power of his rival Duhalde. While Duhalde had stepped down as governor in 1999, Governor Solá would as well discover that holding the highest executive office in the province proved no match against Duhalde.

Technically, the 2005 election was merely an off-term election, yet the 35 congressional seats clearly comprised a grand prize in itself. By beating Duhalde, Kirchner would manage to break free from his veto power in congress – where the PJ bonaerense, later together with pro Menem deputies, went from denying quorum to even voting with the opposition against the Kirchner government.243 The time had therefore come for Kirchner to face up to the powerful provincial party apparatus.244 To many peronists, the battle represented a jugada arriesgada, or a risky gamble. According to a senior member of the PJ leadership allied with Kirchner,

> It was a sharp break with the past. It was a gamble and, I’ll tell you, an extremely risky gamble that even Menem in his moment, when he had so much power, could not make himself do. Kirchner, on the other hand, did, and he achieved it.245

While it would be an exaggeration to present the battle as one peronist party against a non-peronist party, there is no doubt that Duhalde and Kirchner represented two very different interpretations of peronism. This was partly a generational issue as well. While only ten years

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244 For a journalistic account of the “barons” of Buenos Aires Province, see O’Donnell (2005).
245 Confidential interview, PJ central member, Feb. 1, 2007.
apart, given the politic context of Argentina in the 1970s, it was a lifetime. While Duhalde represented a more traditional, centrist peronism, much closer to the countryside and the agricultural sectors, Kirchner was a clear sympathizer of the left peronism of the 1970s. He also contrasted with Duhalde’s admiration for Perón. While Duhalde would construct a mausoleum for the late leader, Kirchner was often noted to have a much more critical view of him. While he vindicated the gains of first of government, Kirchner, repudiated Perón’s last stint in power. The election therefore represented a battle for the future direction of peronism, and between competing contentions of its past. According to national deputy on the winning Kirchner list,

I think that today in peronism, a concept more linked to the left now predominates. One cannot separate this from the political origins of the president, of the senator Cristina Fernández, of many of the members of his government and his cabinet, who come from peronism of the left… and the phenomenon is as well linked to the generational topic, because today the survivors of the youth persecuted in the 1970s are governing… and this has also given an ideological profile to this process, and it is incredibly interesting when Kirchner says, “I am the son of the Mothers and the Grandmothers of the May Square,” it is part of this identification… yes, it is a government of the left, in transition, but of the left.246

This was very much represented in the respective electoral coalitions of the FpV and PJ. Hilda Duhalde on several occasions rallied against the “left,” and presented the battle in clear ideological terms: “I am an absolute enemy of all the piquetero leaders… It is the PJ against the government… FpV, a party of men of the left, of the extreme left, and piquetero leaders.”247

According to one of the principal PJ leaders who ran against Kirchner,

With regards to the legislative elections in the year 2005, la señora Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and I represented two different things: I represented peronism of the province of Buenos Aires, and she represented this new force that her husband wants to make bloom, without the two major parties [PJ and UCR] mattering to them.248

This view, though from a different perspective, was notably also expressed by Kirchner’s allies:

DM: Was it just an internal battle of justicialism?
I: No. I think it was an expression of the dispute between the new and the old, very clearly expressed. I had the occasion to talk to Kirchner in the middle of 2004, at great lengths about this. And he was determined that the “mother of all battles” was to prove that the most solid, most clientelist, most ancient political apparatus in its conception of demagogical politics and double discourses, could be beaten. There could have been an agreement between peronism in its traditional expression and the Frente para la Victoria, but rather it was a strong election in order to put in order the political scenario with a view to 2007. Right now, we are in the middle of the battle, and it is not clear how it will be arranged, there is a struggle… We needed to fight to see if the centre-left has a role in this reaccommodation, or if the old system will recompose. This is always a battle, one stands in the middle of the river, and one can go to one shore or to the other.249

247 Es el PJ contra el Gobierno. Página 12, Aug. 31, 2005.
249 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, March 20, 2007.
This view was shared as well by more traditional peronists. According to one prominent peronist union leader, in the province of Buenos Aires “the Frente para la Victoria was formed by the PV and the piquetero movements, because the PJ had gone with Chiche Duhalde.”

In the province of Buenos Aires, the FpV consisted technically of the Partido de la Victoria, Frente Grande, the Polo Social movement of Francisco Gutiérrez, and a few other minor parties.

The PJ’s ally in the senatorial contest was the law-and-order PAUFE of Luis Patti, officially sealed in August. Two Kirchner heavyweights, chief of cabinet Alberto Fernández and minister of the interior Aníbal Fernández both attacked the pact as a sharp move to the right of Duhalde. While Patti, an ally of Menem in 2003, had also shared lists with the PJ in the past, in the current climate where human rights had become a pillar of the Kirchner government, this alliance proved particularly controversial. As a police commissioner, Patti had been accused of killing peronists during the dictatorship. Governor Felipe Solá sarcastically noted of the PAUFE leader, “He says he is a peronist, but he is involved with the murder of peronists, which is not the same thing.”

Many peronists interviewees would emphasize the ideological component of the battle. According to a FpV national deputy,

Is there ideology? For sure there is ideology. They are not the same, the thoughts of more popular Orthodox conservative shade like that of Duhalde, and a profile of centre-left like that of Kirchner. Not because there are great differences in terms of the economic. I believe that both support the same important role of the state, the systematization of the state, social economy, but on other subjects to be sure, for example in human rights, it seems to me that the differences are great, their views on history… Yes, on one hand the issue was one about power, but on the other, of ideology. This was really the conflict in 2005 in the province – settled off in a manner noticeable favorable to Kirchner.

The left-right split among the PJ-FpV elites was also mirrored at the level of the voters, where CFK and Hilda Duhalde drew a much greater percentage, respectively, of center-left and center-right voters.

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250 Confidential interview, PJ porteño leadership, Jan. 30, 2007
253 At the time of writing (July 2008), Patti was incarcerated in the Marcos Paz penitentiary, awaiting a trial for alleged murder and disappearance of people when he was police officer in BA province. Preso de su propio pasado. Página 12, April 20, 2008.
254 Fuerte pelea entre Kirchner y Camaño. La Nación, July 30, 2005. Patti, while elected a national deputy in the 2005 elections, would eventually be barred from resuming his parliamentary seat, much due to the opposition of pro-Kirchner deputies such as Remo Carlotto, head of the Commission for Human Rights and son of Estela Carlotto, the founder of Grandmothers of the May Square.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Centre-Left</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Center-Right</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFK</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilda Duhalde</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Ideological self-placement of voters, Buenos Aires province, post-election study.  

When asked the reason for the vote, the number one reason for voting for Chiche (29.7 percent), was given as “reaffirming peronism.” For the CFK voters, the main reason (70.9 percent) was “to help the political project of President Kirchner.” “Reaffirming peronism” did not even make the list of relevant reasons for CFK voters.  

While it would be an exaggeration to regard the battle entirely as one between the PJ and kirchnerismo, given the significant overlap, many interviewees emphasized it was a battle against pejotismo and the PJ clientelist apparatus:

The PJ was the people who controlled the structure. But in many places, this structure, many of the mayors who continued to support Duhalde up until the election, ended up losing in their districts…and it is a much more national phenomenon as well. In Greater Buenos Aires were the great leaders of the party, and obviously this apparatus was gambling, but the political action of the project of the presidency of the nation went above the head of this apparatus. This is Greater Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Rosario, Mendoza.

According to one of Kirchner’s transversal allies,

As matter of fact, Cristina is an even stronger figure than her husband. I was a national deputy when she was a deputy, before she became a senator. And she always constructed this image of renovation, of the centre left… What surprised me is that people responded to this, but what surprises me even more is that the president dared to detach himself from this political logic, from an apparatus so…powerful.

One national deputy from Patagonia, made a point regarding the value of the peronist “folklore.”

The president read [the situation] very well, it was a surprise for many, but the president read how much penetration his government and his leadership had, and how much that of Duhalde had lowered. In some senses it was a surprise, and it was a great validation, but also, and I think this is important, it was a demonstration of what the drum and the flag is really worth.

The notion that it was a very calculated gamble was reinforced by comments from one political operator close to Kirchner, who simply answered “no” to an inquiry if the results were a surprise.

I: No, we were quite sure that we would get results based on the general support of the president, which was very high, very high. And everyone there was seeking to let go of this more caudillo-style peronism of the province, they were looking for new characters in politics, and the person of Cristina fit perfectly with this image.

DM: But still, she would fight with the party structure of Duhalde, which seems…

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256 Data provided by CEOP. Exit polls, N=2,500. Error of margin +/- 2% with 95% confidence.
257 Data provided by CEOP. Exit polls, N=2,500. Error of margin +/- 2% with 95% confidence.
258 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 15, 2007.
I: Immense, right. But this apparatus was sustained from government. Outside of government, it is already not the same. To be able to function, you need the apparatus of the state, no matter what.
DM: So when you are outside…
I: Outside of office, this is much reduced.261

One peronist deputy from the province attributed the poor result of the PJ apparatus as a result of the current economic recovery:

People, in scorning what one found in many sectors, including in this stagnant PJ, with no renovation, without political training, they did not visualize this process of transformation, and when one looks at the volume of votes from the clientelist area, from the areas of the political machine, it is getting smaller, it is really getting smaller… they don’t even arrive at 12 of 13 percent of the votes, and even less so when they are slowly losing the state structures that are those that regulate this.262

Among peronists close to Kirchner, many expressed the necessity to break the power of the PJ block in parliament.

The PJ was used to arrange its own list, and by arranging its own list you can make the country depend on you, because the country is dependent on the province of Buenos Aires. And therefore I think it was the mother of all battles, precisely because in order to govern one needed to put up a fight for the province Buenos Aires… I don’t criticize Chiche as much as some others do, because she organized women, and made progress in some matters… she did interesting things, and I am not criticizing her, but I do criticize those that remained there, and thought they were going to stay in power for 800 years using clientelism.263

The parallel to the 1980s Renovation was brought up by a national deputy who formed part of the process in the province, who noted that just like in the 1980s, whoever controlled the PJ bonaerense would control the national PJ. As discussed in Chapter 3, when Cafiero won against the Orthodox in 1985-1987, the national PJ aligned around him. The proportion of his victory of the Renovators over Iglesias, in a further parallel, was very similar to that of the FpV’s victory over Duhalde: three to one.264

In 1985, after the two years of a constitutional regime, there were still no internal elections and one could not normalize the PJ in the province of BA, nor the central one, and with Antonio Cafiero at the helm and other leaders we worked in the Renovation….In 1985 we went with the Renovation front and we won, and afterwards we returned within the structure and in the Province of Buenos Aires we went against outside the party structure, and again we came back winning. It was much the same situation in 2005.265

Another former PJ legislator, now “transversal” city legislator, emphasized that even following the victory, the inherent traits of the PJ made power tenuous:

The thing is that the PJ has this facility to reaccommodate and realign itself. The problem that Kirchner has as well, and I think he knows this, is that the same people that today support him in the Province of Buenos Aires, will tomorrow be capable of making the jump and support whoever is on the opposite path. The same mayors who were with Menem, with Duhalde, are now with

261 Confidential interview, Kirchner political operator, Feb. 23, 2007.
264 The proportion was, for deputies, 41.46 vs. 9.8 percent in 1983, and 43.04 vs. 15.17 percent in 2005.
Kirchner. It is not easy for Kirchner to sweep them away, in one single time, but he has to be very careful because just like they turned their backs on Duhalde they will turn their backs on him if they see someone with better possibilities. Because of this I think the gamble of 2005 was very importance, but it seems to me that we are lacking a second round.266

One peronist who left the PJ for the Frente Grande in the 1990s further emphasized this pragmatic bandwagoning with a lyrical example of two Chilean folk singers:

There is an old song that Víctor Jara and Violeta Parra used to sing… porque en el bando enemigo hay gente del otro partido, pero del tuyo también … what I want to say is that even if Cristina won over the “barons,” this does not mean that all that were there in the trenches with her are guys that believe in a new political construction, that they followed her out of conviction for this ideology. Always in politics opportunism exists, always there will be clientelist practices, but in general, this is what one voted.267

Before and after the election, some opposition parties such as the ARI claimed the electoral battle was simply a ploy for the PJ to obtain all the three senate seats at play: According to Argentine electoral law, while the largest party will win two seats, the third senate seat will automatically go to the minority. Yet as a peronist politician from the province noted, “One cannot say that this was just an internal election of the PJ.”268 This sentiment was shared by the electoral courts, which noted the PJ and FpV were two legally recognized and separate parties, and the legal complaint was rejected. The daily Clarín, taking stock of the “electoral tsunami” in the province, declared that the victory could represented the “end of the party bipolarity” between the PJ and the UCR, whose vote share did not reach 8 percent.269 Kirchner, in any regard, regarded it a crucial victory for his administration and governability, and declared, “Today my government starts.”270

2005 electoral result: PJ split extends to other provinces

The Government Won, the PJ Lost.271
- La Nación, Oct. 26, 2005

The year 2005 saw the PJ even further split than in 2003: In October 2005, it ran, remarkably, split in 11 provinces. The PJ label, which had long failed to provide Argentine voters with a clear indication of the party’s ideological position in terms of left and right, could now not even be used to determine whether the party supported the national government, nominally peronist, or not. The following electoral result demonstrate the utter confusion.

267 Confidential interview, PV central member, March 8, 2007.
268 Confidential interview, PJ bonaerense central member, March 7, 2007.
270 Quoted in (Curia 2006, 252).

209
La Rioja, Oct. 23, 2005, national senators and deputies election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senate list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PV</td>
<td>Angel Maza</td>
<td>75,704</td>
<td>51.12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Carlos Menem</td>
<td>59,856</td>
<td>40.42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National deputy list: Head of list | Votes | %  | Seats |
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PV</td>
<td>Griselda Herrera</td>
<td>75,679</td>
<td>55.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Mario Santander</td>
<td>48,388</td>
<td>35.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Carlos Menem ignominiously dropped out from the second round of the 2003 presidential election, he could no longer brag that he had never lost an election. In La Rioja, his senatorial bid came in after that of sitting governor Ángel Maza. The minority senate seat obtained by Menem on the PJ label would, however, provide him with immunity for prosecution.

Catamarca, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Eduardo Pastoriza</td>
<td>53,024</td>
<td>35.63</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Cívico y Social</td>
<td>Genaro Collantes</td>
<td>49,384</td>
<td>33.18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista</td>
<td>Luis Barrionuevo</td>
<td>40,455</td>
<td>27.18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While governor Eduardo Brizuela del Mora was on good terms with Kirchner, for the legislative elections his Frente Cívico and Kirchner’s FpV ran on separate lists. A radical bastion, the FpV list surprisingly beat even the governor’s list. Likely even more important to Kirchner, the Luis Barrionuevo-led PJ, in alliance with 7 minor, mostly rightwing parties, comes in third. While securing Barrionuevo a seat in the lower house, it was another defeat for the Orthodox union leader.

Santa Cruz, Oct. 23, 2005, national senators and deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National senator list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Alicia Kirchner</td>
<td>57,940</td>
<td>57.96</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>Alfredo Martínez</td>
<td>27,505</td>
<td>27.51</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Headed by President Kirchner’s sister Alicia Kirchner, on a leave of absence from her position as minister of social development, the FpV not unexpectedly won the two majority senate seats, as well as two out of three seats for the Chamber of Deputies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>José Manuel Córdoba</td>
<td>48,744</td>
<td>50.74</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>Juan Acuña Kunz</td>
<td>26,498</td>
<td>27.58</td>
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</table>

Misiones, Oct. 23, 2005, national senators and deputies election

<table>
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<th>National senator list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Renovador</td>
<td>Maurice Closs</td>
<td>188,488</td>
<td>45.65</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista para la Victoria</td>
<td>Luis Alberto Viana</td>
<td>114,851</td>
<td>27.82</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Misiones, the Frente Renovador of the “transversal governor” Carlos Rovira ran against the PJ, in another example of Kirchner supporting the non-PJ candidate. The Frente wins greatly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Renovador</td>
<td>Miguel Angel Iturrieta</td>
<td>190,423</td>
<td>46.47</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista para la Victoria</td>
<td>Emilio Kakubur</td>
<td>112,826</td>
<td>27.53</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mendoza, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>Alfredo Victor Cornejo</td>
<td>234,715</td>
<td>32.19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Enrique Luis Thomas</td>
<td>157,138</td>
<td>21.55</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>Omar De Marchi</td>
<td>93,571</td>
<td>12.83</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Mendoza, the FpV was beat by an UCR alliance with the PI and a provincial party. The FpV included the PJ, PAIS, Partido de la Victoria and other minor parties.

Santiago del Estero, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Cívico</td>
<td>Daniel Brue</td>
<td>187,265</td>
<td>71.05</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Frente Cívico para la Victoria* is another example of Kirchner supporting the non-PJ candidates. An alliance of Kirchner with the *Radical K* governor Zamora, the Frente Cívico ran against PJ, which did not win a single seat (17.22 %, or 45,392 of vote).

Tierra del Fuego, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Rosana Bertone</td>
<td>16,978</td>
<td>32.89</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARI</td>
<td>Ariel Gorbacz</td>
<td>9,487</td>
<td>18.38</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Tierra del Fuego, FpV won one seat as an alliance of the PJ and the PI, with the other going to ARI.

Córdoba, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unión por Córdoba</td>
<td>Eduardo Accastello</td>
<td>444,080</td>
<td>33.34</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Nuevo</td>
<td>Daniel Giacomino</td>
<td>349,918</td>
<td>26.27</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encuentro para el Cambio</td>
<td>Oscar Agud</td>
<td>234,790</td>
<td>17.63</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Córdoba, the provincial PJ was under full control of José Manuel de la Sota, who governed the province since 1999. The *Unión por Córdoba* was an alliance of the PJ with 7 conservative or provincial parties, although Kirchner secured the candidacy of Patricia Vaca Narvaja, a close ally. The *Frente Nuevo* of Luis Juez came second, with a UCR-socialist alliance third. While Juez’s deputies were conditional allies of Kirchner in parliament, Juez complained that Kirchner was wrong to go for de la Sota, with whom his relations were lukewarm at best. Córdoba was therefore a notable exception to the trend of Kirchner supporting non-PJ candidates.

Río Negro, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Julio Arriaga</td>
<td>111,376</td>
<td>43.34</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concertación para el Desarrollo</td>
<td>Hugo Cueva</td>
<td>99,413</td>
<td>38.68</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Governor Saiz was considered a Kirchner ally, the FpV ran on a separate list consisting of the PJ and the FG, and won over an alliance of UCR, PI, and a provincial party. It would be another case of a “win-win” situation, as both lists were Kirchner allies.

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Jujuy, Oct. 23, 2005, national senators and deputies election

<table>
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<th>National senator list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Guillermo Jenefes</td>
<td>119,821</td>
<td>47.28</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Jujeño</td>
<td>Gerardo Morales</td>
<td>78,920</td>
<td>31.14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Jujuy, the FpV, which here included the PJ, won both senate seats of the majority, a noticeable victory against strongman Gerardo Morales, who would assume the next year as national president of the UCR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Carlos Snopek</td>
<td>119,767</td>
<td>48.10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Jujeño</td>
<td>Alejandro Nieva</td>
<td>75,098</td>
<td>30.16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entre Ríos, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista para la Victoria</td>
<td>Blanca Osuna</td>
<td>262,479</td>
<td>45.96</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>Sergio Varisco</td>
<td>124,410</td>
<td>21.78</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alianza Concertación</td>
<td>Emilio Martínez Garbino</td>
<td>80,019</td>
<td>14.01</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Entre Ríos, Kirchner’s relations with governor Busti were neither close nor acrimonious. A united PJ, under total control of the governor, won 3 of the seats at play.

Tucumán, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Beatriz Rojkes</td>
<td>382,426</td>
<td>63.96</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Governor José Alperovich, a close ally of President Kirchner, returned all four of the legislative seats at play for the FpV, which included the PJ, FG, and 6 other smaller parties.

Corrientes, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente de Todos</td>
<td>Eduardo Galantini</td>
<td>281,077</td>
<td>72.76</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Frente de Todos, supported by Kirchner, had just won the governorship against a PJ candidate weeks earlier, and now won all three seats. The Frente candidates included former governor Ricardo Colombi, cousin of sitting Radical K governor Arturo Colombi.

Formosa, Oct. 23, 2005, national senators and deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National senator list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>José Miguel Mayans</td>
<td>122,117</td>
<td>59.81</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>Luis Petcoff Naidenoff</td>
<td>57,478</td>
<td>28.15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Governor Insfrán, in office since 1995, was a close Kirchner ally since before the 2003 election, and the FpV won big in the province. The FpV consisted of the PJ in an alliance of 15 smaller parties, most left leaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Juan Carlos Díaz Roig</td>
<td>124,929</td>
<td>61.83</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
San Juan, Oct. 23, 2005, national senators and deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>César Gioja</td>
<td>140,139</td>
<td>50.05</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Producción y Trabajo</td>
<td>Roberto Basualdo</td>
<td>73,093</td>
<td>26.10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Governor Gioja, a close Kirchner ally, gave the president a clear win for both elections. The FpV consisted of the PJ and 6 smaller parties, while the Frente Producción y Trabajo, a provincial party that also included peronists, got the minority senate seat, and a third deputy seat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Margarita Ferra</td>
<td>130,566</td>
<td>46.16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Producción y Trabajo</td>
<td>Adriana Marino</td>
<td>60,677</td>
<td>21.45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chubut, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Aldo Marconetto</td>
<td>105,123</td>
<td>51.85</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Governor Das Neves was a close ally of Kirchner, although a man clearly harboring his own presidential ambitions. Both seats at play went to the FpV.

La Pampa, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Manuel Baladrón</td>
<td>56,138</td>
<td>34.92</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>Daniel Kroneberg</td>
<td>50,273</td>
<td>31.27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the PJ won two seats in La Pampa, Governor Verna was not on good terms with Kirchner, and the deputies elected, although part of the FpV block, would prove highly qualified allies.

San Luis, Oct. 23, 2005, national senators and deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National senator list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Adolfo Rodríguez Saá</td>
<td>113,738</td>
<td>62.90</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Daniel Persico</td>
<td>30,807</td>
<td>17.04</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In San Luis, the Partido Unión y Libertad of the Rodríguez Saá clan in an alliance with the PJ and Cavallo’s AR was completely dominant. It won all three seats for national deputies, while the FpV won the minority senate seat. The contest was again an example of the FpV running against the provincial PJ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>María Torrontegui</td>
<td>105,765</td>
<td>61.74</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Salta, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputies list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista para la Victoria</td>
<td>Osvaldo Salum</td>
<td>154,974</td>
<td>36.25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>Miguel Zottos</td>
<td>100,686</td>
<td>23.55</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Salta, Governor Romero was in complete control of the provincial PJ, which won two seats. While Kirchner was not quite on hostile terms with Romero, the PJ salteño was not considered allied with the national government.
Federal Capital, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>Mauricio Macri</td>
<td>610,898</td>
<td>34.09</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARI</td>
<td>Elisa Carrió</td>
<td>394,373</td>
<td>22.01</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Rafael Bielsa</td>
<td>367,164</td>
<td>20.49</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Kirchner ally Aníbal Ibarra won the 2003 election against Mauricio Macri, the new centre-right Propuesta Republicana (PRO) of the heir to the Macri business empire won a convincing victory for national deputies. The PRO was an alliance of eight rightwing parties, while the ARI of Elisa Carrió came in second. While peronism had never been dominant in the Federal Capital, the 20.49 percent obtained by the FpV was nonetheless a disappointment. Here, the FpV consisted of the PJ, the Partido de la Victoria, and the minor Nueva Dirigencia.

Neuquén, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputy list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPN</td>
<td>José Brillo</td>
<td>86,606</td>
<td>49.33</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Cívico para la Victoria</td>
<td>Oscar Massei</td>
<td>62,257</td>
<td>35.46</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Neuquén, the PJ and the UCR notably entered in a direct alliance against the center-right Movimiento Popular Neuquino (MPN), which originally started as a neoperonist party in the 1960s. The party of sitting Governor Jorge Sobisch, a Menem ally, still won almost half of all vote, yet the party has virtually no presence outside the province.

Chaco, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election: UCR victory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente de Todos</td>
<td>Ángel Rozas</td>
<td>271,596</td>
<td>56.61</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Gladys Soto</td>
<td>143,007</td>
<td>29.81</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Chaco, former governor and UCR strongman Ángel Rozas headed the list for deputies of Frente de Todos, an alliance of UCR and four minor parties, which won against the FpV, which in addition to PJ included the PV, and the FG.

Santa Fe, Oct. 23, 2005, national deputies election: Socialist victory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National deputies list</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Progresista, Cívico y Social</td>
<td>Hermes Binner</td>
<td>633,203</td>
<td>43.05</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Agustín Rossi</td>
<td>489,584</td>
<td>33.28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Santa Fe, following his very successful administration as mayor of the Rosario from 1995 onward, Binner wins on the ticket Frente Progresista, Cívico y Social, which above all consisted of the Socialist Party, with minor support from the UCR, FG, and the PI. The FpV consisted of the PJ, MID, and a minor provincial party, and was headed by Agustín Rossi, who would be elected new leader of the FpV-PJ group in the Chamber of Deputies.

Who won the October 2005 elections?274 As the previous breakdown of the individual provincial results have demonstrated, the round of elections which culminated above all in the

274 While some of the PJ’s wins in 2005, like in 2003, were highly qualified victories – the provincial branches were in some cases very reluctant supporters of the national government, Kirchner saw three very clear and notable losses in the Federal Capital, in the province of Neuquén, and in Santa Fe Province, the country’s third most important district, where opposition parties maintained or came to power. The opposition victories were, however, quite localized – none of the winning candidates had national
“mother of all battles” in the largest of Argentina’s provinces, provided a very mixed picture. The
nation’s leading conservative newspaper expressed the confusion well in the headline, “The
Government won, but the PJ lost.” It explicitly noted the paradox that while Kirchner had come
from the PJ, and would continue to rely on its deputies for the foreseeable future, his greatest
victories was against the very party itself. According to the daily, “it also turned out evident that
the great defeated is the PJ in its unity.”

Nowhere was the division of the PJ more evident in the province of Buenos Aires. Yet
while the PJ triumphed in most districts, the party was divided in an “unprecedented” 11 districts,
above all in Misiones, San Luis, San Juan, La Rioja, Entre Ríos, Formosa, Tucumán, Santiago del
Estero, Jujuy and Catamarca. While in some provinces the PJ sector allied with Kirchner would
represent the brunt of the party, in others the pro-Kirchner part of the PJ was quite marginal. In
certain provinces, Kirchner directly campaigned against the local PJ. As La Nación noted before
the election, “Paradoxically, then, a peronist triumph in a large part of the country could be to the
detriment of the government if the mood of internal rupture exists.”

In particularly San Luis, but also in Salta and La Pampa, the winning PJ was not allied
with Kirchner. In Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Entre Ríos, Misiones, Formosa, Jujuy, Tucumán,
Catamarca, La Rioja, San Juan, Rio Negro, Chubut, Santa Cruz, and Tierra del Fuego, the FpV
and the PJ allied with Kirchner won the day. The UCR or UCR-based parties won in Chaco,
Mendoza, Santiago del Estero, and Corrientes, but only the first of these provinces would be a
real opposition, as the others were considered Radicales K. Finally, Kirchner’s losses in the
Federal Capital, Santa Fe and Neuquén were clearly noticeable, yet again they hardly represented
the victory of a unified opposition of national projection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>6,808,305</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ anti-K</td>
<td>1,905,976</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Electoral results Oct 23, 2005, FpV vs. the PJ opposed to Kirchner.

While the PJ ran as part of the FpV label in many alliances, it prominently ran directly
against Kirchner’s political formation in districts such as La Rioja, and Buenos Aires. Not

Projection, and in the case of Santa Fe, the winning candidate would maintain good relations with the
national administration.

276 En la mitad del país el PJ irá dividido. La Nación, July 24, 2005.
277 Figures are based on “positive votes,” and are from Godio (2006, 290-291). La Nación has slightly
different calculated differences, with 39.35 percent for the government vs. 9.39 percent for the PJ anti-K. El
Gobierno obtuvo casi el 40% en todo el país. La Nación, Oct. 25, 2005.
coincidentally, the respective peronist leaders in those provinces were Barrionuevo, Menem and Duhalde, or the three caudillos of the PJ that had become Kirchner’s most ardent enemies within peronism.

The argument that this victory represented a turning point within not only the PJ but in Argentine politics, was made by CFK, who declared, “It’s the end of Duhalde, Menem and Barrionuevo... A new stage of renovation begins, of generational transformation, of a new project for the country.” Not only were the three enemies defeated in their respective provinces; the round of 2005 elections also saw the displacement of the Juarez couple in Santiago de Estero, and Bussi in Tucumán. As such, it went a long way toward fulfilling the 2001 cry of “get rid of them all” from 2001. To prominent analyst Natalio Botana, writing in La Nación, the elections represented “the death of the old justicialism.”

Following the elections, the PJ-FpV group would now consist of 112 legislators, including 10 non-peronist “transversal” allies. The opposition PJ, consisting of allies of Duhalde, Menem and the Rodríguez Saá brothers, now counted around 42 legislators. In the Senate, the FpV-PJ would go from 38 to 42 senators.

Experts on Argentine politics agreed the elections represented a drastic blow to Duhalde, although the suggestion that they ended up “destroying Duhalde politically” (Jones 2005, 9) were perhaps somewhat premature. In an interview held months later, President Kirchner would later note of the 2005 contest,

With all due respect, the triumphs in La Rioja over ex President Menem, in the province of Buenos Aires, and in Catamarca were the ones that most satisfied me in the October election, because we won over three forces that represented the old system.

To what degree did they represent a rupture? In congress, the victory had as its most immediate effect to greatly increase the number of Kirchner allies, many of who had long since left –or never joined – the PJ. Fittingly, the new parliamentary group would be called Frente para la Victoria-PJ, so as to be able to incorporate non-PJ allies of Kirchner. Following the assumption of the new deputies, the congressional leadership was promptly replaced to reflect the change in the power balance. The president of the Chamber of Deputies, the ardent Kirchner opponent, Eduardo Camaño, was displaced in favor of Alberto Balestrini, who had headed the FpV list in Buenos Aires Province. A former Duhalde ally, he had been among the first to side with Kirchner. The vice president would be a Córdoba ally, Patricia Vaca Narvaja. Moreover, Agustín Rossi, who in the 1990s had joined FREPASO, became president of the PJ legislative

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280 Based on calculations in Godio (2006, 290-291).
281 Lo que diga sobre la reelección no me lo van a creer” Página 12, May 21, 2006.
group, replacing Díaz Bancalari, with Carlos Moreno as the vice president, a *bonaerense* close to Kirchner. The closeness of the new leadership to the president represented a great change from before.  

Within the government, the departure of Roberto Lavagna as minister of the economy ended the most significant continuity of the Duhalde administration, and his appointment of new ministers Felisa Miceli, Nilda Garré, Jorge Taiana, and Juan Carlos Nadalich was deemed a further “slide to the left” by local commentators such as Morales Solá and by international observers such as the New York Times alike.

In line with the old peronist tradition to “follow the leader,” some of Duhalde’s old allies would eventually migrate to the Kirchner group. Both national deputies and mayors of the province took part in the “exodus.”

Duhalde’s defeat was the defeat of the most developed political party apparatus in the country. While Duhalde for 15 years had controlled more than 70 mayorships, now only seven remained loyal immediately following the election. Within weeks, most of them would now join the exodus.

Among the defeated Peronist, there were several *rescatables*, or “redeemable” peronists, who while they might have sided with Duhalde for loyalty or instrumental reasons, should not be turned away as new allies. Yet the extent to which the former Duhalde allies were rather quickly absorbed into the FpV-PJ group raises the question of how much of a rupture had taken place.

Commenting on this process, one peronist deputy who never joined the Menem bandwagon, noted diplomatically,

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283 At the time of appointment Garré, part of left peronism in the 1970s, was ambassador in Venezuela with very cordial relations with Chávez. She notably apologized to Honduras, where Argentine torturers operated in 1979-1981, training the local death squads. “Pido perdón al pueblo de Honduras.” *Página 12*, Sept. 30, 2006.

284 Taiana’s father was the personal doctor of Perón himself. This did not prevent Jorge Taiana from being imprisoned by Isabel Perón’s government in 1975 and the by the dictatorship, until finally released in 1982. He remains very close to Kirchner ideologically. Un recambio donde se expresa la continuidad de la agenda. *Clarín*, November 29, 2005.


286 Initially, the “hard core” of Duhalde allies was Carlos Ruckauf, Alfredo Atanasof, Oscar Rodríguez, Eduardo Camaño, Mabel Müller, Francisco de Narváez, Nélida Doga, Jorge Landau, Juan José Alvarez y Hugo Toledo, while José María Díaz Bancalari, Graciela Camaño, and Jorge Villaverde sought an early conciliation.


One cannot generalize completely... there are many sectors that have joined this process because they are convinces that this is the best path to carry us forward. And there are others that do it out of desperation, because they do not want to lose their power.289

One younger peronist leader was more critical of this realignment.

I could not have been with Menem, then Duhalde and [now] with Kirchner, having done scarcely any self-criticism. One could have said, “The truth? I was wrong. I have evolved, and I believe the course today is correct.” But if you don’t do that, you are a mercenary. And we all have the right to evolve, to recognize our mistakes, but there are many that were ultramenemistas and today they would kill for Kirchner. Not literally, as a manner of speaking, but today they claim they would die for Kirchner… I believe many of them are opportunists.280

Clearly, whatever Kirchner planned to do, he would need to incorporate some of his old adversaries. As one peronist close to Kirchner’s chief of cabinet noted, “Alberto [Fernández] once told me something, which I think is pretty accurate: ‘We are constructing the boat in the middle of the ocean.”281

Yet the extent to which Kirchner would rely on the PJ, having defeated his most ardent enemies within the party, or seek to build a new force remained to be seen. As Walter Curia noted in Clarín, “The role of peronism, the party of power, continues to be the great unknown in the president’s project to build a great force of the center left in Argentina.” Pointedly, he added that “history shows that peronism never had this characteristic.”282 Nor, despite his independence from the PJ, had he ever done completely without it. Yet the elections certainly further pointed to an end of the old PJ-UCR alternation, as the UCR showed few signs of recovering its role as the primary opposition to the PJ. The question remained what would become of peronism. As Verbitsky noted in Página 12, at this point, “The old radical and peronist identities are looking for new banks.”283

“Is Kirchner a peronist?” Attempt to overcome peronist-radical divide

I think he is not a very peronist president.284
- Peronist FpV national deputy, 2007

You must keep in mind that of the six radical governors here, five are kirchnerista radicals. And therefore with radicalism I think we are encountering a force in the process of dissolution.285
- Kirchner administration functionary, 2007

From his days as governor of Santa Cruz, Kirchner had long reached out to ideological allies in other parties, in particular given the PJ’s swing to the right in the 1990s. Now, with a

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290 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 13, 2007.
291 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 13, 2007.
295 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 15, 2007
significant section of the PJ converted into a clear electoral opponent, he would continue to court members of the UCR, and expressed clear desires to transcend the old PJ-UCR divide in favor of one measured in terms of left and right.

Following the defeat of the PJ *bonaerense* and other opposition forces within the peronist party, newspaper articles were rife with speculation that Kirchner would finally now assume the presidency of the PJ. On May 25, a national day in Argentina, Kirchner would speak in front of a massive audience, where upwards of 300,000 had gathered from the PJ, the CGT, and various social and human rights organizations. Kirchner would use the speech to introduce a further term, borrowed from its Chilean neighbor, to the Argentine political vocabulary: *Concertación*, or concertation. Argentina already knew of the *Radicales K*, a journalistic term first used in early 2005 to denominate radical allies of K.296 The first had been governor of Tierra del Fuego Jorge Colazo, and later Miguel Saiz (Río Negro), Julio Cobos (Mendoza), Eduardo Brizuela del Moral (Catamarca), Ricardo Colombi (Corrientes), Gerardo Zamora (Santiago del Estero). Of all provinces ruled by the UCR, only Chaco governor Roy Nikisch would not ally with the national government This alignment, however, was vigorously resisted from the central UCR party organs, which in several cases would go on to expel the *Radicales K* from the party.

Already following the October 2005 elections, governor Cobos of Mendoza had spoke of a “concertation like the Chilean one, of the centre-left.”297 The creation of a concertation therefore explicitly aimed at solidifying this alliance with radicals of the center-left. It was also part and parcel of a longtime desire to Kirchner: To redraw the party landscape in two new poles, one of the centre-left, of which the FpV would form part, and another of the centre-right, to be formed by Kirchner’s ideological opponents.

Three years into his administration, while Kirchner’s was generally considered a clear example of a center-left politician, the definition of Kirchner as “left” or “center-left” was, however, far from a noncontroversial subject: It was rigorously resisted within certain sectors of peronism itself, particularly those who had aligned with the president after 2005.

Kirchner had been part of the Renovation and had worked closely with members of the *Frente Grande* since the 1994 constituent Convention.298 According to a prominent FG leader, his move toward a clearer ideological definition was the product of a long trajectory:

> I want to tell a little story, with respect to your question if Kirchner is of the left, and it is perhaps what took us all in. What can identity Kirchner as left is that starting from 1995, 1996, there is a very clear opposition from Kirchner to *menemismo* to the point that his wife, Cristina, is kicked out of the PJ Senate group, from the peronist group. So Kirchner achieved establishing himself in

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298 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, March 20, 2007.
these 6-7 years, from 2003, or even from 2001 on, as a clear opposition to *menemismo*, and therefore against the prevailing neoliberalism. If on the one hand he did not have a completely prepared left discourse, symbolically he had a very clear opposition to the establishment of this moment, and this is what seduced the electorate of the centre-left.299

One of Kirchner’s closest political operators from Santa Cruz, while noting that “one cannot always analyze Latin American politics with European eyes,” when asked directly, put it succinctly:

DM: Kirchner himself defines himself in terms of left or right, or not?
I: No, he clearly identifies himself as centre-left.300

One prominent member of the Kirchner administration with a background in political science, expanded on the subject of what the definition of left entailed.

DM: Does Kirchner see the political setting in terms of left and right?
I: Yes, he wants this, he says this and I believe him, he says that he would want to be able to include this, and I believe him… he thinks that this ideological indefiniteness is bad, and that it needs to be translated into a center-right and a center-left, with him being the center left. He believes in this, that one needs to go for this, at full speed, to where one does not know… wherever we are going, we are going fast, and this speed has the rather obvious effects that you cannot control it all. On the one hand you are changing rapidly, on the other hand you are running a series of risks, but things are changing.”

DM: And to break with what he has called *pejotismo*?
I: Yes. Redefine it; give it a more homogenous, programmatic character.
DM: In terms of left and right?
I: I would say in terms of a type of social democracy *à la* Argentina… I believe his is a social-democratic conception. Kirchner is a pragmatic ruler, with certain very fundamental values, which has to do with human rights, distribution of wealth, with social justice.301

One FpV deputy defined Kirchner in the following manner:

It is a short word [centre-left], or a word with which one can define many things. But to me, centre-left would be the most progressive, and with progressive it is understood that there should be social welfare for the majority of Argentines – and non-argentines choosing to live here – the recovery of the most poverty-stricken or those excluded from society. And this, let us call it centre-left. And in this sense, the FpV is of the centre-left, and Kirchner is of the centre-left. Period!302

The definition of as left was clearly bound with the desire to move beyond the traditional PJ. Yet it was a project that clearly would take time. According to a peronist city legislator,

The president made a decision to create a party system that reflects a bit what one can see in modern countries, which is that questions of ideology or of values are what divide the parties. But this is still under construction, because peronism is a movement that contains sectors of the left and of the right, like radicalism.303

As late as May 2006, Kirchner himself continued to speak of a “superior” political formation different from the current PJ.

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300 Confidential interview, Kirchner political operator, Feb. 23, 2007.
301 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration secretary, Feb. 28, 2007.
I don’t participate in pejotismo. I could have been the president of the party, and I wasn’t, I am not, and I will not be. I could have dedicated myself to put together a well-oiled party machine, and I didn’t.\footnote{“Lo que diga sobre la reelección no me lo van a creer.” Página 12, May 21, 2006.}

Rather than relying on the PJ structure, several peronists interviewed drew parallels to European social-left parties as the desired future party model. According to a peronist functionary with past in the Frente Grande,

What Kirchner is proposing is a model like you Europeans have, with one pole of the centre-right, and one pole of the centre-left, more defined. Because here many times what happens is that when it is all mixed, there are peronists of the right, peronists of the left, progressive radicals, radicals of the right, then many times this mix has made it so that one cannot identify clearly with a project for the country. So Kirchner’s idea, or at least he is encouraging this, is that to him, he would like to have two poles…. It will take years, because it is a difficult process.\footnote{Confidential interview, Frente Grande leadership, March 20, 2007.}

One Patagonian deputy close to Kirchner noted,

To me it looks like a stage is coming where there will be coexistence, or a synthesis, of two models: the Chilean model of party concertation with the European party model. The president has in mind a model very similar to the European … What does he aspire to? That there are two great forces, one expressing the interests of progressivism that there is in Europe, and that one would call centre-left, and which would translate into positions vis-à-vis taxes, distribution of wealth, public works, health insurance, and another force of the centre-right which would express the opposite: Less taxes, less social services. And that could have the capacity of alternation [in power]. In Argentina it is very important to achieve this, because there has never been this, there was always a disparity.\footnote{Confidential interview, FpV national deputy, Feb. 8, 2007.}

One FpV deputy made the explicit point that the decline of the old radical and peronist identities had opened up the party landscape for a realignment, of which the Concertation was an expression:

There is a fact that is very important, and I think you have already realized: There are no political parties in Argentina. They were already in this situation, in a situation of decomposition the two great parties, justicialism and radicalism, but with the crisis at the end of 2001 they end up collapsing. There are no great parties, with internal debate; the truth is there are not. So this is the opportunity to make a reconfiguration of a pole of the centre left and a pole of the centre right, but what this Plural Concertation is lacking is a more collective actor, a national articulation. And it is in this we are working, basically with ex-FREPASO, ex-ARIs, with social sectors, and also with some sectors from peronism that we could call peronism of the left, and who do not have an organic, active participation in the PJ. So what appears to be lacking to us is a force of the centre-left that will be Kirchner’s own, where we are. And we, have been here for a long time, we want to move toward this recomposition. And this is the situation. It looks like to us that Kirchner and those who are with the president, if he really ends up insisting that Cristina will be the candidate, could give more force to the construction of this political movement.\footnote{Confidential interview, FpV Buenos Aires city legislator, March 8, 2007.}

Reflecting on earlier qualifications of the Kirchner administration as populist, one official noted, eight before Kirchner announced he would reorganize the PJ:

The problem is that peronism as such, or rather, justicialism, has ceased to be a national party. It is fragmented, not only in its territorial form, but also in its ideological form and in structural terms. Because of this, the president has said he wants to dedicate himself in the next four years to
reorganize justicialism as a party… this is what he wants, and well, this would be very contradictory to whatever a populist leader would want.308

**Peronism in 2007: Still “beyond left and right”?**

While Kirchner may be placed on the center-left, another and more wider question pertains to the identity of peronism itself, four years into the Kirchner administration. Reflecting upon the old division between radicalism and peronism, which was above all a question of cultural identity that tended to cross-cut the left-right divide (Ostiguy 1998), one younger peronist functionary noted,

That duality in the analysis of the reality of our country, I think today it does not exist. Because to me it seems with the crisis of parties that our country is experiencing and that keeps subsisting is that to be a peronist, lamentably, defines absolutely nothing…I cannot say, like you do in Europe, in the PSOE, that by being a peronist I know the positions of my party in relation to the role of the state, or international alignment. Being peronist defines nothing, or it defines everything, but when it defines everything, in reality, it is not defining anything at all.309

One peronist city legislator noted the very wide range of ideological positions taken by peronism:

For me it is this: peronism was a movement of the center, which allowed it to be a “third position” when Perón was still alive. When Perón dies, to me the ideological position of peronism is given by whoever leads it, so it was rightwing in the 1990s, and now it is of the centre-left. I think there is now another generation, the generation of the peronist youth in the 1970s, which has a centre-left, social-democratic view, which are the new cadres that will lead peronism, but I also know that this will only be consolidated if the government consolidates, and Argentina keeps growing.310

According to one peronist national legislator who left the PJ but became an ally of Kirchner,

When I entered peronism in the 1970s, it was considered a wide movement, but in reality it contained within it many rightwing sectors. Not of the extreme right such as López Rega and all of these people, not like that, not these frightful ones, but certainly more conservative sectors, more linked to nationalism, but they weren’t clearly right because of their political economy.311

The point that peronism was hard to explain in terms of left and right, particularly for its economic policies, was made by several peronists. According to one national deputy,

Peronism was about social justice, about economic independence, and this had to do with the idiosyncrasy of the country, and because of this it is very hard to explain what peronism other places. For example, to me it is hard to explain peronism to friends in Uruguay; they understand politics in a very different way.312

With Menem, therefore, there was a sorting-out of sorts of this ideological inconsistency, as many who had been social conservatives would at least publicly defend Menem’s sharp

308 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration secretary, Feb. 28, 2007
309 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 13, 2007.
economic turn to the right. For some, this ideological turn would lead to a break with peronism itself. According to one city legislator of the FpV group,

I am not a peronist, since the 1990s I have not been a peronist, beyond the fact that I do revindicate peronism, but now I can no longer say I am a peronist, because to me peronism as a party ended with the Menem experience. I left peronism because in this moment one needed to do something new.\footnote{Confidential interview, FpV Buenos Aires city legislator, March 8, 2007.}

Has peronism changed to assume an identity of the center-left? Again, a sharp disagreement exists on whether it has or not. One national deputy downplayed transversality as something completely normal in the history of peronism, and compared it to Menem’s embrace of the UCeDé. His answer was typical of those who denied an ideological change within peronism:

No, the ideology of peronism is permanent. The national movement of Argentines, it is the national party of Argentina. It is the Christian and national philosophy; it has nationalist and Christian values; this is justicialismo. … it adopts its doctrine to distinct historical moments. In the 1990s, what Menem did was much similar to what Reagan, or Thatcher did, or Aznar, and today you will find the thoughts of Ségolène Royal, of Zapatero, those in agreement with the world today… it has historically always been so, and nobody gets shocked by this… only Argentine political scientists, they go crazy!\footnote{Confidential interview, FpV national deputy, March 14, 2007.}

Yet for politicians closer to Kirchner, there is still a marked tendency to embrace peronism as a force of the left. For those, the concept of social democracy, so despised by Orthodox peronism, is often used as a frame of reference. According to one national deputy who ran on the FpV list against Duhalde,

Today in Argentina, perhaps the process is more similar to a process of social democracy. In any cases, peronism has a content more linked to the national and a strong nationalist process, and I think this adds some salt and pepper to this interesting process, but it is also in a process of transformation, with efforts and debate, and this is incredibly healthy.\footnote{Confidential interview, FpV national deputy, Feb. 28, 2007.}

One peronist national deputy from Patagonia argued,

In Argentina, I think peronism is of the left, because it is the social left, because peronism is the political identity of the workers, and because [peronism] is the highest level of conscience that the workers had on a massive scale. There could be a Marxist worker, a revolutionary worker, but massively, for the Argentine working class, the highest level of conscience was the peronism, so then it is of the left. Now is Duhalde left? No...\footnote{Confidential interview, FpV national deputy, Feb. 8, 2007.}

Another Kirchner functionary with a background in political science noted the particular problems of applying ordinary indicators of left and right to peronist elites, yet predicted a change:

DM: This negation of left and right seems to be peculiar of Argentina
I: Yes, you have realized? I believe we are going to see a change here, despite of the actors, despite of “this doesn’t’ happen here, here we are different.” This very strange Argentine idea, it imposes itself on the reality, it imposes itself in discussions, but it is going to be negated by its own authors. There is one work that I really like, by a political scientist in the University of
Salamanca. You come with these instruments to Argentina, they make the investigation, and they put peronism, on a scale from left to right, on 6.5, because they did it in the end of the 1990s. But when they edit it, how unlucky, because there is Kirchner, imagine anyone reading it: “ah, peronism, the Kirchner government is of the center right,” fighting with the military and the IMF! In Argentina one needs to use such instruments very carefully …if you talk to the deputies today, many of them are the same, and now they are going to put in 3.5, 3, the same that earlier put in 6.8, 7…… and they would have no shame in doing so! One needs to put in a lot of effort to understand this trajectory, because it is a very long history, even before Perón, from Yrigoyen!318

One interesting case is that a total of five interviewees, when asked about party politics as left-right, brought up the case of the Argentine Communist Party (PCA). As neither the PJ nor the UCR was clearly defined as parties of the left, to some, PCA often served as a frame of reference to what being “left” entailed. During the last dictatorship, the hard-line anti-communist regime willingly sold grains to the Soviet Union, then under an embargo. The PCA, as a result, gave the dictatorship a certain level of support, and in the end further diffused the concepts of left and right. According to a peronist former deputy from Buenos Aires province,

It is so hard to see here [a left-right line] because, you must realize, the Argentine Communist party supported Videla, and supported Viola, because in this moment there was the invasion of Afghanistan, and there was the boycott from the United States. Argentina sold grains to the Soviet Union… it did not prioritize the militants of the people, and the compañeros that fell in the dungeons of the dictatorship, but rather the business that the USSR was doing in Argentina. And these are of the left!319

One peronist union leader in the Federal Capital who was opposed to an identification of peronism in left-right terms, noted,

I believe that the interpretations, let’s say, of the national and popular and the massive, which Perón does, achieves precisely that Argentina is one of the few countries in Latin America where the left does not have a, let’s say, true deepening. And the left always ends up being of use to the most conservative and more rightwing sectors, no? Like the Unión Democrática… The right was always linked to the coup-plotter [golpista] movements, and the left was associated with these movements as well. And only peronism interpreted what was national and popular.320

Another legislator as well drew on a historical experience, when the communist union of meat workers, during World War 2, opposed salary hikes of its own workers:

They [the left] don’t adapt to the Argentine reality. The experience that an Argentine has with whatever has been called left or right is that when there have been processes of growth, of consolidation, or development of the country, those that call themselves left just like those who call themselves right have confronted us. Like in 1945, when the communist party supported the [electoral] lists that the U.S. ambassador had proclaimed, like in 1955 when the civilian police commands attack the unions and expropriated, and they went together, the militants of the communist party protected by the police.321

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317 A reference to political scientist Manuel Alcántara, who has done extensive work on political elites, including their left-right placement on a 10-point scale.
318 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 15, 2007.
319 Confidential interview, PV central member, March 8, 2007.
One transversal city legislator, who clearly defined himself as left, further noted the paradox of the Argentine left’s support for right movements:

There is one pole of the centre-left today, because the “left” has disappeared once more…. and they always end up being of service to the right, and I think that is happening one more time, just like with Perón in the year 1945, when they were allied with the right, allied with the United States, and always, in some way, they end up being of service to the right. In the trial against Ibarra, the exact same thing happened.322

The city legislator referred to the impeachment of center-left mayor of the Federal Capital, Aníbal Ibarra, where left deputies joined forces with rightwing legislators to force his ouster. The background was a fire in the nightclub *Cromañon* in Dec. 2004, a tragic blaze that claimed 194 lives. While a majority of porteños consistently opposed the trial of the mayor,323 who was held as highest responsible for the tragedy as the nightclub had had its license revoked but had not been shut down,324 Ibarra was removed from office on March 7, 2006.325 The loss of the political ally was also regarded as blow to Kirchner’s transversality.326

One peronist union leader reluctant to describe peronism as either left or right, expressed its ideology in this way:

DM: If the PJ is neither left nor right, then how is it different from other parties?
I: Because the other parties are different as well. If you catch hold of [Mauricio] Macri and ask him what he is, he’s going to tell you that he is a progressive! And what is a progressive? I believe peronism is precisely about the possibility to be able to interpret what the people needs.
DM: It sounds very pragmatic?
I: Well… It is very pragmatic, but with a strong ideology as well. It is exactly this, to reconstruct the state through work. And this, I don’t know if it is of the left or of the right… to be against those who robbed, those who tortured, those that made others disappear, to me it doesn’t seem like this is an ideology of either left or right. To defend the rights of workers to me is a policy… I don’t know if it is really left or right.”327

Another peronist in the Federal Capital, who was very appreciative of the Menem years, addressed the question of peronism’s ideological direction in the following manner:

I: Peronism is very influenced by leadership, it has the leadership syndrome, it was born from the top to the bottom, and always had leadership, it cannot live without leadership, when it didn’t have it, it lost. The peronist structure is a structure that this absolutely flexible, a structure that adjusts to the times. In peronism, the only thing that matters to the peronist is to have votes, to be popular, to have a good image, and to do well in opinion polls. If you have this, you can be a good peronist. Yes, peronism is the party of pragmatism; peronism is party that defines itself by pragmatism, by its capacity to govern. Because of the handling of its internal contradictions, it is a political culture, a way of making politics. In the Republic, for its little respect for institutionalism, you

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have a party that respects institutions very little. A party that assumes pragmatism as its program, this is peronism, a party that puts forth leadership a substantive fact.

DM: But I’ve heard people say that Kirchner wants to establish a force of the centre-left…

I: He wants to do this, but it always collides with reality… Peronism is not a party of an ideological base; peronism is not ideological; peronism is a political culture…. [Kirchner] wants to build an ideological construction, or say that this is the peronist ideology, when in reality it is a party that through its history assumed positions that were very diverse, very diverse. It had something in common which is this political culture... But if you try to define the ideology, it’s going to be hard. But fine, this happens with peronism, but is it really so astonishing that there is a party like this in the world?

One peronist senator hailing from the province of Buenos Aires, said,

I believe peronism is beyond left and right. I think today is not the best moment, in my opinion, to distinguish the lefts from the rights…I think today it is a bit too imitating to debate the place of ideology.328

Many noted that the concept of the two poles is a novel conception in Argentina.

According to a prominent member of Kirchner’s PV,

It is something new, because in reality, the PJ… let’s say the politics of Menem, were clearly of the right, but also Kirchner comes from justicialism, from politics of the centre left. If one would divide Argentina a few years ago in peronism and radicalism, we could not in any way speak of systems of left and right, because within radicalism itself there were similar problems. De la Rúa had politics of the right and Alfonsín, or at least a part of his government, had policies of the center left.329

A very close correlation was indeed found as well found among peronist politicians who denied the relevance of left and right, and a desire to return to the old peronism-radicalism contests of the past. A total of seven high-ranking peronists noted a preference for such an orientation, rather than along a left-right pole. One legislator noted,

We define ourselves, in terms that I understand for a European, as progressives. We want social progress, integration, development of the productive forces, a change in how we exploit nature…For us, questions about being from the right or the left, it is of no significance (transcendencia) here. No, peronism, we are not going to commit suicide among ourselves, we are not going to disappear, what could happen is that… look, I would particularly prefer that one would restructure and reorganize radicalism.330

When asked about the left-right cleavage, one peronist leader aligned with Kirchner responded,

It is very hard to understand this here because there are other axes that cross. Carrió, it is very hard to locate her… it is very hard to locate Carrió in this axis, and at the same time it is difficult to say, “ok, peronism in the province of Buenos Aires or Scioli, let’s put them on a left axis.” Because of this it seems to me there is not a tradition in Argentina of left and right, and because of this it is difficult, if one understands the left/right discussion as a discussion about redistribution of income, or as a discussion on how to foment growth… if that’s the case, all right, then peronism was always of the left, and therefore there is nothing new because peronism was always there. But at the same time there is another divide that has to do with questions of…. Abortion, for example, that has to do with the relations with the church, cultural questions, and they go toward the other side. In terms of distribution of income, peronism was always on the left and this continues, but

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328 Confidential interview, PJ national senator, March 1, 2007.
329 Confidential interview, PV central PV member, March 1, 2006.
330 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, March 12, 2007.
perhaps what there is now is a change more toward that cultural, superstructural part that, well, kirchnerismo tries to make its own, which before permitted the Socialist Party, the radicals, to put themselves in the centre-left, although they had positions more to the right in terms of the economy.331

In sum, a variety of interviews with peronists revealed an immense debate whether peronism itself is of the left and right. Clearly, peronists closer to Kirchner were much more inclined to use this characterization. What is also apparent is a very clear correlation revealed between those who advocated continued movement-party logic, and their denial of the peronism as identifiable in left-right terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future model of PJ</th>
<th>Definition of peronism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Center-left”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should remain a movement-party</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Should become a European-style party</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7: Peronist elites’ preference for peronism ideological definition and future PJ model.332

It is very clear that at least for the sample interviewed, ideology and preferred political formation goes hand in hand: Of those who described peronism as “beyond left and right,” none were in favor of the PJ becoming more like a traditional, European-style political party. Conversely, only 2 out 14 interviewed who defined peronism today as left were in favor of a continued adherence to the movement logic.

When asked if the PJ could be conceived of as becoming a more traditional party, a typical response was, “It is much more than that simply having to with the party.” The comments of one PJ leader in the Federal Capital, who in newspaper accounts was described as an ultramenemista in the 1990s and was now an ally of Kirchner, are particularly instructive in getting to the essence of this movement advocacy:

I: Look, peronism… is a movement where we don’t have the rules of the traditional party. First of all, under no point of view can one say who is a peronist and who is not a peronist; to me anyone calling himself peronist is peronist. But to us the party was always an instrument, and our dynamic, as a consequence, is much more flexible. It keeps being this way, and it brings dangers and advantages. The danger is that in some moment the common denominators will not exist anymore, and the advantages are that this has always allowed us to have the capacity to adapt to changes. In peronism, the subject of power is central. What is the ideology? The ideology is the defense of the national interest, where one firmly defends the workers, the most humble sectors… We have a doctrine that determines one’s position in front of every issue. For this reason, sometimes some or our proposals are a bit general, because Perón’s wish was to embrace the concept of the nation, the majority… In general, one lives through historical processes and when these culminate, one lets bygones be bygones.

DM: Pragmatism, one might say?
I: It is a pragmatic dynamic, not ideological. Peronism is not dogmatic.

332 Source: Interview data
DM: Can one define peronism in terms of left and right today?
I: Today one might say that peronism is of the centre left. But this is not because of its ideology, but because of its attitude. Peronism as an ideology is beyond left and right.333

Counterattack of the movement-party: No Jodan con Perón

The first three years of the Kirchner government had seen a massive onslaught on parts of the PJ, which had been beat in provinces such as La Rioja, Buenos Aires, and Catamarca. Yet it was clear that many within the PJ, many who officially were Kirchner allies, tacitly despised the president’s left inclinations, and what they conceived of as a lack of appreciation of Perón itself. For many, while the Kirchner government’s economic policies had proved highly beneficial to them, they were still disturbed by the presence of many setentistas, or the members of the peronist left in the 1970s, in the Kirchner government. Following a long period of acquiescence, one counterattack would come in 2007 and served as a graphic reminder of the continued tension within the PJ.

One lazy summer day in January 2007, a time of year when the Federal Capital feels virtually abandoned, porteños woke up to find walls and stands in several strategic location plastered with posters that read, in large letters, No Jodan con Perón (Don’t Fuck with Perón). While bearing the logo of the railroad union La Fraternidad and the “62,” no further explanation was provided for the graphic display.

While the issue passed by relatively quickly in Argentina media, it was nonetheless a poignant signal from a sector of peronism that felt increasingly under attack, and the reaction appeared triggered by the judicial investigation of Isabel Perón, in self-imposed exile in Spain. Within peronism, this issue would be a highly effective manner in which to gauge a significant existing fault line within the political force. While people around Kirchner in general expressed indifference or support for a trial against Perón’s widow, sectors revindicating peronism’s movement-logic tradition saw the case as a part of a wider ideological onslaught on the identity of peronism itself. The issue represented the first real attempt at reexamining the role of peronism in the 1970s, and also to bring the issue of ideology back into the open.

Three years earlier, in 2004, Isabel Perón had for the first time been mentioned in connection with possible prosecution for human rights abuses. In the province of Tucumán, a judge suggested she had giving the green light to an operation in the province in 1975 that had disappeared people.334 In November 2006, she was ordered detained by Mendoza federal judge. The same judge also sought Italo Luder, who was provisional president of the Senate, Carlos

333 Confidential Interview with member of PJ porteño leadership, Feb. 19, 2007.
Ruckauf, then minister of work, and Antonio Cafiero, then minister of the economy. While the case died down, in January 2007 federal judge Héctor Acosta presented an international warrant of arrest to Interpol. By signing the decrees 2070/71/72 of Oct. 6, 1975, she was accused of having given the military free reins in the “annihilation of the driving force of subversion,” which was used to justify the mass murders during the dictatorship. She was arrested the next day in Spain. Federal judge Norberto Oyarbide, who investigated the Triple A, also requested her detention for links to the death squad, arguing that there had been a “criminal and terrorist policy, institutionally implemented” by her government. While at least 15 were killed during Juan Perón’s presidency, during Isabel’s government, an orgy of murders was unleashed that claimed at least 1,500 dead, the vast majority perpetrated by the Triple A.

Repudiating the investigation, Eduardo Duhalde offered to be Isabel’s attorney, and during interviews, several expressed great consternation over her arrest and the investigation, which was an ongoing issue at the time of the interviews. Peronists more critical of Kirchner saw it as a frontal assault against peronism itself, orchestrated by the Kirchner government. One peronist senator claimed that “the idea to attack the historical and central figures of peronism I think is all connected to the same: to this decision to destroy peronism”:

From the moment President Kirchner assumes, one starts noticing that his objective in reality is to destroy the great Argentine parties, radicalism, and peronism. And in his imagination appears to be the idea to make a new force rise, of the centre-left, picking up politicians from different parties. And this is exactly what he has done. I believe his clear objective was to destroy peronism, and because of this, he is not a peronist. He uses peronism, like in the province of Buenos Aires, because it is the way in which to obtain a great sum of votes. He wants to destroy it, but at the same time he needs it...It is obvious that his idea is to destroy peronism, and it appears like until now he has it in a state of shock. And I also think that it is for the same reason that normalization has not been achieved, because the leaders who are real peronists don’t dare to raise their heads and demand normalization, out of fear.

One leading peronist politician in the Federal Capital opposed to Kirchner noted it was rather a battle over its identity rather than over peronism itself, but his conclusions were similar:

I think what the government is nourishing, what they are trying to force...is the end of peronism. I think they are trying to force the end of peronism, with an additional element: They want to say there is only one version of peronism, finally, which is theirs, which is of the young romantics of the 1970s, of the guerrilla of the 1970s; ‘this is the real version of peronism.’ These people in reality weren’t too peronist, because they got in contradiction with Perón himself... and because of this, because the subject of Isabel does not end with Isabel, it goes against Perón.

335 La consigna de Isabel es siempre “no me atosiguéis.” Página 12, Nov. 3, 2006.
340 Duhalde le ofreció a Isabel ser su abogado en la causa por la Triple A. Clarín, Jan. 25, 2007.
341 Confidential interview, PJ national senator, April 25, 2007.
342 Confidential interview, Buenos Aires city administration functionary, Jan. 23. 2007.
To one member of the PJ in the Federal Capital who lived through the peronist infighting in the 1970s, the trial against Isabel meant that “one has gone on again to discuss the internal struggle of peronism 30 years ago.” The issue of Isabel thus touched upon a great many issues, including the identity of peronism:

Look, I will be very honest to you. In fact, this subject hurts a lot. It brings back a very difficult phase. To us, that in this very moment they are putting Isabel on a parallel with Videla is very painful, and to us it seems absolutely just, the truth is that to us this seems tremendously unjust…The era was so full of violence, and there was a period of very hard inflexion which was the assassination of Rucci. Some say death of Rucci, but Rucci did not die in bed… the reactions of others sectors, of other gangs, of the right, shall we say, I don’t justify them, but they must be seen in this context. I don’t justify it and I never would have participated, but we were in the middle of a fight of gangs, and the truth is that in this fight, I would tell you that everyone… not everyone, but many, held positions in the state, those of the right and others as well, if we examine it… there were attacks promoted by people who were national deputies, governors, and even chiefs of the police. So to me it seems that looking for the political responsibility in Isabel or in Perón is something that offends peronism. The deputy Kunkel came out…
DM: So he needed to come out…
I: No, they ordered him to!343

Carlos Kunkel, who was elected a national deputy in 2005, had often taken positions revindicating the role of left peronism in the 1970s, and demonstrated no love for Isabel, under whose government he had been imprisoned. According to Kunkel, “Perón did not kick us out; we were the ones who left. We decided to go, and we went. With much pain, much sorrow. What came later would prove us right.”344

Several peronists singled out Kunkel and Eduardo Luis Duhalde, secretary of human rights, as instigators of the judicial investigation of Isabel Perón, although no evidence was ever presented.345 Kunkel would later declare he “didn’t think she had any responsibility.”346

Was Kirchner himself behind the investigation? To be sure, it was clear that the issue reopened an important discussion regarding peronism’s past, which had never really been examined critically. Even the Renovation in the 1980s did not fundamentally address the 1970s violence and the possible responsibility of Isabel Perón, as well as crucially, whether certain organizational or ideological traits of peronism itself were also to blame. Yet was Kirchner himself behind it? To be sure, peronists close to the president denied this. According to a leader of the Compromiso K, while Kirchner would not seek to end the investigation, neither was he pushing it forward.

I don’t think the president is behind this, there could be some people close to him that are doing it, but I insist: he is not going to do anything so that one does not investigate, so that justice moves forward with the investigation… He will stop at absolutely nothing, but I don’t think he is pushing

344 Quoted in Wornat (2005, 95).
345 Five interviewees brought up the name of Kunkel, and three of Eduardo Luis Duhalde.
346 Kunkel: “Perón ni remotamente tuvo que ver con la Triple A; Isabel, no creo.” Clarín, Jan. 24, 2007
it. Moreover, I think it is good that the subject is investigated. It is a very hard and painful subject, but one in which peronism has responsibility. We were in government during this epoch, so therefore, it is a pending self-criticism. But the president gains nothing with this.347

A national deputy for the FpV emphasized as well the need for peronism to critically examine the period, and not let bygones be bygones.

I think the courts need to investigate, because there are thousands of dead and many disappeared, at least 700 disappeared in the period that runs from November 1974, when the decrees are signed, when the state of siege is declared, until Isabel’s government [ended]… looking at the political process it is clear that here role was that of a woman who had no capacity to govern, but being in that place has an important responsibility for the scaffolding of the parapolic and paramilitary groups that later would feed the functioning of the repressive structure under the dictatorship… and there are people responsible for this who needs to be held accountable. And this creates a convulsion and a debate within peronism. I think that there are sectors that think that what one is looking for is an assault against Perón.348

This interpretation was not only limited to peronists close to Kirchner. One peronist politician in the Federal Capital who could diplomatically be described as an adamant opponent of Kirchner, noted,

Towards the 1990s, one tried to make a synthesis of peronism, to enclose within it – the edges of the plate, Perón used to call it – the distinct ideological expressions of peronism. One did not talk about ideology, and one attempted this. Today, the debate was reopened, the debated of Argentine society in the 1970s was responded, and on top of this, one reopened the inside of peronism, with the process against Isabel Perón. This is something of this moment, of this very moment.349

What did the actual posters mean, and to whom were they directed? Most saw them as a direct response from the Orthodox peronism to the judicial investigation of Isabel Perón.

The Orthodox PJ came out with this phrase: Don’t fuck with Perón. The president definitely wants that the justice system acts and does not pause before anybody. And if it needs to not pause for anybody, it needs to not pause for anybody, it’s that simple. The truth is, deep down, he does not care for Isabel; he is not a man who has particular sympathy for her. And there is more. I know the president, and I have shared things with him: He does not have much sympathy for the entire life of Perón. He says that Perón until the year 1972 is one thing, but that later when he returns to Argentina, he is already a… he divides, he has an outlook… this is subject to debate. But he says, “No, Perón up until this time, the first years, but not later.” No, he does not have a reverential respect for him; in short, [Perón] does not matter much to him.350

One leader of the “62” confirmed the posters were a response to the trial against Isabel, noting, “It is a political persecution of peronism; this is what they are doing... Because of that, I went out to defend Isabel, because beyond defending her, I am defending Perón and Evita.” At the same time, he denied it was a signal to the government.351 Most others, however, were adamant that the posters were directed against the Kirchner administration itself. One peronist intellectual close to Kirchner noted,
In a certain sense, this was done for many reasons, but one definite reason was to inconvenience him. It has also to do with this, it was directed at more than just him, but it was directed at him. One the one hand, “Don’t fuck with Perón” says no more than just that, and it is told by a union sector that is very markedly of the right…

DM: Of the Orthodox peronists?
I: Of the part that was the classic peronist right. And what one is raising here is a message for many, but basically for the president, because whatever the “62” says does not matter for anyone, it only matters to Kirchner and the organizations that make up the CGT, which is his ally. Therefore, this is more or less the peronist question.\footnote{Confidential interview, Kirchner administration adviser, Feb. 19, 2007.}

One union leader in the Federal Capital noted,

It means that a sector of peronism, I would say the majority, felt that they started to meddle with the past of peronism… and that by picking on Isabel, the shot went toward Perón, and some leaders felt that the best manner to go out and defend this was to say, “Don’t fuck with Perón” That was a clear message.\footnote{Confidential interview, PJ porteño central member, Feb. 28, 2007.}

Many also saw it as, in the words of a Buenos Aires deputy, as a “visceral reaction of self defense” on part of the unions themselves.\footnote{Confidential interview, FpV national deputy, March 14, 2007.} According to a transversal leftwing deputy, who remained highly critical of the unions,

The unions permanently extort all those who rule, and I am sure that they extort Kirchner as well… the national government pushed into the open a subject, which is the Triple A and the links, the actions of the Triple A during the peronist government. Perhaps not so much tied to Perón, but certainly tied to Isabel. And Isabel and Lopez Rega are subjects that they don’t want to touch because they were very close. The union thugs, which was the traditional syndicalism, were accomplices of this. Many sectors are accomplices. They denounced compañeros, their own, affiliated to their union, people that afterwards the Triple A killed. Therefore, they don’t want to touch the subject nor go in depth. Nonetheless, the Kirchner government had the courage to at least bring the subject up. The subject of the Triple A had never been touched in this country… and it important that perceived a government that has links with peronism would bring it up, because it seems to me to say: We are going to examine in depth subjects that some does not want us to touch.\footnote{Confidential interview, FpV Buenos Aires city legislator, March 8, 2007.}

A peronist national legislator added,

At least she needs to come here and testify; she needs to testify. She cannot say, “no, I won’t declare, nothing happened.”\footnote{Confidential interview, FpV national deputy, Feb. 28, 2007.}

As it were, the judicial process would come to a halt in April 2008, when the Spanish national court rejected the extradition of Isabel, on grounds that sufficient evidence for her responsibility was not provided.\footnote{“A ella nada la relaciona con las desapariciones.” \textit{Página 12}, April 29, 2008.} The case, however, served to bring out in the open the simmering ideological tensions within the PJ, and served as a major first step toward a reexamination of the historic role of peronism. It represented a conflict over peronist identity, which in the final instance was a battle over its ideological orientation.
Kirchner and the PJ: Rupture or reconciliation?

“I believe the PJ will be normalized, and be part of the Frente para la Victoria.”
- Member of PJ porteño leadership, Jan. 2007

“I think he will not take over the PJ. I think he wants to lead a new party.”
- FpV national deputy, March 2007

While it appears unlikely the judicial investigation of Isabel Perón was ordered by the Kirchner administration, for many peronists it reinforced the notion that peronism was under attack. For nearly four years, the president had showed little inclination to take over the leadership of the PJ, and his support of leftwing transversal forces and other allies, left an impression among many that peronism was under siege. Crucially, there had never been an acceptance of Kirchner as the leader of peronism, unheard of in peronist vertical tradition. Even the weak Isabel, had commanded the loyalty of the brunt of Orthodox peronism even after years in Spain and Kirchner was “a peronist leader, yes, but a very suspicious leader” for many peronists, above all those who had celebrated Perón’s rupture with the peronist left in 1974. In 2007, then, the future role of Kirchner within the PJ or peronism itself was a wholly open subject. Moreover, while the PJ technically ruled the nation, as well as a majority of its provinces, the national party itself was very much reduced to insignificance. According to a national deputy,

Today there is a referential leadership, there is Kirchner, and the people, but after that there is nothing. There is no party leader – there are governors, deputies, ministers, senators, but there is no…. structure. The national structure of the PJ no longer exists.

According to a peronist functionary,

The PJ does not exist. There is no national structure anymore, and I don’t think it is a priority of Kirchner that there be one. The problem is that peronism today is empty. The PJ does not exist. I’m telling you, electorally, the party is intervened, and the leadership that Kirchner has is because he is the president of the nation, and if the president… it would be a fiction. Tomorrow we could have elections in the PJ and Kirchner would win, but this would not put the party in order, because it seems to me that still we have not had a renovation of leaders. There are leaders who were with Menem, and now are with Kirchner.

The need for a rupture with the party was a point made particularly by the more ideologically inclined allies of the Kirchner administration, who criticized the continuity within the party of elites who had been with Menem, Duhalde, and were now Kirchner converts:

DM: I’ve read that there are people who fear that Kirchner wants to destroy the PJ. What does this mean? Well, perhaps not destroy, but…
I: No, but that is fine, we can adopt the laws of physics, of genetics, which sometimes are very similar to those of politics. Perhaps for something to grow the old must be destroyed. For the

358 Confidential interview, PJ porteño central member, Jan. 30, 2007.
359 Confidential interview, FpV national deputy, March 6, 2007.
360 Confidential interview, FpV national deputy, March 6, 2007.
362 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 13, 2007.
chicken to be born, you must break the egg. I believe that the PJ, as it is now, is no good anymore. It is a powerful apparatus in electoral terms and in some places, for example Buenos Aires Province. But is life about an election? To be powerful in electoral terms changes it into something good, for the necessities of people? No! It seems to me then that if one needs to destroy it, then destroy it.363

In 2007, many thought he would create an entirely new national party to replace the PJ. And the speculation was hardly without any foundation; since early 2000, Kirchner had talked about creating a new party, and he had in the Partido de la Victoria a personal electoral vehicle that had worked to draw in non-peronist supporters. As well, his electoral alliance and parliamentary group remained known as the Frente Para la Victoria-PJ – and not the other way around.

Here as well, a clear correlation existed: while his new transversal and other allies of the center-left were convinced there would be a complete break – undoubtedly partially representing their own desires – those more tied to the PJ, perhaps equally naturally, considered it only a matter of time before Kirchner would assume as PJ president. According to one leftwing functionary,

As a matter of fact, until this day he doesn’t want to be president of the PJ, and I don’t think he will be. His leadership position includes being the leader of peronism, or at least a great sector of it, not of everything, but his interest is not to preside over the PJ, his construction is much wider. It includes now the Plural Concertation, which he has promoted and promotes day after day with vehemence, and they are including, whether the peronists like it or not, people from the UCR.364

The uncertainty surrounding Kirchner plans was captured as well by a government functionary:

DM: What does Kirchner want with the PJ?
I: I think that it is not all clear to him. Everyone wants him to be president of the PJ and he has not done so, because to be president of the PJ is to take on all of this, and I don’t think he is interested in it. I think he dreams about a new political force that would represent a broad progressive peronism.
DM: A concertation, like in Chile?
I: But a concertation requires willing actors, and you don’t have that here.
DM: Exactly. But does he have plans to construct a new party?
I: It is very probable, is very probable, yes. I don’t know if it will be a reorganized PJ, or if it will be a new party.
DM: Still one doesn’t know.
I: Still one doesn’t know well how it will be, but this is the idea. It is very clear to him, when he speaks of the new and criticizes the old, there is a strong sense here of what the old and the new is. This is the frontier.365

One peronist intellectual argued that practical reality as well impeded upon any possible desires to establish an entirely new party:

364 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 27, 2007.
365 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 15, 2007.
I: Yes, but until now he has done what he could. If things were like he wanted them to be, in 2011 his political force would be the Frente para la Victoria, which would have support from some sector of the PJ, but not the other way around. Not the other way around, this is what he would want, and I don’t know if he is going to achieve it. But the truth is that this is not going to be easy.\(^\text{366}\)

An FpV city legislator of transversal origin suggested a type of synthesis:

I believe Kirchner is going to try to make a new political force. With the [2007] elections this process may slow down a bit, but this is the idea. When I have had the chance to talk with Kirchner – before he was president, even before the agreement with Duhalde – he always thought one needed to create something new. A few months ago I was in Casa Rosada with him, and he gave me the impression that he wants to create a new political force that has peronism as the central nucleus, which is logical, not just because of Kirchner’s own origins, but because a party’s social base is the logical one a leftwing force is peronism.\(^\text{367}\)

Rather than a complete rupture with peronism itself, Kirchner was rather leading a drawn-out battle with a significant part of it, principally that of the right. No opposition existed to the left of Kirchner within peronism. A member of the Compromiso K also acknowledged a rupture within peronism, and crucially noted that rather than a complete break with the PJ, Kirchner would rather seek to attract new forces to the party.

I: What there clearly is, then, is a rupture with peronism of the conservative dye, with menemismo, and later with the conservative peronism of the Buenos Aires Province, which is what the fight was about when Cristina won against Eduardo Duhalde’s woman. With them, yes, there is a rupture, but not with peronism.

DM: Not with peronism itself?

I: What it has to do with is to expand the peronist space, because peronism alone is not sufficient to govern Argentina today… the PJ continues to be an important force in the interior, and we are above all very strong in Buenos Aires province, but kirchnerismo leads the PJ, and also leads all the other groups.

DM: And not the other way around?

E: To be sure. Peronism is a component, the spinal column of all this, but it is not everything; it will be widened, modernized. Kirchner is a hacedor (a “doer”), and I don’t think it is in his head to make an entirely new party. He is not of those who would say, “I will make a new political movement,” he doesn’t have time for… he is a hacedor more than an ideologue.\(^\text{368}\)

During the Menem era, the PJ had been reduced to significance, yet while Menem drastically deinstitutionalized the PJ following its Renovation, Kirchner did not. As one functionary noted, “It’s not like he invented this. He found it like this, and he draws strength from it.”\(^\text{369}\) Yet he clearly had little interest in reviving a party where most of the elites had been his ideological opponents. The elections in 2003 had brought some new allies to his coalition, but it was above all in 2005 that he would break the power of the most significant opposition to his leadership within the PJ, namely the PJ bonaerense. The 2007 elections would serve to continue that trend, as well as to prepare the ground for the big prize: The continuation of Kirchner’s

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\(^{368}\) Confidential interview, Kirchner political operator, Feb. 25, 2007.

\(^{369}\) Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 15, 2007.
project through the election of, in his words, either a *pingüina o pingüino*, as the next president of Argentina.370

2007: Rightwing peronist pressure to normalize the PJ

In the run-up to the October elections, Kirchner as well faced increasing demands to normalize the PJ, although most of the calls now came from his most hardcore opponents within the party, most of who had been competing directly against Kirchner in 2003 and 2005, either within the PJ label or outside of it. Despite Kirchner’s victories, they had not aligned behind his leadership or given up the fight to suppress it.

The fight over the control of the national PJ also had is more bizarre sides. In January 2007, Adolfo Rodríguez Saá flew to Washington, DC, to present a case for the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights demanding the national normalization of the party, a move that even his own supporters found to be “a bit exaggerated.”371

Then, the most ardent anti-Kirchner peronists held what they claimed was an official PJ conference, in the luxury resort Potrero de Funes in San Luis, home province of the Rodríguez Saá dynasty. Adolfo Rodríguez Saá was self-appointed president of the conference, and with Carlos Menem and Ramón Puerta set up a “Superior Justicialist Command.” The conference was reported to have attracted 428 attendees, and drew a great variety of peronists who might have been enemies in the past, yet were not united in opposition to Kirchner. Old Menem allies such as Miguel Ángel Toma,372 Alberto Kohan,373 Moisés Ikonicoff, Guillermo Cherashny, Humberto Toledo, Julio César “Chiche” Aráoz, and Eduardo Menem were present, as well as representatives from Ramón Puerta’s group *Peronismo de Pie*. While Duhalde carefully kept his distance, his close ally Daniel “Chicho” Basile attended, among others. Several speakers at the conference heaped lavish praise on the former president.

The conference had a clear ideological bent of the right. Also attending were head of the UCeDÉ, Jorge Pereyra de Olazábal; Governor Jorge Sobisch of Neuquén; Ramón Saadi of Catamarca; and Luis Patti, who was prevented from assuming his seat in congress due to charges

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370 Before CFK’s candidacy became official, Kirchner bred uncertainty regarding his own candidacy, noting the candidate would be “either a male or a female penguin.” Yet he had early noted that he was not interested in reelection. “Lo que diga sobre la reelección no me lo van a creer.” Página 12, May 21, 2006.
372 Toma had also been Duhalde’s chief of SIDE, and was now an ally of Mauricio Macri.
373 As of June 2008, under investigation for illicit enrichment. Qué es de la vida de... Alberto Kohan. Página 12, June 24, 2008.
of involvement in torture.\textsuperscript{374} The conference thus summoned not only the rightwing sectors of the PJ, but most all right or center-right forces in the nation.

Among the concrete acts of the congress was to demand the expulsion of Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández “for having passed from the PJ to the FpV.”\textsuperscript{375} Moreover, its primary future goal was to unify the national opposition to Kirchner, so as to be able to force through a second round in the October presidential elections.\textsuperscript{376}

The congress, moreover, claimed official status as the PJ’s national organ, which prompted secretary general of the PJ \textit{porteño}, Víctor Santa María, to declare, “if Menem, Rodríguez Saá and Puerta are the authorities of PJ, I declare myself King of Spain.”\textsuperscript{377} Yet a local judge from the province would actually validate the conference, which initiated a judicial battle over its status as a legal PJ congress.\textsuperscript{378} Servini de Cubría, who ruled against the validity of the congress, was told by the Federal electoral chamber it was outside her authority, and taken off the case. Ramón Ruiz, the national interventor of the PJ, called the self-convoked congress “illegal,”\textsuperscript{379} and in October a federal judge finally declared that it did not constitute an official PJ congress.\textsuperscript{380} However, the judge also noted that Argentina’s constitution explicitly highlights the importance of functioning political parties,\textsuperscript{381} and Ramón Ruiz was ordered to move forward in his work to normalize the PJ.\textsuperscript{382}

Meanwhile, Duhalde had been keeping a low profile. He had not attended the San Luis conference nor made any general statements, but in September returned to the national stage and said he would work to “reconstruct” the PJ, a declaration unlikely to assuage rumors that he was planning a return to national politics.\textsuperscript{383} It was, as a comment in \textit{La Nación} correctly pointed out, “the return of he who never left.”\textsuperscript{384} The pressure was clearly rising on Kirchner to make a move with the PJ.

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\textsuperscript{374} El PJ anti-K busca que Menem se baje y quiere sumar a Duhalde. \textit{Clarín}, July 13, 2007.
\textsuperscript{376} Hugo Calaris, writing in \textit{La Nación}, offers a humorous interpretation of the dynamics of Peronist meetings: 1) There is no sense in having any meeting unless it is made against an absent third party; 2) The important is to determine who has not been invited; 3) If everyone wears a tie, the leader is the only one not wearing one. \textit{Cabez. La Nación}, May 9, 2004.
\textsuperscript{378} Batalla judicial por el sello PJ. \textit{Página 12}, Aug. 20, 2007.
\textsuperscript{379} Interventor del PJ califica de “ilegal” el cónclave en San Luis. \textit{Perfil.com}, July 6, 2007. \texttt{www.perfil.com}
\textsuperscript{381} Article 38 of the Argentine Constitution states that “political parties are fundamental institutions of a democratic system.”
\textsuperscript{382} Servini fue separada de una causa del PJ. \textit{La Nación}, Oct. 11, 2007.
\textsuperscript{384} El regreso de quien nunca se fue. \textit{La Nación}, Sept. 12, 2007.
Ironically, the “PJ anti-K” would eventually be unable to settle on a common candidate, as the personal ambitions of its leaders came in the way of a single candidature. Alberto Rodríguez Saá would run on the FREJULI list, while Sobisch sought a national projection as candidate of his MPN.

2007 elections: A concerted effort at overcoming the peronist-radical divide

The round of 2007 gubernatorial elections would introduce a range of new historic developments. They would see the first democratic election of a woman governor in Tierra del Fuego, while in Santa Fe, the Socialist party would finally win the governorship, a first for the party. The elections would also lead up to what was the most remarkable moment of all, namely the coming to power of the first democratically elected woman president in Argentina.

Achieving the election of his wife to succeed him in the presidential chair was clearly the principal motivation for the knitting of Kirchner’s electoral alliances. Before the 2007 presidential elections, several provincial elections were held. While Kirchner in general aligned with center-left forces, there were also cases where he sought to curry the favor of both the PJ, and non-PJ forces of the left to support the CFK candidacy. But there were also notable failures, such as in Córdoba, where Kirchner attempted to placate both the left and a conservative provincial PJ but ended up alienating both.

The Catamarca election in March was the first electoral test of the new Concertation. According to a peronist functionary involved with the Catamarca election, it was also part of a growing left-right divide in Argentine politics.

The people still will not really say, “I am of the left” or “I am of the right,” but this cleavage is becoming highly significant here. This new reconfiguration of the party system tends to generate more aggregations because of it. You have the case of Catamarca, where you have a radical [Brizuela de Moral] who is a little more progressive, more of the center, and from the PJ you have

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385 FREJULI was also the name of the 1972-1973 peronist electoral front, although the acronym in 2007, for legal reasons, stood for Frente Justicia, Unión y Libertad.
386 Nor was any agreement achieved with Mauricio Macri, or his ally Ricardo López Murphy, whose candidature, as in 2003, also competed for the center-right votes. Opposition to CFK’s candidature also came from the former Kirchner ranks. Roberto Lavagna had been Duhalde’s last and Kirchner’s first minister of the economy, and declared his intention to fight for a runoff with CFK. Lavagna, a peronist, was particularly promoted by former president Raúl Alfonsín, in an ironic parallel to Kirchner’s advocacy of his wife’s ticket with the Radical K’s Julio Cobos. While Eduardo Duhalde kept a rather low profile in the election campaign, Lavagna had the open support of another bonaerense, Eduardo Camaño, who on Oct. 17 – the peronist Day of Loyalty – would characteristically claim that Lavagna was peronism’s candidate, as opposed to CFK, as “Perón threw them out of the Plaza [in 1974] and many of those are today in government.” While Lavagna had never been on acrimonious terms with Kirchner and declared himself a “progressive,” he noted of Kirchner’s allies that “this vengeful left wants to drain peronism from the left. Cf. “Esta izquierda revanchista quiere vaciar al peronismo por izquierda” Página 12, Oct. 18, 2007.
Barrionuevo, who is old-fashioned, very Orthodox, and Kirchner supports the other, beyond the old peronism-anti-peronism. And there are many more examples.

**Catamarca, March 11, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Cívico y Social – FpV</td>
<td>Eduardo Brizuela del Moral/Lucia Corpacci</td>
<td>92,531</td>
<td>59.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista por la Dignidad</td>
<td>Luis Barrionuevo/Francisco Sotomayor</td>
<td>58,636</td>
<td>37.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first election of 2007, held in Catamarca, was judged to be first “test-case” of the professed Concertation since its 2006 launch. Despite its tiny size and population – 335,000 inhabitants – the Catamarca election was a highly significant one, as the eventual success of the new alliance would serve as a weathervane for the presidential elections later that year. The election, moreover, pitted current governor Brizuela del Moral against Kirchner’s old enemy in the PJ, union leader Luis Barrionuevo, who made a last attempt at the governorship in alliance with the Saadi-sector of the PJ.

**Entre Ríos, March 18, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista para la Victoria</td>
<td>Sergio Urribarri/José Lauritto</td>
<td>292,352</td>
<td>47.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>Gustavo Cusinato/Alba López</td>
<td>124,392</td>
<td>20.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente para la Victoria y la Justicia Social</td>
<td>Julio Solanas/Enrique Cresto</td>
<td>115,695</td>
<td>18.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Entre Ríos, Busti had been governor on three occasions, but as the province does not have consecutive reelection, he would step down as governor after the 2007 election. His anointed candidate was Sergio Urribarri, a minister of his provincial government, and while Busti and Kirchner had never been close, Urribarri, who won more than the double of his nearest rival, declared he would be a “K governor.” Solanas, a dissident peronist running on the FpV label ended third. As well, Mauricio Macri came to campaign for his own candidate, who in the end barely pulled two percent, and demonstrated the rather localized power of Macri’s center-right party PRO.

**Rio Negro, May 20, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concertación-Provincial party</td>
<td>Miguel Saiz/Bautista Mendioroz</td>
<td>126,640</td>
<td>47.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Miguel Pichetto/Julio Arriaga</td>
<td>109,346</td>
<td>40.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Rio Negro, the close Kirchner Radical K ally Miguel Angel Saiz was reelected. His main competitor, however, came from another Miguel Angel and Kirchner ally as well, the FpV-PJ group leader in the Senate, Miguel Angel Pichetto. Both would, moreover, campaign for CFK as the presidential candidate, and for Kirchner the result would in any case be a win-win situation. To maintain balance, he did not intervene on behalf of either candidate. The victory of Saiz,
moreover, was regarded as a further triumph for the Concertación, which Kirchner was actively promoting in a range of campaign speeches. On May 25, 2007, the national day speech was conspicuously held in Mendoza, governed by Radical K governor Julio Cobos, who would soon be announced as CFK’s vice presidential candidate. The sharing of the presidential formula with a radical was another unprecedented event within peronism.

Tierra del Fuego, June 17 and June 24, 2007, gubernatorial election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Hugo Cóccaro/Rosana Bertone</td>
<td>19,711</td>
<td>37.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARI</td>
<td>Fabiana Ríos/Carlos Basanetti</td>
<td>17,408</td>
<td>32.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR-Provincial</td>
<td>Jorge Garramuño/ Pablo Blanco</td>
<td>16,094</td>
<td>30.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the southernmost of Argentina’s provinces, the pattern from Río Negro was repeated, where both FpV candidate Hugo Cóccaro and the UCR’s Jorge Garramuño declared in favor of Kirchner. Sitting governor Cóccaro, however, had recently been denounced for alleged corruption in several public works, while the radical candidate as well had recently seen his functionaries involved in bribery as mayor of the capital city Ushuaia. In the first round, Fabian Ríos from the ARI captured the second place, and secured her place in the runoff. In a surprise win, Ríos beat the PJ candidate one week later. While ARI leader Elisa Carrió had become one of the most vocal and hardcore opponents of Kirchner, Ríos early on signaled she was “respectful” of the president. Neither would her provincial ARI branch join the Coalición Cívica launched by Carrió for the October election. Yet the otherwise remarkable event of the first democratically elected woman governor of Argentina, moreover from a new party, was drowned out by a local election that would have even wider ramification: The second round of the election for mayor of the Federal Capital.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARI</td>
<td>Fabiana Ríos/Carlos Basanetti</td>
<td>31,539</td>
<td>52.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Hugo Cóccaro/Rosana Bertone</td>
<td>28,528</td>
<td>47.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Lists</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>List Votes</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Propuesta Republicana</td>
<td>Mauricio Macri/Gabriela Michetti</td>
<td>798,292</td>
<td>45.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diálogo por Buenos Aires-FpV</td>
<td>Daniel Filmus/Carlos Heller</td>
<td>414,205</td>
<td>23.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Más Buenos Aires-CC</td>
<td>Jorge Telerman/Enrique Olivera</td>
<td>360,734</td>
<td>20.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following Ibarra’s suspension and later impeachment from the mayorship, Ibarra’s 2003 running mate and vice chief Jorge Telerman had been running the Federal Capital. While he had the support of some sectors of peronism, the official FpV-PJ candidate was Kirchner’s minister of education Daniel Filmus. Behind Filmus was the newly renovated PJ porteño, the Partido de la Victoria and the smaller Nueva Dirigencia. Important sectors of the peronist right, moreover, were supporting the center-right candidate Mauricio Macri, who now made a second attempt after losing in 2003 to Ibarra. Just like in 2003, President Kirchner intervened repeatedly in support of

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240
Filmus, and according to reports sought to polarize the election as a contest between the left and the right. While Filmus would beat Telerman for a place in the second round – an achievement hailed as a major victory by Kirchner, especially as Telerman was as well backed by Elisa Carrió and center-right sectors of radicalism – Macri would go on to win the second round by more than 20 points. Macri’s candidature had been for many as a surprise, as he had been expected to launch a presidential bid in 2007, although national polls suggested his chances of beating either one of the Kirchner couple were slim. Now, however, he won the mayorship for the capital of Argentina, which would serve as an extremely important platform to build up support for a potential future presidential bid. Several peronists and transversal allies of Kirchner in the run-up to the June election argued that the polarization with Macri and Kirchner, through his candidate Filmus, was part of his desire to lead a wide space of the center-right, with Macri as a leader of an eventual center-right pole. As such, the election did indeed bring about such polarization, although Macri’s win superseded even the most optimistic of projections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Propuesta Republicana</td>
<td>Mauricio Macri/Gabriela Michetti</td>
<td>1,007,729</td>
<td>60.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diálogo por Buenos Aires, and FpV</td>
<td>Daniel Filmus/Carlos Heller</td>
<td>645,779</td>
<td>39.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**San Juan, Aug. 12, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV alliance with 5 minor parties</td>
<td>José Luis Gioja/Sergio Uñac</td>
<td>187,429</td>
<td>61.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente para el Cambio</td>
<td>Roberto Basualdo/Raúl Anzor</td>
<td>75,126</td>
<td>24.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In San Juan, close Kirchner ally José Luis Gioja easily won reelection, against a provincial coalition with a large peronist component.

**La Rioja, Aug. 19, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente del Pueblo Riojano</td>
<td>Luis Beder Herrera/Teresa Luna</td>
<td>65,724</td>
<td>42.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Ricardo Quintela/Fernando Rejal</td>
<td>43,082</td>
<td>27.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lealtad y Dignidad</td>
<td>Carlos Menem/Nicolás Martinez</td>
<td>34,547</td>
<td>22.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Menem had won the minority senate seat in the 2005 legislative election, Página 12 called the electoral outcome of the 2007 gubernatorial election “The End of a Ghost of the Past.” Menem, despite his multiple stints as governor of La Rioja, ended up third, behind both FpV candidate Ricardo Quintela, mayor of the capital city, and Luis Beder Herrera, whose Frente del Pueblo Riojano was comprised of four minor parties with a background in peronism. Beder declared after his victory in favor of Kirchner’s project, and that he would support CFK in the upcoming elections.

**San Luis, Aug. 19, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

400 Algo más que una cuestión de nombres. Página 12, June 5, 2007. This point was also stressed by five politicians and functionaries interviewed who were much involved in the election.
402 Data from Andy Tow archive, with 99.64 percent counted. http://towsa.com/andy/totalpais/index.html
406 Data from San Luis government with 95.27 percent completed. http://escrutinio.sanluis.gov.ar/
The Rodríguez Saá family dynasty, governing since 1983, maintained complete hegemony over San Luis, and the FpV and UCR do not even participate in the gubernatorial contest. Yet the province had seen an increase in protests in recent years, including opposition marches clashing with the police, and the province at one point had earlier appeared to veer on federal intervention. The turnout for the August election was only 60.55 percent, while 11 percent voted in blank or spoiled their vote.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Alberto Rodríguez Saá/Jorge Pellegrini</td>
<td>130,173</td>
<td>85.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Socialista</td>
<td>Roque Palma/Alfredo Dolorini</td>
<td>15,251</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Governor Alperovich, a close ally of Kirchner, was reelected by a landslide. The nearest runner-up, the Fuerza Republicana now led by Ricardo Bussi, came in on second place with only 5.24 percent of the votes. Domingo Antonio Bussi had been elected mayor of San Miguel de Tucumán in 2003, yet had not been able to assume due to criminal charges brought up for crimes committed during the dictatorship.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Progresista, Cívico y Social</td>
<td>Hermes Binner/Griselda Tessio</td>
<td>864,524</td>
<td>53.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Rafael Bielsa/Carlos Galán</td>
<td>688,197</td>
<td>42.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Santa Fe, the national deputy Hermes Binner became the first Socialist to ever govern an Argentine province. His nearest competitor was former minister of the exterior Rafael Bielsa, who was duly supported by Kirchner, although the president did not attend the closing of the campaign, and noted that he did not “disqualify” any candidate, a clear expression of the good relationship he had with the socialist leader. To his credit, outgoing governor Obeid had pushed for the provincial legislature to end the infamous Ley de Lemas which had allowed him to win against Binner in 2003 with substantially less votes. This time, Binner’s Frente Progresista, an alliance principally of the socialist party, allied with the left-leaning Demócrata Progresista and the Communist party, finally won the governorship and ended a quarter-century of PJ dominance. Binner, however, noted that “we are not opponents” of Kirchner, and while the socialist party would later form part of the Coalición Cívica that supported Elisa Carrió’s presidential bid, Binner’s support for the former ARI leader was rather lukewarm, who was eventually beat by CFK by 25,000 votes in the province.

Córdoba, Sept. 2, 2007, gubernatorial election.\textsuperscript{416}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unión por Córdoba</td>
<td>Juan Schiaretti/Héctor Campana</td>
<td>582,973</td>
<td>37.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Cívico y Social</td>
<td>Luis Juez/Antonio Benigno Rins</td>
<td>565,239</td>
<td>36.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR alliance</td>
<td>Mario Negri/Miguel Abella</td>
<td>347,698</td>
<td>22.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Córdoba was a particularly difficult case, which would reveal that Kirchner’s earlier strategy of putting his eggs in more than one basket could strongly backfire as well. Luis Juez, the mayor of the capital city, had through the years maintained a close relationship to many of Kirchner’s own allies. He was considered a candidate of the center-left, had met Kirchner on many occasions as one of the original transversales, and while Kirchner had abstained from supporting him openly in 2003 and 2005, had considered himself a “critical Kirchner ally.”\textsuperscript{417} His gubernatorial bid was now supported by, among others, the Frente Grande, Libres del Sur and Partido Intransigente, all center-left allies of Kirchner. The provincial PJ, however, was under the complete control of José Manuel de la Sota, a one-time Renovator, and his defín, or anointed successor, was vice governor Juan Schiaretti. While Kirchner was known to “detest” de la Sota, he faced a dilemma whether to openly aid Juez, Schiaretti, or abstain from supporting any. Kirchner’s own coalition, moreover, was equally divided. His cabinet chief Alberto Fernández favored Juez, and had favored Binner in Santa Fe. His longtime rival in the administration, Julio de Vido, had in both occasions supported the PJ candidates, while Graciela Ocaña of the PV, and Patricia Vaca Narvaja, first vice president of the lower chamber,\textsuperscript{418} campaigned for Juez. Vaca Narvaja had herself entered parliament in 2005 on the lists of the Unión por Córdoba, which was now an alliance of the PJ and 11 other parties. To add to this internecine rivalry, Schiaretti’s running mate was Héctor Campana, who had originally been Juez’s candidate to succeed him as mayor of Córdoba city. Following a very slow count of the votes, Juez claimed the initial outcome that favored Schiaretti a product of fraud.\textsuperscript{419} Weeks of legal wrangling followed, until the election was legally settled on Oct. 4, where victory was awarded to Schiaretti with a margin of 1.13 percent. Juez had a fallout with the Kirchner government, which took a neutral position in the post-electoral fraud, of “indifference,” and called for an abstention or a blank vote for the October elections.\textsuperscript{420} Important members of his party, however, such as newly elected mayor of Córdoba Daniel Giacomino, remained allied. In Córdoba, from an ideological point of view, Juez was a much more natural ally to Kirchner than Schiaretti. Yet it is important to keep in mind that the all-important presidential election was only weeks away, and as Juez had consistently trailed Schiaretti in the polls, Kirchner appeared unwilling to anger the local PJ by openly supporting Juez. However, it appears Kirchner made a miscalculation not to take a clear stand, as eventually both Schiaretti and Juez would turn against him and accuse him of “ambiguity.” De la Sota, for instance, would complain bitterly that CFK would hold a rally with Giacomino, elected mayor of Córdoba as successor to Juez, his bitter enemy, rather than with the local PJ.\textsuperscript{421} While events in 2008 would eventually demonstrate Schiaretti’s lack of support of the national administration, it is clear that the PJ did no favors for CFK in October, as she was eventually be beat by more than ten percentage points by Roberto Lavagna. It appears a manifestation of the failure of the strategy: By trying to appease both candidates, Kirchner would in the end lose the loyalty of both. Only time would tell if Kirchner would heed this lesson.

\textsuperscript{417} “No merecen otra oportunidad.” Página 12, Aug. 31, 2007.
\textsuperscript{419} Por un pelo, pero además está en discusión. Página 12, Sept. 4, 2007.
\textsuperscript{420} “Milito por la abstención y el voto en blanco.” Página 12, Sept. 8, 2007.
\textsuperscript{421} Dura crítica de De la Sota a las alianzas de Kirchner. La Nación, Oct. 21, 2007.
Chubut, Sept. 16, 2007, gubernatorial election.422

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ and provincial party</td>
<td>Mario Das Neves/Mario Vargas</td>
<td>167,958</td>
<td>71.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCR</td>
<td>Raúl Barneche/Pablo Del Giúdice</td>
<td>29,527</td>
<td>12.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having gained the governorship in 2003, after 12 years of radical dominance, the popular Mario Das Neves won reelection in an utter landslide against the UCR.423

Chaco, Sept. 16, 2007, gubernatorial election.424

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Head of list</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ alliance</td>
<td>Jorge Capitanich/Juan Carlos Bacleff Ivanoff</td>
<td>241,425</td>
<td>46.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente de Todos</td>
<td>Ángel Rozas/Carim Peche</td>
<td>240,249</td>
<td>46.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last gubernatorial election before October proved a welcome surprise to Kirchner. In Chaco, the young Jorge Capitanich scraped in against former governor Ángel Rozas, the only UCR governor who had not allied with Kirchner. It was Capitanich’ fourth electoral contest against Rozas, the first being in 1999, yet his victory was a highly unexpected one.425 His victory was a clear blow against the UCR, which had grown particularly hostile of the Kirchner government as the Radicales K had joined it. Rozas was, moreover, president of the UCR from 2001-2005, and had ruled Chaco from 1995-2003. Capitanich led a coalition of the PJ and 6 minor parties, including the Frente Grande, and was cabinet chief in the Duhalde emergency government of 2002-2003. The first governor of Montenegrin origins, Capitanich had become an early ally of Kirchner, and clearly identifies with the center-left.426 He won national recognition through his work as a senator, yet was still considered very much an underdog against the UCR apparatus of Rozas. In many ways embodying both a generational and ideological change within peronism, Capitanich was a prime candidate for a top position in a future reorganized PJ.

The 2007 presidential election

A French socialist senator asked me, “what is happening in these countries? Is there a turn toward the left?” “No,” I told him. “It is simpler than that. Now the governors in Latin America look like those they govern.”427

- Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

In the lead-up to the presidential elections, Kirchner would score a range of noticeable victories, and in many cases, both the winner and the runner-up would declare their support for CFK in the later October elections. This was clearly of a mutual advantage; while securing CFK’s victory was Kirchner’s overriding priority, many political groupings of particularly peronist origins supported the candidacy in order to ride on her coattails. The downside to this strategy was that Kirchner would be left with a range of national legislators and executives whose could

422 Data from Andy Tow archive with 98 percent counted. http://towsa.com/andy/totalpais/index.html
427 Comment made by CFK during a congress of philosophy in San Juan, reported in “Queremos cambiar el país.” Clarín, July 13, 2007.
hardly be taken for granted, based as it was often on mere electoral opportunism rather than genuinely shared ideological and programmatic convictions.

The year 2007 had in any case seen massive gains for the FpV and the Concertation in the provincial elections, and CFK easily won in the first round. While she did not receive a majority, a run-off was not necessary by Argentine electoral rules given the size of her victory. She became the first woman president democratically elected in Argentina, and more than doubled her husband’s 22.2 percent default win in 2003.

Just like in 2003, despite four years of a nominally peronist government, no party competed on the PJ label. The vice presidential candidate of the FpV, moreover, was a radical – a definite first in Argentine politics. From the moment CFK declared her candidacy, her campaign was almost devoid of peronist liturgy, just like it had been in 2005. Rather, she clearly presented herself as a candidate of the ideological center-left, and drew parallels to historic Latin American left leaders rather than General Perón. This was witnessed symbolically by the active presence of the daughter of Chile’s socialist president Salvador Allende. On election night, she was as well joined on stage by defeated French socialist candidate Ségolène Royal. The return to an old alternation between the PJ and the UCR seemed more remote than ever, and Horacio Verbitsky declared in Página 12 that “The CFK-Cobos formula means the end of UCR, but also of the PJ,” yet added pointedly, “although not of the peronist and radical identities.” A lingering question would be whether the new center-left vs. center-right poles desired by Kirchner and advocated through transversality and now the Concertation, could really trump the old identities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cristina Fernández/Julio Cobos</td>
<td>Frente para la Victoria</td>
<td>8,651,066</td>
<td>45.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elisa Carrió/Rubén Giustiniani</td>
<td>Coalición Cívica</td>
<td>4,401,981</td>
<td>23.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Lavagna/Gerardo Morales</td>
<td>Una Nación Avanzada</td>
<td>3,229,648</td>
<td>16.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberto Rodríguez Saá/Héctor Maya</td>
<td>Frente Justicia Unión y Libertad</td>
<td>1,458,955</td>
<td>7.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando Solanas/Angel Cadelli</td>
<td>Partido Socialista Auténtico</td>
<td>301,265</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricardo López Murphy/Esteban Bullrich</td>
<td>Recrear para el Crecimiento</td>
<td>273,015</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Sobisch/Jorge Asís</td>
<td>Movimiento Popular Neuquino</td>
<td>268,255</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8: Argentina, Oct. 28, 2007, presidential election.

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428 To be president, the candidate must receive either 45 percent of votes outright, or 40 percent, with 20 percent or more distance to nearest competitor.
433 The final and official figures were reported in Página 12, Nov. 13. Y CFK superó la barrera del 45
Eight gubernatorial elections were held the same day, and many demonstrated the development where competing lists for governor would both profess their support for CFK’s candidature. However, they would most often present separate lists for national deputies, and the apparent conversion of former PJ opponents raised questions on how contingent their loyalty to CFK would be.

**Misiones, Oct. 28, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frente Renovador</td>
<td>Maurice Closs/Sandra Giménez</td>
<td>170,985</td>
<td>38.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Pablo Tschirsch/Adolfo Pischik</td>
<td>127,379</td>
<td>28.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unión Popular</td>
<td>Ramón Puerta/Angel Repetto</td>
<td>70,078</td>
<td>15.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Misiones, Pablo Tschirsch, an evangelical pastor, ran on the FpV label. He had been vice governor under Rovira’s last mandate, yet had rebelled against his former boss. Adding further to the confusion, Kirchner favored Maurice Closs, close to Rovira, and a former radical, who won the election with almost 10 percentage points. The outcome was therefore very much a revenge for Rovira, who saw his preferred successor win. While Tschirsch was backed by an alliance of the PJ and seven other parties. It had been somewhat of a surprise that Tschirsch would run on the FpV label, but as in many provinces, both the winner and the runner-up supported CFK on the ballot. While head of the provincial UCR in 2002-2003, Closs had been elected in 2005 as the youngest senator in Argentina (34) on the Frente Renovador label, principally a coalition of four left parties that in 2003 fought against the official PJ led by Ramón Puerta, supported by Duhalde.

This time, however, Puerta, close to Rodríguez Saá and considered an ardent opponent of Kirchner, ran as the candidate of Unión Popular, as a curiosity the old peronist label of Augusto Vandor in the 1960s. Puerta only came in third – a further blow to the anti-Kirchner sector of the PJ.

**Mendoza, Oct. 28, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ alliance</td>
<td>Celso Jaque/Cristian Racconto</td>
<td>312,240</td>
<td>37.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concertación</td>
<td>César Biffi/Enrique Thomas</td>
<td>247,396</td>
<td>29.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mendoza was a typical case in point where both candidates for the governorship had CFK as their presidential candidate. The results, however, were a blow to the Concertation, as outgoing governor and now vice presidential candidate Julio Cobos was unable to secure the election of another Radical K, César Biffi. Rather, a PJ alliance with four minor parties won over the Concertación Plural label, an alliance of nine parties. While the winner Celso Jaque, a national senator, declared loyalty to Kirchner, he was a markedly more conservative candidate than Biffi.

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246
Santa Cruz, Oct. 28, 2007, gubernatorial election.\textsuperscript{440}  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV Santacruceña</td>
<td>Daniel Peralta/Luis Martínez Crespo</td>
<td>66,254</td>
<td>58.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambiemos Para Crecer</td>
<td>Eduardo Costa/Walter Cifuentes</td>
<td>44,114</td>
<td>38.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Santa Cruz, Daniel Peralta won as expected running for the Fronte para la Victoria Santacruceña. Peralta was first designated provisional executive following a period of instability with many social conflicts that saw the saw the renunciation of two governors, Sergio Acevedo, in March 2006, and his successor, Carlos Sancho, 14 months later.\textsuperscript{441} Peralta was a provincial deputy who had taken a leave of absence in order to lead the intervention of Río Turbo mine, where 14 workers died in a 2004 fire. Yet despite a period of demonstrations, at times violent, roadblocks, and harassment of local politicians, above all by the far left, their actual support at the polls turn out to be minimal. The MST, which represents the hardcore left opposed to Kirchner, pulled less than 2 percent of votes for deputies. In the gubernatorial contest, Eduardo Arnold, vice governor of Kirchner 1991-1997 and now an opponent of the president, only won 1.59 percent of the votes.\textsuperscript{442}

Salta, Oct. 28, 2007, gubernatorial election.\textsuperscript{443}  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convergencia Salteña</td>
<td>Juan Manuel Urtubey/Andrés Zottos</td>
<td>230,311</td>
<td>45.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Justicialista para la Victoria</td>
<td>Walter Wayar/Javier David</td>
<td>226,276</td>
<td>44.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Salta elections were a further example of a left-right struggle over the governorship, while both the winner and the runner-up had CFK as their national candidate. Despite his control of the PJ apparatus, outgoing governor Juan Carlos Romero failed in having his vice governor Walter Wayar elected to succeed him. Romero was four year earlier Menem’s running mate, and clearly located on the political right. FpV candidate Urtubey ran a clear campaign of the left, and his coalition consisted of five parties, including the Partido de la Victoria, Renovador de Salta, and Frente Grande. Wayar ran on an alliance between the PJ and four conservative parties, and lost by less than one percentage point in a surprise election. Urtubey, who would later receive a strategic post in the renovated PJ, had been a national deputy since 1999, and headed the important Constitutional Affairs Committee. He was considered very close to Kirchner, and represented both an ideological and generational change – he had just turned 38 before the election. Romero had remained distant from Kirchner, although he had agreed to attach his list to the candidacy of CFK as well. Yet the loss of Romero’s delfín or anointed candidate, if not ending it, certainly was a heavy blow to the old Romero dynasty.\textsuperscript{444}

Jujuy, Oct. 28, 2007, gubernatorial election.\textsuperscript{445}  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Walter Barrionuevo/Pedro Segura</td>
<td>91,214</td>
<td>35.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primero Jujuy</td>
<td>Carlos Snopek/ Marcelo Quevedo Carrillo</td>
<td>76,331</td>
<td>29.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{440} Argentine Ministry of Interior, with 99.15 percent of votes counted. \url{www.resultados2007.gov.ar/}
\textsuperscript{442} Santa Cruz tuvo festejo local y nacional. \textit{Página 12}, Oct. 29, 2007. He was later ejected from the FpV parliamentary group, on whose lists he had been elected deputy, for participating in the conference.
\textsuperscript{443} Salta Electoral Tribunal, 97.13 percent. \url{www.comiciosalta.org.ar/escrutinio/0resultados/dp_24.htm}
\textsuperscript{445} Data from Andy Tow archive with 94.33 percent counted. \url{http://towsa.com/andy/totalpais/index.html}
In Jujuy, following the opposition to Carlos Rovira’s project in Misiones, governor Fellner had dropped his own project to change the provincial constitution to allow for reelection. In his stead, the FpV-PJ candidate was Walter Basilio Barriomuerto, a provincial deputy since 1995, and since 2003 the vice governor of Jujuy. He beat the Primero Jujuy, an alliance that incorporated the UCR and three minor parties, but whose candidate was a peronist, national deputy Carlos Daniel Snopek. Both candidates attached their lists to CFK as president.

**La Pampa, Oct. 28, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Oscar Mario Jorge/Luis Campo</td>
<td>90,527</td>
<td>53.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Pampeano Cívico y Social</td>
<td>Juan Carlos Marino/Daniel Kroneberger</td>
<td>61,956</td>
<td>36.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In La Pampa, Oscar Jorge had defeated former governor Rubén Marín in the internal PJ elections, and won handily the governorship on the PJ level. A former president of the Banco de la Pampa and mayor of the capital city Santa Rosa, Jorge was considered a close ally of Kirchner and CFK. He defeated the Frente Pampeano, an UCR alliance with three minor parties, to win a province in ruled of the PJ since 1983, ruled by the PJ since 1983. Rubén Marín, two-time governor and now a national senator, still controlled much of the PJ apparatus, with outgoing governor Carlos Verna.

**Formosa, Oct. 28, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PJ alliance</td>
<td>Gildo Insfrán/Floro Bogado</td>
<td>157,085</td>
<td>72.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederación Política y Social</td>
<td>Luis Na idealoff /Ana Caligaris</td>
<td>27,297</td>
<td>12.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “eternal Insfrán” could be considered one of the few remaining PJ caudillos who had not been defeated in the 2005-2007 renovation period. In power since 1995, he was an early ally of Kirchner before he became president. Thanks to a system of lemas, his electoral list received more than 70 percent of the votes, as the PJ was allied with, incredibly, 48 parties, against the 12 parties of the mainly UCR-based Confederación, which came in at a distant second place.

**Buenos Aires Province, 28, 2007, gubernatorial election.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FpV</td>
<td>Daniel Scioli/Alberto Balestrini</td>
<td>3,376,795</td>
<td>48.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalición Cívica</td>
<td>Margarita Stolbizer /Jaime Linares</td>
<td>1,158,672</td>
<td>16.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unión-PRO</td>
<td>Francisco de Narváez/Jorge Macri</td>
<td>1,047,126</td>
<td>14.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Daniel Scioli, Kirchner’s vice president, was an extremely popular candidate both in the Federal Capital and in the province of Buenos Aires. By pulling him out of the Federal Capital contest – it was long expected he would run for mayor there – Kirchner all but secured his election as governor of Buenos Aires. By doing so, due to the huge importance of this electoral district,

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447 Electoral Tribunal of La Pampa. www.trielectorallapampa.gov.ar
449 Government of Formosa Province, with 96.5 percent counted. www.formosa.gov.ar/elecciones2007/
Kirchner moreover assured the election of CFK as the next president of Argentina. Scioli won with nearly a majority of the votes, and in the end even gained more votes than CFK in the province.\footnote{“Hay que tomarlo con humildad.” Página 12, Oct. 29, 2007.} While Kirchner and Scioli had earlier spats, they had seemingly reconciled in the latter years. The sheer importance of Scioli’s popularity, moreover, could hardly be ignored, especially as, unlike Duhalde and partly Felipe Solá, Scioli did not have his own political structure and institutionalized powerbase in the province. Nor was he tied to the old provincial “barons,” and as represented a great degree of renovation.\footnote{Confidential interview, FpV Buenos Aires city legislator, March 8, 2007.} Moving his candidature from the Federal Capital to the province probably led to Macri’s win, by securing CFK’s election it was clearly a price Kirchner was willing to pay. For the 2007 election, the FpV now incorporated the PJ, as well as 11 minor parties. Yet while on the surface the PJ had now reconciled with the FpV, with whom it fought an extremely bitter battle in 2005, it is also important to note that rather than a slowing down of the process that started in 2005, the renovation of the political leadership in the province really accelerated in 2007, and not only on the level of national deputies. While almost all peronist candidates for mayor attached their lists to the CFK ballot for president, a record number of contests took place where the October elections functioned as an open internal election, where a variety of peronist candidates fought for the same mayorships. The government, in most cases, refused to endorse any candidate in particular. As a result, the election saw the fall of many of the old barons, in places such as Quilmes, where Francisco Gutiérrez won over Sergio Villordo; La Plata, where Pablo Bruera of the Movimiento Evita won over Julio Alak; in Almirante Brown, where Jorge Villaverde lost for Dario Giustozzi; in Tigre, where Sergio Massa, won over Ernesto Casaretto; in Malvinas Argentinas, where Kirchner functionary Fernando Gray won over Alberto Groppi, and so forth. While some caudillos certainly remained in their entrenched fiefdoms, this ensured that CFK, as president, would now face a province where the majority of its mayors were now shifting, broadly speaking, from the center right to the center left. One final case deserves particular mention. In Lanús, in the heart of Greater Buenos Aires, the octogenarian Manuel Quindimil had run the partido as his personal feud since 1973, only interrupted by the dictatorship, and had supported Duhalde in 2005. Now, he was finally forced out, by a margin of 38 to 27 percent, by provincial deputy Darío Díaz Pérez.\footnote{Lanús sin Manolo. Página 12, Nov. 4, 2007.} There could hardly be a greater symbol of the PJ renovation than the final defeat of the perennial mayor “Manolo” Quindimil.

The result of the 2007 elections also meant that the FpV-PJ groups in Congress were significantly reinforced. In the lower house, while the FpV had until then maintained the loyalty of around 110 legislators,\footnote{Cross-checked with legislators.} it won 78 of the seats at play in 2007. Many legislators who had entered as Menem and Duhalde allies failed to renew their seats, and the FpV and its allies, including 10 Radicales K, could now count 148 legislators in total. This would give CFK an absolute majority in the lower house, though, as Página 12 suggested, not all the official supports...
who had entered could be counted as fully “loyal.” That number, the newspaper suggested, was probably closer to 130.\textsuperscript{456}

Before the election, the anti-Kirchner PJ group counted 11 deputies, following numerous defections to the official FpV-PJ group. Of those, nine were up for election, yet all lost. The two remaining, Jorge Sarghini and Francisco De Narváez would be reinforced by three deputies entering on the Rodríguez Saá list from San Luis.

In many instances, electoral alliances used \textit{listas colectoras}, or collector lists, where the parties had a common presidential candidate yet separate legislative lists. In some cases, this led to a rather extreme dispersion; in Córdoba, for instance, 29 lists were presented for national deputies; in Mendoza 26; while in the ever-fragmented Federal Capital a record 30 lists were presented.\textsuperscript{457}

It was also the first time since Perón came to power that the UCR, now with only 27 deputies, was not the second largest party in Congress. That role now went to the \textit{Coalición Cívica}, which elected 29 legislators, although the coalition would soon experience a major split, from more left-leaning deputies who objected to the presence of prominent centre-right politicians Patricia Bullrich and Alfonso Prat-Gay in their midst, and complained of a move to the right of the CC’s candidate, former ARI leader Elisa Carrió.\textsuperscript{458}

In the Senate, 24 seats were up for renewal – a third of the seats is renewed every two years – and due to the Argentine system where a minority seat is reserved for the party that comes in second, in many provinces the PJ had ran divided or on different labels, so the actual ideological convictions of many senators entering was far from clear. Before the election, around 40 senators had been reckoned as allies of Kirchner, a number that now increased by four. While the loyalty of many senators was still untested, at least four could be considered belonging to the anti-Kirchner PJ, prominently Carlos Menem, Hilda Duhalde, and Adolfo Rodríguez Saá.

Kirchner had made great strides toward building up his own parliamentary force, yet the myriad of provincial party labels at the same time was a witness of the continued power of the

\textsuperscript{456} Los oficialistas son mayoría, pero no todos parecen serlo. \textit{La Nación}, Feb. 29, 2008. The newspaper’s analysis proved remarkably correct: In the later March vote over the export taxes, 129 legislators would vote with the government.


\textsuperscript{458} La coalición de Carrió quedará dividida en tres en el Congreso. \textit{La Nación}, Nov. 17, 2007; Los socialistas pelean entre ellos, pero más con la Coalición Cívica. \textit{Página 12}, Jan 16, 200. The future of the \textit{Coalición Cívica} seemed highly uncertain, as both the Socialist Party and ARI were internally deeply split, above all regarding its relations with the CFK administration.
governors. In the power vacuum under the Alianza government, they had gained power, while local party branches had become increasingly provincialized.459

Despite leading a great renovation, and fighting battles against the old caudillos, the functionary noted, Kirchner still faced arduous negotiations with the local strongmen, and would often have to weigh up the desire for an ideological renovation with the continued power of governors who were only reluctant allies of his national project.

In an interview before the elections, one deputy close to the president noted that Kirchner had always been bent on a renovation of the old and particularly rightwing peronists within the PJ, but that he needed the 2007 elections as a “test of strength” vis-à-vis the governors. Pointedly, the deputy noted, “After this legislative renovation we are going to be in conditions to normalize the party.”460

The 2008 renovation of the Partido Justicialista

Cristina Fernández would not campaign on the PJ label, as the party’s state of intervention prevented any candidate from doing so. Her label was, just like her husband in 2003, the Frente para la Victoria. For four years, Kirchner had avoided taking any steps to lead the PJ, and in 2005 the national branch technically ceased to exist, as its national organs were intervened.

The surprise was therefore great when, toward the very end of the electoral campaign that would see his wife elected president, Kirchner announced during an electoral event held in Ituzaingó, in the heart of the Buenos Aires conurbano, the future “democratic reorganization of the Partido Justicialista.”461 After ignoring the party for the entirety of his mandate, and often leading electoral coalitions against the PJ in many provinces, he would now seek to lead the party.462

The assumption must clearly have been planned earlier. In March 2007, a peronist deputy involved in the process, revealed that by then Kirchner had agreed to lead the party, and wanted to reduce the size of its national organs, and, as a second step, launch a process of reaffiliation, in order to purify its memberships lists, considered to be both inflated and outdated.463 Kirchner, moreover, expressed that he desired to convert the PJ into a party closer to the Spanish PSOE.

459 According to a Kirchner adviser involved in alliance making ahead of the 2007 election, “It is a political system of rulers, a very particular system. This makes him very conservative in his renovation of leaders. With the federal system, it is very hard to... punish your adversary.” Confidential interview, Kirchner adviser, Feb. 15, 2007.
462 The news had been revealed a few days earlier to a group of key Peronist mayors who were skeptical of the Concertación. El Presidente se concentrará en el armado peronista. La Nación, Oct. 29, 2007.
Beyond the historic irony – Menem wanted the PJ to be like the PP of José Maria Aznar, the ideological opponent of PSOE – it appeared to indicate he was serious about a redefinition, or clarification, of the PJ’s ideological positions.

A leftwing peronist deputy noted the problem that the PJ during the Menem administration had become a party of the government, and lacked a structure independent of executive offices: “A party leader outside of an executive office is unfortunately only a weak party leader – at the very least, you need to hold a legislative office to have some authority.”

Yet Kirchner would defy this logic through a highly unusual mechanism: His wife was now elected president of Argentina, and as the couple had always worked in politics together, the new PJ president certainly would not be far from power. Moreover, as a future president of the party, Kirchner would be able to dedicate his full attention to its reorganization.

It was also a decision supported by Argentine public: A Jan. 23, 2008, Ibarómetro poll carried out for Clarín revealed that more than half of those polled agreed Kirchner should take over the PJ presidency. Kirchner, in turn, declared the party would be very welcoming of those who had left the party or even in some elections opposed it, though he drew a clear division with eternal enemies such as Menem, Barrionuevo, and the Rodríguez Saá brothers.

As the most organized and largest of the provincial branches, with nominally a million and a half members, it was clear that the PJ bonaerense would have a particular weight within the party. The great question remained whether Duhalde would join the reorganized party, or seek to challenge Kirchner’s bid for the PJ presidency, which was to be voted on by its members. Duhalde in the end choose neither. Any suggestions of reconciliation with the Kirchner couple were ended as Duhalde in February – just like Menem had opined on Duhalde’s qualifications – declared that CFK was “not prepared to govern.” The harsh assessment by the former president was further accentuated by the fact that Roberto Lavagna, who had gained more than three million votes in the presidential campaign, only days earlier had reconciled with the presidential couple and supported Kirchner’s assumption as president of the PJ.

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464 Confidential interview, Kirchner administration functionary, Feb. 15, 2007.
465 Al ex presidente lo ven como “el más apto.” Clarín.com, Jan. 27, 2008. According to Ibarómetro, 24.8 percent rated the proposal “very good” and 26.2 percent “good,” with 23.5 percent “bad/very bad.”
466 The party branch was lead by José María Díaz Bancelari, although Alberto Balestrini was a very likely candidate for the next leadership renewal, scheduled for late 2008. The election of Balestrini would represent a further strengthening of Kirchner’s influence within the PJ bonaerense, to the detriment of Eduardo Duhalde. Duhalde’s proclamations to retire from politics had long ago assumed the status of a running joke.
468 Los motivos, los costos y las ganancias. Página 12, Feb. 4, 2008.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial executive</th>
<th>Mandate start</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Relations with Kirchner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires Province: Daniel Scioli</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Close Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catamarca: Eduardo Brizuela del Moral</td>
<td>Dec. 2003</td>
<td>UCR-K</td>
<td>Radical K ally⁴⁶⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaco: Jorge Capitanich</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Close Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chubut: Mario Das Neves</td>
<td>Dec. 2003</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Córdoba: Juan Schiaretti</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Poor relations with Kirchner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrientes: Arturo Colombi</td>
<td>Dec. 2005</td>
<td>UCR-K</td>
<td>Radical K ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entre Ríos: Sergio Urríbarri</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formosa: Gildo Insfrán</td>
<td>Dec. 1995</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jujuy: Walter Barrionuevo</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Close Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Pampa: Oscar Mario Jorge</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Close Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Rioja: Luis Beder Herrera</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendoza: Celso Jaque</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misiones: Maurice Closs</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>Close Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuquén: Felipe Sapag</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>Declared as ally 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Negro: Miguel Saiz</td>
<td>Dec. 2003</td>
<td>UCR-K</td>
<td>Radical K close ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salta: Juan Manuel Urtubey</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Close Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan: José Luis Gioja</td>
<td>Dec. 2003</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Close Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Luis: Alberto Rodríguez Saá</td>
<td>May 2003</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Clear opponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz: Daniel Peralta</td>
<td>May 2007</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Close Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe: Hermes Binner</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Opponent but on good terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santiago del Estero: Gerardo Zamora</td>
<td>March 2005</td>
<td>UCR-K</td>
<td>Radical K close Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tierra del Fuego: Fabiana Ríos</td>
<td>Dec. 2007</td>
<td>ARI</td>
<td>Opponent but on good terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucumán: José Alperovich</td>
<td>Oct. 2003</td>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>Close Kirchner ally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9: Provincial heads of government and relations with Kirchner 2007.⁴⁷⁰

**Party resurrection: March 7, 2008 national congress of the Partido Justicialista**

Historic PJ leader Antonio Cafiero was asked to preside the first PJ congress in four years. Cafiero agreed, (“I am not the best, but the oldest”), yet took a jab at the newly announced plan to associate the PJ with the Socialist International, which he deemed “Eurocentric.”⁴⁷¹

A total of 907 seats to the congress were allocated to the 24 provinces and the national capital, including 89 to Córdoba, 81 to Santa Fe, and 40 to Capital Federal. Buenos Aires province alone would send a whopping 246 delegates to the province, duly elected weeks earlier,⁴⁷² yet the representatives from many other provinces needed to extend their mandates, as the disorganization of the respective branches did not yet allow for new elections.⁴⁷³

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⁴⁶⁹ Brizuela del Moral, following the debacle surrounding Resolution 125, increasingly sought to distance himself from the Radical K label.
⁴⁷⁰ Source: Based on a variety of news reports and interview data.
⁴⁷¹ “Soy el más viejo, no el mejor.” Página 12, March 6, 2008.
⁴⁷² As the most organized and largest of the provincial branches, with nominally a million and a half members, it was clear that the PJ bonaerense would have a particularly great weight within the party. The question remained whether Duhalde would challenge Kirchner for the presidency. Before this, in line with its own charter, the PJ needed to hold its national conference. The PJ bonaerense therefore met on Feb. 22.
A reported 803 delegates finally met in what was a remarkably calm and well-organized congress, compared with previous gatherings of the highest authority of the PJ. The main task was to officially choose a new leadership. Gildo Insfrán, governor of Formosa, was elected to replace Eduardo Camaño as president of the congress, while the main vice presidencies went to Jorge Busti, Hugo Curto, Juan Schiaretti, and José Luis Gioja.474

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gildo Insfrán</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Governor, Formosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Busti</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Ex Governor, Entre Ríos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugo Curto</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Mayor, Tres de Febrero (BA Province)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Schiaretti</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Governor, Córdoba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Luis Gioja</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Governor, San Juan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eduardo Camaño</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Ex National Deputy (BA Province)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Carlos Romero</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Ex Governor, Salta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Fadel</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>National Deputy, Mendoza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Obeid</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Ex Governor, Santa Fe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristian Asinelli</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>City Legislator, Federal Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Abarca</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>PJ bonaerense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Peralta</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Governor, Santa Cruz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roddy Ingram</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Provincial minister, Chubut</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10: PJ National Congress leadership, elected March 7, 2008.475

The PJ charter had been last modified in 2003, but built mainly on the changes achieved following the Renovation process in the 1980s. While the organizational setup of the congress was kept intact,476 the only modification done was to approve of changes to the setup of the national council. Kirchner declared he wanted to greatly reduce the size of the council, yet was faced with great pressure from the many peronist leaders explicitly demanded a place on the council.477 The only modification to the party charter was article 24, which determined the
to elect its representatives to the national congress, as their mandates were by now expired. The provincial council had drawn up a unanimity list of 246 names, headed by governor Daniel Scioli, and while the congress only knew the name of the three persons heading it, Scioli, Balestrini and Díaz Bancalari, in a spirit of unity – or, less charitable, in a manifestation of continued verticalism – the list was elected by unanimity. Un congreso a pedir de Kirchner. Página 12, Feb. 23, 2008.

473 Una rápida elección. Página 12, March 6, 2008.
474 Sin disidencias, el peronismo inició el trámite para consagrar a Kirchner. Clarín, March 8, 2008.
475 Source: Compiled from variety of news sources.
476 The main provisions in the PJ charter regarding the congress states: Art. 19. Congress is the supreme organism. It is elected for four years, directly by members, or by their respective district congress. Every electoral district will have three delegates, and one for every 5,000 affiliated. Quorum is a half plus one of all delegates, or a third of all delegates on second convoking; Art. 20. The national congress elects the president, four vice presidents, and seven secretaries. Needs to meet every year at least, and if a third of its members demands it, as Extraordinary Congress, or when the National Council solicits it; Art. 21. The national congress supposed to elaborate political plan or approve electoral platform. It can change the party charter, intervene provincial parties for one year.
477 Kirchner cocina a fuego lento la lista de autoridades del PJ. Clarín, March 15, 2008.
composition of the national council and the executive board of the council, respectively of 75 and 28 members. While a reduction from the 110-member Menem council, it was significantly more than the 40 Kirchner was said to desire.

Clearly, the haste with which the council was organized could be attributed to a necessity of clearing the path for the election of the national council, only weeks away, and a final requirement in order to regain legal status. The congress did, however, find the time to grant amnesty for peronists who had participated in elections on non-PJ list, and it also voted to ban those accused of participating in crimes during the 1976-1983 dictatorship from running as PJ candidates. No modifications were done to the part of the charter that spoke of the “national peronist movement” composed of “corresponding” sectors of “workers, women, and youth,” which harked back to the “branch” setup of the original Partido Peronista, more reminiscent of a party of 1950s than a modern party, and in 2008 sounding quite obsolete. However, the barely one-hour long congress would have to leave more substantial changes for a hopefully future date.

**The new PJ national council: The tricky balance of renovation vs. reconciliation**

The period from the congress until the creation of national council provided the PJ with a unique historic opportunity: The possibility to choose its leadership in internal, competitive and democratic election. Never before, not even when Antonio Cafiero became president of the PJ council, was the victory a result of a direct vote, as the party’s statues stipulated. Given that Kirchner clearly was opposed by significant sectors within the PJ – above all, Eduardo Duhalde – the internal elections could serve to establish his leadership of the party for the next four years. Unfortunately, it would not be this way. While the Rodríguez Saá brothers did present a competing list, FREJULI, with former senator Héctor Maya as candidate for the PJ presidency, the list did not comply with the rules of the PJ’s own party charter, and was consequently rejected

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478 Art. 24 establishes the council as the executive organ of the party. The council is to consist of a president, five vice presidents, and council members. Their mandate is four years as well. The legal representative (currently Jorge Landau) has voice but no vote. Quorum is half plus one in first convocation, and a third in second, and decisions are taken by simple majority. Members of national council are to be elected by direct and secret vote of affiliates, with the country as one district.

479 Sin disidencias, el peronismo inició el trámite para consagrar a Kirchner. Clarín, March 8, 2008.

480 Héctor Maya, former senator from Entre Ríos, was candidate for president of the PJ council. Olga Elena Riutort, María Teresa González, Carlos Dellepiane, Liliana Negre de Alonso and Horacio Alonso were candidates for the vice presidencies; Daniel Basile, secretary general; Horacio Alonso, vice secretary; and for the remaining positions, Bernabé Arnaudo, Raúl Coscolla, María de las Mercedes F. de Landra, Dario Hernández, Angel Leónidas Abasto, Fernando Gan, Martín Sánchez, Miguel Siciliano, Alberto Tell, Raúl Armando Menem, María Angélica Torrontegui, Alberto Apolonio, Mariano Rolla, Juan Soria, Luis Lusquínos, Dante Cardozo, Juan Pedersoli, Beatriz Nadif de Flores, Claudia Lascano, Oscar Melano, Rosa Carrasco, Maximiliano Vargas, José Luis Carballo, and Carlos Edgardo Menem (nephew).
by the federal judge overseeing internal elections. Duhalde, the one remaining power factor with a potential national presence, decided not to compete institutionally with Kirchner within the PJ, yet would continue his opposition to Kirchner and the new CFK government through his MPA foundation.

For the consolidation of the PJ, this was highly unfortunate. It provided the party with a clear institutionalized path for the settling of differences, but Kirchner was in the end left with no official opposition to his leadership. As recent past and future events would demonstrate, challenges to his leadership of peronism were abundant, yet would not find expression in the selection of the PJ’s leaders. After a judge rejected a legal complaint from FREJULI, Kirchner was declared to be the next president of the PJ national council on April 12, and immediately started touring the country. He also moved from his office in Puerto Madero to take up offices in Matheu 130, in the Once district, a significant symbolic gesture. Originally inaugurated by Menem, the official seat of the PJ had hardly been a nest of activity, yet would now finally house the permanent offices of the president of the PJ.

As he had earlier noted, Kirchner sought to cast very wide net in the drawing-up of the new 74-member national council, and to seek to contain critical forces within the party structure. The new list nonetheless displayed notable renovation. The inclusion of Beatriz Liliana Rojkes, Sergio Urrribarri, and Jorge Capitanich, who were rewarded with the important vice presidencies, signaled both a generational and ideological change within the party, and. These top positions also included Daniel Scioli and Hugo Moyano. In addition, the young city legislator Juan Cabandié, a leader of the resurrected JotaPé (and who had as an adult learned he was the son of desaparecidos), received a secretariat, as did Mariana Grass and José Ottavis, all young peronists. Emilio Pérsico, leader of the peronist-based Movimiento Evita, was also rewarded with a post. Despite speculations that governor of Chubut, Mario Das Neves, would be denied a

481 The rules stipulated that at least five provincial districts must support it, and a minimum of two percent of the party membership, or around 66,000 signatories. The FREJULI list presented 25,471 signatures, of which only 10,540 were deemed accurate, while the Kirchner list arrived with 315,730 signatures, of which 8,225 were rejected, and he had the approbation of 23 provincial PJ presidents. Kirchner asumirá en el PJ en cuanto lo apruebe la Justicia. La Nación, April 22, 2008; Una guerra de nervios contra reloj con escribanos y firmas en carretillas. Clarín, April 19, 2008.

482 The electoral board of PJ denied the list legality due to various irregularities, a decision later sanctioned by the courts. An appeal was launched to the Supreme Court, which as of July 2008 had not made a decision.

483 The complete list, handwritten and full of last-minute changes, was presented to PJ interventor Ramón Ruiz at 11:56 Friday night, April 18 – four minutes before the deadline! Una guerra de nervios contra reloj con escribanos y firmas en carretillas. Clarín, April 19, 2008; Kirchner con el camino liberado. Página 12, April 23 2008.

484 Kirchner presidente, Moyano y Scioli vices. Página 12, April 18, 2008; Un laboratorio del poder real. La Nación, April 19, 2008.

485 Así será el nuevo peronismo de Néstor Kirchner. Perfil, April 19, 2008.
post due to his public arguments with cabinet chief Alberto Fernández, he likewise received a position on the executive board.

Conspicuously absent from a position on the executive board – a secretariat or vice presidency, as opposed to the wider national council – was governor Juan Schiaretti of Córdoba and former governor of Santa Fe, now senator, Carlos Reutemann, whose relations with Kirchner had gone from lukewarm to openly critical following the new initiative from the CFK government to increase export taxes on a variety of agricultural products. Geronimo Venegas, who had become head of the “62” following the death of Lorenzo Miguel, similarly did not receive a position. Head of UATRE since 1991, Venegas represented the more Orthodox sectors of the party, and had in 2005 sided with Duhalde. Nor was there any room for old enemies such as José Manuel de la Sota, Carlos Ruckauf, or any allies of Carlos Menem, nor did Luis Barrionuevo or any of the gordos receive any posts. Eduardo Camaño, likely thanks to his relations with Lavagna, received one of the posts of spokesperson in the larger council, yet not on the executive board.

Kirchner’s public assumption of the PJ took place on May 14, 2008, and in many ways represented a synthesis of the old with the new. The act took place in the Almagro stadium, in the Tres de Febrero partido of the bonaerense caudillo Hugo Curto, and witnessed scenes of the usual fist fights between the truck drivers and construction drivers unions. The opening speech, however, was held by Juan Cabandié, the son of desaparecidos, and now leader of the peronist youth. Attendance from the new council was almost perfect, though governor Schiaretti and former governors Reutemann and Busti notably remained absent. None of them had received any central position in the council.487

Before the act, Kirchner’s first task as president was to open a party locale in Ezeiza, where he would hold a hard speech against el campo, or the various agricultural organizations that had increasingly resorted to road blocks and holding back produce as methods of protests, which he deemed to “only care about their own pockets” (the same event would also see the affiliation of a prominent Ezeiza resident, former soccer star Diego Maradona, to the PJ!).488

In Almagro stadium, Kirchner now surprisingly ceded the word to his wife, who spoke of the need to “avoid confrontations” and “false, artificial divisions.” While the new president did

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486 One Peronist intellectual described the 62 Organizations are an “old rubber seal whose organization has become idle with the prevailing legality.” Confidential interview, Kirchner administration adviser, Feb. 19, 2007.
488 “Sólo les importa el bolsillo de ellos.” Página 12, April 25, 2008.
not mention the agricultural interests, the speech appeared directed as an olive branch toward them.

Yet rather than diminish, for the next week’s the conflict with the agricultural interests would rather explode in strength, and the confrontations that had been brewing since the implementation of the government’s new taxes would nearly paralyze the country. The conflict, which would in the end last for four months, would also serve to greatly distract Kirchner from his goal of renewing the PJ.489

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489 On significant event in the PJ’s renovation was the opening of a Escuela Superior Peronista in Gaspar Campos 1065, the old residence of Juan Perón in Buenos Aires Province, by the Peronist Youth. Lanzamiento de la escuela de adoctrinamiento peronista. Zona Norte Diario, May 25, 2008.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Néstor Kirchner</td>
<td>Former President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Daniel Scioli</td>
<td>Governor Buenos Aires Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Vice President</td>
<td>Jorge Capitanich</td>
<td>Governor Chaco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Vice President</td>
<td>Hugo Moyano</td>
<td>Secretary General CGT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Vice President</td>
<td>Beatriz Liliana Rojkes</td>
<td>National deputy</td>
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<td>Fourth Vice President</td>
<td>Sergio Urribarri</td>
<td>Governor Entre Ríos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>Alberto Fernández</td>
<td>Cabinet Chief, president PJ porteño</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Celso Jaque</td>
<td>Governor Mendoza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Secretary</td>
<td>Alberto Balestrini</td>
<td>Vice Governor, BA Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of the Interior</td>
<td>Juan Manuel Urtubey</td>
<td>Governor of Salta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Organization</td>
<td>José Luis Gioja</td>
<td>Governor of San Juan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Coordination</td>
<td>Mario das Neves</td>
<td>Governor of Chubut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Minutes</td>
<td>Lucia Corpacci</td>
<td>Vice Governor Catamarca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Regional Integration</td>
<td>Walter Barrionuevo</td>
<td>Governor of Jujuy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of International Relations</td>
<td>Graciela Giannettasio</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Institutional Relations</td>
<td>José María Diaz Bancalari</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Business Relations</td>
<td>Oscar Jorge</td>
<td>Governor La Pampa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Relations Social Organizations</td>
<td>Emilio Pérsico</td>
<td>Leader Movimiento Evita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Parliamentary Relations</td>
<td>Carlos Kunkel</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Municipal Matters</td>
<td>Julio Pereyra</td>
<td>Mayor of Florencio Varela, BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Trade Unions</td>
<td>Antonio Caló</td>
<td>Secretary General UOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Women</td>
<td>Teresa Luna</td>
<td>Vice Governor La Rioja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Youth</td>
<td>Juan Cabandié</td>
<td>Legislator Federal Capital, leader JP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Strategic Planning</td>
<td>Julio de Vido</td>
<td>National Minister of Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Economy and Production</td>
<td>Carlos Caserio</td>
<td>Minister Córdoba government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Development and Social Planning</td>
<td>Omar Perotti</td>
<td>Mayor of Rafaela (Santa Fe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Human Rights and Justice</td>
<td>Juan Carlos Dante Gullo</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of Science and Technology</td>
<td>Alberto Cantero</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11: PJ national council executive board, 2008-2012.\(^{490}\)

\(^{490}\) Compiled from a variety of news sources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Party President</th>
<th>Notes on local party branch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Buenos Aires</td>
<td>José María Díaz Bancalari</td>
<td>Duhalde still in control of parts of apparatus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Capital Federal</td>
<td>Alberto Fernández</td>
<td>Many peronists outside official branch support Macri. SUTERH leader Vicente Santa María in practice controls most of the party branch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Catamarca</td>
<td>Dalmacio Enrique Mera</td>
<td>Most of party apparatus still under Barrionuevo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Chaco</td>
<td>Aldo Adolfo Leiva</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Chubut</td>
<td>Mario Das Neves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Córdoba</td>
<td>José Manuel de la Sota</td>
<td>de Sota and governor Schiaretti control much of apparatus, and on bad terms with K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Corrientes</td>
<td>Tomás Rubén Pruyas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Entre Ríos</td>
<td>Sergio Daniel Urribarri</td>
<td>Busti still holds much power and is critical of K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Formosa</td>
<td>Gildo Insfrán</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Jujuy</td>
<td>Huascar Alderete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 La Pampa</td>
<td>Rubén Marín</td>
<td>Governor Marín and Carlos Verna hold real power and have poor relations with K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 La Rioja</td>
<td>Ángel Eduardo Maza</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Mendoza</td>
<td>Adolfo Bermejo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Misiones</td>
<td>Intervened</td>
<td>Ramón Puerta still controls much of PJ apparatus and is opponent of Kirchner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Neuquén</td>
<td>Luis Sagaseta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Río Negro</td>
<td>Jorge Alberto Cejas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Salta</td>
<td>Juan Carlos Romero</td>
<td>Long critical of Kirchner, relations worsened after strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 San Juan</td>
<td>José Luis Gioja</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 San Luis</td>
<td>Adolfo Rodríguez Saá</td>
<td>Controlled by opponents Rodríguez Saá brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Santa Cruz</td>
<td>Sergio Acevedo</td>
<td>Reutemann remains de facto head of PJ and an on-and-off friend-foe of Kirchner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Santa Fe</td>
<td>Norberto Nicotra</td>
<td>Poor relation with Kirchner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Santiago del Est.</td>
<td>Nílda Riachi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Tierra del Fuego</td>
<td>Mabel Luisa Caparros</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Tucumán</td>
<td>Beatriz Liliana Rojkes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12: Heads of provincial PJ branches and relations with Kirchner, May 2008.\(^{491}\)

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\(^{491}\) Based on a variety of news sources and interview data.
Skepticism of transversal allies – and push for PJ in the Socialist International

Kirchner’s assumption of the PJ leadership was a move not only opposed by his old enemies in the PJ, but also from many of the center-left, such as past transversal allies like Luis Juez, and present allies such as Martín Sabbatella.492 The highly popular left-wing mayor of Morón announced that “it is a mistake that Kirchner detains himself in this structure. The Concertation will end up being just a satellite structure of the PJ.”493

Kirchner, however, would be quick to reassure on several occasions members of the PV and others that transversality and the Concertation was far from dead, and promised Radical K leaders such as vice president Cobos that the PJ would form part of the larger Concertation.494 He was as well very careful to meet with representatives from the piqueteros groups, who initially expressed great hostility to the idea.495 In a meeting with the leaders of the four largest groups, Emilio Pérsico (Movimiento Evita), Luis D’Elía (FTV), Edgardo Depetri (Frente Transversal) and Humberto Tumini (Libres del Sur), Kirchner notably told them he needed to take the reins of the party “so as not to leave it in hands of the right.”496

A further novel development that served to ameliorate the fears that Kirchner was moving to the right, or at least seeking refuge in a party that still contained substantial elements of the right, was when Kirchner through interlocutors let it be known that he wanted to enlist the PJ in the Socialist International. He had already expressed interest in the international network of center-left parties in 2003,497 a desire that had been maintained four years later with the imminent normalization of the party. While it could be regarded partly a tactical move to ameliorate resistance from those reticent of him taking on PJ presidency, it would also be consistent with his idea of giving PJ a clear ideological profile.498

Jorge Capitanich, a young governor close to Kirchner, met with the party president and declared, “the party needs to have a position of the center left, progressive, which belongs to the Socialist International, with a dynamic participation in the national and international scenarios.”499 It was, perhaps, even more surprising to hear Hugo Moyano endorsing the project as well, as peronism had always been hostile to ideological clarifications, but the leader of the

492 Sabbatella had led a highly successful administration as mayor of Morón, and in 2005 asked his voters for a corte de boletas, where they would vote for his party for the local elections, but for CFK as senator. He was considered one of the original transversal allies.
494 Kirchner les hizo un guiño a los radicales K. Clarín, April 25, 2008.
495 Kirchner dará espacio a piqueteros K y ellos harán una marcha por Cristina. Clarín, Feb. 14, 2008.
499 La Internacional Socialista y el PJ. Diario Hoy, Feb. 27, 2008.
CGT confirmed Kirchner’s intention after a private meeting, and expressed his full support.\footnote{“No podemos estar con el partido de la Thatcher.” \textit{Página 12}, Feb. 27, 2008.} International support came as well from the socialist prime minister of Spain, José Rodríguez Zapatero, who had for years regarded Kirchner “a strategic ally.”\footnote{Zapatero espera a Kirchner y lo define como “aliado estratégico.” \textit{Página 12}, May 31, 2005.} Yet while reaction from the more Orthodox sectors of the PJ were muted, it was a proposal bound to be met with considerable opposition from the sectors of the party who still argue peronism “to be beyond left and right.”

\textit{El Campo} protests derail attempts at to consolidate a resurrected PJ

By the time of Kirchner’s assumption as president of the PJ, the confrontation between the government and the agricultural interests was reported to seriously derail the work to renew the PJ.\footnote{PJ: Kirchner comienza una etapa de revisión. \textit{La Nación}, April 7, 2008.} At the same time, it would bring together the council for debates and deliberations in a manner unprecedented in the recent history of the party.

Following a drastic rise of worldwide food prices – and a corresponding hike in profits for the producers – the new CFK government on March 10 announced new floating or sliding-scale taxes that would raise the rate on a range of products sold above a certain price, earmarked for public spending.\footnote{The tax rate on soy beans went up on average 9.1 percent, from 35 to 44.1; sunflower oil, up on average 7.1 percent to 39.1; while corn and wheat were reduced on average 0.8 and 0.9 percent, down from 25 and 28 percent before. The projected income from whatever was gained above the 35 percent taxation mark for soy products was earmarked for a “Fund for Social Redistribution,” which would finance a range of social projects, announced by the government. In an attempt to calm its critics, the government made the plan public. 50 percent of the funds would go the construction of public hospitals and health centers; 20 percent for public housing; 20 percent for building rural roads; and 10 percent to smaller family-owned farms. Una intervención para prevenir la inflación. \textit{Página 12}, March 12, 2008; Con la soja se cura, se habita y se transporta. \textit{Página 12}, June 10, 2008.}

The controversial taxes met with resistance from the start, and while compensatory mechanisms were later offered for smaller and medium farmers, protests increased in strength. \textit{El Campo}, as this highly diverse group became known as, organized roadblocks, dumped milk and held back products – which lead to real food scarcities in urban areas – and at one point burned great stretches of grazing land that covered the Federal Capital in smoke.

The issue of putting export taxes on agricultural products or other raw materials, was a tried and tested strategy. The Duhalde government had financed the \textit{Jefe/Jefa de Hogares} plans of social assistance after the 2001 economic collapse largely by adding a 10 percent tax on raw materials, and 5 percent on manufactured or processed goods, as well as a 20 percent tax on crude oil and 5 percent on petroleum derivatives.\footnote{Silletta (2005, 119).} Menem had earlier removed all export taxes as part
of this neoliberal agenda, thought it should be noted that the overvaluation of the peso during his administration hit agricultural exports particularly hard.

As the devalued peso had made agricultural exports very lucrative, Kirchner had already raised the export taxes during his government, and several members of his government, such as Minister of culture and political scientist José Nún, had long advocated raising them. Such a move was opposed by such disparate forces as Carlos Menem and Elisa Carrió. Lavagna, when running against CFK in October, strongly criticized the candidate of the Coalición Cívica, and argued that “those who demand that we end the export taxes are making demagogy from the right.”

The new executive board made its debut on May 27, 2008. The meeting would serve the dual purpose of making the national structure of the PJ operational, while addressing the rapidly escalating conflict between the government and the agricultural sectors. There were early signs the PJ’s top executive organ was to be different than the “empty shell” of the Menem years. During a press conference, the PJ made public a document – the result of intense debate in the council, with multiple changes made by members of the council – that in very strong language denounced el campo as “antidemocratic,” for its “destabilizing spirit” and for “plotting a coup.”

Days later, Kirchner presided over the first meeting of the complete PJ council, where the party would address the agricultural conflict. The press had access to the meetings, and as Página 12 noted, “the exchange of opinions, interventions that triggered rapid replies, was something unprecedented in the verticalist tradition of justicialism.” One member of the PJ’s new executive board commented, “It has been a long time since one debated like this in the PJ.”

The meeting had near-perfect attendance of its 75 members, although governor Schiaretti and former governors Reutemann and Romero were absent. The three belonged to the center-right part of the PJ, and formed part of the group of peronists who opposed the new agricultural taxes. When asked about the apparent differences within the PJ, Kirchner declared,

We are not a corporation. We have a philosophy of politics and of the country. We are a democratic party… those of us who suffered the dictatorship, we believe in democracy…. This is not the stock market.

505 “Kirchner es un oportunista con principios.” La Nación, July 9, 2006.
506 “Kirchner me critica, pero no me llega ni a los tobillos” La Nación, March 12, 2007.
510 Una reunión con cambio de opiniones. Página 12, June 6, 2008.
511 Kirchner convocó a una contramarcha. La Nación, July 11, 2008.
Kirchner now faced two distinct tasks: To aid the government of CFK by containing the dissident sectors of his own party and to proceed with his original plans to reconstruct the PJ as a national party. It would become clear that the energies spent on the former task, would increasingly sap the energies from the latter.

Kirchner was careful to meet with members of the new Concertation as well as older transversal allies, and found that most were supportive of his mobilizations of support for the government’s initiative, and for his plans to lead the PJ. Within peronism itself, a highly symbolic event was a joint rally of the JP and the *Juventud Sindical* of CGT in defense of the government’s policies. The rivalry between the competing youth peronist organizations in the 1970s mirrored the violence between left and Orthodox peronism, and had many times ended with bloodshed and killings.

Yet the export taxes provided a godsend for the political opposition to Kirchner, above all for those located on the ideological right and center right. In Argentina, the left have traditionally suffered from an extreme degree of dispersion, where a plethora of parties would present a dizzying array of competing lists, prevented from political differences or pure vanities from presenting common candidates. Much the same can be said of the center-right, which in the recent 2007 election had divided the ideological anti-Kirchner vote among at least three candidates. It has been a maxim in the PJ’s history that its greatest opponents could be found within its own ranks. Always a truth with considerable modifications, the agro strikes nonetheless appeared to further a trend started earlier, where the rising star of Mauricio Macri drew considerable support from the more rightwing sectors of peronism.

Reflecting upon the desire of Kirchner for an ideological landscape divided in the left and right, one prominent functionary of K administration pointed out that “Argentina has been characterized by never having had an important conservative party, and therefore it is very possible that *macrismo* can convert itself into this.” The statement by a national FpV close to the Kirchner administration, made in February 2007, therefore appeared quite prescient of events a year later:

> The factors of power, the economic powers, some business sectors, some very linked to the multinationals, part of the Argentine finance system, part of the rural sectors, will not have a head that can exercise political party leadership, but they are sectors of power of the right or centre-right that play a distinct role, with much faster organizational power than those of a political party. Against such decisive policies, much of the national media will respond to these factors. This is the real political opposition that exists in Argentina against kirchnerismo.

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512 Hubo apoyo de los K que no son del PJ. *Página 12*, June 3, 2008.
514 Confidential Interview with functionary of the Kirchner administration, Feb. 27, 2007.
As mayor of the Federal Capital, and historically on good terms with Duhalde, Macri was a likely gathering point for the opposition. During the conflict, he kept, however, a relatively low profile. Macri, who regard himself as a representative of a modern or “new politics” beyond the old parties PJ and UCR, was likely keen to avoid too close of an identification with some of el campo’s political allies, many of whom hardly represented an image of renovation.

Within peronism, the opponents of Kirchner read very much like a “Who’s Who” of the PJ in the 1990s. The conflict appeared to have achieved the feat of, at least temporarily, bringing them together. Siding publicly with the agricultural interests were, among others, ex governor Ramón Puerta, a personal friend of Macri; ex governor José Manuel de la Sota; Alberto and Adolfo Rodríguez Saá; ex governor Carlos Reutemann; ex governor Jorge Busti; old Menem allies such as Carlos Soria, Jorge Matzkin and Miguel Ángel Toma, and many others.

In July, the most hardcore opponents would occupy the seat of the PJ’s national council. Led by Héctor Maya, the failed candidate for the PJ presidency and Alberto Rodríguez Saá’s FREJULI running mate in 2007, a group of around 30 people would briefly occupy the building, where they hung banners of “peronism or Kirchner.” The group also included Teresa González Fernández and Daniel "Chicho" Basile, the latter particularly close to Duhalde. In other words, the group was linked to three former national presidents, who now would intensify their efforts to remove the newly – and duly – elected leader.

Eduardo Duhalde in particular would be a main protagonist during the agro conflict, and would refer to the countryside protesters as “patriots.” Head of the foundation MPA since 2001, he would now lead a range of meetings and discussions that greatly criticized the new CFK government, and Kirchner’s leadership of the PJ. He attracted ministers from the Macri government and pro-Macri peronists such as national deputy Francisco De Narváez. Remarkably, he also allied with Luis Barrionuevo, whom he referred to as “my friend,” and who clearly harbored his own ambitions. Duhalde, despite his multiple retirements from politics, was now actively tying together and opposition front through the MPA. He had the open support of at least 20 national legislators, and met increasingly with union leaders such as Raúl Etcheun of the meatpackers (STI), Armando Cavalieri (SIC) of retail workers, and UATRE leader Gerónimo Venegas of the “62.” Historically in peronism, divisions in labor – be it the CGT or the “62” – have often mirrored divisions within the PJ itself, and Barrionuevo had long threatened to leave

516 Confidential interview, PRO national deputy, June 12, 2006.
the CGT, led by Kirchner ally Hugo Moyano. The final product would now be an excision from the CGT, unified since 2004, where Barrionuevo proclaimed himself the general secretary of a new and “rival CGT.”

The PJ, then, clearly remained divided in the fight with el campo. Many of Kirchner and CFK’s opponents, such as Reutemann (Santa Fe), Busti (Entre Ríos), Romero (Salta) and Marin and Verna (La Pampa) were former governors who still commanded much of the official PJ structure in their respective provinces. In Córdoba, an uneasy truce with de la Sota and lukewarm relations with current governor Schiaretti were turning into open conflict, though the opposition had not yet reached the degree of hostility of the Rodríguez Saá brothers in San Luis. What was clear, though, was that not only did Kirchner still face significant challenges to his leadership of peronism; his opponents were moreover exclusively located to his ideological right.

In an attempt to decompress the conflict with the countryside, and to award it further democratic legitimacy, the CFK government announced it would take the project to the national Congress. In the period leading up to the legislative vote, both sides saw massive street mobilizations that numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Kirchner, as president of the PJ, was particularly active holding speeches and leading demonstrations. The relations between the groups, however, remained acrimonious, and several lawmakers who had announced their support of Resolution 125 experienced escraches, where groups of protesters would target their private homes. In the Chamber of Deputies, despite projections of massive defection from the FpV, the resolution passed relatively easy, with 129 votes to 122. Twenty of the legislators nominally allied with the government voted against the official project. Ahead of the final vote in the Senate, Kirchner promised that the PJ would respect the result. None of the major agricultural organizations made similar pronouncements.

In the Senate, eight members of the PJ-FpV announced they would vote against the resolution of their government. While the government was still assured of a majority due to its non-PJ allies, Senator Alberto Rached, of the Frente Cívico por Santiago, who had previously announced he would vote with the government, dramatically switched his vote in last minute.

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522 El nuevo mapa del poder peronista. La Nación, July 13, 2008.
523 Las retenciones, en manos del Congreso. Página 12, June 18, 2008.
525 Ajustado triunfo oficial en Diputados. La Nación, July 6, 2008.
526 Kirchner prometió aceptar la decisión que tome el Congreso, Clarín, July 16, 2008.
527 They were: Juan Carlos Romero, Carlos Reutemann, (Santa Fe) Roberto Urquía (Córdoba) Rubén Marin (La Pampa), Roxana Latorre (Santa Fe), Elena Corregido (Chaco), Teresita Quintela (La Rioja) and Sonia Escudero (Salta). Cf. Tras una dramática sesión, el vicepresidente Cobos desempató la votación al rechazar el proyecto oficial de retenciones. La Nación, July 17, 2008.
amidst threats to his family by opponents who had surrounded his house in Santiago province.\(^{528}\) The vote was now down to a 36-36 tie.

According to the Argentine constitution, in case of a tie in the Senate, the vice president holds a tie-breaking vote. Julio Cobos had earlier drawn criticism from his own Radical K allies for his quiet opposition to the taxes, and he had met earlier with governors opposed to the project such as Schiaretti of Córdoba.\(^{529}\) Nonetheless, when Cobos finally declared at 4:30 in the morning, following a marathon Senate session, that “My vote is not positive – history will judge me,” it was a political earthquake.\(^{530}\) For Kirchner and the PJ, the dramatic culmination of the four-month conflict was the most stunning defeat since he came to power in 2003. To be sure, the future of the Concertation was cast in doubt by the negative vote of CFK’s own Radical K vice president. Moreover, and not unexpectedly, the dissident peronists within and outside of the PJ smelled blood, and calls were soon made for displacing Kirchner as the PJ’s president.\(^{531}\)

**Why party change?**

Kirchner’s long-delayed decision to finally embark on a process of party-building was a dramatic change from past years, and presented observers of the PJ with a clear puzzle. Indeed, given the president’s very high approval ratings and determined political will, the initial puzzle at first may appear to be, why did he actively avoid doing so this years?

The previous sections have outlined how the incessant intra-party struggle within the PJ and the wider peronist “movement” of dissident party factions and allied organizations can only be understood through the lens of the PJ’s nature as a personalistic movement-party. The internal characteristics of the party such as the lack of a dominant and clear ideological orientation, when coupled with an uninstitutionalized top leadership and leadership succession and highly unclear boundaries for what structures made out the official party, was a recipe for party turmoil and internecine warfare.

Even given the PJ’s conflictual history, however, the events after 2003 – where the PJ failed to line up behind the national president and rather sought to sabotage his administration – are remarkable. While the national party organs had collapsed, and while clearly many PeJotas existed on the provincial levels, Kirchner, in break with peronist tradition, refused to take over the control on a national level, and as this study has shown, on several notable occasions fought directly against it. After an initial attempt at party resurrection in 2004 demonstrated that the PJ


\(^{530}\) Cobos se quedó con la última palabra. *Página 12*, July 17, 2008.

\(^{531}\) El justicialismo disidente ahora le reclama “gestos” a Néstor Kirchner. *Clarín*, July 18, 2008.
still harbored strong ideological opponents that refused to align with the new government’s direction, he would even fight the PJ head on as his main electoral opponent on both national and provincial levels.

Due to the immense heterogeneity of the movement-party, many peronists had loyally followed Menem despite his drastic ideological and programmatic turnabout in the 1990s. Yet while some were quick to join the Kirchner bandwagon after 2003 – many undoubtedly due to political opportunism – an unprecedented number remained directly opposed to the new direction, as well as to becoming a more institutionalized party.

As Duhalde, though stepping down as president in May 2003, repeatedly betrayed his professed intentions to leave politics and continued to hold veto power over legislation, it is clear that the crucial October 2005 electoral battle was about breaking his political power. Yet an analysis of the contest, which ended catastrophically for Duhalde, reveals the clear ideological differences between the two camps. To be sure, the 2005 “mother of all battles” was to a great extent an internal battle of peronism, but it was also much more than that: It signified a drastic restructuring of power between the current and former presidents, and led to a significant renovation of leadership on the provincial level. It also meant the defeat of a road block toward an ideological redefinition of the PJ and peronism, which Kirchner appeared to seek.

Two more years would pass, however, before Kirchner went for the leadership of the PJ. One national deputy close to the president revealed that while they could have forced through a new leadership after the 2005 elections, “it would have separated the waters too early,” by leaving out many people that still had not aligned behind Kirchner:

> We weren’t interested in this, nor was it convenient, because if had done this immediately after 2005, many of our own people would have remained outside who later ended up aligning, including Díaz Bancalari – and he was the one who accompanied senator Duhalde as her running mate!532

Some of the 2005 opponents then, while they might have sided with Kirchner’s opponent for their own reasons, were still considered “redeemable” peronists. Before this could happen, a natural period of time would have to pass. Moreover, a further showdown was yet to come, in the October 2007 election that would see his wife elected to the presidency in the first round, and a further renovation of PJ leaders in the province of Buenos Aires. It was only then that Kirchner could declare, after fighting much of the party for four years, that he would now dedicate his time to rebuild the PJ. Before this point, his most ardent opponents within the party, who had showed

532 Confidential Interview with FpV national deputy, March 13, 2007.

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little inclination toward aligning behind the president and his policies, had to be fought and defeated.

The new renovation, be it generational or ideological, was if anything even more pronounced in the provinces beyond Buenos Aires. Kirchner explicitly sought to destroy the power of his ideological opponents within the PJ, and between 2003 and 2007, this meant directly taking on his opponents within the PJ, such as Menem, Barrionuevo, Romero, Juarez, and other party stalwarts. Kirchner, notably, had early on expressed interest in leading the party. Yet the disastrous 2004 party conference had revealed the extent of opposition within the PJ, and a seeming end to the old peronist tradition where losers let bygones be bygones, and aligned behind the new leader. Given the internal contradictions within the party and sorrow state of its internal organs, this did not happen. From this moment on, he worked against party normalization, and pressured the new council members allied with him to resign, which in the end rendered the party judicially intervened for its failure to elect a new leadership. Slowly, however, he accumulated more political capital, most notably in the Oct. 2005 midterm elections, and finally in the Oct. 2007 presidential and legislative elections. As the 2003 electoral mandates expired – as e.g. the congressional seats once controlled by Menem, Duhalde, or other opponents were renovated – Kirchner’s power grew correspondingly. He then would follow through on his assertion made two years earlier (and ridiculed by his opponents) that he would not seek reelection, and was finally free to invest resources and time and embark on a party-building project.

Especially in the early years, Kirchner clearly at many times found more eager support for his project, which clearly broke with the PJ’s past agenda, outside of the PJ than inside of it. His victory against Duhalde’s and the Orthodox’ sections of the PJ, however, appears to have had the seemingly paradoxical effect of moving him closer to the party, as the PJ apparatus proved much easier to conquer than what most had imagined. Yet Kirchner’s confession to his transversal allies that he did not want to leave the PJ “in the hands of the right”\footnote{“Vamos a construir una alianza plural.” Página 12, Feb. 14, 2008.} is a potent reminder that the battle over the PJ, and peronist identity, is far from over. Notably, many of Kirchner’s most ardent ideological opponents – from the center-right and right – are still found within the PJ. The opposition to Kirchner within the party, to borrow from Borges, was hardly united by love, but out of fear of Kirchner, and is more likely than not to descend into vicious infighting. Tellingly, the “congress” of the PJ section opposed to Kirchner – the “PJ anti-K” – did not even manage to rally behind a common candidacy against CFK’s candidacy in October 2007.
Yet as the rebellion in the PJ’s own ranks during the agro strike clearly demonstrated, a will exists, if not yet ability, for the simmering rightwing Peronist opposition both outside and within the PJ to find together. As the previous sections has argued, Kirchner clearly desired an ideological polarization in the party landscape, where electoral battles would be driven by opposing policy agendas rather than as naked battles for power, as had been the case in the PJ before 2003. Yet Kirchner’s polarization also had the effect of bringing closer his ideological opponents within the PJ – all, it should be emphasized, to his political right and none to his left – to the point where they represented a real threat to resuscitate and take over the PJ.

The opposition within the PJ to Kirchner’s leadership is quite clearly measurable in left-right terms. While Orthodox peronists are hesitant to admit the left-right differences, they can be identified through their appreciation of the role of Perón, and particularly that of Isabel, in the period preceding the military dictatorships. Whether they walked our got kicked out, the JP and the peronist left did leave the May Square plaza in 1974. In power today, these setentistas do represent a clear ideological and generational breach with the old peronism. The case of Isabel, the Triple A, the responsibility of the union leadership, and ultimately the role of Perón himself make out a continued and very significant fault line within the party, and it overlaps almost perfectly with two highly significant issues: 1) Whether the PJ should move toward a more European-style organization or remain a movement-party, and 2), Whether peronism today can be characterized, as Kirchner’s supporters argue, as a clear center-left force, or whether the PJ is, as Teisaire argued in the founding congress of the Partido Peronista more than six decades ago, still a party of “neither left nor right.”

Conclusion

Transversality was a journalistic classification. It is a term that could work in a party system that is functioning. In Argentina, we all know that the reconstruction of political parties is going to take a long time. - Néstor Kirchner, May 2006.

Kirchner’s assumption of the PJ presidency in 2008, which followed on the heels of his wife’s assumption of the national presidency, represented the apogee of kirchnerismo thus far. Given the massive electoral victory of 2007, which built upon the “mother of all battles” in 2005, the PJ elites appeared to finally realign behind the new PJ leader.

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534 As Bobbio reminds us, “it has been shown repeatedly that there is nothing more ideological than declaring the demise of ideologies” Bobbio (1996, 3).
However, the internecine party warfare throughout the Kirchner administration – and, to be sure, the struggle for power preceding it ever since Menem’s loss of power and authority – should serve as a potent reminder that while the party may appear outwardly stable, the particular legacy of the characteristics of the PJ as a personalistic movement-party makes even Kirchner’s resurrected PJ a fragile construction.

The uninstitutionalized nature of the party leadership selection had left a power vacuum after Menem, with the result that the party was unable to come up with a recognized national leader following its fall from power. Even during Duhalde’s “emergency government,” party infighting continued unabated, drawing attention away from his main task of managing one of the greatest political and economic crises in Argentine history.

The leadership struggle was compounded by another trait of the personalistic movement-party: its failure – extreme in the case of the PJ – to present a dominant and clear ideological orientation. For its elites – and for the Argentine people – it was far from clear whether the party could be located on the political left or right; when the internal leadership struggle in addition took on a strong ideological content, the party was utterly unable to resolve its differences.

While Kirchner was of a very different mold than Menem – he would move away from the most excessive plebiscitarian appeals of the former – the legacy of the personalistic movement-party was still felt during his administration. During the four years of his administration, the task of uniting the PJ behind a common project was a futile task, and Kirchner was neither the PJ’s de jure or de facto leader, as witnessed by the many electoral showdowns with its component parts. Kirchner, in turn, certainly drew on the past tendencies of unclear boundaries between the party and its affiliated organizations; often, he would support dissident peronist groups on the provincial level. Crucially, Kirchner would also seek to recruit members of other parties and organizations, such as Radicales K, and members of partially defunct parties such as the Frente Grande and the Partido Intransigente, but also, notably, from social organizations.

However, even this practice – reminiscent of the PJ’s past fluid party boundaries – does not fully fall within the movement-logic: The main rationale was not favoring a “movement” over a “party” per se, but rather due to the failure of the PJ to line up behind the president, and his desire and need to seek ideological allies of the left and center-left within non-PJ networks. This task in itself – seeking to forge a common ideological identity to this project – speaks directly against the movement-party logic.

In an attempt at reconciliation, Kirchner would go on to cast a relatively wide net to incorporate the brunt of peronism in the resurrected PJ. While some diehard peronist opponents
were deemed “untouchables,” Kirchner incorporated many who had fought him actively, but had switched to profess their loyalty to Kirchner as it became clear that his accumulation of political power was real, and that the stigma of the “22.2” was a thing of the past. On a personal note, during my field work in Argentina in 2007 – even before he had declared his intentions to assume the reins of the PJ – I would like to add that it often strained credulity to hear how key peronists who had fought Kirchner with vehemence in 2005 were with such apparent ease able to explain away their past support for Duhalde and Menem with their current support for Kirchner, whose government policies and assessment of the peronist past – such as the tragic 1970s – were so diametrically opposed to those of particularly Menem. Just like most of them turned their backs on their former political bosses when the winds blew in another direction, a great many of them would undoubtedly turn their backs on Kirchner where they to sense his power waning.

Unless party loyalties become programmatic and tied to an ideological project rather than a person, political defeats, real or perceived, may expose the apparent unity of Kirchner’s PJ as a house of cards. The defeat of Resolution 125 may have been a temporary political setback, or it may be the launching of a new offensive for anti-Kirchner forces, within and outside of the PJ. In terms of the PJ’s resurrection, it thus remain to be seen whether Kirchner’s renovation will leave a lasting imprint on the party, or whether the PJ will again retrograde into its internecine battles of the past.

This investigation into the PJ’s elites suggests that even among Kirchner’s current allies, a vast discrepancy exists regarding the preferred future ideological course of peronism, and of the preferred organizational form of the PJ. Should the newly united PJ split again, it will this time very likely be along an even clearer ideological left-right line. It is indeed notable that while no peronist opposition exists to the left of Kirchner, there are plenty of PJ stalwarts who continue to oppose him on the right. These sectors, such as those led by rightwing peronist and multimillionaire businessman Francisco de Narváez, may finally succeed in forging alliances with their natural ideological allies on the right, such as Mauricio Macri, yet given the level of personal ambitions and vanity among this sector, Kirchner’s PJ may in the end come out on top against a divided opposition. The underlying divisions within peronism are thus clear testaments to the inherent instability of the lack of a common programmatic and ideological project – both a heritage of the PJ’s historic claim to be beyond left and right – and of the fallacy that this division can be overcome in favor of a common project.

The final outcome of the new PJ leader’s apparent desire to spearhead the redefinition of peronism as a center-left force is of utmost political importance, as in the most optimistic of scenarios if may paradoxically help to supplant the many “ismos” in Argentina – be it
menemismo, duhaldismo, macrismo, or, to be sure, kirchnerismo – in favor of political loyalties based on coherent ideologies. Personalistic loyalties are inherently less stable and enduring than ideological ones, and this analysis of the PJ and its trajectory has sought to demonstrate that one of the major reasons for the PJ’s historical instability has been the failure to provide a clear and consistent programmatic orientation, in addition to other characteristics of the personalistic movement-party. Any steps that seek to promote such a development should therefore be lauded for the promotion of political stability it entails, independent of one’s judgment of the merits of Kirchner’s administration. What remains clear is that the PJ has a long way to go in its transition from a personalistic movement-party, toward that of a more institutionalized party formation. Similarly, despite Kirchner’s move from president of the nation to president of the PJ, the battle for peronism’s identity today, a quarter century after the death of its founder, is yet far from over.
CHAPTER 5

A NEW PARTIDO-MOVIMIENTO EMERGES: THE PRD

In no way am I of the centre-left: I am the candidate of the revolutionary and progressive forces.\(^1\)
- Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, at June 22, 1988 mass meeting at the Mexico City Zócalo.

The PRD should not be boxed into a political geometry. It is enough to define us as a democratic party that fights for the changes that the country needs.\(^2\)
- Rosa Albina Garavito Elías, PRD senator, 1997

On the front page of its May 7, 1989 edition, *Proceso* declared on its front page, “The PRD is being born: A left that is every time less of the left.” The left-leaning, hard-hitting Mexican news magazine referred to the official creation of the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática*. In a meeting in the famed downtown Zócalo in Mexico City, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of former president Lázaro Cárdenas and the party’s likely new leader, proclaimed the PRD into existence on May 5, describing the party as,

> The party of the Mexican people, the party that was born on July 6, our party of today, and the party of tomorrow, the party that demands: Democracy now, a fatherland for all!\(^3\)

The date July 6 referred to the national elections held the previous year, where the infamous “fall of the system” during election night, which many believe robbed Cárdenas and his electoral coalition FDN of his presidential victory. As Carr noted, “Although it is impossible to estimate the scale of the officially engineered fraud committed during the election and postelection periods, the FDN’s claim that its presidential candidate actually won more votes than the PRI cannot be dismissed out of hand” (1992, 306).\(^4\)

The PRD today remains a paradox. The party would survive fraud and repression to become the largest party of the left in Mexico’s history. The achievement is all the more remarkable given the party’s barely two decades-old history. Yet the PRT today remains greatly

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\(^3\) Quoted in Pascal Beltrán del Río and Oscar Hinojosa: Con 80,000 Militantes realizó el PRD su Asamblea Constitutiva; Consciente de que son pocos. *Proceso*, no. 653 (May 8, 1989): 16-17. “Democracia Ya, Patria Para Todos” remains the PRD’s official party motto.

\(^4\) Cárdenas himself noted, “we cannot say that the 6 July election was a fair one, nor that the official results correspond to the reality of the votes actually cast.” Quoted in Galindo López (1990b, 395).
torn between two factions: one headed by the last presidential candidate, who continues to insist on his victory in the 2006 election, and as a consequence of this belief refuses to engage with the national executive and is highly reluctant to engage in institutional reform, and another sector more inclined toward reforming the country’s political institutions, and dialogue with the national government. Parallel to this, are fundamentally opposed conceptions of what should be both the programmatic orientation of the party, as well as its organizational setup. In essence, this is a schism about whether the party should remain a loose personalistic movement-party organization, and look for ideological inspiration in the Mexican Revolution, or if the party should move toward a more traditional and institutionalized party organization, and look for ideological and programmatic inspiration in international socialism and social democracy.

This chapter aims to do the following: While not a historical analysis of the PRD, it will locate the current conflict of the party in the historical context. First, I will locate the internal fault lines of the party in a larger trajectory. In particular, a “reform vs. rupture” debate, which characterized the party’s first six years of existence, was closely mirroring party elites’ competing conception of not only the PRD’s strategic orientation, but also of the very organizational model of the new party. Crucially, these competing models are also linked to the battle over the PRD’s very ideological and programmatic identity. While one sector drew inspiration principally from the Mexican Revolution and what is considered its heyday, the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), another sector sought to locate the party in a wider international ideological context. The extent of this battle is illustrated by the party’s long hesitance to even declare itself as “left,” which only happened nearly a decade after its founding.

The PRD’s history is also the story of attempts to strike a balance between the PRD’s desire for autonomy from its two historic leaders, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas,5 and Andrés Manuel López Obrador,6 and its reliance on these leaders as a unifying factor in what has historically been a highly fragmented party both organizationally and ideologically.

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the battle of whether to remain a formation of the movement-party type, or whether to assume a more institutionalized form, has been the essential

5 A definite biography of Cárdenas has yet to be written. Existing works such as Taibo II (1994), Fortson (1997), and Ascencio (2000), are largely based on interviews – the two first ones exclusively – and are excessively hagiographic. Aguilar Zínser (1995), though covering a limited time period, is a much more useful and critical examination of Cárdenas’ leadership. A brief (and scathing!) review of this literature is found in Edgardo Bermejo Mora, Cárdenas en su Tinta, La Jornada, Jan. 9, 2000 (Masiosare supplement).

6 Existing biographies, on a rough scale of their increasingly critical attitude of AMLO, range from the benevolent Ortiz Pinchetti (2006), to Gómez (2005), Lajous (2006), Trelles and Zagal (2004), to the highly critical and thesis-driven Grayson (2007). All have their strengths and weaknesses, though only the work of Ortiz Pinchetti, AMLO’s first secretary of government (2000-2003), is based on actual interviews with the PRD leader.
fault line throughout the PRD’s history. Secondary to this struggle, though intricately linked to it, it argues that the battle over the PRD’s programmatic identity has greatly mirrored this struggle over its organizational setup, as well as its earlier debates on reform of the country’s institutions vs. rupture with the regime. While the PRD remained largely a personalistic movement party from its foundation up until the present, an examination of the party’s historical trajectory reveals that it was far from static, as great and protracted battles were fought out among its elites over these very conceptualizations of the party. The party was in a permanent tension between the idea of a movement-type organization, and that of more traditional party type, and an examination of the party’s internal dynamic is as well a study of significant attempts at party change. While devastating electoral losses in its early years are signaled as an important contributing factor toward building a more traditional party, this analysis argues that electoral loss was neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for its leadership to change the party’s strategic, ideological, and organizational orientation.

“The party of the July 6 fraud”

One day I asked myself, why the hell do I continue in the PRI?7
- Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Many political parties, particularly those of the left, are born in opposition. Even so, the PRD remains a very particular case. The immediate roots of the party lie in a defection from the seemingly hegemonic PRI. As a reaction to its increasingly neoliberal turn, the party of the institutionalized revolution in the mid-1980s experienced significant defections.

After attempts at internal reform of the PRI failed, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano, together with other priístas such as Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and Ifigenia Martínez, took the internal reform current Corriente Democrática (CD) out of the PRI, and decided to face the old party in the 1988 presidential elections under the banner of the Frente Democrático Nacional (FDN), which in addition to the dissatisfied priístas was joined by a range of smaller parties, attracted to the candidacy of CCS for both ideological and opportunistic reasons. The PRD would be a direct product of this very disparate electoral coalition. In the eventual July 6 election, the FDN coalition included four registered parties, as well as more than 25 other organizations and movements. While the Partido Mexicano Socialista (PMS) was the largest organization of the Mexican political left,8 the FDN was ideologically and organizationally extremely heterogeneous, bringing together “some very unusual bedfellows with conflicting visions of what a progressive

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7 Quoted in Ortiz Pinchetti (2006, 93).
8 The PMS withdrew its own candidate, Heberto Castillo, less than a month before the national election.
Mexico might look like” (Carr 1989, 384). Nor was the FDN clearly of the left; as Reding noted, the FDN was essentially an “unusual limited alliance” of “leftist, centrist, and rightist parties that are opposing the PRI” (1988, 328).

Due to its character as an electoral front the FDN was described as a “semi-anarchic movement” (Bruhn 1997, 136). To oppose what was regarded an electoral fraud orchestrated by the PRI, and to continue the fight for democracy, CCS on Oct. 19, 1988, announced that a new party would have to be formed. Following its constituent assembly, the PRD, which was thus a direct project of the official fraud, faced further opposition from the electoral authorities. The representatives of the governing PRI were joined by the opposition Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) – which had denounced the 1988 fraud but quickly accommodated with the regime – in voting against the PRD’s registration. The PRD thwarted this attempt by accepting the PMS’s offer of taking over its party registry, and the process was formalized May 26, 1989 (Vivero Ávila 2006, 64).

Within the PRD, tension would soon arise between its many constituent parts and with its leader CCS. Upon CCS’ suggestion, the new party would be known as the Party of the Democratic Revolution (Castillo 1996, 17), and it was clearly a direct consequence of his presidential candidacy. At the same time, the PRD’s reliance on the socialist PMS for its registry underscored that it was also a product of a fusion of virtually all forces of the Mexican left. While the only legal party to stick with the PRD was the PMS, this party itself was the result of a resent fusion of a variety of left parties, and the PRD became “something of a front itself, much like its predecessor (PMS) had been” (Valdés 1994, 63). The party’s fractious nature can largely be traced as a direct result of its founding moment (Prud’homme 1996). While the most ideologically antagonistic factions of the FDN, such as the nationalist and conservative PARM did not join the new PRD, the new party would still lack a clear ideological profile. Beyond “ending the regime,” it was far from clear what the party actually stood for. Crucially, nor did

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9 The most thorough examination of early PRD years is Bruhn (1997). For general history of Mexican left, see Carr (1992). A very useful summary is found in Modonesi (2003).

10 Of the four registered political parties of the FDN, only the PMS joined with Cárdenas in forming the PRD (Bruhn 1997, 115). The most opportunistic paraestatales or semi-official parties set up by the regime, quickly fell away. The paraestatales quickly came to terms with Salinas, supporting many of his neoliberal reforms (Bruhn 1997, 161). Some, like PARM, had simply joined FDN out of fear to lose its party registry (Craig and Cornelius 1995, 277), whose prerogatives it treasured more than joining a new party. The PARM was essentially a conservative and nationalist party formed by an earlier split within the PRI in 1954 (Craig and Cornelius 1995, 259).

11 Bruhn (1997), in a particularly insightful analysis of the PRD, further noted that “The conditions that foster party emergence differ substantially from the conditions that foster their consolidation.” Focusing particularly on the electoral dynamics of the PRD, Bruhn concluded that “the factors that encourage the creation of new parties and their early success do not necessarily support, and may even block, consolidation” (1997, 4).
agreement exist on exactly how the PRI regime should be brought down: by the ballot box, or by insurrection.

The orientation of the new party: Anti-system orientation trumps ideology

While President Carlos Salinas (1988-1994) largely ended Mexico’s economic import-substitution model, it soon became clear that that the neoliberal opening of the Mexican economy would not be followed quickly by a corresponding political liberalization.

Among Mexican party elites, Molinar Horcasitas (1989) early identified a shift in the main axis of competition in, away from one of left-right toward a perpendicular and tactical axis of anti-system–pro-system, and the PRD would place itself squarely in the anti-system camp, or among those who wanted to “redefine the government structure -from the power of the executive to the electoral system- and the ruling party's relationship with the state” (Molinar Horcasitas 1989, 273).12

It must be noted that being anti-system at the same time meant being pro-democratic, as democracy appeared utterly contingent on ending the PRI regime. Yet it also had the effect of further downplaying ideology – at least as defined by the left-right axis – in favor of an anti-system orientation. In short, in the time period the PRD came into existence, the Mexican party system was arguably “no longer ordered by ideology, but rather by tactics and strategy along the pro-regime–anti-regime axis” (Molinar Horcasitas 1989, 286).13 Producing a coherent ideological platform was thus less important than devising tactics and strategies to end the system. While this also opened up for an anti-system party of the right, the PAN eventually accommodated with the Salinas regime, negotiating victories and concessions in return for toning down its anti-system aspects against a regime that, following PRI’s economic turn, greatly shared the PAN’s own neoliberal platform (Bruhn 1997, 7).14

In addition to the heterogeneity of its constituent elements, and the dominance of anti-system tactics and strategies over ideological opposition, a third factor conspired against the PRD’s attempts to find a common ideological and programmatic project. Internationally, this was the time of the “End of History” argument (Fukuyama 1989) where the collapse of Stalinist communism led many to not only question the old paradigms of socialism vs. capitalism, but even to dismiss the left-right divide as the major cleavage around which political struggle would be organized.

12 For the development of Mexico’s electoral system, see Gómez Tagle (2004) and Horcasitas and Weldon (2001).
13 For a recent overview of Mexican party system, see Langston (2007)
14 Sympathetic studies of the PAN, such as Shirk (2005), while emphasizing the PAN’s “moderation” and willingness to work for gradual reform, tend to ignore this point.
While the CD of CCS and his fellow PRI defectors is generally regarded as the “left” wing of the PRI, in really the group was “very difficult to locate politically,” and its main actors, rather than clearly of the political left, were described as “authentic children of the PRI” (Carr 1989, 369, 383).15 Porfirio Muñoz Ledo (PML), with CCS one of the principal defectors from the PRI, noted at the time that “we share the goals of restoring relevance to the ideals of the Mexican revolution… We are a populist-nationalist current of the Mexican revolution, but we do not stand for socialism.”16 As the CD and the PRI defectors would make out the main current of the new PRD, the PRI heritage was very likely to leave its mark on the new party.

Heberto Castillo, historic leader of the Mexican left and head of the party that gave the PRD its registry, admitted it would be a far shot for the PRD to assume the ideology of the PMS, a declared socialist party:“We socialists who came to the new party are very few, compared with the millions of Mexicans who only want to fight for their rights and find in the Mexican Revolution the path to improve.”17

According to Adolfo Gilly, of Trotskyist political origins yet a backer of CCS, the PRD represented above all the “national ideology of cardenismo” (Gilly 1990a, 62). Looking back in Mexico history, Gilly located the PRD solidly in this nationalist tradition, identifying in the party currents of cardenismo, state nationalism (priísmo), independent socialism, and Mexican communism (1990a, 63).18 Semo (2003) saw in the PRD a party that “unified Cárdenas and the left, and whose program was an eclectic synthesis of both” (2003, 113).

Yet within the party there were also dissenting voices, such as Jesús Ortega, who acknowledged that while the PRD should not define itself as socialist at that point, it should go beyond the content of the Mexican Revolution and cardenismo as its ideological frame of reference, and not discard the socialist project for the future.19 In its founding years, however, such ideological clarification was not undertaken.

It was also notable that the PRD came into existence with virtually no prior founding documents. While other parties of the Mexican left had produced clear and elaborate statement of principles and programs of action, the PRD would lack these basic documents. While the party finally held its first national congress in November 1990 – following four postponements— the

15 For a thorough study of the CD, see Garrido (1993)
16 Quoted in Reding (1988, 359).
18 See also Gilly (1990b).
party had yet to produce a party program.\textsuperscript{20} Not even the midterm elections in 1991 helped create unity, as internal struggles prevented a common platform. The party’s second congress in July 1993 finally approved a political program and strategy for contesting the 1994 presidential election, though it only agreed in very general terms upon an economic platform to offer the voters. While the hasty and contingent manner of its formation may have justified such an important omission in its first years, it was even the more alarming that by 1994, five years after its foundation, as its founder was to contest the presidency again, the PRD was still “basically a party without a unified program” (Valdés 1994, 65).\textsuperscript{21}

Galindo López noted that “The PRD was born with a definition of centre-left, despite that it did not claim this place in the Mexican political geometry” (1990a, 10). While it incorporated the majority of the Mexican forces of the left, the PRD was indeed remarkable in that it refused to define itself ideologically. Indeed, while the party could generally be regarded as of the left, it would take the PRD almost a decade after its founding to declare itself as such. Part of the explanation can be found in the historical setting; as Craig and Cornelius noted, “With the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the Mexican left has no alternative models to advocate” (1995, 279). Born in a time where the very validity of the left-right cleavage was put in doubt, the PRD appeared to find no other option than attempt to take the national-revolutionary mantle from the PRI, and to rely on the unifying power of its founder, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano (CCS).

\textit{Neocardenismo: A vague ideological and programmatic orientation}

The very name of the PRD invoked the Mexican revolution, and the notion that the party first and foremost was striving for a revindication of the revolution was underlined by the fact that its first president, and 1994 presidential candidate, was the son of Mexico’s most famous president, who not only had fought in the revolution, but as president (1934-1940) put into practice, much delayed, many of the admittedly very progressive aspects of the 1917 Mexican constitution. As leader of the PRD, CCS emphasized programmatic continuity with this era. CCS regarded the PRD as a convergence of the forces of the revolution with socialist currents (Cárdenas 1990a, 3), and the party would very much be tied to his ideological conception of its continuity with the revolution. While decidedly against neoliberalism, CCS was far from a radical, rather calling for social justice and ecological protection (Cárdenas 1990b). Like his


\textsuperscript{21} In fairness, criticism of vague political platforms also extended to the PRI and PAN. See Valverde Viesca (1995)
father, moreover, CCS decidedly refused to declare himself or his party as “left.” Ahead of the 1988 election, to those who saw in the FDN a bourgeoning socialist party, he noted,

I don't see why people are talking about socialism, nor do I believe that what my father achieved in this country is socialism... It was simply the application of constitutional norms and the fulfilling of the principles of the Mexican Revolution.22

Nor would CCS or the new party define itself as left. A decade later, the “advanced principles of the Mexican Revolution” remained the basic guiding line for the PRD, rather than any programmatic clarification that could serve to locate the party in the international context. CCS, and the dominant party elites, rejected left and right placement, preferring, as Salazar noted, “to take refuge in the unfathomable ambiguities of the Mexican Revolution. Nationalism, sovereignty, statism, defense of social conquests” (1997, 26)

CCS also had clear preferences for the party’s organization as that of a movement-type party, rather than that of a more institutionalized formation, and it was his desire, according to Semo, which shaped the party’s early movement-like structure:

> Neocardenismo is not an organizer of party. It prefers the direct and fluid relations between the leaders, sympathizers, and the voters. It regards with much distrust stable organization and depersonalized leadership.23

Many writers have similarly blamed CCS for the PRD’s lack of party institutionalization. According to Borjas Benavente,

> the charismatic leader set himself up as the source of legitimacy of the leaders, as an umpire in the internal battle for power, imposed the predominance of the conception of the PRD as a movement-party and justified the line of democratic intransigence and the strategy of confrontation.24

Yet as Wuhs notes, CCS “effectively bound a diverse set of actors together across the different levels of the party organization” (2002, 193) – a party organization that was notoriously fragmented, with little common identity. The emphasis on CCS’ caudillismo should therefore not overshadow the fact the little cohesion within the party set itself up for a leadership of this type. The massive fragmentation on the left, Vivero Ávila, adds, “prompted the concentration of power in the caudillo and postponed the process of institutionalization of the party” (2006, 200, 69).

There was as such little controversy regarding CCS’ second presidential candidacy in 1994, as he appeared at times to be the only factor binding the disparate party together, with cardenismo the common programmatic coordinator. Yet following the electoral defeat in 1994, both the party’s programmatic declaration, and CCS’ refusal to engage in negotiations with the regime, became increasingly questioned. Similarly, so did his idea of the PRD’s organization as a movement-party.

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23 Semo (2003, 159).
Unclear party goal: Reform or rupture with the system

From CCD’s first presidential run to his PRD candidacy in 1994, the PRD wavered between support for negotiating with the PRI regime, to rejecting the possibility of reform in favor of permanent anti-system mobilization (Prud’homme 1996, 1). Indeed, Gilly, a chief ideologue of the party, confirmed that the disjunctive was indeed whether PRD wanted “rupture or a reform” (Gilly 1990a, 66-67), with Gilly himself advocating the former.

Yet the strategy had inherent flaws, as the question arose: A rupture with what? If the main goal of the party was indeed to end the regime, then any other achievements by the party would be subordinate to this goal, and party success could not be claimed unless complete victory was achieved. Also, one might add, were the party to be successful in “throwing the PRI from Los Pinos” (the office and home of the Mexican president), it would set itself up to have its main raison d’être taken away from it.

There were early voices highly critical of this intransigent position of “rupture.” Alcocer (1990) spoke out against “sterile anti-governmentism” and argued that the PRD should “renounce its totalitarianizing pretension, the mythical representation of ‘the entire people’ and rather to aspire to a simple citizen majority.” The PRD, according to Alcocer, should “respect, in order to transform,” the existing institutional framework, rather to present itself as “an anti-systemic force” (1990, 54, 58).25 Similarly, Gutiérrez Espíndola warned against the “ghosts of insurrection,” noting it was “worrying in the extreme to find in the discourse and political practice of the PRD strong echoes of insurrectional positions that are nurturing a strategy of total confrontation” (1990, 2).

In 1990s, it was therefore not clear whether the party respected the political system in which it nonetheless participated, albeit hesitantly. The party often seemed to “frequently opt more on delegitimizing the process than keeping watch on and correcting its deficiencies,” such as its “attitude of constant impugnation of the work of the Federal Electoral Institute” (Peschard 1992, 120, 136). In its political opposition to the PRI regime, the PRD (and also PAN) was deemed to “have made a business out of discrediting the system of which itself forms part” (Peschard 1993, 117)

This clearly posted a range of problems that went beyond the actual characteristics of the Mexican political system: While the party denounced the system in which it was operating, it continued to participate in it, while asking the electorate for their support. This stance “created confusion in potential supporters who were not sure why they were being asked to put a lot of effort into a process that the party argued was fundamentally flawed” (Bruhn 1997, 11). This also

led to serious paradoxes, which are echoed even today: If elections were fraudulent – which they in many cases likely were – how legitimate were the PRD’s own elected legislators, and what should be their role in a flawed system? While the PRD’s legislative bench grew in the 1990s, this political schizophrenia was never fully resolved, as witnessed by its role in legislative reform, discussed below.

**Party orientation and incentives to movement logic**

In addition to the division on what should be the PRD’s orientation vis-à-vis the PRI regime, a second major disjunctive pertained to the party’s organization. According to Palma, PRD’s dilemma in its early years was whether “to construct a ‘movement-party’ or an electoral party” (2004, 119). Crucially, this debate on organization greatly mirrored the debate on whether the PRD should strive for reform or rupture, and as such presents important lessons on the advocacy of a certain party type, in particular as this debate has in many forms persisted until the present.

In crude terms, one can argue that if the new party sought to gradually transform the regime, the organizational pattern of a more traditional party type would likely be sufficient. This had indeed been the crux of politics in other settings; parties organize to achieve change through reform of existing institutional setups.

Yet if the new political organization sought to end the regime, a more active mobilization and a different type of movement may be regarded as more fruitful, particularly in conditions of the repression that PRD activists were indeed facing.

In the early years, while divergent opinions surely existed, the dominant concept among the PRD’s elite was that of “a looser movement-party” (Prud’homme 1996, 20). This could be regarded as a combination of various factors, such as the desire of its many constituent units to maintain a degree of autonomy, or its demonstrated troubles with coming up with a unifying program.

Yet it must not be forgotten that the party did not operate in a vacuum. The party was the direct result of what is widely recognized as a mass electoral fraud, and its members continued to face vicious repression and murder of its cadres. While the PRD’s intransigent opposition to the regime and its professed desire to end it hardly left the PRI prone to accepting the party as a legitimate player, it would be cruel and false to suggest that the part brought the repression upon itself. Indeed, on the very eve of the 1988 election, CCS saw his campaign coordinator and
another close adviser brutally murdered. During the sexenio of Salinas (1988-1994), the party noted at least 250 further murders of its activists (PRD 1994). In the first elections where the PRD would participate under its own name, in Michoacán, where CCS had won 60 percent of the vote, the PRD in 1989 claimed victory in 18 electoral districts, though the party was only awarded six. More chillingly, 15 activists of the new party were murdered (Galindo López 1989). As in the case of Argentina, a looser and more decentralized structure appears quite a logical case in terms of survival, in a climate where even its national party headquarters had to be evacuated following bomb threats. Even when Mexico moved toward conditions of democracy – arguably, the 1994 election was its first democratic election (Domínguez 1999, 6) – the repression of PRD activists hardly ended. In the first 15 months of the new Zedillo administration, the party reported 150 deaths – numbers worse than even the darkest days of the Salinas regime. Tragically, while the number of PRD activists murdered would decline markedly after 2000, assassinations still continued throughout the 1990s, bringing the total number of PRD dead by January 2008 to 697. The number is merely the grimmest face of what was an entire body of harassment and arbitrary arrests.

Finally, as noted earlier, the movement-structure can hardly be separated from its leader. In these years, the party experienced massive conflict over the internal party rules (Bruhn 1997, 205), and the disagreements likely left much more room for CCS’ leadership. At the same time, as a loose and non-institutionalized party-movement, moreover, would pose less of a counterweight and threat to the dominance of CCS in the PRD leadership, the party in some ways also contained the contradiction found as well in the PJ. As Pivron notes, during the Salinas regime the chaos of organization was prevalent; many PRDs existed, acting highly autonomously, without real control of national branch (1999, 250-251). The PRD National Executive Committee (CEN), the party’s highest executive organ, had little independent power outside of CCS, and no clear institutionalized authority existed that could contradict him and his insistence on non-negotiation with the regime.

While government repression would be an obvious factor blocking the formation of a more institutionalized party structure, it should be noted that it is far from clear that that

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26 The murders of Román Gil Heraldez and Francisco Javier Ovando, who had collaborated with CCS for years, took place July 2, 1988, just days before the election (Taibo II 1994, 111-112).
27 In the time period 1988-May 1994.
28 Confidential interview, PRD member, March 12, 2008.
30 See breakdown in Table 7.1 in Ch. 7.
cooperation with the government would have led to a strengthening of the party, as some analysis have suggested (Bruhn 1997). As the PRD was arguably a “confederate party made up of political groups” (Valdés 1994, 74) rather than a group unified around a programmatic goal, one of the few common denominators was indeed the intransigence of CCS. Moreover, given the bitter history of government repression faced by the PRD (as opposed to the PAN), such cooperation arguably would “certainly have provoked cooptation and disintegration of the organization” (Prud’homme 1996, 343). Independent of whether such negotiations with the regime would have been successful or not, this could easily as well have been construed as treason. As a more institutionalized structure had yet to be built, and as the party lacked a clear programmatic platform and ideology, the loyalty of many of its members was to CCS rather than to the PRD itself. And given that it saw itself as representing the majority of the population, time would only be on its side, as increasing popular protest and mobilization would eventually force the regime to open up to democracy, where the PRD would, it was assumed, be rewarded for its intransigent attitude.

Negative returns of movement-logic: How to get out of electoral dead end

In its early years, the PRD appeared trapped in a circular logic whose making was a joint product of a repressive government as well as its own intransigence. The repression of its cadres hardly induced the new party to engage in open discussion with the regime, as negotiations could be construed as legitimizing the very regime that was blamed for their killings. Consequently, the party banned its members or associated movements from engaging in any talks with the regime. In return, the PRI regime was hardly induced to offer any concessions to a party whose main goal appeared to be ending it. The government clearly had incentives to attack the party, and during the 1994 campaign for the presidency, it duly did all it could to portray CCS and the PRD as confrontational and violent, through a massive media campaign, aided by the pro-regime Televisa network (Aguilar Zínser 1995, 326-331).

At the same time, the PRD played into this depiction, as it was indeed highly mobilizational. While CCS never advocated violence, he was portrayed as intransigent and radical. In a time of escalating violence, this confrontational approach “not only proved ineffective as a strategy for delivering payoffs but tended to frighten and annoy undecided voters”; his strategy of plazismo or mass rallies arguably “ended up preaching to the converted rather than reaching out to independent voters (Bruhn 1997, 292). CCS’ 1994 campaign coordinator Adolfo Aguilar Zinser admitted the failure of the PRD’s tactics of mobilization and
protest: “far from to convince, it takes away, polarizes, and confronts” (Aguilar Zínser 1995, 453).

The strategy of intransigence appeared also detrimental, and a double-edged sword, in terms of outlining a clear strategy for the PRD. While the party did find in the intransigence and candidacy of CCS a common cause to hold an admittedly splintered party together, it also delayed the development of a stable party identity beyond the goal of ending the regime.

During the Salinas years, the PRD was guided by the conviction that the regime was illegitimate, and no negotiation could therefore take place with it. Yet while the 1994 election was believe to be the revindication of this strategy, the clear – and democratic – electoral defeat of CCS put this strategy, as well as the tactics of mobilization, into doubt. For the first time since its founding, not only did CCS face criticism for his intransigence, but the sector of the party that called for negotiation with the regime gained force. The years 1994-1995 were therefore central in what was the strategic redefinition of the party, as well as the first serious attempt at organizational and ideological change.

**Divorce over party strategy parallels push to change party**

The years 1994-1995 saw an increasing crystallization of the positions of “reform “ or “rupture,” a division already present before the general election. The PRD’s attitude in the congress, which mirrored its general intransigence approach, has been criticized for having prevented the party from articulating and presenting constructive proposals, as the party’s legislators instead found a negative consensus in denouncing the regime (Valdés 1994). Nonetheless, ahead of the 1994 election, many of its legislators played important roles in elaborating the 1994 electoral form, which further reformed the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE). Ahead of the 1994 contest, the “moderates” actively defended the 1994 electoral reforms for what they were: important institutional improvements that were largely based on their own proposals (Palma 2004, 130). Yet rather than lauding the further leveling of the playing which the reform ensured – it significantly reduced the PRI’s power over the IFE – on Jan 27, 1994, CCS attacked the reforms negotiated by PML in the parliament, even though the PRD’s own deputies had hailed and voted for them, as its content was largely a product of the work of its legislative bench (Palma 2004, 122-123).

31 The reform above all dealt with the IFE. In effect, the voting powers of the political parties on the IFE Council was reduced, as six “citizen counselors” would be nominated by the political parties and elected by a two-thirds vote of the Chamber of Deputies. The IFE General Council would now be composed of the Secretary of the Interior; the General Director of the IFE, the Secretary of the IFE General Council, four legislative representatives, six citizen councilors, and representatives from all registered parties. Cf. Domínguez (1999, 5-7) and Wuhs (2002, 295).
This rejection of institutional reform set the party on “a path of no return: The denunciation of the entire election beforehand” (Aguilar Zínser 1995, 346). That is, even if CCS would enter the 1994 contest, accusations of fraud delegitimized the results before the elections were even held, and the PRD found itself in the intolerable situation where its presidential candidate competed without fully accepting the improved rules of the game hailed by the official party leadership.32

In addition to belittling the PRD efforts of institutional reform, CCS also ran his campaign over the heads of the official party leadership. PRD leaders increasingly complained of an “open divorce” between CCS’ presidential campaign and the official party structures. Members of the PRD elite demanded a closer coordination between the party and CCS’ campaign, but CCS trusted his own and largely independent campaign structure over the PRD’s party organization, and PRD leaders, who felt left out of important decision making, demanded a closer coordination between the campaign and the official PRD (Aguilar Zínser 1995, 41).

“Salvation” or “negotiation”

The significant defeat suffered by CCS in the campaign did little to push CCS toward moderation. Notably, six months after the election, he showed no signs of accepting his defeat as a victory for the reforms. In what was admittedly a turbulent time, with peso flight and guerrilla war in Chiapas, CCS demanded that President Ernesto Zedillo should renounce, and that a “government of national salvation” created in its stead (Aguilar Zínser 1995, 421).33 Yet the party elites now openly called for party change. The party’s new coordinator in the Chamber of Deputies, Jesús Ortega, declared that the PRD’s main challenge was to erase the image of the party as insurrectional and violent. Ortega acknowledged that CCS was still the party’s real leader, though “not for always.” Even more direct was the socialist Heberto Castillo, formerly of the PMS, who argued that CCS and his group had become “a minority, extremist, and fundamentalist.” He argued, “What I don’t think is positive for democratic future is when there are extreme positions, like the excluding ones of ‘you or me.’”34 It was clear that the electoral defeat had “undermined the unifying presence of Cárdenas” (Wuhs 2002, 209) and while voices

32 CCS was no longer the official leader of the party, having stepped down March 1993.
33 Subcomandante Marcos had earlier called for a Convención Nacional Democrática. This would also be the name of the movement created by AMLO in 2006.

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had long argued for a change in the party’s organization and program, their calls for reform were getting louder.

The increasing internal division would come to a blow at the party’s 3rd national congress in Oaxtepec, Morelos state, held in August 1995, more than a year after the national election.\(^{35}\)

CCS continued to call for a government of national salvation, or a kind of emergency cabinet, led by an interim president – Zedillo was told to step down – and for new national elections (Becerra 1995, 15). Other such advocates were Adolfo Gilly, Rosa Albina Garavito Elias, Marco Rascón, and René Bejarano. Bejarano, a prominent representative of the social movements within the party, argued, “they are wrong those who think that we lost votes because of our radicality.” Defending the idea of “democratic radicality,” he dismissed negotiation and moderation on the grounds that “social-democratic politics as well have entered into crisis in the entire world” (Becerra 1995, 15) – in other words, juxtaposing social democracy with negotiations with the PRI government. The electoral defeat one year earlier appeared to have had very little effect on the cardenistas’ preferred party strategy.

Yet this time the “radicals” were no longer in a majority. Before the congress, a Reforma poll noted that 90 percent of the members of the PRD’s CEN wanted to have relations with government.\(^{36}\) Against the advocacy of “salvation” was PML’s proposal to vote for a negotiated transition with the regime, that is, to actively participate in the reform of the institutions of the Mexican state. PML, now PRD’s official party leader, focused on two further elements missed by the salvacionistas, namely this sector’s inability to assume self-criticism for the 1994 electoral defeat, and the fact that in a time of political stability, the real beneficiaries of the crisis was not the PRD, but the PAN (Becerra 1995, 15). When the congress voted upon the two radically differing political lines, the proponents of negotiation won a massive victory.

**Why did the party change? Connection rhetoric and movement advocacy**

The victory of the negotiating line can be regarded a significant step toward institutionalization. Not only did the PRD reorient its strategy toward focusing on participating within the system; as the congress gave a carte blanche to PML and party leadership, for dialogue, it also meant a victory for its leadership. Before the congress, the party had “two types of leadership,” that is, the formal of the national executive committee, and the de facto of CCS (Palma 2004, 116). The PRD seemed to come to terms with the fact that of the two competing

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\(^{35}\) While discussions were held regarding a move to indirect elections, this did not materialize. In a further setback for party reformers, the PRD congress also allowed new members to join and vote at the very day of the election.

\(^{36}\) Reported in Palma (2004, 114).
visions, only one would win. When the majority of its 1,500 delegates voted for the changes in the PRD’s Political Line – it was to be reflected in its official document – in practice it also bestowed more legitimacy on the work of PML, party leader since 1993, and on the work of its parliamentary faction, led by moderate Jesús Ortega.

What caused the PRD to undertake this first step toward party change? Becerra has designated the development “a tough experiment in collective learning” (1995, 17), and following a disastrous electoral results, it is clear that external loss proved a big role in motivating change (Prud’homme 1996).

Yet the connection between the electoral loss and party change is far from straightforward. First, in terms of party strategy – reform or resurrection – a majority of PRD’s deputies were already advocating reform, as witnessed by the episode when the 1994 electoral reform was largely dismissed by CCS. While the 1994 loss then clearly gave impetus to a more profound debate on the party’s course, sectors within the party seemed to draw very different lessons. The party congress was held more than a year after the electoral loss, yet a significant sector of the party would hear no self-criticism, and insisted on the strategy of “salvation.” CCS and the “radicals” did not change their mind; their strategy was rather dismissed by the elected delegates to the third national congress. It appears, then, not a case of elite conversion, but rather of displacement of one sector of the elite from the party’s most important institution.

What is moreover highly significant is the increasingly clear connection between one’s vision of the strategic orientation of the party, and the advocacy of a particular type of party organization. While CCS and his allies largely continued to favor a movement-party structure similar to the loosely organized FDN in 1988, PML advocated a more traditional party organization. The movement-party advocates, largely the same as the salvacionistas, argued that such a part type was far too narrow, and as the PRD, they believed, represented a majority of the nation, it should not limit itself to the structure of a mere traditional party, but widen it to include other social actors in a broad mass movements. Rather than building an autonomous party organization, the “radicals” preferred to cast a wide net. According to Palma, this group had nothing to say in relation with the institutional weakness of the party and the weakness of its electoral apparatus as, after all, the creation of this “new majority” was an epochal project … the PRD was not conceived as a part of a whole, but rather as the whole.37

The PRD had indeed “frequently appeared not to recognize the existence of other parties and considered itself the only legitimate option” (Valdés 1994, 74), and this strategic orientation appeared to go hand in hand with the movement strategy: As the PRD presumably represented a majority, it should be a mere party like the others.

The 1994 loss, then, while providing important impetus for party change, did not alone cause it; it built on the earlier divisions noted from the party’s very conception, which were reinforced as the PRD’s legislators pushed democratic reform in parliament through the improvement of the country’s political institutions. Yet as the “moderates” displaced the “radicals” in the national congress, the party moved toward ditching its anti-systemic orientation. Here, it should also be noted that CCS to his credit duly accepted the changes in the political line, and the “double leadership,” where CCS would question party leader PML, appeared to come to an end, with CCS assuming the role of “grand conciliator” (Pivron 1999, 266) in favor of party unity. The PRD could now move forward to focus on a next step in a nascent process of institutionalization, namely ideological and programmatic definition.

**The battle over the PRD’s ideology and program**

While the PRD made clear strides toward moving away from anti-system strategies in favor of advocating a reform of the system, the party’s ideology remained as ambiguous as it had been at its founding. The confusion over the party’s ideological position was very much reflected in the populace. For instance, in a poll by the political magazine *Voz y Voto* in Mexico City in 1995, only 49 percent of voters even regard it a left party. Twenty-one percent did not know, 29 percent called it “centrist,” while 11 percent even thought it was “right.” Even more so, when asked what was really meant by “left,” the most common answer was “The opposition/Those who are not in government.”

The extended “reform vs. rupture” debacle, and the ideological ambiguity of the PRD’s leaders or their open refusal to define themselves as left, clearly worked against providing voters with any ideological cues for voting, and to anchor their vote in an ideological affinity with the party that went beyond a mere call for opposing the PRI government. For nearly a decade, the PRD had refused to define itself as “left,” and even academic supporters of the party such as Enrique Semo as late as 1996 notably continued to argue that the party should avoid doing so: “the PRD cannot be a party of a single ideology; it should not define itself ideologically” (1996, 40).

Yet there were forces within the PRD that clearly worked to make party profile more clear. Already in 1990, PML had initiated the process for the PRD to be accepted into the

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38 Heberto Castillo, among others, still rallied against the “double leadership” of the party, arguing that as party leader, PML could “never as president liberate himself from the shadow of the caudillo that Cuauhtémcoc has been” (Castillo 1996, 16). PML and CCS remain bitter rivals to this day.

Socialist International (SI), and the PRD was accepted as a consultative member in March 1992.

Despite the opposition of many of its own elites, in New York City, on Sept. 11, 1996, the SI finally voted to accept the PRD as a full member following a unanimous vote, while denying the PRI this possibility. PML observed that “a great majority declared that the PRD is a democratic and socialist party, and that the PRI is not.”

While PRD was now recognized internationally as a party of the left, this identity, according to Becerra, “was until recently systematically denied by its presidential candidate and some of its close ideologues.” Now, however, the PRD joined a club constituted by the legal and pacific left, which seeks power through the democratic path. To enter the Socialist International has a symbolic effect that should be taken advantage of and used to the maximum by the perredistas themselves; they are now part a program and an idea of the left.

However, other observers found it hard to accept the new categorization of the PRD as a left party. Jorge Alcocer, who renounced from the PRD in protest against CCS’ dominant position, argued that “The PRD is of the left, its principles leaders are not.” While PML could be placed in this category, he noted “Cárdenas, Roberto Robles Garnica, Andrés Manuel López Obrador come from another tradition, of another political current, that of revolutionary nationalism, of identifying with the values of the Mexican Revolution and later, of general Lázaro Cárdenas” (1997, 35).

Others, like Salazar (1997), noted that while the party incorporated the brunt of what had been the Mexican left, including the PMS,

The PRD does not assume, clearly and programmatically, as a party of the left…. In the vision of the greater part of its leaders, it is about being a conjunctural and transitory instrument, charged with carrying out in practice a democratic revolution, identified with the triumph, on the national level, of its peculiar visions of democracy.

Crucially, the vision that it was necessary “to defeat, and including, to exterminate, the PRI-government,” went hand in hand with the advocacy of a much wider and looser movement-

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40 PML had also tried to do the same with the PRI ever since he was secretary of work in government of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976). Pascal Beltrán del Río: Permitir la Entrada del PRI Equivaldría a admitir a Reagan. Proceso, no. 1037 (Sept. 15, 1996): 29-31 (31).
41 In particular, President Willy Brandt was very favorable. The Socialist International also maintained close relations with the PRI, as the party retained much goodwill particularly for its harboring of refugees from the Spanish Civil War and from other dictatorial regimes up until the 1980s. Sanjuana Martínez: La Internacional Socialista Acepta al PRD, pero Sigue con el PRI. Proceso, no. 803 (March 23, 1992): 45-47, and Pascal Beltrán del Río: Permitir la Entrada del PRI Equivaldría a admitir a Reagan. Proceso, no. 1037 (Sept. 15, 1996): 29-31.
42 El PRD, miembro de la Internacional Socialista con plenos derechos. La Jornada, Sept. 12, 1996. PRI was given consultative status, below that of full member but above observer status.
structure, which moreover should not define itself. For many of its leaders, rather than valued in itself, the PRD was then merely a means to an end. In line with this logic, the lack of ideological definition then appears hardly by accident, but a product of intent and design that followed an internally logic circle: An ideologically diffuse movement-party purporting to represent the majority, or the nation, widely and loosely organized in order to achieve the primary goal of the movement: To end the regime.

Yet with the defeat of the “salvation” line in 1994, this section of the party, which included CCS, appeared to be on the defensive. The PRD’s next national congress, held in 1998 again in Oaxtepec, showed a marked continuity with the previous line. While CCS during the 1994 election campaign had maintained a very ambivalent attitude toward the EZLN, oscillating from condemnation of the violent uprising to seemingly justifying it (Aguilar Zinser 1995),\(^\text{45}\) the PRD now distanced itself markedly from the EZLN and its call for radical change (Meyenberg and Carrillo 1999, 59).\(^\text{46}\) Yet the 4th congress was important for another development as well: The PRD would finally declare itself as a party of the left. According to its reformed statutes,

>The Party of The Democratic Revolution establishes itself as a party of the left, as an association of free and equal men and women, in order to strengthen the Republic, establish the validity of the Constitution, to found institutions in freedom, justice, equality, reason, and tolerance, and to open unrestricted political, economic, social, and cultural possibilities to the national community and to every Mexican.\(^\text{47}\)

While it therefore left the concrete interpretation of what “left” entailed open, this was nonetheless a major step forward. As Sánchez Rebolledo noted in Proceso, “It seems unbelievable, but the PRD never settled ideologically with its history.” Now, however, “The [PRD] congress responds with an exorcism that a great part of the leadership does not share: to proclaim in its Declaration of Principles that the PRD is a party of the left” (1998, 12) (emphasis in original). To Marco Aurelio Sánchez, another critic of the PRD, however, the PRD nonetheless remained “a party without a precise ideology, whose doctrine is reduced to a collection of generalities” (Sánchez 1999, 146)

If this definition was, as some argued, “only formal” (Reveles Vázquez 2004, 49), one would be hard pressed to award it any importance. Yet the claim that it was a mere label fails to take into account the great resistance from within the PRD to this ideological clarification. One significant reason for the opposition, Bartra noted, was that within the party “there is a range that

\(^{\text{45}}\) PML also initially held this position.  
\(^{\text{47}}\) PRD 1998 Declaration of Principles, quoted in Meyenberg and Carrillo (1999, 57). The declaration of principles is the primary guiding document for establishing a party’s ideological identity.
includes all types of positions, some centrists and including conservatives, and up to infiltrations from the right. They are people and currents with very diverse origins. Yet while the PRD’s vast diversity was likely a significant factor, advocates of the movement-logic, which preferred ideological ambiguity, also had an intrinsic interest in allowing the party to represent the “majority” that sought to transform rather than the much more limiting “left.” By defining itself as “left,” as Meyenberg and Carrillo note, the PRD was now finally able to “set itself apart from the image that would project it as a political movement in search for the absolute transformation of the regime” (1999, 54). For the Mexican voters—as well as for its own militants—the party could now offer at least a rudimentary definition against which its programs, and actions, could now be judged.

A party or a movement-party? Divide defines 1996 internal election

The 1996 reform of the COFIPE electoral law, which followed the 1994 law that had been opposed by CCS, appeared as the most significant reform law to date. The IFE would now be a truly independent citizen board, nominated by consensus in Congress, and no member of the government would be allowed to sit on it. The revised electoral law also contained a range of drastic electoral change that on the whole appeared very advantageous to the political opposition to the PRI government, and party president PML hailed them as significant. Yet in an echo of the 1994 dispute, other prominent members of the PRD, such as Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) deemed them “completely insufficient” and openly opposed them. While AMLO was then a regional leader from Tabasco, his opposition to the reforms proved very worrisome to the party reformers, as AMLO was quickly sailing up as the favorite to succeed PML as party president, in an election moreover to be decided by the party base. He was also openly pushed by CCS. The 1996 PRD internal election thus deserves particular emphasis, as the competing

49 Main changes: The IFE’s autonomy was strengthened in relation to the executive branch, as voting members were reduced to its president and eight councilors, elected to seven-year terms by a vote of the Chamber of deputies. For the Senate, distribution of seats was changed to two majority and one minority seat from each state, as well as a national PR list of 32 seats. In the Chamber of Deputies, no party would be allowed to hold more than 60 percent of the seats, and overrepresentation inherent to the SMD system was reduced to a maximum of eight percent (200 deputies also elected by PR). The threshold for legislative representation was set at two percent threshold. Public financing of parties was also greatly expanded, intended to insulate parties from pressure from private actors. The rules for campaign finance were as well sharpened. Cf. Wuhs (2002, 296) and Domínguez (1999, 8).
51 See Wuhs (2002) for the development in candidate selection procedures within the PRD.
visions over the party’s organization and orientation was sailing up as the dominant cleavage among the candidates.

AMLO was the embodiment of the movement advocate. In Tabasco, he had created the PRD’s first state branch, after having lost as the FDN’s candidate for governor in 1988 to PRI’s Salvador Neme Castillo in an election fraught with irregularities, such as vote coercion, ballot stuffing, counting of votes in houses of PRI activists, and so forth (Gómez 2005, 120). After the 1991 midterm elections, he had led the first of many “exoduses” or marches organized by social movements to Mexico City to protest against the blatantly fraudulent elections. This work had met with considerable success; as a result of the 1991 protests, in the electoral districts of Cárdenas, Jalpa, Nacajuca and Teapa, the PRI’s victory was reversed (Ortiz Pinchetti 2006, 105). Even more dramatically, Governor Neme, ultimately responsible for the election, was himself removed from office barely midway into his mandate. For the 1994 gubernatorial election, AMLO refused an offer by president Zedillo to head a PRI-PRD slate (López Obrador 1995, 154). Yet he would face another massively fraudulent election, against PRI’s Roberto Madrazo, who reportedly spent more than 70 million dollars on his campaign – an amount that even surpassed the money spent on the 1996 presidential campaign of Bill Clinton. AMLO claimed that a massive 70 percent of the vote tallies did not add up, and the PRD impugned 1,100 out of 1,744 ballot boxes for irregularities. Citizen IFE councilors Santiago Creel and José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti, in a partial examination, duly confirmed vast irregularities, but the elections were not annulled. AMLO again organized a massive march – on foot – to Mexico City to protest the official results that gave 56 percent of the votes to Madrazo, against 37 percent for AMLO, and the post-electoral scenario was characterized by massive social protest and upheaval protests, upheaval. AMLO even got hold of a cache of 45 boxes of checks and receipts that all but confirmed Madrazo’s overspending, and camped out with his supporters in the

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53 In Cárdenas, for instance, it was uncovered that the PRI had won with more votes than the actual number of registered voters
55 Ortiz Pinchetti (2006, 49). For his dirty work in 199, PRI leader in Tabasco Roberto Madrazo would be rewarded a senate seat by the PRI (Gómez 2005, 120). Yet AMLO’s protests significantly contributed to the later stepping down of Neme Castillo in 1992. According to official figures, the FDN received 24 percent of the votes (Ortiz Pinchetti 2006, 103)

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Mexico City Zócalo. He would later gain further national fame in protests against the environmental damages inflicted upon Tabasco by the state oil company Pemex, where he declared he and his supporters would continue to block oil wells “until they throw as all in prison.”59

Yet while a bloodied AMLO appeared dramatically on news front pages, just like CCS, however, it should be mentioned that AMLO would never call for violence. The only blood flowing was his own, and that of his fellow protestors. As he noted,

They say I am violent, but they don’t take into account that we have been fighting in Tabasco for more than seven years, and there has been no violence, because we have acted with much responsibility, because we have looking after the people. Madrazo would not be in Tabasco if we really were violent.60

As a candidate, however, he defended the idea of the PRD as “a party in the movement,” or a much looser social structure, which had admittedly brought many gains in the past.61 Yet as Heberto Castillo, who would compete against AMLO for the PRD presidency, warned, “One ignores that we have learned to fill streets and plazas, even zócalos, but we haven’t learned to fill ballot boxes… we have forgotten that while hundreds walked a thousand kilometers under the sun and under the rain, señor Madrazo continues to be the governor of Tabasco” (Castillo 1996, 17).

None of the other original candidates - Castillo, Amalia García, and Jesús Ortega - agreed to the conception of the PRD as a “party in the movement.” García declared that “to compete for power is not just a subject of the season,” and that social movements “do not set out to be government.”64 Ortega, ahead of the election, further noted,

Paradoxically, the PRD is born from the 1988 movement, but to convert itself into a party as a power alternative, it must end being a movement; it must convert itself into a party with internal

58 Here, AMLO’s path would cross that of then-deputy Felipe Calderón, who as president of the PAN went to the PRD headquarters to witness the evidence of fraud. Gerardo Albarrán de Alba: López Obrador los Conoce y los Describe: “Zedillo ha Involucionado”; Chuayffet “Vive en la Contradicción.” Proceso, no. 1029 (July 21, 1996): 18-23 (22).
62 Amalia García Medina: While daughter of the PRI governor in her state of Zacatecas 1956-1962, she became first an activist of PCM, and distinguished herself as a human rights activist, feminist, and was both federal deputy and city legislator in Mexico City. She is considered a social democrat within the party.
63 Jesús Ortega Martínez: Ortega started out in the PST, which he represented as a federal deputy already in 1979. He was then a founder and deputy of the PMS, the FDN, and then the PRD. He was AMLO’s secretary general 1996-1999, and head of the PRD senate group 2000-2006. He was AMLO’s official campaign coordinator in 2006, and then became coordinator of the FAP.
stability, with structure, and with the vision of a party. I say that one needs to move from the tactics of the social movement to the strategy of a political party... I don’t share the idea of López Obrador: If we want to be a power alternative, we must move beyond the phase of the movement and to situate ourselves in the strategy of the party.65

Yet on election day, it became clear that AMLO’s candidacy would reap a massive majority. Despite a range of irregularities, according to official results he gained almost 74 percent of the vote. While the PRD had agglomerated virtually all left forces under its party banner, for the fourth consecutive time, its new party president would again be a former priísta.

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<th>Percent</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Andrés Manuel López Obrador</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>264,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heberto Castillo</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>49,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalia García</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>44,100</td>
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Table 5.1: PRD internal election, July 14, 1996.66

The election was open to all party members, and analysts such as Becerra noted that “had the election been run by the organized structures, that is, the professional politicians of the party, some months after the correction of Oaxtepec, it would have been difficult to pull a triumph” (1996, 23). Becerra, who feared the seemingly radical visions of AMLO, argued “the majority of its cadres and professional politicians do not share the vision and line of the radical alliance of López Obrador, yet will nevertheless find themselves displaced by it in the taking of decisions” (1996, 24-25). Moderates within the party duly regarded AMLO’s victory a “revenge” by those who lost at Oaxtepec, and a reversal of the Oaxtepec line (Peñaloza and Espinosa 1996, 18).

Yet the fears of the opponents of “mobilization and confrontation” (Becerra 1996, 24) did not come true, as an important element was neglected. Jesús Ortega, a clear proponent of party building, had renounced his own candidacy in favor of joining the AMLO ticket as candidate for secretary general. Consequently, the formula also received the support of the vast majority of the party bureaucracy: 55 out of 66 PRD national deputies, and 5 of its 7 senators.67 Crucially, as a condition for this unity list, Ortega had demanded that AMLO “should support the resolutions of the Third Congress of Oaxtepec,” held the previous year.68 AMLO, upon winning, in turn declared he would respect the dialogue for electoral and institutional reform.69

67 Resultados con 60% de casillas: López Obrador 76.3%; Heberto Castillo 14.3, Amalia García 9.3. La Jornada, July 16, 1996.
68 Declina Ortega su candidatura en el PRD en favor de López Obrador. La Jornada, May 19, 1996.
69 Ofrece López Obrador respeto al diálogo para la reforma electoral. La Jornada, July 16, 1996.
Following AMLO’s victory, a prominent analyst noted that while “a great part of the members of the losing electoral lists have insisted in the necessity of abandoning movementism and the identification with the EZLN, which opts for the creation of a broad front of national liberation….everything indicates that the new PRD leadership will rely everything on movementism” (Alcocer V. 1996, 21).

Yet the radical shift foreseen would not materialize. Under the AMLO-Ortega leadership, not only would the PRD come across as a very moderate party: The PRD would also be lifted to unprecedented electoral heights, which included displacing PAN from the position it had held for nearly six decades, namely as Mexico’s second largest party.

**The electoral gains of moderation**

Upon taking office, AMLO went as far as publishing a letter in the leftwing La Jornada calling not the resignation, but rather for the consolidation of the presidency of Ernesto Zedillo, and Becerra noted, somewhat startled, that “we don’t find the traces of the quarrelsome and intransigent leader, nor the promoter of ‘national salvation’” (Becerra 1996, 19).

The moderate discourse of the PRD has often been posited as the cause of the massive electoral gains during his presidency. In the first ten months following AMLO’s election, the number of municipalities governed by the PRD increased nearly 50 percent, from 185 to 251 (Bruhn 1999, 94-95). The PRD, moreover, was also winning major cities, such as Acapulco (Guerrero), Tuxtla Gutiérrez (Chiapas), Morelia (Michoacán), Nezahualcóyotl and Ecatepec (Mexico State), as well as of the greatest prize of all, the Federal District. For the midterm elections, the PRD would on July 2, 1997 amass 125 deputies – a quarter of the house of deputies, as well as 16 senators.70 During AMLO’s presidency, in addition to the federal district, four coveted governorships would be won by the party of the Aztec sun.

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<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>PR list for Senators</td>
<td>25.85</td>
<td>7,569,895</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR list for Deputies</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td>7,519,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF Mayor election (PRD votes)</td>
<td>48.11</td>
<td>1,861,444 (1,758,525)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR list for ALDF</td>
<td>45.22</td>
<td>1,748,652</td>
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Table 5.2: PRD national election results, July 2, 1997.71

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70 Tally of AMLO’s gains: 125 national deputies; from 6 to 15 national senators; from 115 to 252 local deputies; from 182 to 281 municipalities; from governing 5 to 23 percent of population, or 4,246,521 to 20,983,853 people.

How much that is directly attributable to AMLO’s presidency is not definite. Bruhn (1999) has argued that a momentum was already building for the party, and that it would have won greatly regardless of who would be the party president. What is clear is that the party did moderate its position, a process that jumpstarted with the victory of the 1995 Oaxtepec line. By 1997, the PRD was seemingly “abandoning almost completely its earlier ‘anti-everything’ positions, assuming a moderate profile” (Salazar Carrión, 1997, 26). As Palma notes, it was the beginning of a process of “normalcy,” where “the destructive and belligerent image of the PRD of earlier campaigns had been left behind” (2004, 187, 200).

Some analysts went as far as declaring AMLO’s “faith in institutions” (Reveles Vázquez 2004, 40) by asking is legislators not to impugn Zedillo, although rather than a change, AMLO only followed the line of former party president PML. Eisenstadt declared AMLO to belong to the “party side” of PRD, as opposed to its movement advocates (2004, 224). Yet an examination of the PRD’s organization and orientation reveals a much more complicated picture. As noted earlier, the moderation line had been adopted earlier and had been a requisite for Ortega joining AMLO’s ticket, who noted, “we cannot return to the old scheme of deprecating the political struggle by privileging the revindicative fights.”72 Yet the reliance on “Brigades of the Sun,” essentially extra-party networks, to promote the vote over the party was a nod to the movement-party activists, as well as representing clear continuity with AMLO’s movement past. Second, while the active push for PRI defectors to join the PRI landed the PRD its first governorships and was supported by a majority of its elites, including Ortega, it also posed a serious risk of making the party even more programmatically and ideologically disparate.

**Continued ambiguity in organization and ideology**

While AMLO followed the line of moderation, he clearly did not abandon the dual conception of the PRD as a movement-party. Asked whether PRD would push for votes or mobilization, he noted, “Both things…In non-electoral periods we can act as a movement; ahead of electoral processes we should act as a party.”73 Rather than the PRD taking on a permanent character as an institutionalized, autonomous and permanent organization, between elections, in other words, the preference was still for a much more flexible movement, springing to life at election time. The party was in any case still far from renouncing its mobilizational aspects, such as in 1999, where Felix Salgado Macedonio, the party’s controversial candidate for governor of

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Guerrero, loudly denounced fraud, and engaged in mass protests and the blocking of streets to protest a claimed fraud.\(^74\)

Moreover, as a party, PRD still sought a parallel to the institutional path with its marked advocacy of plebiscitarianism. While its deputies and senators produced significant legislation in congress, the party simultaneously pushed “numerous initiatives to promote the referendum and its variations: the plebiscite, the revocation of mandate, the popular initiative, and consultation” (Semo 2003, 121). In 1998, the PRD’s platform called,

To introduce in the constitution as mandatory national consultations through referenda, the plebiscite, and popular initiatives, in the case of projects, laws, or measures that alter substantially the political, social and cultural life of the country.\(^75\)

Moreover, despite the PRD’s entry into the Socialist International and later declaration as a left party, AMLO also resisted declaring himself of the left, and the PRD’s new president would only finally do so in a very qualified manner. Before his 1996 election as party president, he specified that “I don’t like political geometry, because it is a lot of simplification.” As opposed to the other candidates for the office, Amalia García and Heberto Castillo, who were clearly located on the socialist left, AMLO was said to “respond more to a definition as ‘nationalist.’”\(^76\) In an interview, AMLO noted,

I prefer more to speak of historical referents. It takes more time explaining it, but all the better. I like to talk about the PRD taking the best from the Sentimientos de la Nación of Morelos, of the frugal, austere Republic of Juárez, of the democratic ideals of Madero, longings for justice of Villa Zapata, and the popular and patriotic government of Lázaro Cárdenas. This is what I like better! Without putting in “left.” When I talk about of us being of the centre left, it is because that is where the heart is located, but I don’t like political geometry. Regardless, because it exists in political science and one needs to locate oneself, I would say of the centre-left.\(^77\)

AMLO’s referents were, in other word, the Mexican revolution and president Cárdenas’ 1934-1940 corporate statism, which while undoubtedly progressive eras defy a characterization as “left.” Greatly due to the ambiguity and vacillations of its leaders, the PRD was in 1997 reported as “immersed in an ideological crisis,” a party “without a clear identity, eclipsed by neocardenismo, with which it was founded in 1989, until the point of almost not recognizing itself as of the left.”\(^78\) Even as the party was moving toward finally declaring itself as such, ahead of the 1998 national congress, AMLO in radio interviews still refused to classify the PRD as

\(^{74}\) Palma (2000, 200).

\(^{75}\) Quoted in Semo (2003, 121).


“left,” rather defining it as “of the center.” While the party had moderated its discourse, Salazar noted that it remained “a party-front or a party-movement or a watershed party,” where ideological definitions were secondary and would have to await the dominant goal, the ending of PRI rule (1997, 27).

**Informal extra-party networks prioritized over traditional party structure**

A significant invention by AMLO and the PRD ahead of the 1997 election was the launching of the “Brigades of the Sun.” These informal but paid networks, whose main purpose was to promote the vote, were very clear examples of the movement-party logic where the boundaries between the official party and affiliate organizations – and the division of labor between them – were blurred.

AMLO had first used the concept in the 1994 Tabasco gubernatorial election, and they had also contributed successfully to get-out-the-vote efforts in 1996 in Morelos, Mexico, Hidalgo and Coahuila. Ahead of 1997 midterm election, AMLO would now focus all his energies on meetings and evaluations of the Brigades.

Initially set up in 150 electoral districts, the networks were widened across the nation by AMLO’s secretary of organization Rosario Robles. While Robles claimed the Brigades were there doing “voluntary work,” the more than 63,000 *brigadistas* were hardly volunteers, but paid workers.

The Brigades, while essentially vote canvassers, have been credited with presenting a “kinder, gentler image, among a population terrified by media portrayals of the PRD as a violent and antisocial party” (Bruhn 1999, 95), and were undoubtedly important to the PRD’s electoral successes. Nonetheless, the emphasis on spending resources on the networks over the PRD’s formal structure was as well a cause of tension and concern within the party. As Amalia García warned, the “activists,” who were paid 600 pesos a month, were not even members of the PRD, and as such their loyalty could not be taken for granted. In addition, the imposition of external,

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79 Reported in Sánchez (1999, 186). In 1997, following the impressive electoral victory, José Zamarripa de la Peña, Technical Secretary of the CEN of AMLO, similarly rejected the “phobias” of those arguing the PRD should declare itself a party of the left: “The PRD is not, luckily, the continuation of those groups and disciplined parties, well formed ideologically in the that entire range that is known as left, capable of elaborating prescriptions and programs, but with an ingrained anti-establishment calling” (Zamarripa de la Peña 1997, 11).


81 Gerardo Albarrán de Alba: “El PRD, Ante su Nuevo Reto. *Proceso*, no. 1081 (July 20, 1997): 20-25 (22). In the longer run, this is precisely what happened, as Robles’ prestige in the party fell due to her
or non-PRD, candidates for the 1997 election led at one point to a local party organization holding Robles, and fellow CEN member Pablo Gómez hostage.82

Toward the end of his term as PRD president, AMLO also acknowledged that despite the massive electoral gains, he had not strengthened the PRD’s organization sufficiently:

I had to choose between lifting the party from the electoral lethargy in which it found itself, or dedicate myself to organizational work, to political education and to strengthen the ideals and principles of the party. I chose the former.83

While he neglected formal party organization, he did, however, strengthen the movement aspects of the party. In 1996, he had created several new secretariats on the national executive committee to deal specifically with social movements. According to Becerra, this harked back to “old latent prejudices,” where the “always honest leader of the ‘social movement’” was contrasted the “professional party-politician,” and where the “electoral party” was dismissed “in favor of the “movement-party” (Becerra 1996, 19).

Electorally, this found expression in the PRD’s decision to allow an unprecedented amount of its candidates to be external to the party, ranging from representatives from social movements and unions to disgruntled PRI and PAN members. Within the PRD, there was agreement to pursue this practice, in particular as most of the external candidatures were offered in parts of the country where the PRD had virtually no presence. In addition, Jesús Ortega declared.

We cannot deny some people that they change political position. I cannot be that intolerant and I don’t think it is a mark of the left [to exclude] people who…have changed, and recognized that they were wrong. It would be an inacceptable intolerance. Because from this point of view, only those that militated in the socialist left would have the authority to advocate change in this country... there could be errors, but the spirit of political alliances does not exist to encounter opportunists; it is to find and get allies that share the essential of the PRD program.84

For a party in growth, it would seem natural to attract candidates from other parties, in particular where the PRD had had very little presence, such as Zacatecas and Baja California Sur. Indeed, the PRD itself had largely been the product of a schism in the old ruling party, where disillusioned priístas on the left had decided time had come to skip the party.

While the PRD had always sought to cast a wide net, the practice of attracting external candidates was particularly used during AMLO’s rule. To illustrate, of the PRD’s PR list of candidates for national deputies in 1997, a massive 50 percent were non-party outsiders, and many professional PRD politicians who had been with the party since its foundation found mismanagement of funds and poor electoral results. Rueda concludes that the Brigades, “appeared only interested in power and money” (2005, 129).

83 Quoted in Alvaro Delgado: López Obrador Reconoce que Descuidó la Organización y el Proceso Electoral del PRD. Proceso, no. 1169 (March 28, 1999): 14-17 (15).
84 Quoted in García Ponce (2005a, 65).
themselves displaced by the newcomers (Palma 2000, 200). In particular, the reliance on former priístas reached such proportions that critics of this strategy argued their party had become “the garbage dump of PRI and of priísmo in decomposition” (Sánchez 2001, 71).\(^{85}\) Palma (2004) noted that “the destination of discontent priístas is the PRD” (2004, 192); to this one might add “opportunistic,” as most had ditched their old parties in the last moment only after failing to secure a nomination for a candidacy. In this regard, the PRD’s winning candidates for governorships during AMLO’s presidency are particularly instructive: all came from the PRI, and all had joined the PRD ticket only after having lost the PRI nomination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Antecedents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal District</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas</td>
<td>PRD (PRI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacatecas</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Ricardo Monreal</td>
<td>PRI until losing nomination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baja California Sur</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Leonel Cota Montaña</td>
<td>PRI until losing nomination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nayarit</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Antonio Echevarría Domínguez.(^{86})</td>
<td>PRI until losing nomination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tlaxcala</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Alfonso Sánchez Anaya.(^{87})</td>
<td>PRI until losing nomination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3: PRD gubernatorial victories, 1996-1999.\(^{88}\)

Many of the external candidates, moreover, were extremely controversial within the party, and appeared to have been “subject to electoral possibilities, rather than ideological or programmatic affinities” (García Ponce 2005a, 64-65), with many moreover accused of having committed fraud and harassed the PRD for years before deciding to switch to the party for a candidacy.\(^{89}\) In Zacatecas, for instance, Ricardo Monreal’s alliance of priístas and external

\(^{85}\) Marco Aurelio Sánchez, a political scientist and PRD member who was once a candidate for party president, has written two books on the PRD. His assessments of the party are consistently harsh, and his predictions have most often proved inaccurate, e.g. when he in 2003 – even before the videoscandals and desafuero - argued that AMLO was politically “dead.” Nora Rodríguez Aceves: “Fue Cárdenas Quien Dio de Baja a Rosario.” \textit{Siempre!}, Aug. 18, 2003: 26-27.

\(^{86}\) Antonio Echevarría would even later join the PAN (Martínez González 2005, 149). This did not prevent him from being promoted by the AMLO campaign to head its 2006 senatorial list. Following protests from Nayarit PRD, the place eventually went to Francisco Javier Castellón Fonseca, former rector Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit.

\(^{87}\) Sánchez Anaya later caused particularly controversy when he, in breach of PRD party statutes, tried to have his wife María del Carmen Ramírez try to succeed him as governor. While the candidacy was later ratified by the PETJF, she ended up a distant third, and it moreover exposed the party to accusations of hypocrisy as the PRD had strongly attacked the suggestion that Martha Sahagún, wife of Vicente Fox, might seek the PAN nomination to succeed him in the presidential chair.

\(^{88}\) Compiled from a variety of news sources.

\(^{89}\) Examples include: Ricardo Villa Escalera: 1998 candidate for governor in Puebla, Ricardo Villa Escalera, had been expelled from PAN, allegedly for being too conservative for the party, and a supporter of Contras in Nicaragua. María Scherer Ibarra: “Las Corrientes Internas son una Necesidad Política.” \textit{Proceso}, no. 1154 (Dec. 13, 1998): 14-15 (14). Ignacios Morales Lechuga: attorney general of the Federal District and then of the nation under Carlos Salinas. His candidacy was finally vetoed by CCS. Socorro Díaz: In the PRI until 2002, when she left to compete as PRD candidate in Colima. She had a long past in
candidates, while securing the PRD the governorship, was accused of displacing the “traditional perredistas” there. Within the PRD itself, ahead of its 1999 internal election to chose AMLO’s successor, in many states the PRD party organization faced massive infighting not only between the PRD’s currents, but also between the newcomers and the party’s historic figures, many with a long trajectory on the political left.90

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Antecedents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal District</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Andrés Manuel López Obrador</td>
<td>38.54</td>
<td>1,694,186</td>
<td>PRI (PRD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiapas</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía</td>
<td>51.50</td>
<td>535,860</td>
<td>PRI until 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerrero</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Carlos Zeferino Torreblanca</td>
<td>56.04</td>
<td>588,542</td>
<td>Not a PRD member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michoacán</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Lázaro Cárdenas Batel</td>
<td>43.10</td>
<td>561,170</td>
<td>PRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baja California Sur</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Narciso Agúndez Montaño.91</td>
<td>43.68</td>
<td>66,845</td>
<td>PAN, then PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacatecas</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Amalia García Media</td>
<td>47.00</td>
<td>223,364</td>
<td>PRD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4: PRD gubernatorial victories, 2000-2006.92

In addition to increased infighting and jockeying for candidacies with the newcomers, the inclusion of the external candidates also carried the danger of watering down the PRD’s ideology, as well as its very identity, such as its claim to be an agent of transformation and democratization. While parties may primarily exist to win elections, the task of forging a common identity and project was clearly hampered by the inclusion of a candidates whose views where outright rightwing and conservative. Casting a wide net helped the PRD win elections, yet it at the same time set also worked against its institutionalization. Unless the forging of a more institutionalized party was truly only secondary to winning elections, for the PRD, the gains of the period were mixed.

In sum, during AMLO’s period as president, the PRD did moderate its discourse and no longer pushed for the collapse of the national government. It also defined itself as left, and associated itself with the Socialist International. Yet these events, as has been noted, clearly built

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91 Governor Leonel Cota Montaño was criticized by the PRD for allegedly imposing Agundez, his relative. See Gloria Leticia Díaz: “Los Bateadores Emergentes.” *Proceso*, no. 1468 (Dec. 19, 2004): 41-44.
92 Source: Vivero Ávila (2006, 277), and a variety of news sources.
on earlier developments, and may be considered as much the work of leaders such as PML and Jesús Ortega, AMLO’s secretary general.

Organizationally, party-building was undertaken, much in areas where the PRD had had little presence, yet AMLO focused more on the PRD’s relations with social movements than traditional party building. Bruhn (1999) found “little evidence that the PRD changed organizationally,” as the party continued to battle “divisions, relatively low institutionalization, and personalism” (1999, 90). In the future, AMLO foresaw bipartism between the PRD and the PAN (Voz y Voto 1997, 18). Yet for this to happen, the PRI had to be destroyed, and this remained the basic goal for the party. Despite all its gains, the PRD for many of its elites appeared still as much a means to that end, rather than as an end in itself.

**CCS: De facto leader of the PRD, but losses lead to leadership challenge**

CCS had already in 1993 stepped down as the PRD’s de jure leader, but in practice remained the dominant figure in the party. Two failed presidential bids would eventually erode his unofficial role as the PRD’s leader.

While the 1994 defeat had eventually led to a change in party line, the 2000 presidential campaign of CCS would remain very much stuck in the movement-party logic, and demonstrated that while the electoral success had put a lid on tensions within the PRD, the duality of party or movement was very much alive and well. Remarkably, even after a crushing defeat in 2000, significant sector continued to insist on the merits of mobilizational tactics over party-building.93

In 1997, CCS had won overwhelmingly the first-ever elections for mayor of Mexico City. Yet while the administration could point to modest improvements (Ward and Durden 2002), it was arguably “more noted for its honesty than for daring reforms” (Bruhn 2004, 131), and did little to publicize its achievements.94 Yet CCS was nonetheless rigidly bent on the presidency. Already on May 28 1999, more than a full year before the 2000, he accepted the presidential candidacy of the PT, just a day after the PRD and the PAN had started negotiations of a possible common candidature to end the dominance of the PRI (Semo 2004, 46). While CCS would later deny he was the formal candidate of any party before the PRD,95 there was little doubt that his decision put enormous pressure to agree to his candidacy. As CCS thus “imposed himself through

93 For a summary of the 2000 election, see Reyes del Campillo (2000).
94 Also, PRI had done everything possible to make it a poisoned victory: the outgoing administration removed computers and equipment, destroyed city files, and even stole furniture and city cars. CCS was moreover relentlessly attacked by the still PRI-dominant media. Cf. Dawson (2006, 89-90) and Ascencio (2000, 193).
opportunistic form” (García Ponce 2005b, 48) on top of the party’s own formal mechanisms for selecting a candidate, it was also a blow to the party’s attempts at autonomy from its former leader, as he in any case did not consult the PRD before talking with the PT. 96

Few lessons, moreover, were apparently learned from the 1994 campaign. Like then, CCS’ campaign operated virtually outside of the PRD’s structures, and its CEN complained that it was not allowed to participate in its decisions, and accused him “of having created a parallel and autonomous organ “that practically hijacked the electoral process” (Romero Miranda and Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2002, 57). He also relied on the Brigades to bring out the vote, yet while AMLO had used them so successfully in 1997 – and would use them again to win the mayorship of Mexico city in that same election97 – CCS lost decidedly to both the PRI and the PAN candidates.

With the fall of the PRI from power, not only had the PRD lost what had in many ways been its common and agglutinative project; to add, the party that would lead the new government after 71 years of PRI rule, was not the PRD, but the PAN. With the third failed attempt by CCS to reach the Mexican presidency, not unexpectedly, calls went out from within and outside the party for it to move beyond his leadership and particular vision of the party. Enrique Semo wrote in Proceso, “The left was not born with Cárdenas, and its future does not depend on him” (2000, 27).

Within the PRD, many of its members had long sought to balance their appreciation of CCS’ historic role with the need to move beyond his dominant figure, and his conception of his party. Senator Antonio Soto, a PRD founder and veteran from Michoacán, remarked of CCS, “Although his weight [in the PRD] is invaluable, the party should not depend on him. And to me it seems that he understands it this way.”98

Jesús Ortega, while a key figure on CCS’ presidential campaign, had long spoken out against the loose movement-like structure of the campaign, and of the party itself. Ahead of the party’s 6th Congress, held in Zacatecas in April 2001, Ortega called for “ending the duality of a party-front,” which he signaled as “one of the causes of our crisis”:

96 According to Sánchez (2001, 31) CCS violated Article 92 of the party statutes, which establishes that members who join coalitions not approved by the PRD will be expelled. CCS, in any case, did not consult the PRD.

97 For the 2000 election, AMLO had also started operating the Brigades already in February, while CCS would wait until May, barely two months before the election, to utilize the Brigades. María Scherer Ibarra: “Concentrado en el DF y López Obrador, el PRD Dejó Sólo Cárdenas.” Proceso, no. 1227 (May 7, 2000): 20-22 (20).

What are we, a party or a front? Are we a movement-party? In my opinion, the moment has come to end with this conceptual indefiniteness. In the political struggle, the concepts of front, movement, and party are qualitatively different and cannot be mistaken, because this would lead to wrong actions and strategic errors. We have been a front; we need to convert ourselves into a modern party of the left.99

Notably, Ortega thus drew the distinction between the party-movement, on the one hand, and a “modern party of the left,” on the other. Yet at the party’s congress, the two lines were again crystallizing, and they notably also paralleled the vision of whether to engage in dialogue, or to seek confrontation, with the new PAN regime. The proponents of dialogue, such as Ortega and Amalia García, pushed for a more bureaucratized and autonomous party, while those who dismissed cooperation with the regime, such as AMLO, CCS, and Rosario Robles, represented the latter. Nine months after the election, the positions during the 6th national congress were as far apart as ever.

In her inaugural discourse, Amalia García, who was president of the party but had not achieved a renovation of the party, argued,

The time has come for us to establish with all clarity the rules of coexistence of these two great conceptions, and of the political expressions that support them. Until now, both of them, true currents of thought, almost two visions of the world and of life, have coexisted amidst permanent tension.

Ortega, in a similar tone, declared that “the PRD must change in order to end this pernicious conception that the movement and direct action is everything. This is not true.”100

Ortega’s allusions to “conservative visions” within the party that clung to “sterile activism and testimonial oppositionalism” drew loud whistles and cheers of disapproval. Ortega complained of what he called remnants of “old priistas culture that does not pay attention to ideas nor reason, but which uncritically follow submission, and instead of reasoning, shout and don’t listen, and pretend to deafen out reasons.”101

The conference was also notable for its open criticism of CCS in several speeches during the conference, including from party leader Amalia García, who criticized his acceptance of the PT candidacy, and the alliance made with PT and other parties, which had brought little electoral gain and cost the PRD legislative seats.102 While CCS had not held an executive position in the party since 1993, this was nonetheless a first. Ortega argued that the PRD had now “crossed the

100 Identificar al PAN como adversario principal o ir a un pacto para la transición, disyuntiva del PRD. La Jornada, April 25, 2001
102 Chuchos y amalios, sin revancha; Rosario Robles, ausente; críticas por las alianzas. La Jornada, April 26, 2001

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Rubicon” in its break with CCS: “In the PRD, from now on there are no untouchables. Cuauhtémoc is no longer untouchable.”

The 2000 election in many ways signified a change of roles between CCS and AMLO; while the former had been pushed by the other, AMLO’s already high star in the party was starting to shine brighter than its three-time failed presidential candidate. As for now, however, AMLO, CCS, and Rosario Robles, who had taken over the Mexico City administration in 1999, found common ground in their fight to reject any agreements or dialogue with President Vicente Fox. On the other side were the forces of Amalia García and Jesús Ortega, and the PRD’s executive committee, who wanted to establish long-term dialogue with the PAN administration.

Felipe González, former prime minister of Spain and vice president of the Socialist International, as a guest to the congress intervened to declare that “one cannot continue offering ‘paradise on earth’ for the future, while the right governors in the present” Jesús Zambrano, a former guerilla fighter and now secretary general of the PRD, warned that another intransigent line would “condemn us to be a minority,” and pleased with the congress members “not to impose limits on ourselves,” yet to no avail. The congress voted, 546 to 528, to approve a Political Line that strictly prohibited the PRD leadership to establish any major agreements between the PRD and the new Fox administration, as well as with any local PRI governments.

The vote was also a victory for Rosario Robles, who was, with CCS’ backing, sailing up to be the party’s next president. A former member of the Maoist Línea de Masas (later OIR-ML), she was a clear representative of the movement advocates within the PRD, and had led catcalls against Ortega and García’s call for reform.

While the congress had made an unprecedented step in moving beyond the leadership of CCS, it was a paradox that the party’s two rising stars, Robles, and Mexico City mayor AMLO, were the political children of the PRD founder. Moreover, it was also highly notable that while the PRI had finally been defeated – for many years the central aim of the party – now, a majority seemed willing to swear a similar resistance to the new PAN government, and to repeat its old intransigence. Even with this goal completed, and despite dismal electoral results, the majority of the party appeared locked in a trajectory, where no room was found to discuss a redefinition of its

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103 “Cárdenas no me asusta” responde Amalia García. *El Universal*, April 28, 2001
program or organizational form. Yet with a democratically elected government in place, the

**Return to intransigence: Movement-party revival under PRD President Robles**

While CCS had seen his influence within the party wane, he managed to have his favored
candidate, Rosario Robles, elected PRD leader. Her main opponent, Jesús Ortega, in his
campaign had focused exactly on the issue of PRD’s uninstitutionalized leadership, and the need
for the party to end CCS’ unofficial but real leadership over the PRD.\footnote{Guillermo Correa: PRD, Elecciones Turbias. \textit{Proceso}, no. 1324 (March 17, 2002): 26-28 (26).}

Robles was elected president in a highly controversial election against Jesús Ortega, with
widespread accusations of fraud, and recommendations from an investigative committee that it be
cancelled.\footnote{La elección del PRD, bajo las mismas reglas de 2002. \textit{La Jornada}, March 21, 2005}

Robles had been promoted by CCS, AMLO, Carlos Ímaz, and the couple Rene Bejarano-Dolores Padierna, head of the powerful CID faction of Mexico City.\footnote{Rosario Robles Berlanga: Robles’ political career began in student politics with the radical maoist Línea de Masas, later Organización de Izquierda Revolucionaria (OIR-ML), and in STUNAM. She held a variety of posts in the PRD, such as secretary of organization under AMLO. Her highest public office would be to succeed CCS as interim Chief of Government in the Federal District in 1999.} While CCS first denied it, Robles acknowledged his backing for her candidacy, and loudly professed her loyalty to the
party’s principal founder.

Robles had been secretary of government in the Mexico City administration of CCS – the
number two job after the mayor – and when CCS resigned to be presidential candidate, she was
elevated to be chief of government. Following her brief stint as Mexico City mayor, she left the
post with a very popular image, but was also accused of excessive spending on publicity and
privileges for government functionaries, of using city funds to promote Carlos Ímaz as candidate
for the presidency of PRD-DF, and of governing in a particularly personalistic and
confrontational style.\footnote{Raúl Monge: Cárdenas y Robles Gastaron más que Espinosa Villareal. \textit{Proceso}, no. 1256 (Nov. 26, 2000): 44-47, and Sánchez (2001, 71). Ímaz won over his main rival Dolores Padierna 35-23. While Robles and Ímaz shared with Padierna-Bejarano and AMLO the conception of the PRD as a movement-party, they were also bitter rivals for power within the party and Mexico City. Like CCS, she was also accused of}
Robles would only be president of the PRD for 16 controversial months. While the 6th national congress had revealed a party deeply divided over what should be its role vis-à-vis the new Fox administration, Robles favored full frontal opposition and no dialogue with the government (Romero Miranda and Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2002, 65). For a while, she managed to achieve some party unity behind this new intransigence (Crespo 2004, 79). Robles lamented what she called a “divorce” between the social movements and the PRD, and decidedly pushed for its incorporation in the party structure. She also worked to extend the recruitment of current or former priístas as candidates for the 2003 election.

For the 2003 election, growing discontent with the general performance of the Fox government indicated that the PRD would reap major electoral rewards, and Robles announced she would step down if the party did not gain more than 20 percent of the votes. While gains did go up – with 95 deputies, the PRD nearly doubled its legislators from the disastrous 2000 elections – the party nonetheless only pulled 18.8 percent of the national vote, and even lost presence in several states. The Brigadas del Sol, moreover, which had performed so disappointingly in the 2000 election yet were still used, were again signaled as a major factor of the defeat (Ortíz Fragoso 2004, 25).

Robles stepped down from the PRD presidency soon thereafter. But it was not to follow up on her pre-election promise, but for the uncovering of massive financial irregularities such as the contraction of massive debt and the near bankrupting of the PRD on her watch. After 16 controversial months as party president, the PRD was reported to have a debt of at least half a billion pesos, with at least half contracted by Robles. Robles denied the charges of financial mismanagement and alluded to a “dirty war” against yet on Aug. 9, 2003, stepped down as PRD using the position merely as a springboard, as she harbored her own intentions for a future run for the presidency. This made her a rival of AMLO. Cf. Raúl Monge: Rosario Robles y su Estilo Personal de Gobernar. Proceso, no. 1246 (Sept. 17, 2000): 8-12.

114 Renuncia Robles a la presidencia del PRD. El Universal, Aug. 10, 2003; PRD: caciquismo, negocio y division. El Universal, Aug. 13, 2003; Descarta Cárdenas crisis en el PRD. El Universal, Aug. 13, 2003. In her place was designated Leonel Godoy Rangel, who was at the time Secretary of Government in Michoacán. He was appointed by the PRD’s National Political Commission, confirmed later by the party’s National Council.
president.116 She declared she was “not disposed so that the only asset I have, which is my
honesty, today should be object of darts of friendly fire” (Robles 2003). Yet when it was
disclosed that her lover Carlos Ahumada, a wealthy businessman, had taken over parts of the
PRD’s debt, and later sought to blackmail the party by making this public, her remaining
credibility in the PRD, was destroyed.117

Corruption in the party-movement: The 2004 video scandals

While a consequence of the video scandals was the throwing out of its former president
from the PRD itself, they were not principally about Robles, though they were orchestrated by her
lover. Above all, they revealed the corruption of former and past functionaries in the
administration of AMLO and the principal corriente backing him, the social movement-oriented
CID.

On March 1, a video had surfaced that showed Gustavo Ponce Meléndez, AMLO’s
secretary of finance in the GDF, high-rolling in the Bellagio in Las Vegas. It was subsequently
revealed that Ponce had a range of trips to Sin City paid for by Carlos Ahumada, a shady
Argentine-Mexican businessman. Originally from Córdoba, Argentina, Ahumada had made a
fortune in Mexico, though he had been involved in many irregularities, and had been jailed for
fraud. During the administration of Óscar Espinosa as regent of the Federal District, Ahumada’s
Quart group had landed significant contracts through a combination of innovation and low prices,
but also using more dubious methods. While the group kept low profile during the CCS
administration, during the Robles administration it would be very active, obtaining many
contracts through outright bribes. Worse still, its constructions were often shoddy and made with
low-quality material, and the group tended to charge for works that were never completed. When
AMLO took office as mayor in 2000, the irregularities of the past administration were quickly
discovered, and an investigation launched.118

Ahumada had earlier deemed AMLO a “demagogue” and declared he “would do
everything that is necessary that this guy doesn’t make it” to the presidency.”119 Yet the real
motivation for Ahumada’s tirade against AMLO appeared much more profane; as a result of the
irregularities uncovered, AMLO cancelled Ahumada’s GDF contracts, held back payments to the

116 Nadie puede manejar al PRD maniatado y bajo sospecha, dice; reprocha fuego amigo. La Jornada, Aug.
115).
Quart Group, and launched proceedings against Ahumada. As for Ponce, who fled the city following the accusations against him, it became clear that Ahumada had funded his gambling habits in return for Ponce facilitating his contracts with the GDF.

Yet the worst was yet to come. On March, 3, on the TV show of the personage “Brozo the Sinister Clown,” René Bejarano, leader of the CID, on live TV was confronted with another video recording showing him accepting wads of cash from Ahumada. While Bejarano argued it was campaign donations, it was clear that Ahumada in return wanted Bejarano to intercede on his behalf to release pending payments, and stop the AMLO administration’s harassment of him (Lajous 2006, 109). While AMLO had never met Ahumada and had no direct relation with him (Ortiz Pinchetti 2006, 326), Rene Bejarano Martinez had grown to become one of his most important backers, having known him since 1989. In 1999, he was an early supporter of AMLO’s mayoral bid, and he became the coordinator of his campaign. He had been expected to be AMLO’s secretary of government, but the post fell to José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti. Bejarano then assumed the official title of personal secretary of AMLO, though his real role was to serve as a link to the ALDF. Later as ALDF deputy, Bejarano would lead the PRD group, and head the powerful Commission of Government. The video scandals now had reached the highest levels of the PRD – and the AMLO administration – and Bejarano resigned from the party, in the face of his expulsion.

While the video scandals exposed the corruption within a part of the PRD and battered the credibility of the AMLO administration, they did not mortally wound AMLO, who could credibly claim innocence in the affair. Despite the actions of Ponce and Bejarano, AMLO had, after all, ordered the very investigation of Ahumada that had set the process rolling. The scandals, significantly, also had the effect of making AMLO believe they were orchestrated principally to prevent him from reaching the Mexican presidency.

After arranging for the release of the videos – they were brought to the Televisa studios by PAN federal deputy Federico Döring, who sheepishly stated he “did not know” where they came from – Ahumada had fled to Cuba, arriving hand in hand with Rosario Robles. Yet the Cubans had him arrested, and he would admit during interrogation that he had indeed negotiated

120 Corruption was uncovered in the delegation Gustavo A. Madero, where delegation chief Octavio Flores Millán fled, but was captured in Sept. 2005, although later freed on “technical errors” Aug. 2007. He had been a recipient of Ahumada’s largesse yet later angered the businessman when he was forced to fire Ahumada’s contacts Luis Salazar and María Martha Delgado from the delegation government. The two also fled, first to the state of Querétaro, then Cuba. Exoneran al ex delegado en GAM Octavio Flores Millán del delito de fraude genérico. La Jornada, Aug. 25, 2007.

121 Lajous (2006, 26). In practice, this post was held by Alejandro Esquer, then as now AMLO’s private secretary.
with representatives from PAN and the PRI over the compromising videos. An investigation by
journalist Adrián Rueda reveals there was indeed a plot hatched by Carlos Salinas – the PRD’s old
nemesis – and PAN’s Diego Fernández de Cevallos, to buy the videos from Ahumada.
According to Rueda, “In the end it remains clear that effectively one dealt with a complot against
the PRD, but one carried out from the interior of the same party, and activated by two of the most
sinister minds of Mexican politics” (2005, 31), namely Salinas and Fernández de Cevallos.

Rueda in particular outlined the responsibility of Rosario Robles, and her collaborators
Carlos Ímaz and Ramón Sosamontes. Sosamontes, former delegation chief and a confidant of
Robles, had contracted and overpaid Ahumada for a school for the blind which was, to add, of so
poor quality that it was deemed useless. Similar practices had also occurred on the watch of René
Arce, his predecessor. It was also revealed that Ímaz, delegation chief of Tlalpan, who had
known Robles since their days as student activism, and was backed by her to head the PRD-DF,
had received money from Ahumada. While Ímaz claimed the money - more than half a million
pesos – had been spent on Robles’ campaign for the PRD presidency. Eventually forced to resign,
Ímaz was kicked out of the PRD, and was later convicted to three years in prison.

While Robles denied officially to have been financed by Ahumada, she admitted the fact
in an internal hearing of the PRD. The scandals had thus directly hit the party itself, and party
members such as Carlos Navarrete and Jesús Zambrano called it the “worst moment in PRD’s
history.” Robles, Ímaz, and Sosamontes had their party rights suspended by the CEN on March
5, and the PRD’s national council met in Morelia immediately thereafter for a full hearing. The
tribunal found her guilty, with Ímaz, of breaching party rules, and ratified their suspension of
party membership. Sosamontes, while lying about his relationship with Ahumada and the

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122 Rueda (2005, 253-266) and Lajous (2006, 140). It is worth noting that Ahumada’s bribes or campaign
contributions were hardly limited to the PRD, but that Ahumada was also linked to the PAN and Fox
through his stepson Manuel Bribiesca, his brother Javier Fox Padilla, and nephew Xavier Fox Padilla. Cf.
Raúl Monge: Un Directorio Telefónico de Ahumada. Proceso, no. 1440 (June 6, 2004): 22-23; and Jesusa
123 First reported by Raymundo Riva Palacio: Rosario, la clave, El Universal, Oct. 25, 2004, and more
detail in Rueda (2005, 20, 132). Diego Fernández de Cevallos was a long-time antagonist of the PRD.
Following the 1988 fraud, he helped secure PAN support for PRI’s move to have the ballots burned. El
PAN busca reditar la quema de paquetes de 1988, acusa el PRD. La Jornada, July 6, 2006.
sentenced to three and a half years in prison, though he was eventually bailed out. More bizarre tales
surfaced: According to Eliseo Martínez Pérez (mayor of León for Pan 1991-1993), Ahumada and Robles –
then president of the PRD – reportedly offered him 2 million dollars to run on the PRD label. In the end, he
ditched the PAN, but for PRI-PVEM, although he lost. Cf. Verónica Espinosa and Raúl Ochoa Rincón.
126 Rueda (2005, 301-302).
beneficiary of his largess, was exonerated, though he had resigned before the verdict.128 Facing expulsion from the party, so did Robles. Later, a harsh report by Jaime Cárdenas, head of a special anti-corruption commission, found that she was criminally liable, having “betrayed the political trust bestowed upon her by violating consciously the normative framework… [and] the principles of the party that took her in and putting in risk its existence” by contracting debt not authorized by the PRD’s national council, and repeatedly lied about its extent.129 Additionally, within the party she led she had set up an “alternative cabinet” of Javier Hidalgo, Ramón Sosamontes, Juan Guerra, and Pablo Gómez, which took decisions over the heads of the PRD’s CEN, its top executive organ.130 For the PRD, it was a further testament to the party’s lack of autonomy and institutionalization of its organs, and it brought renewed focus on the role played by the party’s corrientes, above all Bejarano’s CID.131

Rich currents, poor party: The corrientes of the PRD in 2004

During AMLO’s period as party president, it seemed like what had been derogatorily named as corrientitis, or the bickering among the PRD’s internal currents, had come to an end.132 Yet subsequent years had revealed the continued tension and differences within the party. With the video scandals, the subject was thrust on top of the agenda. As writer and PRD sympathizer Carlos Monsiváis noted, “Nor René Bejarano nor Rosario Robles nor Ramón Sosamontes were made in one day. It required the consolidation of spaces of impunity, negligence or helplessness of its most important leaders (Cárdenas and López Obrador) before these successive crises” (Monsiváis 2004, 16), as various corrientes operated increasingly like parties within the party. The corrientes, above all the CID led by René Bejarano, came particularly under fire for the corruption uncovered in their midst.

129 Gloria Leticia Díaz: La Gestión de Rosario, Impune. Proceso, no. 1490 (May 22, 2005): 12-17 (13). The committee had been established March 2004, and while it concluded that Robles and José Ramón Zebadúa, her ex coordinator of finances, were criminally liable, the next step would have been to take the case to the federal attorney general. The PRD was at the time fully occupied trying to kick out that very same attorney general. Cf. La inhabilitación cohesiona al PRD en víspera de su noveno congreso. La Jornada, April 22, 2005; Aplaza PRD sanciones a la gestión de Robles. El Universal, April 24, 2005, and Raúl Monge: Rosario Robles, en Turno. Proceso, no. 1440 (June 6, 2004): 20-25.
131 Garavito called the relation with Bejarano “one of the worst mistakes” of AMLO (Garavito 2004, 19). For more on the Ahumada affair, see the full-length investigation by Proceso journalist Raúl Monge (2004).
Various studies of the PRD have given much attention to the *corrientes*, and rightly so; in many ways, the PRD has remained a party of strong subgroups, yet of weak formal institutions. They became particularly institutionalized and national in orientation ahead of the 1996 election, where they competed for posts on the *planilla* system of proportional representation, where seats in the PRD’s organs were now rewarded according to vote share (Wuhs 2002, 195). However, as has been noted, much of their general disagreements can first and foremost be traced to the party’s founding, with its confluence of diverse currents.

The *corrientes* have been described as “factions dominated by personalistic interests” (Palma and Balderas 2004, 63) and are as such often dismissed as being all about power, and not about content. Martínez González (2005), in a recent study of the PRD, argues they do not compete over ideology, but merely serve to conquer offices (2005, 210). Semo (2004) refers to them as “power groups,” and argues that “none of them can be considered a true current that obeys a particular vision of reality and the party, and to an own style of making politics” (2004, 228).

This study takes issue with the idea that the differences between the *corrientes* are not substantial; on the contrary, while their differences are indeed often manifested in squabbling for candidatures, the history of the party also demonstrates profound disagreements within the party on substantive issues, where internal groups have assumed diametrically opposed positions on the party’s strategy, organizational form, and ideology, and have largely remained highly consistent with these orientations when organized as *corrientes*.

In 2004, however, the video scandals, which followed years of internal party fighting, had led to calls to end them. During the PRD’s, 8th national congress, held immediately after the exposé of corruption, the party explicitly sought to have them liquidated. In the word of party president Leonel Godoy, who had taken over from Robles, the PRD was traversing its “greatest crisis in its short history,” and the *corrientes*, with the exception of the CID, promised to dissolve.

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133 Martínez González (2005) traces the *corrientes* and the trajectories of their individual leaders in a historic perspective. More a more concise overview of earlier *corrientes*, see e.g. Pivron (1999) and Sánchez (1999, 75-87). Borjas Benavente (2003a, 2003b) is a thorough chronological description of the PRD’s trajectory. Vivero Ávila (2006) presents a more analytical general overview of the PRD.

134 The main argument of this study (2005), which explicitly focuses on the *corrientes*, is that the party’s elite is not comprised of those with the most experience, but is rather an equilibrium of power negotiations. He concludes, somewhat paradoxically, that elite “recycling” is also prevalent in the party.

135 Quoted in Ortiz Fragoso (2004, xxvi).
Corriente de Izquierda Democrática – Izquierda Democrática Nacional (IDN)

The CID was above all the product of René Bejarano, who had established this social-movement oriented corriente in 1993. Bejarano had built his career on social movements. In 1985, following the Mexico City earthquake that exposed the corruption and incompetence of the ruling party, he was one of the founders, with his wife Dolores Padierna, of the Unión Popular Nueva Tenochtitlán (UPNT), a housing/social organization, and built on his influence in this and other social movements to launch a growing political career. While he had joined the PRD in 1989 and been a federal deputy of the party, he remained, to say the least, a controversial character before the scandal, having been accused of “land invasion, trafficking in housing, selling school lunches and food handouts donated by groups of social assistance, extortion of street vendors, and protecting pirate taxis” (Lajous 2006, 111). In 1996, AMLO denied him a post on the CEN as party president, referring to him disparagingly as “the cacique of the high plain.” While CID had earlier functioned as somewhat of an umbrella organization for social-movement oriented corrientes, by 1999 most had left, and Bejarano remained fully in charge. That year, the CID had at least 50,000 members, as Bejarano continued to establish other housing organizations, workers in the informal economy, illegal taxi drivers, and other associations of citizens with few resources. Bejarano was director general of the government of CCS, having provided crucial backing for this campaign. He served under Robles, who was a strong rival for power in the DF and nationally, yet surprisingly supported her for party president. Under AMLO, while his official position was that of private secretary, he coordinated relations with the ALDF, and actively sought to become PRD’s coordinator in the ALDF, and to head the Commission of Government. Following the video scandals, he renounced the party, ahead of certain expulsion. In 2003, the CID had two members on the CEN; 20 of 95 national deputies; 80 members on the national council; and presence in 27 states. In the Federal District, its bastion, it controlled 10 out of 13 delegations, and 22 of 37 ALDF city legislators. Agustín Guerrero was president of PRD in Mexico City. After the video scandals, the CID would be officially led by Javier Hidalgo Ponce, spokesperson at PRD CEN. Other key members: Francisco Chíguil Figueroa, Adrián Pedrozo; Rigoberto Nieto López; Alfredo Hernández Raygos; Miguel Bartolini.


137 Fransisco Ortiz Pardo: La Sucesión en el PRD se Reduce a Pactos de Interés. Proceso, no. 1165 (Feb. 28, 1999): 16-20 (17). Social organizations prominent in the CID, in addition to the UPNT, was the Frente Popular Francisco Villa, created in 1988 as a landless movement/housing organization, though highly controversial for its methods.


139 Fransisco Ortiz Pardo: La Sucesión en el PRD se Reduce a Pactos de Interés. Proceso, no. 1165 (Feb. 28, 1999): 16-20 (17). Social organizations prominent in the CID, in addition to the UPNT, was the Frente Popular Francisco Villa, created in 1988 as a landless movement/housing organization, though highly controversial for its methods.

140 René Bejarano: El operador de Andrés Manuel. El Universal, March 4, 2004

141 Bejarano maintained the money was only voluntary contributions from Ahumada to the PRD’s campaigns. He eventually spent eight months in prison on various charges, the most serious being money laundering. When these were dropped, he was allowed to pay bail and was released. Exonera juez a Bejarano; saldrá libre. El Universal, July 6, 2005; René Bejarano, absuelto por lavado de dinero. La Jornada, July 6, 2005. Bejarano queda libre bajo fianza. La Jornada, July 7, 2005
### Nueva Izquierda (NI)

The biggest rival to CID, both in terms of its size and of its social-democratic orientation. Led nationally by Jesús Ortega Martínez and Jesús Zambrano Grijalva – hence its nickname of *Los Chuchos – Nueva Izquierda* was established in Tlaxcala in 1999. Before that, it had long existed within the party, and had informally been known as Los Chuchos, after its two main leaders. Preceding the PRD, many of its members had earlier split off from the PST of Rafael Aguilar Talamantes to establish the PMS, and later the PRD in 1989. Within the PRD, it had earlier belonged to the *Arco Iris* coalition headed by PML. While it attracted members from diverse backgrounds – Zambrano, for instance, had been a guerilla fighter – it had particularly emphasized a negotiated transition with the regime, and dialogue with its political opponent, as contrasted with the strategy of intransigence. In Mexico City, *Nueva Izquierda* was joined by René Arce Islas, head of the *Corriente por la Reforma Democrática* (CRD), which like the Ortega-Zambrano group was more inclined to negotiate rather than democratic intransigence of CCS. In Mexico City, Arce was also a historic rival of Bejarano, and the battle of the two Renés would increasingly define the battles in the Mexico City party branch. Whereas CID lost influence particularly in Mexico City after the video scandals, Arce’s group in Mexico City grew correspondingly. Nationally, NI had 14 out of 52 PRD deputies in 2001; by 2006, it had the loyalty of 27, 20 local legislators in the ALDF, around 40 percent of the delegates to the national council, as well as a majority on the CEN. Other key members included Rosario Tapia; Miguel Alonso Raya; Erick Villanueva; Jorge Calderón; and Lorena Villavicencio.

### Foro Nuevo Sol (FNS)

The FNS, principally consisting of former members of the PCM, had been an important group within the PRD, but had lost much influence during the presidency of Amalia García of the PRD, which had not been regarded an effective one. Her leadership over the party was marred by the fraud allegations from its disastrous 1999 internal election, and she never established complete authority. This was compounded by the lackluster electoral showings of the party in 2000. FNS, which has long defined itself as social democratic, received a new boost with the election of Amalia García as governor in Zacatecas. Key members included: Martha Dalia Gastélum; Juan José García Ochoa; Iván García Solís; Eloi Vásquez; Raymundo Cárdenas; and Malú Micher.

### Unidad y Renovación (UNYR)

UNYR was notable for its rapid rise and fall, as well as the historic PRD figures it attracted. This highly variegated group shared historic ties to CCS, and to Rosario Robles. It was created shortly after Robles left the PRD, and attracted many cadres historically not affiliated with any group. Yet when the video scandals broke out, and the true extent of corruption and mismanagement of the Robles presidency was revealed, it rapidly disintegrated, and took on a new form as essentially a local Mexico City current. Key members included Armando Quintero, Pablo Gómez, Salvador Martínez Della Rocca; Saúl Escobar; Alfonso Ramírez Cuéllar; Jesús Martín del Campo; Inti Muñoz; Agustín Rodríguez; Gilberto Ensástiga Santiago; Carlos Ímaz; Clara Brugada; Edgar Torres Baltazar; and Ramón Sosamontes.

### Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria (ACNR, Cívicos, Movimiento Cívicos)

The oldest national group in the PRD, but much reduced. Its cadres had long trajectories in social struggles and guerrilla movements. The national coordinator was Mario Saucedo Pérez. Key members: Francisco Saucedo Peréz, Humberto Zazueta, and Leticia Burgos.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Movimiento de Bases Insurgentes (MOBI)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOBI was a small <em>corriente</em> tied to radical social movements that appeared in the late 1990s, and was created by Gerardo Fernández Noroña and Raúl Alvarez Garín.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Red de Izquierda Revolucionaria (REDIR)</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REDIR was a small <em>corriente</em> that also emerged in the late 1990s, under the leadership of ex-guerrilla fighter Camilo Valenzuela, Antonio Rueda, and Pablo Franco. It also emphasized links with social movements.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Cardenistas vs. Lopezobradoristas</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No official <em>corriente</em>, but key <em>cardenistas</em> included Adolfo Gilly; Ricardo Pascoe; Lázaro Cárdenas Batel; Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Batel; Leonel Godoy; Samuel del Villar; Rosa Albina Garavito; Paco Ignacio Taibo II; Demetrio Sodi; and Julio Moguel Viveros.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like the <em>cardenistas</em>, the <em>lopezobradoristas</em> did not have their own official <em>corriente</em>, but included people from Tabasco as well as former members of his PRD CEN, and <em>ex priístas</em>. Among his most loyal supporters were Octavio Romero Oropeza; Alberto Pérez Mendoza; Enrique Semo; Raquel Sosa Elizaga; Bertha Luján Uranga; Laura Itzel Castillo Juárez; Alejandro Encinas Rodríguez; Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo; Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón; Manuel Camacho Solís; José María Pérez Gay; and José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AMLO: Mexico City mayor and real leader of PRD**

Will they try to disqualify you from now toward 2006?
- I haven’t thought about this yet.
  Do you see it as a possibility?
- The only thing I can say is that they do not regard me approvingly.142

The years 2003-2005 saw a change in power relations between historic supporters of CCS, and of the forces surrounding his one-time protégé, AMLO. While holding no executive office since 1993, the clout of CCS had remained considerable within the party, and he had backed winning candidates AMLO, García, and Robles. Yet the same scandals that liquidated Robles’ presidency also served to undermine CCS’ influence within the party vis-à-vis AMLO. At the party’s 8th national congress CCS was booed, and following what he perceived as insults from interim party leader Leonel Godoy – whose friendship with CCS stretched three decades –

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CCS walked out of the congress, amidst cries of “Obrador!” and he declared he would renounce all positions in the party.143

Earlier, Enrique Semo Calev, an economist and former PCM member, had published a book on the Mexican left and the PRD (Semo 2003), who drew controversy particularly for its very harsh of CCS and neocardenismo, which Semo characterized as marked “by the magnitude of its silence about the great problems of our time, and the absolute absence of universal values” (Semo 2003, 163). As Semo was secretary of culture in AMLO’s Mexico City government, many saw this as a declaration of war between the PRD’s two strongmen.144

AMLO had become a candidate for Mexico City mayor in classic fashion. In October 1999, he embarked on a tour of Tabasco municipalities to consult them whether to seek the support for this candidacy rather than the governorship of Tabasco; in the ensuing referendum, he unanimously received their backing (Grayson 2007, 150). He also asked for the signed support of the members of the PRD’s national council, who unanimously backed his candidacy (Ortiz Pinchetti 2006, 144).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrés Manuel López Obrador</td>
<td>109,000</td>
<td>76.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demetrio Sodi145</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>8.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo Gómez146</td>
<td>10,646</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ifigenia Martínez</td>
<td>5841</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco Rascón</td>
<td>5414</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5: PRD internal elections, Nov. 14, 1999, candidate for Mexico City mayor.147


145 While no longer a member of the PRD, Sodi deserves particular mention due to his distinction of having run for all three major parties. After serving in the PRI, he ran for nomination for PRD candidate for mayor in 2000, but lost against AMLO, and resigned to join the PAN. He pushed CCS’ presidential candidacy in 2006.

146 Pablo Gómez in particular had sought to disqualify AMLO’s candidacy on grounds that he did not have the required residency in Mexico City, but all the PRD organs ruled against him. Even after AMLO’s sweeping victory in the internal elections, Gómez and Rascón insisted on the illegality of AMLO’s registry. Cf. Ifigenia Martínez se sumará a la campaña del ganador. La Jornada, Nov. 15, 1999; Ortiz Pinchetti (2006, 144).
While AMLO’s victory in 2000 was a welcome triumph amidst generally dismal electoral results for the PRD, it was not a landslide; the PRD lost five delegations in DF, half of its local districts, its legislative majority in the ALDF, and all in all pulled 300,000 less votes than in 1997.\footnote{Raúl Monge: En el DF, los Signos de la Ingobernabilidad. \textit{Proceso}, no. 1236 (July 9, 2000): 44-47.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrés Manuel López Obrador</td>
<td>PRD</td>
<td>1,601,646</td>
<td>39.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santiago Creel</td>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>1,367,501</td>
<td>33.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesús Silva Herzog</td>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>929,941</td>
<td>22.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tere Vale</td>
<td>PDS</td>
<td>135,475</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauricio Prieto</td>
<td>PARM</td>
<td>15,304</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6: Federal district elections, July 2, 2000.\footnote{With 93.47 of ballot boxes counted. IEDF: más de 4 millones sufragaron. \textit{El Universal}, July 4, 2000.}

Yet AMLO would early on go on the offensive. From day one, he launched criticisms against the new national PAN administration, to the point where his own advisers in vain sought to make him soften his media attacks on Fox.\footnote{Cf. Raúl Monge and María Luisa Vivas. “Fox no Tiene Compromiso con los Pobres...Yo sí.” \textit{Proceso}, no. 1272 (March 18, 2001): 40-43; Raúl Monge: Historia de un “Fajador.” \textit{Proceso}, no. 1483 (April 3, 2005): 14-19 (17).} Over the next years, he would moreover launch a range of innovative social programs and highly visible projects, many of which would even greatly change the very looks of the city.\footnote{Ortiz Pinchetti (2006, 234); Las obras apuntalaron a AMLO. \textit{El Universal}, July 27, 2005; Martí Batres: El balance obligado. \textit{La Jornada}, July 28, 2005. Despite the social programs, he also faced critics within his own party, who deemed him a “populist” rather than a leftist. According to Rosa Albina Garavito, a PRD veteran, “It is hard not to designate as “left” a program of government that puts in the centre of attention the social necessities of the most vulnerable groups of society: The elderly, children, women, the indigenous, those without a roof, etc. Nevertheless, this radical social program is framing itself in the populist politics of the priista regimes. Garavito Elias (2001, 90).}

- New monthly pensions for the elderly, equivalent of half a minimum salary, and paid in the form of credit to be used in supermarkets.
- New stipends for the sick and disabled, and for single mothers who sent their children to school.
- Free school supplies for children.
- Trimming the bloated GDF bureaucracy. Salaries, cell phones, and vehicle privileges for those remaining were cut, a saving of ten billion pesos.
- Renovation of the historic city centre, in cooperation with billionaire Carlos Slim, the Alameda park, and the new Plaza Juárez.\footnote{The deal with Slim caused particular controversy, as Slim in return for the investment took over 50 buildings in the historic downtown of Mexico City. AMLO had earlier been highly critical of Slim’s}

• Renovation of the main thoroughfare Reforma.
• Adding a second level to the Periférico, the peripheral ring of freeway around the city, and new bridges to commercial zone Santa Fe.
• Construction of a new university, the Universidad de la Ciudad de México, and 16 new high schools.
• Construction of 120,000 housing units.
• Adding 45 new trains to the metro.
• The Metrobus bus rapid transit system, a dedicated bus line in central avenue Insurgentes.

His predecessor Rosario Robles’ massive spending to highlight the achievements of the DF administration has been signaled an important factor in AMLO’s win (Trelles and Zagal 2004, 78). Yet when indications of waste incurred by the previous administrations emerged, his relations with CCS and Robles quickly turned sour. Moreover, while he had railed against the “mafia” of priístas such as Salinas de Gortari and panistas such as Fernández de Cevallos – who had sought to prevent him from running for mayor on grounds of residency requirements – AMLO’s handling of the video scandals drew further criticism. CCS openly criticized AMLO for not strongly condemning the actions of his collaborators. This sentiment appears to have been as well felt by the public; in a poll taken immediately after the scandals, AMLO had slipped down to merely 33 percent support as a candidate for the presidency. As Palma and Balderas (2004, 66) noted, despite four years in power, “His response has not been that of a chief of government that takes responsibility for the actions of the members of his cabinet, but of that of an opposition leader.” AMLO showed a strong resentment toward assuming self-criticism; he dismissed the video scandals as a “complot” and “conspiracy,” and in response held a mass rally on March 14, attended by more than a quarter million people to “inform” his supporters of the incidents. Looking back on incident a year later, he still refused to condemn Bejarano, referring to his actions as “products of circumstances,” while he did admit the scandal had been the greatest blow to his government. Yet while the video scandals questioned the honesty and integrity of his collaborators, and the PRD itself, the case that most directly threatened to derail his final

157 Quoted in Ortiz Pinchetti (2006, 334).
The objective of the Mexican presidency was not the video scandals, but the desafuero, which had indeed the elements of a true conspiracy.

Desafuero: The triumph of the movement logic over shoddy institutions

The video scandals had barely died down when the most serious impediment to AMLO’s candidacy emerged. It was commonly referred to simply as the desafuero – in all essence, as Grayson notes, a “concerted drive by Fox to strip López Obrador of his immunity as an elected official so that he could stand trial for having flouted a judge’s order” (Grayson 2007, 2). The implications could not be more dramatic: The barring of AMLO as a presidential candidate. As the case had the effect of significantly battering Mexico’s political institutions and polarize the country ahead of its crucial 2006 presidential election, it is instructive to examine the case in certain detail.

In November 2003, a local judge, Gabriela Rolón, ordered the city mayor to pay compensation for the expropriation of a stretch of land in the San Juan locality in Iztapalapa delegation. AMLO refused to comply with the ruling, dismissing the merits of the case and the absurdly high amount – almost two billion pesos – demanded. Shortly thereafter, it was uncovered that the person demanding compensation was not the rightful owner of the land, on which tens of thousands lived today, and had moreover engaged in the falsification of documents. To add, the land had been owned by Mexico City for decades. The claimant, Enrique Arcipreste del Abrego, was an associate of Carlos Ahumada, and like Ahumada he would soon flee to Cuba. The trumped-up case of San Juan, however, was only the beginning.

Then there was the case of the El Encino. In the delegation of Cuajimalpa, the Mexico City administration was charged with ignoring a court order to stop work on a newly constructed road. The planned road, which was to provide better access to a newly constructed hospital, was said to obstruct the access to the El Encino property of Federico Escobedo Garduño, another character of shady business origins.

Then, on May 17, 2004, attorney general Rafael Macedo de La Concha asked the Congress to initiate desafuero proceedings against AMLO. Art. 38 of the Mexican constitution states that political rights of citizens are suspended when a penal process has been initiated.

160 Like Ahumada, and other associates of his such as Antonio Martínez Ocampo, Arcipreste would soon he would also flee to Cuba, yet Cuban authorities deported him back to Mexico. Deporta Cuba a México a Enrique Arcipreste: El Universal, May 4, 2004. See also Ortiz Pinchetti (2006, 298-300).
against them (Córdova Vianello 2006, 55). Were AMLO to be stripped of his immunity and be charged, it would then effectively bar him from participating in the 2006 elections.

The next 11 months were filled with increasing tension and polarization between AMLO and the national Fox administration, and a range of massive street mobilizations and meetings in the Zócalo denounced what was regarded a political attack on AMLO’s candidacy.

Despite warnings from finance and the stock market, as well as harsh criticism of the case in the international press, the responsible commission voted to bring the case to a full vote in the Chamber of Deputies. Ahead of the vote, held April 7, 2005 AMLO held a dramatic speech in the chamber, charging it was a “long-term plan not for any motive permit that that this populist Andrés Manuel will arrive at the presidency.” It was hard to argue against him. Yet parliament nonetheless voted 360 to 127 to strip the mayor of his fuero, or constitutional immunity, and he had to step down as mayor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>In favor</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>Abstained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>147</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVEM</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergencia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7: Desafuero vote, Chamber of Deputies, April 7, 2005.

The battle had now reached its heights, with a majority of the population regarding it a plot to disqualify AMLO from the 2006 competition. A national poll conducted days later found that 49 percent of Mexicans – and 63 percent of defeños – believed his arguments, while only 28 percent nationally, and 21 percent in Mexico City, believed the prosecutors.

The political debate and massive street mobilizations would completely dominate the news picture in Mexico City and the country in general, the following weeks. During the PRD’s 9th national congress, held April 22-24, 2005, outgoing PRD president Leonel Godoy declared that the country’s political institutions faced their gravest threat since the upheavals of the 1988

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163 Federal Deputy Regina Vázquez was the only PAN deputy to vote against the desafuero.
165 March 11, 2005 poll, reported in Juárez (2005, 8).
fraud, and demanded that the attorney general step down. The issue completely dominated the PRD congress, which was moreover overshadowed by the “March of Silence” on its closing day, where more than a million people marched in one of the largest demonstrations in history. As pressure was building to dismiss the case, AMLO declared he would defy the desafuero by return to work in the mayor’s office, which would have seen his arrest, yet his bail was mysteriously paid, as it turned out, by two members of the PAN, clearly to avoid this scenario.

On April 12, Fox even met with the U.S. Joint Chief of Staff Richard Myers, a clear sign of the international community’s concern over the case. Then, on April 27, Fox finally announced the “renunciation” of attorney general Macedo de la Concha, the prosecutor in the case, and that AMLO would not be prevented from participating in the future elections. Essentially clearing AMLO of the charges, it was a massive defeat for the Fox administration, which had been responsible for initiating them in the first place. While the prosecutor’s office would continue its investigation and even tried to send it to Chamber of Deputies again, the case was effectively over.

The desafuero, as Córdova Vianello notes, was a “very clear example of political institutions subject to political interests,” and “had to do with a political use of the Law whose absurd implications were evident” (2006, 54, 56). Yet while Fox used the desafuero politically, so did AMLO, others as well accused him of “locating himself on top of the law, the institutions, and the rest of political actors and… to consider himself to act in an arbitrary, authoritarian, and illegal manner” (Borjas Benavente 2005, 126). Throughout the process, to be sure, AMLO had declared the case of no legal merit, and made his declarations without lawyers. As Lajous has noted, when AMLO declared he would “not seek immunity or contract lawyers because, simply, I am not guilty” and that he would rather “count on the support of men and women of good will,” he was in practice relying on other justifications than the law. According to Lajous, “This posture

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168 While the city police reported 1,2 million people stretching over 7 km, the federal police, reported 120,000.
169 They were local PAN deputies, Jorge Lara and Garnela Cuevas, who were said to be acting on advice of future president Jorge Calderón. Ortiz Pinchetti (2006, 401-402).
171 The assessment by Borjas Benavente that the desafuero was “a cause that is perceived as unjust, but that legally is correct,” is nonetheless shared by few. Quoted in Gloria Leticia Díaz and Rodrigo Vera. Otra Vez el Caudillo. *Proceso*, no. 1449 (Aug. 8, 2004): 22-26 (26).
is profoundly antidemocratic, because it assumes the application of the law can be negotiated as a function of the force and power of the indicted” (2006, 182-183).  

Be that as it may, the desafuero also had the effect of greatly strengthening the faith in popular mobilizations, which undoubtedly had put massive pressure on the federal authorities. Moreover, to AMLO and his supporters – already prone to believe in conspiracies, real or not – it appeared that the cards were indeed stacked against them. A worse starting point for the 2006 elections is hard to envision.  

**The movement trumps the party: Imposition of leaders and candidates**

As the desafuero process was nearing its final stages, the PRD held internal elections to replace interim president Godoy. While AMLO had earlier agreed not to interfere in the internal election, he reneged on his promise by openly pushing Leonel Cota Montaňa for national president, and the controversial Martí Batres as head of the all-important DF branch. While AMLO had left the party presidency of PRD in 1999, his clout within the party as Mexico City mayor was decisive, in particular following CCS’ loss of prestige and distancing within the party.

In 1998, AMLO had recruited Cota, a long-time member of PRI, to run as the PRD’s candidate for governor in Baja California Sur, which he won handily. During the desafuero process, he had been one of many ex priístas in charge of the Redes that had led AMLO’s  

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172 Also, while all support was arguably made on a voluntary bases, non-unionized workers in the city were reported to having subtracted 15 percent of their salary for two months, in order to pay for the “civil resistance.” Raúl Monge: Los Excesos. *Proceso*, no. 1477 (Feb. 20, 2005): 16-23 (21).

173 For more on the desafuero from a first-hand observer, see Ortiz Pinchetti (2006, 342-413)


175 Martí Batres Guadarrama; Batres was earlier considered an “acolyte” of Bejarano. Bejarano was close to Batres, and made him head of the all-important Comisión de Gobierno in the ALDF. Relations soured, however, when Bejarano fired Batres' sister Lenia from her post as director of government in the delegation Cuauhtémoc. As a local deputy, Batres was involved in the notorious Leche Betty scandal in 1999, where low-cost milk were provided to low-income groups, but was exposed to have a low nutritional value and even contained fecal matter. Batres was awarded the first list on the PRD’s PR list in 2000, which assured him a seat in parliament. AMLO pushed for him to be coordinator of PRD bench, although his experience was limited. Under his coordination the PRD managed to approve more funds to the DF, but he was a very controversial coordinator, and faced several attempts at destitution. In 2003 he joined the GDF as Undersecretary of government. During the desafuero, he was in charge of the “taking” the chamber of deputies, in the heated days ahead of the parliamentary vote. Cf. Jesusa Cervantes: Rebeldón Perredista contra Martí Batres. *Proceso*, no. 1278 (April 29, 2001): 30-31; Álvaro Delgado and Raúl Monge. El Equipo de la Resistencia. *Proceso*, no. 1484 (April 10, 2005): 22-28, and Jesusa Cervantes: Rebeldón Perredista contra Martí Batres. *Proceso*, no. 1278 (April 29, 2001): 30-31; Martí Batres dirigirá el PRD capitalino los próximos tres años. *La Jornada*, March 21, 200; Álvaro Delgado and Raúl Monge. El Equipo de la Resistencia. *Proceso*, no. 1484 (April 10, 2005): 22-28; Ebrard pone al frente de Sedeso. *La Crónica*, Dec. 5, 2006; Sánchez (2001, 63-65); and Lajous (2006, 25).

“defense” through mass mobilization. Given the dramatic circumstances, and the weight of AMLO’s endorsement, the corriente NI, which had grown steadily since its 1999 creation, decided to join AMLO’s ticket. The only other opponent was Camilo Valenzuela of the small corriente REDIR, who lost more than four to one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Corriente</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leonel Efraín Cota Montaño/Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo</td>
<td>462,112</td>
<td>81.02</td>
<td>AMLO/NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camilo Valenzuela/Otilia Galindo</td>
<td>108,202</td>
<td>18.98</td>
<td>REDIR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.8: PRD internal election, March 21, 2005.\textsuperscript{177}

While the election was not free from accusations of fraud – 15.31 percent of the ballot boxes were annulled – there was no question of the combined AMLO-NI ticket’s legitimacy, although only 650,000 out of a registered five million members participated.\textsuperscript{178} The March, 21 election also choose 1,100 delegates to the PRD’s national congress, 192 of the members of the national council, as well as the leadership for 28 state committees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leonel Cota Montaño</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Independent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gerardo Fernández Noroña</td>
<td>Social Communication</td>
<td>MOBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo</td>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando Belaunzarán</td>
<td>Political Training</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verónica Juárez</td>
<td>Municipal Affairs</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Antonio Magallanes</td>
<td>Labor Affairs</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad Morales Vargas</td>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel Barbosa Huerta</td>
<td>Legislative Affairs</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcela Nolasco Pastoriza</td>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>Cívico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cintya Mazas Vázquez</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>Cívico</td>
</tr>
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<td>Agustín Guerrero, Dolores Padierna (2006)</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>IDN</td>
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<td>Rosendo Marin</td>
<td>Social Movements</td>
<td>IDN</td>
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<td>Selene Vázquez</td>
<td>Political Operation</td>
<td>IDN (FNS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camilo Valenzuela</td>
<td>President National Council</td>
<td>REDIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saúl Escobar</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
<td>Movimiento</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Héctor Bautista, Angel Cedillo (2006)</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>ADN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otilia Galindo García</td>
<td>Equality and Gender</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
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<td>José Borges Contreras</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada Omaña Márquez</td>
<td>Migrants</td>
<td>IM\textsuperscript{179}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Carlos Mezhua Campos</td>
<td>Indigenous People and Campesino Affairs</td>
<td>IM (UNYR)</td>
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<td>Hortensia Aragón, Juan Manuel Ávila (2008)</td>
<td>Political Relations and Alliances</td>
<td>FNS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9: PRD National executive committee (CEN), 2005-2008.\textsuperscript{180}

\textsuperscript{177} Out of 650,309 votes, 79,975 were annulled (15.31 percent of ballot boxes) – barely enough to avoid annulling the election. Declaran válidos los comicios perredistas. La Jornada, March 28, 2005.

\textsuperscript{178} The PRD’s membership rolls, admittedly bloated, boasted 5,139,255 members. A las urnas, más de 5 millones de perredistas. La Jornada, March 20, 2005.

\textsuperscript{179} Izquierda en Movimiento, formerly known as “MEC,” is the new corriente of Marcelo Ebrard.
The election for governor of Mexico State, held on July 3, 2005, is a further example of AMLO’s control over the selection of the party’s candidates, as well as of the characteristic of personalistic movement-parties to attract non-party candidates. It is particularly instructive as it demonstrated the limitations of the use of non-PRD external candidates, but also the failure to assume any lessons from it.

AMLO, against the wishes of the PRD’s state organization, pushed as the party’s gubernatorial candidate Yeidckol Polevnsky, the first woman president of the business organization CANACINTRA, but with no ties to the PRD. Important local leaders such as Javier Salinas (NI) and Jaime Enríquez Félix (cardenista) and Héctor Bautista (MoviDig/ADN) loudly complained against what they regarded as an imposition. As an ally of Bautista later noted,

The way we felt it, we had a very strong candidate in Héctor, but then comes Andrés Manuel to tell us, “No, it’s my friend Yeidckol, because she represents CANACINTRA, businessmen, and this is an important alliance for me to be able to win in 2006.”

While AMLO was reportedly in charge of her campaign himself, local perredistas complained over its organization. While AMLO would campaign on her behalf during the weekends, she would otherwise draw little media presence or garner publicity. PRD members were particularly angry on her use of consulting company Integrare, headed by Adolfo Orive Bellinger, a man signaled as the “ideologue” of former president Carlos Salinas.

Worse still, the strategy of an external candidate backed by AMLO did not appear to work. While the PRD governed 23 municipalities, including Neza and Ecatepec, and had a large following, a June opinion poll found here only at 15 percent, far below the PRD’s historic levels. It scarcely helped her performance when it was discovered she had given false information on her name, age, and education. Finally, the backing of Convergencia, a small party of former PRI governor of Veracruz, Dante Delgado, of the PAN’s candidate, raised serious questions of its the ideological consistency of a party that was promoted as the PRD’s future coalition partner in 2006. In the end, the PRI’s Enrique Peña Nieto won the governorship. PRI also swept 39 out of 45 local districts, while the PAN won one (down from 12 in 1999), while the remaining five were the districts of Nezahualcóyotl, the stronghold of Bautista López, whose candidacy AMLO had

denied in favor of Polevnsky. While both Polevnsky and PAN demanded the elections to be annulled, due to what was said to be massive overspending by the outgoing PRI governor Arturo Montiel, it was also clear that the PRI was far from dead.\footnote{Holgada ventaja de Peña Nieto en el Edomex. July 4, 2005; Exigen PRD y PAN anular comicios. \textit{La Jornada}, July 5, 2005. It should be noted that the parties had grounds for suspicion: A corruption scandal was exposed in the local electoral institute just weeks before the election, and PAN as well complained of massive spending by the PRI-governed state. El IEEM buscará en estas votaciones “limpiar” su imagen de parcialidad. \textit{La Jornada}, July 3, 2005.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percent$^{187}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRI-PVEM</td>
<td>Enrique Peña Nieto</td>
<td>1,801,530</td>
<td>47.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAN-Convergencia</td>
<td>Rubén Mendoza Ayala</td>
<td>936,615</td>
<td>24.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRD-PT</td>
<td>Yeidckol Polevnsky Gurwitz.</td>
<td>918,347</td>
<td>24.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Null</td>
<td></td>
<td>122,362</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not registered candidates</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,993</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.10: Mexico State gubernatorial election, July 3, 2005.$^{188}$

More bad news was to come from the state of Nayarit. While the PRD had run the state since 1999, the gubernatorial elections were won by PRI’s Ney González Sánchez.\footnote{Reñida pelea entre PRI y PRD en Nayarit. \textit{El Universal}, July 4, 2005; Recibe Ney acreditación como gobernador electo. \textit{El Universal}, July 12, 2005.} The PRD’s candidate, Miguel Ángel Navarro Quintero, had like the outgoing governor joined the PRD only after losing the PRI nomination. Navarro Quintero, a PRI senator at the time, would still be placed on the PRD’s PR list for 2006, ensuring him a seat in the Chamber of Deputies.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percent$^{190}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>Ney González Sánchez</td>
<td>176,500</td>
<td>46.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRD-PT-PRS.$^{191}$</td>
<td>Miguel Angel Navarro Quintero</td>
<td>161,634</td>
<td>42.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>Manuel Pérez Cárdenas</td>
<td>22,952</td>
<td>6.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergencia</td>
<td>Jesús Paredes Flores</td>
<td>8,285</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Null</td>
<td></td>
<td>12,246</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not registered candidates</td>
<td></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.11: Nayarit gubernatorial election July 3, 2005.$^{192}$

The Mexico and Nayarit defeats, which occurred in states with heavy PRD presence, sent ominous signals for the future. As Leonel Godoy noted,

\footnote{Percentage of total votes, including null votes and non-registered candidates.}
Now, the presence of López Obrador, like in the past that of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, was not sufficient. Revisions are required within the party, and to analyze its proposals, internal organization, structure, and discourse.¹⁹³

Yet Godoy’s warnings were not heeded, as the PRD would subordinate itself to AMLO’s leadership, and continue relying on external and ex-priista candidates, a practice that would on many occasions cause major fissures with its formal party organization for the 2006 election.

While the PRD had acted united in the desafuero process, regarded a legitimate defense of his right to participate in the 2006 content, the semblance of party unity was an illusion. The fights over candidacies, and the heavy-handed intervention of AMLO in designating candidates, soon lead to renewed internal tensions.

In particular, AMLO’s eagerness to install Marcelo Ebrard as his successor as Mexico City Mayor would lead to a bitter fight over the nomination. Ebrard knew AMLO since 1999, when he declined his own candidacy in order to support AMLO’s mayoral bid, and his help proved decisive for AMLO to win.¹⁹⁴ Ebrard, who had with Manuel Camacho had earlier founded a short-lived center-left party, had renounced from the PRI in 1994, like his mentor Camacho. In AMLO’s GDF, he replaced Leonel Godoy as secretary of public security in 2002, and was the brainchild of the controversial plan of contracting Rudolph Giuliani to implement his “zero tolerance” program in Mexico City, as well as to involve Carlos Slim in the renovation of the city centre.¹⁹⁵ While the Giuliani plan, due to popular opposition, was never fully implemented, overall crime reportedly went down 15 percent on his watch, which turned Ebrard into AMLO’s favored successor (Ortiz Pinchetti 2006, 273). His career received a blow following the Nov 23, 2004 Tláhuac lynching of federal police officers by an angry, when the Federal government fired him.¹⁹⁶ Yet Ebrard was later reintegrated in AMLO’s candidate as head of the powerful secretariat of social development, one of the most important posts in the city government.

In the PRD, Pablo Gómez, Jesús Ortega, and Armando Quintero all had ambitions of being mayor. As a counterweight to Ebrard – whom they accused of using his position to push his candidacy – they agreed to settle on a common candidature.¹⁹⁷ Among Ebrard’s most important backers was PRD-DF president Martí Batres, who would receive Ebrard’s old job when the latter became mayor, as well as the IDN of the Bejarano-Padierna couple. On Nov. 21, when the PDF-DF’s state council was to meet to hear allegations that Batres, from his office as PRD state

¹⁹³ Exigen PRD y PAN anular comicios; Peña Nieto “rebasó topes de campaña.” La Jornada, July 5, 2005.
¹⁹⁶ As DF is not state, it is not fully autonomous with its own constitution, and this position is decided upon by the federal executive.
president, was actively using his position to push the candidacy of Ebrard. When the PRD-DF council was to hear accusations that Batres was, from his office as PRD boss, actively helping candidacy of Marcelo Ebrard, groups linked to Bejarano (IDN and FPFV) violently broke up the council meeting.198

AMLO asked Ortega, the eventual candidate, to decline in favor of Ebrard, arguing that “My national project is at stake.” Ortega refused to decline, and responded, “It is not your project, Andrés; it is of the party. You are the visible head, but I am here just like you, for the same project of the left, and perhaps even before you,” a reference to AMLO’s priísta background. A few days later, AMLO publicly intervened in favor of Ebrard, declaring that “I would like Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon to win the candidacy.”199 On Dec. 4, Ebrard duly won the PRD’s internal nomination with almost 60 percent of the votes.200

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón</td>
<td>274,297</td>
<td>58.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesús Ortega Martínez</td>
<td>193,195</td>
<td>41.33</td>
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Table 5.12: PRD internal election, Dec. 4, 2005, candidate for Mexico City mayor.201

Ebrard would be elected mayor of Mexico City with an almost 20-percent lead over the PAN’s candidate the following July 2, 2006, having actively signaled continuity with the popular programs implemented by AMLO.202 Yet the manner in which AMLO had intervened in PRD’s internal nomination battle had left an additional scar that was scarcely healed ahead of the 2006 presidential election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Party/Coalition</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon</td>
<td>PRT-PT-Convergencia</td>
<td>2,213,969</td>
<td>46.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demetrio Sodi de la Tijera</td>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>1,30,1493</td>
<td>27.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatriz Paredes Rangel</td>
<td>PRI-PVEM</td>
<td>1,030,805</td>
<td>21.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberto Cinta Martínez</td>
<td>PANAL</td>
<td>108,965</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gustavo Jiménez Pons</td>
<td>PASC</td>
<td>50,324</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.13: Chief of government, federal district election, July 2, 2006.203

199 Gloria Leticia Díaz and Raúl Monge. Por el GDF: Con Todo. Proceso, no. 1517 (Nov. 27, 2005): 31-34.
201 Confirman el triunfo de Ebrard; ganó en 15 de las 16 delegaciones. La Jornada, Dec. 6, 2005
Finally, while AMLO’s successful Mexico City administration made him the PRD’s natural candidate, CCS was still not all willing to let go without a fight. While he had participated in the March of Silence (though he was booed by AMLO supporters), his support of AMLO was described as rather a “forced solidarity,”\textsuperscript{204} given CSS’ own ambitions to yet again be a candidate, and he had been at the margins of the earlier mobilization in support of AMLO.

CCS had in 2004 stated his wish to contest the PRD’s nomination, although prominent \textit{perredistas}, including his own son, Governor Lázaro Cárdenas Batel, spoke out against it.\textsuperscript{205} While CCS stepped down from contesting the nomination in July 2005, there were many hints from his backers that he might seek an independent candidacy.\textsuperscript{206} Rafael García Tinajero, a federal deputy and a supporter of his candidacy, complained that “in the PRD there is a precandidate who already feels he is president.”\textsuperscript{207} On Dec. 7, 2005, the PRD’s national council finally pronounced the formation of the coalition \textit{Por el Bien de Todos} and its program to contest the presidency, and AMLO was declared the official candidate. There were no other contenders.\textsuperscript{208}

\textbf{Continued ambiguity and contradiction: PRD program and allies}

When CCS declined on July 4, 2005, to seek the PRD’s nomination, he spoke of the need for “a new option of the left.”\textsuperscript{209} This was notable for more than one reason. First, it was far from clear that he regarded AMLO to represent this new option, as he appeared to still hold out the possibility of an independent candidacy. Second, before officially declining only days earlier, he had notably criticized AMLO and his political proposals, for not being of the left.\textsuperscript{210}

What AMLO did do, however, was to clearly set the campaign up as a class struggle, though curiously while not relying on any international referents. The campaign motto was “For the well-being of all, first the poor,”\textsuperscript{211} and AMLO started his campaign on Jan. 19, 2006, in Metlatónoc, Guerrero – said to be the poorest municipality in Mexico.

\textsuperscript{206} Se retira Cárdenas de la contienda interna del PRD. \textit{La Jornada}, July 6, 2005.
\textsuperscript{207} Divide a \textit{perredistas} la decisión de Cárdenas. \textit{La Jornada}, July 6, 2005.
\textsuperscript{208} PRD (2006a, 162).
\textsuperscript{210} María Scherer Ibarra and Alejandro Caballero. Contra su propia Historia. \textit{Proceso}, no. 1499 (July 24, 2005): 20-23 (23).
\textsuperscript{211} The slogan, “For the good of all, first the poor,” was the work of Tere Struck, publicist of AMLO’s 2000 campaign, and also that of CCS in 1997. María Scherer Ibarra: Concentrado en el DF y López Obrador, el PRD Dejó Sólo a Cárdenas. \textit{Proceso}, no. 1227 (May 7, 2000): 20-22. The slogan was derived from Cuban revolutionary and poet José Martí’s discourse of Nov. 26, 1891: \textit{Con todos y para el bien de todos}. 330
The coalition’s final program (2006c), approved Dec. 2005, was very much a synthesis of AMLO’s *Un Proyecto Alternativo de Nación*, (2004) his *50 Compromisos para Recuperar el Orgullo Nacional*, (2005), and CCS’ *Un México para Todos* (2005), and were hammered out through a variety of forums held August-October 2005. Only once in the 60-page document, and only tangentially, was the word “left” even mentioned.212

While the PRD’s platform did include sections on social issues largely identified with the international left, such as tolerance of sexual diversity, and right of women to abortion in cases such as rape, it included few concrete proposals on these matters. Moreover, AMLO was largely silent on the issue of these rights, clearly wanting to maintain his traditionally good relationship with the church (Trelles and Zagal 2004, 185). Here he stood in opposition to his party. While the PRD had taken clear public stances on social issues AMLO was accused of “betraying the principles of his party” for his “determined rejection to compromise on subjects of high voltage, such as euthanasia, abortion, homosexuality,” and for making alliances with high members of the Catholic clergy.213

**AMLO’s alliances and candidates: Beyond the PRD**

As noted earlier, AMLO had a long tradition of recruiting non-party candidates. Yet this personalistic movement -party characteristic was this time met with much criticism, given the dubious credentials of many of the coalition’s candidates. Ahead of the election, Adolfo Gilly, a PRD founder close to CCS, notably declared that “For ethical reasons, without which there exists no left, or for moral reasons, if one prefers, I will not vote for Andrés Manuel López Obrador not for anyone of his candidates.”214 While CCS himself, as well as his son Lázaro, said they would vote for AMLO, Gilly refused to back PRD’s candidate because of his “political operators,” many of whom he identified as historic enemies of the party. “For the PRD,” Gilly wrote, “these are other times, those of Manuel Camacho, Marcelo Ebrard, Socorro Díaz, Federico Arreola, José Guadarrama, Yeidckol Polevnsky, Zeferino Torreblanca, Fernando Martínez Cué, and Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía.”

While the PRD was to a large extent founded on the back of PRI defectors, and while several of the allies had collaborated with the party for a considerable time, it was nonetheless

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212 In relation with human rights: “El compromiso de la izquierda es su ampliación, exigibilidad y fortalecimiento” (PRD-PT-Convergencia 2006c, 12).


remarkable that in AMLO’s inner campaign circle, there were no original perredistas or members of the historic political left.215

Gilly’s bitter criticism drew further attention to the PRD’s candidates, whose adherence to the PRD’s program and identity was questioned. In Quintana Roo, for instance, José Luis García Zalvidea, denounced as an “historical adversary of local PRD activists,” ran as the party’s candidate, as his brother Juan Ignacio “El Cacho,” the original candidate, was in prison on charges of embezzlement. Following the election, García Zalvidea promptly declared he would switch allegiance to PAN.216 In Chihuahua, the PRD put Víctor Anchondo Paredes as a senatorial candidate, despite accusations of assassinating and torturing local perredistas when he had been secretary-general of local the government. Layda Sansores Sanromán, a candidate for national deputy, was daughter of former national PRI leader Carlos Sansores, and had spent 36 years in the government party. While she left the PRI in 1997 to run as PRD candidate for governor in Campeche, she ended up leaving it in 2000 in order to support PAN candidate Fox’s bid for the presidency. Astonishingly, she would then join Convergencia as a federal deputy candidate in 2006, having gone through four political parties in less than a decade.217 During a mass meeting in Campeche, AMLO had to apologize on her behalf for her aggression against local reporters.218

Other examples of – until very recently – ex-priístas, included Raúl Sifuentes, a former secretary general of the PRI government in Coahuila; Enrique Ibarra, former IFE representative for PRI; Víctor Manuel Gandarilla, a former collaborator of current PRI presidential candidate Roberto Madrazo; José Guadarrama, accused of massive fraud and even repression on behalf of the PRI in the 1990s; Arturo Núñez, a fellow tabasqueño who left the PRI in 2005; and many others.219 For the coalition’s list for candidates for senators in the 32 majority districts, only 16 out of 64 candidates were of immediate PRD origins; at least 26 had recently belonged to the PRI, and seven to PAN.220 As a final curiosity, it should also be noted that as the PRD’s candidate for a

215 Among his closest advisers were: Juventino Castro y Castro, a retired Supreme Court Judge; David Ibarra Muñoz, secretary of housing in the PRI administration of President José López Portillo; Bertha Maldonado, a publicist; Federico Arreola, a founder of the Reforma newspaper and former director of the Milenio newspaper, and Elena Poniatowska. None were members of the PRD. Daniel Lizárraga: Un Flanco Vulnerable. Proceso, no. 1516 (Nov. 20, 2005): 7-10 (8).
216 Camarena and Zepeda Patterson (2007, 293-294). He ended up staying within the PRD Senate group.
220 See Appendix for breakdown. Apuesta el PRD a ganar senadurías con ex priistas; 29. La Crónica, April 2, 2006.
senate seat was Alfredo Durazo, who had been private secretary of PRI’s assassinated 1994 candidate Donaldo Colosio – and later, quite notably, President Vicente Fox.

Reliance on informal networks over party organization: Redes Ciudadanas

The clearest manifestation of the movement-logic over traditional party organization was the prominent role of the Redes Ciudadanas, or “Citizen Networks,” in AMLO’s 2006 campaign.\(^{221}\) On Dec. 4, 2004 AMLO announced the creation of a Comité Protector de las Redes Ciudadanas, led by federal deputies Manuel Camacho, Socorro Díaz, and José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti – all elected as external candidates in 2003 and not members of the PRD – as well as Senator César Raúl Ojeda from Tabasco, Leonel Cota,\(^{222}\) governor of Baja California, and Ricardo Monreal.\(^{223}\) According to its own documents, the Redes were intended as, “a vast movement that decides to unite at the margin of the parties, and to link itself closely to the solution of its problems, in defense of an independent presidential candidacy such as that of Andrés Manuel López Obrador.”\(^{224}\)

The utilization of the Redes was AMLO’s own initiative. They were to mirror his organizational work as head of the PRD in Tabasco, and AMLO’s brother Pío Lorenzo had set up the first of the new networks already in August 2003.\(^{225}\) As its document states, it was a wide movement operating “at the margin of the parties,” whose main purpose would be to defend, through mass mobilization, the attempts at blocking AMLO’s candidacy for the 2006 presidential election. While AMLO had not yet lost his fuero and been booted from office, the Redes were created preemptively; in the case of a negative outcome, they would stand ready for mass mobilization (Ortiz Pinchetti 2006, 359).

While the Redes lay dormant when the desafuero finally imploded, it was clear their use was not limited to mass mobilization: For the 2006 elections, the Redes would in many ways

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\(^{222}\) Cota drew criticism as he suggested if AMLO was removed, there could be armed risings in the country. Ricardo Alemán: Roberto Madrazo, el verdugo de AMLO. *El Universal*, Aug. 9, 2004.

\(^{223}\) Federal deputy for PRI 1988-1991, then PRI senator 1991-1997. left PRI Feb. 1998 to seek governorship of Zacatecas, which he won. He was a “precandidate” for the 2008 internal PRD elections, though withdrew when it became clear that AMLO supported Alejandro Encinas. Notably, Monreal also was facing an internal PRD investigation for his role in the 2007 state election in Zacatecas, where his brother David ran on the PT list. In other words, while facing a threat of expulsion from the PRD for having supported another party, Monreal still sought the party presidency!


make out an independent and parallel structure to the PRD. Their official role would be to bring out the vote, just like the Brigadas del Sol had functioned — though with varying degrees of success — in the elections of 1997, 2000, and 2003.

Given that the PRD was the most important actor in defending AMLO both legally and through mass mobilization, it is remarkable that the party had only a very limited role on the networks, with not a single original PRD member among its coordinators. While some, like Díaz and Camacho, had broken with PRI several years earlier, their presence drew much attention among traditional perredistas. Díaz, as a PRI deputy, had voted to legitimize the triumph of Salinas in 1988 as head of a commission to investigate the fraud — to add, she had placed the presidential sash on him during the inauguration - and had been undersecretary of the interior ministry in his government. In the PRI, she had been a national senator, as well as the party’s general secretary. Camacho Solís, while he broke with the PRI in 1994, was once described as “the right-hand man of Carlos Salinas… who only broke with Salinas when he did not chose him as presidential candidate [of the PRI].”

The reliance on the Redes over the PRD, though galling to many perredistas, carried a clear logic. Already in 2003, AMLO was reported to have distanced himself from the PRD, which he referred to as “the political institution to which I belong”. This was at least partly conjunctural; while he shared the movement-logic emphasis with Rosario Robles, then-head of the PRD, they had become bitter rivals for power, given both her own ambitions and close relations with CCS. But also, given his substantial success as an organizer of social movements

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226 Their role will be more fully discussed in Ch. 6.
227 Their territorial structure was: Socorro Díaz, northern pacific; Manuel Camacho, central north; Ricardo Monreal, center and east; José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti, the Federal District and surrounding states, and César Raúl Ojeda for the southeast, later replaced by Adán Augusto López Hernández.
229 Alejandro Caballero: El PRD: La Paradoja. Proceso, no. 1382 (April 27, 2003): 20-22 (21). Once his political adversary, Camacho’s extensive political networks and great knowledge of politics were valuable assets. Already in 1993, when AMLO went to DF to protest, he met a friendly response from Camacho who was then the president-appointed regent of the city. By 1994, Camacho bailed the PRI, arguably after failing to become its presidential candidate. After attempting to set up his own party, Partido del Centro Democrático, he joined AMLO’s 2000 campaign. In 2003 he ran on the PRD deputy list, though he is not a member of the party. He was heavily criticized by AMLO in his book Tabasco, Víctima de Fraude Electoral from 1988, and was accused of being sent by Salinas to prevent the FDN through fraud from winning the Tabasco election, which came on the heels of the fraudulent national election. Camacho denied these charges. Cf. Gómez (2005, 111); Raúl Monge: Las Redes de Camacho. Proceso, no. 1484 (April 10, 2005): 26-27; and Daniel Lizárraga: La Desmemoria. Proceso, no. 1528 (Feb. 12, 2006): 9-11.
230 Quoted in Gómez (2005, 222).
in the past, it built on a long trajectory of preference for the movement over the party. Mass mobilizations, it should be noted, did in the end prove spectacularly successful during the desafuero process, particularly, as Lajous notes, “in front of a government which had panic for popular mobilizations” (2006, 217).

Yet ahead of the 2006 contest, there were clear warning signs that the Redes could also bring problems for the presidential candidate. In Guerrero, where AMLO promoted Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo for governor and where he had placed his brother in charge of the local committee, fights had broken out between rival structures.232 In Hidalgo in 2005, moreover, their effectiveness was further questioned, as electoral losses took place above all in places where local coordinators of the Redes were in charge, and not the PRD.233

There were increasing reports of clashes between Redes promoters and local PRD party organizations over candidacies. The nomination of Alfonso Durazo, private secretary of Vicente Fox, for a senate seat was regarded a typical imposition, and the coalition was increasingly accused of “accepting contenders with judicial antecedents, dubious fortunes, links with repression, until possible ties with drug cartels.” As an investigation by Proceso noted, by early 2006, the Redes “threaten to transform themselves into a source of discredit for the candidate to the presidency.”234 This also undermined the state goal of recruiting candidates who could attract votes for AMLO’s candidacy; the postulation of some candidates could also backfire. In Chihuahua, Víctor Anchondo Paredes, a candidate for senator, was as secretary of government in the state administrations accused of encouraging impunity in the process of investigation against women in Ciudad Juárez.235 The human rights organization Amnesty International asked for further investigation of Anchondo’s role, and members of the PRD impugned his candidacy to the TEPJF.236 Lázaro Cárdenas Batel, governor of Michoacán, openly warned against the “grave danger” that the PRD would turn into a “recycled PRI, and not necessarily of the best of PRI.”237 He also signaled these controversial candidacies as the reason his father, CCS, would not be actively campaigning for AMLO in protest.

236 Amnistía pide investigar el historial de Anchondo. La Crónica, April 7, 2006.
Coalition allies to win presidency, but detrimental to party

In 2000, the PRD had lost months of negotiations with its coalition partner PT in its demand for legislative spots in return for supporting the candidacy of CCS. Given the rules of electoral competition enshrined in the COFIPE, coalitions between political parties supporting a particular presidential candidacy would also have to present common electoral lists. In practice, this meant that the dominant party of the coalition would have to negotiate with its smaller partners on the number of candidatures award to their parties. In 2000, for example, the PT’s intransient demands led to the PRD eventually shedding 15 of its safe deputy seats to the PT and other minor parties.238

On Nov. 23, 2005, PT allied with the PRD for the 2006 contest, and a week later Convergencia would do the same. The parties would support the candidacy of AMLO, yet sought to extract a significant price for it. Both parties are personalistic to the extreme, and its leadership has repeatedly proven highly opportunistic in its alliances.

Tourists to Mexico City are likely to come indirectly into contact with Convergencia, due to the naked protests of the “400 pueblos” in downtown Mexico City, where for years protests have been held against the founder of the party, Dante Delgado Rannauro, for his conduct as state functionary for the PRI in Veracruz.239 Columnist Ricardo Alemán has described Convergencia as Delgado’s “family business”; he remained its president from 1999 until 2006, when he took up a Senate seat.

The PT, which claims to be party of democratic socialism, and has often taken radical political postures, remains a paradox; it was reportedly set up by Carlos Salinas and his brother in 1989-1990 to sap strength from the PRD. The party has been described as “a private franchise, created by the Salinas family – Carlos and Raúl – and registered to Alberto Anaya, a bon viveur and impostor of politics who sells to the highest bidder.”240 The party’s president remains Alberto Anaya Gutiérrez, almost two decades after its founding. While in alliance with the PRD in 2000 and 2006, the PT has on the state level often been its opponent, primarily in alliances with PRI. The party was in 2006 in danger of losing its registry as a national party, given a national average vote of around two percent.

238 The alliance was Convergencia por la Democracia-PT-PAS-PSN. Only the first two would retain their party registry. The smaller parties would together receive more financial prerogatives than the PRD. Cf. Romero Miranda and Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2002, 57) and Debacle impune. La Jornada, July 19, 2006.
239 From 1988-1992, he was interim governor. Se fueron, pero... ¡cuidado que regresan!. Milenio, Nov. 29, 2008.
In 2006, however, the dominant goal was to win the national presidency. In return for supporting AMLO, the PT and Convergencia extracted an even higher price from PRD than in past elections; both parties were awarded 12 seats on the coalition’s PR list, as well as three senate seats each. In addition, following the 2006 election, the PRD would moreover “lend” the PT three of its senators, so that the party could enjoy the financial privileges that come with having an official senate group.

All in all, out of the 200 available spots on the national PR list, the PRD made 114 of them available to its allies and external candidates, leaving only 86 for PRD members, as well as 180 out of 300 national SMD districts. While many candidates were highly respected members of social organizations and allied unions, many, as has been noted, were not. Their sole purpose was to attract more votes for the national candidacy of AMLO. As a historic PRD leader noted, “The idea of winning elections at some times was carried to the extreme of putting forth bad, very bad candidates… that is, not bad, but at times very good candidates, but with a very dubious trajectory.” While it remains in dispute whether these candidatures, particularly the controversial ones, in the end furnished more votes or actually detracted from AMLO’s total share, for the PRD itself, their inclusion would further deprive the PRD of its argument as a party of change after 6 years of PAN rule. Also, it made it excessively hard to present to the Mexican voters one common and coherent programmatic and ideological façade, as the excessive inclusion of non-party candidates and loosely affiliated organizations questioned the party’s very identity.

2006 election: Fraud or arrogance – or both

On July 2, 2006, 11 pm sharp, the president of the general council of Mexico’s IFE declared on national television that one could not determine “with clarity” the “the party or coalition that obtained the greatest percentage of the vote cast.” For the stability of Mexico’s political institutions, following upon a particularly polarized and nasty election campaign, this was the worst possible scenario.

AMLO claimed he had a lead of half a million votes, and demanded through media that the IFE “respect these results.” He then went to the Zócalo, where tens of thousands of supporters had gathered, where he declared himself winner of the 2006 presidential election. Felipe

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242 Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Jan. 11, 2008.
244 For a summary of the 2006 election, see Reyes del Campillo (2007). The 2006 election is also the subject of a symposium in January 2007 PS: Political Science & Politics.
Calderón, the PAN candidate, immediately countered that his own exit polls showed him with a four-percent lead, and in turn declared himself winner.\textsuperscript{246} Just two weeks earlier, on June 13, both candidates had promised they would await making any declarations and respect the authority of the IFE and the TEPJ, the country’s highest electoral court.\textsuperscript{247}

To Mexico’s process of democratization, which had been a drawn-out and gradual affair rather than an abrupt break with the old authoritarian regime, the candidates’ behavior was a major setback. As Lazio notes, “the two ignored the IFE and showed that the end was still far away. After having instigated hatred and polarization in society, the candidates of the PRD and PAN demonstrated that their principal concern was to gain power at any cost” (Curzio 2006, 10).

As the country’s electoral institutions would eventually favor Calderón – though with a margin of victory of only 0.58 percent – AMLO’s refusal to accept his defeat and his resort to mass mobilization to protest an alleged fraud, would invariably lead to a media portrayal of the PRD as not only a sore loser, but as a party whose willingness to engage in mass mobilization threatened political stability.

Yet as the recent analysis of the PRD demonstrates, the crisis did not appear out of nowhere. The actions undertaken to prevent the PRD candidate from running had clearly made the party susceptible to believe in yet another conspiracy. The weight of a legacy of having been born as a result of a fraud, and to have lived through a decade of heavy government repression, can hardly be understated. Yet when the TEPJF finally declared Calderón to be Mexico’s president elect on Sept. 5, more than eight weeks later, the PRD’s position would become increasingly marginalized, even among the significant sector of society that believed the party had indeed been the victim of a fraud. Moreover, the manner in which AMLO had run the campaign, refusing to take corrective measures when deficiencies were uncovered, opened the equally plausible scenario that the 2006 battle had simply been lost at the ballot boxes.

**PRD: Failure to take preventive measures, despite warnings**

Felipe Calderón, though fully backed by the PAN structure – his father had been among the party’s founders – did not at first appear a strong candidate. By a twist of fate, he had been president of PAN the same years as AMLO led the PRD, though unlike AMLO he had not raised the party’s vote during his tenure. Nor did he distinguish himself as parliamentary coordinator of PAN, or as Fox’s secretary of energy until 2004, when he stepped down in protest over Fox’s


favoritism of Santiago Creel as the PAN’s presidential candidate. Yet he had nonetheless secured his party’s nomination, and faced a massive challenge in AMLO.

Despite the politically orchestrated desafuero, as Lajous notes, “One must recognize that, following the desafuero, López Obrador did not radicalize. Strengthened by an enormous popular support and backed by international media, the tabasqueño tried to calm the public atmosphere and limit confrontation.” AMLO left the city with massive approval ratings – 76 percent positive, according to a Reforma poll, and 83 percent according to Consulta Mitofsky. Yet while he opened the campaign with a clear lead over his rival, when the campaign ran into trouble, his lack of willingness to take corrective measures was noticeable, as was his faith in the triumph of citizen mobilization, and the superiority of the Redes.

AMLO ran a campaign that above all privileged personal contact, and in this manner it was clearly reminiscent of the campaign style of CCS. Already by April 2006, he had reportedly met with more than 3 million people, after more than 600 public meetings. Yet just as AMLO ran his own campaign over the heads of the PRD, he also refused to change strategy when he appeared to be slipping in the polls.

AMLO committed several identifiable mistakes. First, following a barrage of negative attack ads from PAN and supporting organizations, AMLO continued to insist on a “strategy of moral superiority.” This, however, at the same time as many of his coalition’s candidates were under heavy scrutiny for their past. As Dresser noted, “It is not necessarily electorally intelligent to erect AMLO as the messiah of the clean hands and surround him with candidates whose hands are dirty” (2006, 9-10). The coalition did, however, take action: It complained to the IFE and TEPJF. As Villanueva notes, the party did follow the actual legal way to respond to the negative – and, it would be declared later, illegal – campaign. The problem was that IFE for more than a month failed to respond to the coalition’s complaint (Villanueva Mukul 2008, 12). Another clearly negative action was his call to President Fox to “shut up,” likening the president to a chachalaca, a particularly loud species of bird. Again, the IFE would declare later, the intervention of the sitting president was indeed contrary to electoral law. Yet it also made AMLO appear disrespectful toward the presidential office. Third, his massive blunder not to attend the first presidential debate – graphically highlighted by an empty chair – appeared to fit into a pattern of arrogance and evasiveness toward the media.

A varied group of assessors, including Ortega – the official head of the campaign – Federico Arreola, and Camacho Solís of the Redes all tried to make AMLO change and respond

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to the attacks, but to no avail: AMLO dismissed the polls as not reflecting his real level of support, and continued to lead the campaign himself. Only toward the end of his campaign did his advisers convince him to change his tactics. The candidate gave more attention to the media, including interviews, and paying for more spots. Moreover, the first major effort was as well made to coordinate media efforts between the PRD and the Redes. He also met with members of the business community, which he had largely ignored, but which had launched and paid for many of the negative attack ads against him. The effort gave results; while he had been slipping steadily in the polls ever since the chachalaca episode, polls in Reforma and El Universal, hardly favoring the candidate, put him back in the lead against Calderón.

The performance of Mexican electoral institutions

The IFE made several blunders that hardly helped defuse the situation. In addition to the quick count, the IFE undertook a preliminary count, and left out 2.5 million votes from the latter. While this was done according to pre-established procedures – the boxes left out had some inconsistencies – the institute failed to give a clear and quick explanation for the discrepancy between the PREP and the partial quick vote count, and why Calderón’s lead was cut down from 1.04 to 0.63 with the inclusion of these votes. Neither did they explain discrepancies between the PREP and the partial quick vote count. Thus the demand for a full recount quickly arose, to the cry of Voto por voto, casilla por casilla even before the IFE had made its final declaration. As the institute continued the original count, AMLO returned to the lead for 20 hours. Yet when the IFE closed the full count on July 6, following a tense 31 hours of counting, Luis Carlos Ugalde said Calderón had received the most votes, and then went far beyond his authority to declare Calderón the winner. This was clearly a task that befell the TEPJF, which would make the

250 Of the three candidates, AMLO actually ended up spending most on media. He spent more than 40.48 percent of all paid publicity on television. See Trejo Delarbre (2006) for summary of media distribution.
251 Gloria Leticia Díaz and Daniel Lizárraga. La Soberbia. Proceso, no. 1544 (June 4, 2006): 16-21. Ironically, as mayor of Mexico City, AMLO had maintained excellent relations with members of the business community, as witnessed by his close cooperation with Carlos Slim, and had relied primarily on private funds for the city renovation. Yet given his attacks on particularly bankers during the campaign, he still felt impelled to declare, “I am not an enemy of businesspeople.” Gloria Leticia Díaz and Daniel Lizárraga: Al Final, Concesiones... Proceso, no. 1547 (June 25, 2006): 6-11 (11).
252 Camacho and Almazán (2006) outline what they regard the major mistakes of his campaign. For an opposing view, see the article by Batres Guadarrama (2007) in Proceso, which dismissed calls for self criticism.
254 AMLO: el PREP, manipulado y con infinidad de inconsistencias. La Jornada, July 4, 2006.
255 Ventaja de AMLO disminuida persistentemente durante 18 horas. La Jornada, July 6, 2006.
final decision after examining potential impugnations. AMLO, for one, declared he would impugn it, noting that “there were many irregularities, to put it mildly.” The battle was on.

In a massive “informative assembly,” on July 16, which attracted close to 1.5 million, AMLO claimed falsifications in 60 percent of the vote tallies, and called for “civil resistance” against the fraud, and a complete recount. Yet the discourse appeared at times highly contradictory. Just as AMLO referred to the IFE as “delinquents” and the election as a _cochinero_, the PRD launched a barrage of complaints to the IFE, totaling 227 _juicios de inconformidad_ – despite having disqualified the very same institutions to which it was now appealing. In addition, PAN launched 131, and the PRI one. This was the highest number of complaints in the history of presidential elections in Mexico (Córdova Vianello 2006, 25).

The PRD’s lawsuits were “sloppily prepared and internally inconsistent” (Schedler 2007, 91), as the party asked simultaneously for a full recount, invalidation of entire election, and the annulling of specific poll stations. The fraud accusations also changed; one day AMLO spoke about “cybernetic fraud,” later it was old-fashioned vote-stuffing. Nor did he explicitly state he would respect the TEPJF’s decision.

The PRD first achieved a recount of 2,864 polling stations it had impugned. The limited recount, however, showed minimal movement in either direction; moreover, given that the ballot boxes had been signaled as suspicious by the PRD, it was hardly a random sampling, but chosen exactly where the PRD had expected to gain. Yet the party still demanded a full recount, and it should also be noted that they were hardly isolated in this demand. According to polls by Ipsos and Bimsa, taken three weeks after the election, 48 percent of the population also wanted a recount. Another, by Parametría, even showed a remarkably high 72 percent.

Yet on Aug. 5, 2005, the TEPJF finally rejected a full recounted. The tribunal ordered 11,839 further ballot boxes to be opened – 91.4 percent of then won by PAN – and did annul some. Yet the recount of the close to 3.5 million votes, published Aug. 28, showed only a small net swing to AMLO of 4,800 votes, and while 744 polling stations were annulled, it was far from enough to change the result (Aparicio 2006). AMLO, however, refused to accept the results, and

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reportedly said that even if a full recount was undertaken, he would not accept results that were not in his favor.262

This presented the PRD with the impossible scenario. Even if the party had been correct in its claims that most of the fraud took place before the final results were in, it would now be impossible to confirm this, as this could only be blamed on the PRD’s and the Redes’ lack of vigilance on election day. Moreover, it should be noted, beyond minor irregularities, most observer missions, such as the mission of the European Union, headed by José Ignacio Salafranca, did find the actual balloting to have been fair.263

Finally, the mass protests put up by the party were steadily draining it of support. The party had blocked off major parts of downtown Mexico City, from the Reforma to the Zócalo, which was grinding parts of the city to a halt and causing much friction.264 An increasing numbers of intellectuals sympathetic to AMLO expressed doubt of the wisdom of the encampment, which would last for 48 days.265 Finally, on Sept. 5, The TEPJF declared its final verdict: Calderón was the legitimate winner of the contest. Not unexpectedly, AMLO dismissed it.266

PRD’s own demand that all votes be recounted was directly undermined by AMLO’s statement that he would not respect the result if it did not confirm his victory. Nonetheless, a full recount would likely have served to immensely defuse the very tense situation. The PAN, seemingly nervous, refused to push for a recount that would have had the potential to greatly boost the legitimacy of the eventual president. As Schedler notes of Calderón, “A more enlightened conception of his own self-interest might arguably have led him to embrace the

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262 Enrique Krauze: Mexico: Democracy Under Threat. Washington Post, Sept. 5, 2006. This lead Krauze to argue that “López Obrador is not a democrat. He is a revolutionary with a totalitarian mentality and messianic aspirations.” Ever since the beginning of his administration, AMLO had faced such accusations. Krauze coined the term “tropical Messiah” in a much-cited article ahead of the election. According to the conservative, “[AMLO] doesn’t believe he is Jesus, but yes, something similar.” (Krauze 2006, 24). (Notably, Krauze also wrote, “If the margin would be less than 7 percent, López Obrador will repeat his experience in Tabasco: He will not recognize the results; he will claim fraud, he will speak of a complot, criticize the rich, step up his efforts, invoke civil resistance, call for mobilizations in all the country in order to convoke new elections, up to forming a parallel government.”) The characterization of AMLO as a “Mexican Messiah” is fully extended in a critical biography of AMLO by Grayson (2007), to the extent that the designation is hardly used as a metaphor, but rather used to really claims that AMLO has a messiah complex.

263 A member of the Spanish PP, Salafranca was an early target for accusations of partiality. Yet some other groups, such as the Mexican Alianza Cívica and the U.S. organization Global Exchange, who observed more than 2,000 boxes, also reported many cases of vote buying and intimidation. Oswaldo Zavala: Elección Sucia. Proceso, no. 1549 (July 9, 2006): 58-62.

264 A 12-km encampment along the parade street reforma, stretching from the Fuente de Petroleos all the way to Avenida Juarez, and then on to the Zócalo. Installed July 30-Sept. 14. 2006


266 Calderón llama a dialogar. El Universal, Sept. 6, 2006; AMLO desconoce fallo; seguirá en lucha, afirma. Sept. 6, 2006. For a summary of the AMLO teams various complaints, see Murayama (2006).
recount demand instead, and to open talks with the PRD about the formal rules that might govern recounts in the future…. Unsurprisingly, the leading candidate’s evasive legalism did nothing to allay the political conflict” (Schedler 2007, 91).

While AMLO’s intransigence has tended to receive the brunt of the attention, a full understanding of the following events cannot be achieved unless one keep in mind that the PRD was correct in many of the inconsistencies it pointed out. Moreover, the party’s distrust of the IFE could most immediately be traced to 2003, when the PRI and PAN in a display of majoritarianism had used their majority to trump through their candidates as IFE councilors, allowing the PRD no input in selecting them (Gómez Tagle 2006).

Finally, the performance of the IFE, above all that of the president of its general council, was far from stellar, and Ugalde would indeed be sacked as part of the 2007 electoral reforms. The IFE was heavily criticized for its belated response under Ugalde’s watch to PRD’s complaints on the attack ads against AMLO, as well as on President Fox’s blatant intervention in the campaign, illegal according to Mexican law. Indeed, the same TEPJF verdict that declared Calderón winner on Sept. 5, acknowledged that this had more than anything put the elections in danger of actually being annulled (Curzio 2006, 26). As Salazar Ugarte sums up, “it is difficult to explain how, on the one hand, one gives credit to and qualifies as illegal and illegitimate certain interventions in the process, and on the other, declares the validity of the election” (2006, 9). Given the level of polarization before, during, and after July 2, the events at the very least go a long way toward explaining the PRD’s reluctance to accept the verdict’s decision.

**Conclusion**

This review and analysis of the PRD has aimed to demonstrate a range of factors. First, it has sought to establish the PRD as a personalistic movement-party. It has argued that the party characteristics of this party type have been highly prevalent throughout the PRD’s entire trajectory, above all its inclination for mass mobilization, taken to new heights during AMLO’s

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268 They included a range of anti-AMLO propaganda from the business sectors, such as those Víctor González Torres, owner of Dr. Simi, a low-cost drugstore chain of supposed generic drugs. According to the COFIE, business sectors are not allowed to contract political messages.
desafuero; the uninstitutionalized nature of its leadership succession process, where the party’s strongmen more often than not intervened for their favored candidate; the particular unclear boundaries between the party and its extra-party networks, which moreover attracted and included a range of non-PRD candidates for public office; and the recurring anti-system attitudes of many of its elites. Finally, particular attention has been given to the party’s remarkable failure to present a clear and dominant ideological orientation, where two of its principal founders, national party leaders, and presidential candidates only reluctantly accepted the PRD as a party of the left.

Second, a further key point has been to emphasize that the tension between being a movement party or a more traditional party type has been a constant throughout the party’s entire existence. While the balance at times shifted between the two positions, it remains clear that movement-parties are likely to remain in permanent yet unresolved tensions between the two modes. Moreover, at several points in its history, aspects of the movement-party logic, such as lack of ideological precision, debates on strategic orientation, and on the party’s organizational setups, have even taken center stage in the PRD’s internal political fights.

From its very inception, the PRD was tightly linked to its founder CCS, and numerous studies have pointed out the importance of establishing more autonomy from its founder. What has received less attention, however, is the connection between the party’s very vague ideology, with a common denominator found in historical cardenismo, and its stated goal of ending the PRI regime. The PRD was regarded by its own elite as the main instrument of Mexico’s democratization, which appeared to necessitate the destruction of the PRI. This focus postponed the need for a more unifying ideology, and, I argue, even worked against it. The party’s main goal was not defined as left or right, but in terms of achieving democratization by ending the system. In terms of party strategy, it is therefore clear that this anti-systemic component was dominant within the party from the start, and was tightly linked to its leader. In its initial years, it continued to overshadow further ideological precision. A link is thus demonstrated between one’s preference for party strategy – historically expressed as “reform or rupture” – and ideology, where party elites such as CCS, but also others, including AMLO, were lukewarm if not hostile to ideological definitions, while in favor of the intransigent line: Ending the PRI regime was larger than a left-right issue. Yet as the party actively avoided declaring its ideological position, and attracted highly controversial candidates to achieve its dominant goal, the PRD created confusion among its voters – and, to be sure, among its own cadres – on where it stood ideologically beyond its prime task of ending the regime.
Even from the party’s beginning, however, there were tensions between this model, and one that called for a more traditional, and institutionalized, party model. While the PRD’s corrientes have been presented as being principally about power and with little differences, this review suggests that the tension that surfaced on several occasions was increasingly expressed through them. While the bickering for power among the corrientes certainly assumed center stage, particularly in media’s portrayal of the party, there were underlying differences that went to the heart of the party’s organization, strategy, and, to a lesser extent, ideology. This chapter therefore rejects the characterization of the corrientes as pure power instruments with negligible differences, and rather points to an increasing crystallization among pro-movement forces on the one hand, and supporters of a more institutionalized party form, on the other.

The PRD did experience a highly significant case of party change in 1995, when the party voted to ditch its intransigence and calls for the government to step down, in favor of a negotiated transition with the regime. These changes appear again to have been not the result of a significant elite conversion, but rather of changing power relations between the two camps identified earlier. While the changes were implemented following electoral defeat, this external event cannot fully account for the party change. First, CCS and his supporters in the party elite continued called for a government of national salvation more than a year after CCS’ defeat in the 1994 election, and were only defeated by a majority vote in the party’s national congress. Moreover, while the years 1996-1999 has often been characterized as years of moderation for the PRD – which they duly were – and are often used as a contrast to AMLO’s later radicalization, the movement-party logic was alive and well within the party. In these years, the most noticeable party change – its strategic orientation – rather built on the earlier party line established at Oaxtepec. That the party leadership AMLO/Jesús Ortega followed this line, then, in the end must be seen as a continued trend toward institutionalization, which moreover included the declaration of the PRD to be a left party.

Subsequent events further demonstrated the tenaciousness of this conceptualization, as the rupture model would again reappear. While the 2000 defeat was every bit as brutal as the one six years earlier, it appeared to have little effect on the movement advocates, who in a distorted version of the democratic intransigence of the 1990s now switched to lead renewed calls for intransigence against a democratically elected government, namely that of President Fox.

Yet obstacles to party change were clearly found in the party’s external environment as well. Just like PRI’s repression of the PRD had edged it toward intransigence and movement-emphasis in the past, so the onslaught against AMLO during the desafuero appeared to convince a significant section of the party, for whom AMLO was the undisputed leader, that one could still
not take the impartiality of Mexico’s electoral institutions for granted. The brutal repression of the PRD cadres in the 1990s, and the PAN government’s shameful attempt to block AMLO’s candidacy, were external factors that clearly brought grist to the mill to the seemingly always-latent movement-party advocates within the PRD. Crucially, the end result of the 2004-2005 desafuero struggles could even be read as a clear victory of citizen mobilization over shoddy institutions, where the movement-logic proved to be the successful tool that defeated the blatantly political attacks from the country’s executive and judicial powers.

This mobilization also gave further impetus to the organization of a citizen movement, or “networks,” whose loyalty and efficiency AMLO appeared to value higher than the PRD’s own formal party organization. The extent to which these networks took over basic party functions such as vote canvassing and electoral observation, is stunning, in particular given that the networks, while successful in 1997, in subsequent contests had proven inefficient. In 2006, moreover, conflict broke out between the Redes and the PRD’s own party organization, in particular as the Redes also turned toward promoting its own non-PRD candidates. The inclusion of a vast range of non-PRD candidates, a cause of serious internal tension, appeared to AMLO an acceptable price to pay for reaching the presidency, the overarching imperative.

Finally, the seeming paradox of a leader who had been considered a radical yet whose own ideological stances were actually rather of the center, can only be understood as part of the movement-logic. While the personalistic leader thrives on ideological indefiniteness, it is clear that ideology was indeed subordinated to the larger “cause” of the leader. However, for AMLO, as for his followers, the same logic could be used to reject even current institutional setups if they were perceived as hindering it, effectively turning politics into a “with us or against us” game in which there could be little or no compromise.

While the forces within the PRD in favor of a more traditional institutional had clearly been gaining force within the party, it was also apparent that a significant sector of the party felt the movement-logic – and distrust of institutions – had been vindicated, and it was in 2006 highly unclear whether the pro-movement or pro-party advocates would come out on top, or even what lessons they drew from the debacle. The next chapter then aims exactly at establishing insight into the PRD elite’s strategies, and to examine further the connections between support for institutional reform, preferred party organization, and ideology.
CHAPTER 6

To hell with their institutions!¹
- Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Sept. 1, 2000

The PRD that emerged following the 2006 debacle was a party of massive contradictions. On the one hand, the party had gathered more votes than any other left party in Mexico’s history, and its legislative group in the Chamber of Deputies was only rivaled by that of the ruling party PAN. Yet the protests against the perceived fraud in 2006 appeared to have seriously drained the party of much of its support. In 2007 alone, the PRD had lost more than 2 million voters in the 15 state elections held that year.² Following the party’s disastrous internal election in 2008, which finally culminated with the TEPJF declaring Jesús Ortega the winner, opinion polls indicated the party’s national support had plummeted down to 11 percent. Since the 2006 election, the party therefore appeared to have lost more than 2/3 of its support, with the hemorrhage primarily benefiting its oldest nemesis, the PRI.³

The party’s relations with its 2006 presidential candidate AMLO were again crucial. On the one hand, the party’s record 2006 support was achieved much thanks to AMLO’s candidacy, which overall pulled over one million more votes than did PRD’s legislative candidates. Nonetheless, AMLO’s and the PRD’s massive mobilizations and encampments protesting the 2006 outcome, which culminated in AMLO’s proclamation as “Legitimate President” of Mexico, appeared to increasingly drain the support of both.

When the majority of the PRD’s deputies and senators were active participants in negotiations over Mexico’s 2007 electoral reform and 2008 energy reform, AMLO’s dismissal of the party’s legislative work demonstrated diverging agendas: The gap was increasing between his

¹ This widely-quoted statement was uttered in a mass meeting on the Zócalo on Sept. 1, 2006, where AMLO’s speech was improvised. It has often been misquoted as “to hell with the institutions,” though the overall effect likely remained the same, namely appearing to express rejection of Mexico’s national political structure or at the very least their impartiality. Que se vayan al diablo con sus instituciones: López Obrador. La Crónica, Sept. 2, 2006.
desire to maintain control over the 2006 movement, and PRD’s need to establish autonomy vis-à-vis its former presidential candidate, and maintain a separate identity.

AMLO still commanded the loyalty of at least a third of the party’s legislators and much of its grass roots, and the PRD would experience its most significant schism, which almost resulted in its rupture, over whether to follow the cause of AMLO and the logic of the movement-party, or whether work within the institutions in order to reform them.

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the PRD, characterized as “a phenomenon that is hard to describe” (Semo 2006, 88), remained a personalistic movement-party in 2006, yet was more torn between two logics after the 2006 election than at any time in its history, including 1994-95 and 2000-2001. A significant sector of the PRD’s political elite was willing to follow AMLO over any other official party authority, and rejected the decisions of the majority when it was perceived as going against the interest of the greater movement. They regard the PRD itself principally as a means to further that movement. The other sector of the PRD, which despite AMLO’s popularity within the party had gained increasing support within the party in recent years, worked to further the party’s autonomy and regarded it not just an instrument but a means in itself, and advocated its role in transforming Mexico’s institutions rather than seeking to transplant them.

In establishing the party’s shifting internal dynamic and fault lines, a range of discussions crystallized in what was increasingly expressed rather euphemistically as “the two visions” of the PRD: In reality, the party was brutally divided, and reconciliation between its two main tendencies – its party-builders and movement-advocates – appeared far from a likely outcome. The main divides had to do with accepting self-criticism after the 2006 election, including the unprecedented use of non-party informal networks to perform traditional party functions; whether to reject the possibility of improving the country’s existing national political institutions or seek to reform them; building a more traditional party organizations, or remaining a loose party-movement with emphasis on mobilization; to accept the PRD’s declaration as a socialist party or to dismiss this limiting ideological designation; and, finally, whether to align the party unequivocally behind its former presidential candidate and his broad movement, or to chart out a more autonomous course from the party’s de facto leader. All these issues go to the heart of the characteristics and logic of the personalistic movement-party, and would dramatically converge and culminate in the 2008 fight over the PRD’s national presidency, which pitted the two camps directly against each other in a protracted battle over the control of the party. This chapter will detail how these battles unfolded, and how dynamics of these “two visions” are closely linked.

The divisions that ran through the party do not, however, merely reflect what Katz and
Mair have described as the conflict between its “faces,” namely the party in public office, on the ground, or in its central office (Katz and Mair 1993). The divisions within the PRD are not as neat as those arguably found within parties of the industrialized democracies of the west; rather, within the PRD, the fault lines are in many ways more profound, as they traverse all these aspects of the party, and are not subject to the logic of any party “face.” To illustrate: On the one hand, the majority of the party’s legislators backed the highly significant 2007 electoral reform, which was largely a product of the PRD’s input, and the 2008 energy reform, which retained state ownership over the PEMEX oil company. Both of these reforms were in turn backed by a majority on the party’s national executive committee. On the other hand, a dissenting group of legislators shared a deeply ingrained distrust of institutional reform, and prioritize the larger movement led by AMLO over the PRD’s legislative work. Profoundly loyal to AMLO and sharing his preference for mass mobilization, they heeded his advice to vote against the PRD’s own legislative group, and were willing to storm the congressional podiums or otherwise to try to block legislative initiatives on which they were outvoted, even if these reforms were backed by virtually the entire leadership of their own party.

The 2006 election, then, appeared to have crystallized the PRD into two segments, which moreover drew drastically different lessons from the 2006 debacle. For the sector around AMLO, the perceived fraud was merely the final confirmation of the lack of partiality of the country’s institutions, and a final nail in the coffin for what they regarded to be a quixotic project to reform them. The other sector, however, was particularly alarmed over the PRD’s bleeding support in the succeeding state elections, and the increasing public rejection of the AMLO’s stance. They felt the movement logic had increasingly backfired, and that the party’s programmatic identity was overshadowed by AMLO’s movement and his project, where it was in the eyes of many still primarily associated with strategies of intransigent opposition to Mexico’s political institutions. This sector of “moderate” reforms, notably, also pushed for the party’s definition as a socialist party, an orientation that was valued very differently by its political elites, and even disputed by many who are paradoxically regarded as its “radical” wing.” Yet as this chapter also intends to demonstrate, the main distinction between the “reformers” and the “radicals” was never chiefly one of who was more radical in terms of left or right, but rather between those advocating the party’s conversion into a more traditional and institutionalized party that prioritized working for institutional reform, and those advocating its continued organization and orientation as a movement-party subordinated to the larger movement led by AMLO.
Continued failure to define “left”: Return of pro vs. anti-regime cleavage

As noted in the previous chapter, the PRI regime’s economic turn to the right in the 1980s, when combined with its refusal to engage in political liberalization, had produced a shift in the Mexican political system on the elite level, from a left-right ideological axis toward a perpendicular axis of anti-system and pro-system that would overshadow the latter. As Molinar Horcasitas noted, “Strategy replaced ideology as the key to party-system organization” (1989, 280).

4 To the PRD, this meant that its vague identity as a left party was overshadowed by its anti-system stance, against a regime that was indeed far from democratic. This contrasted with PAN, which largely shared the PRI’s neoliberal economics, and which quickly turned toward negotiating electoral victories with the PRI: The PAN could afford itself the luxury of protracted negotiation, unlike the PRD, which greatly opposed the PRI’s economic turn, and tended to regard economic democracy and political democracy as two sides of the same coin.

With increasing political openness due to significant political reforms (1990, 1994, and 1996 in particular), even before PAN won the presidency in 2000, its elite members, such as then-party president Felipe Calderón, already in 1998 foresaw the 2000 and especially 2006 to be a battle of the PRD vs. PAN, or a reorientation of political struggle as left vs. right.

In the 1990s, then, the pro-and anti-democratic positions were on the mass level closely linked to party preference: Those who called themselves “left,” were more pro democratic than those who said they were of the right, who favored more authoritarian positions (Moreno 1999, 47; Moreno 1998, 39). Yet following the electoral reforms in the 1990s, and a protracted yet tangible opening of the political space, the Pro- vs. Anti-Regime cleavage began to diminish and economic and social issues returned to the forefront (Moreno 1998). This did not yet mean a clear ordering of left-right issues; rather as McCann and Lawson note, “ideology became an

4 For a more contextual elaboration, see Molinar Horcasitas (1991).
5 A former priista who became a PRD senator put it in the following manner: I think that this axis of political struggle, in Mexico there was a phase of nearly 20 years, when it was subordinated to another axis, that of government-opposition. This axis dominated 20 years of political struggle; I’d say it became an obsession: ‘Throw PRI out of Los Pinos,” is the expression that the opposition used, because for 71 years it had the presidency of the Republic. So this became the essential object of the political forces in those 20 years. In 2000 this feat was accomplished and another axis, the one of left-right, starts to impose itself. The 2006 election is already, then, a matter of left and right…Earlier, one centered on the fight for power, and one displaced the left-right axis. I am not saying that it disappeared, but simply that it was subordinated by that of government-opposition.” Confidential interview, PRD senator, Feb. 5, 2008.
increasingly muddled concept, representing an uncertain amalgam of classic ‘left-right’ issues, cultural values, and attitudes toward the old political establishment” (2003, 66).  

But after the 2000 election, when PRI lost the presidency after 71 years, a structural impediment had finally been removed in order for the political landscape to reorient along a left-right dimension, on both voter and elite levels. This reorientation appeared to have taken place on the mass level in time for the 2006 presidential context. According to Moreno,  

The 2006 presidential race was a true confrontation of left against right at the national level. Voters self-identified as on the left voted disproportionately for López Obrador, while Felipe Calderón had his best performance among center-right voters, according to exit poll results. However, the effects of class were not as strong as those observed for ideological identities. Income had a more significant effect on the vote than occupation, but such an effect is relatively small if compared to the one produced by ideology.  

According to Bruhn and Greene (2007), however, this does not mean that society was particularly polarized. Perhaps against what one might expect, following the 2004-2005 confrontation, and a highly conflictive campaign, the authors argue that while there was elite polarization, Mexican voters in the 2006 election were “surprisingly immune to campaigns that attempted to draw them into partisan battles.” Drawing on data from the Mexico 2006 Panel Study and the Mexico 2006 Candidate and Party Leader Survey, the authors argue that political elites might be “out of step with the electorate and in some sense seek to contravene the public will” (Bruhn and Greene 2007, 36).  

Yet given the little usage of the terms left and right in the political discourse, the seeming lack of polarization among left and right voters may also be a reflection of great uncertainty of what these terms truly entail - or what their party’s actual ideological position is. As Moreno notes, up until 2003, the PRI was seen as a party of the right as well as, notably, “favorable of social redistribution,” while the PAN was seen as of the center, and the PRD as left (Moreno 2003, 110). Even when voters are capable of identifying the parties according to geometrical criteria, the usefulness of the left-right dimension is clearly greatly diminished when they are still not able to assign any more content to, for example, left, than simply being “against the regime.”  

In a recent study of the ideological preferences of voters, Estrada and Parás report that while voters were capable of assigning left-right positions to parties, they were much less capable of giving actual content to this dimension. While the voters differed in views of e.g. death penalty, privatization of state companies, and abortion, these were not connected to left-right

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7 See also Klesner (2005), who confirms that “the primary cleavage in Mexican politics revolved around regime issues… a proregime versus antiregime cleavage ran through the electorate in the recent past and on up through Fox's election” (2005, 127).
9 The same data also indicate that 27.5 percent of voters could not place themselves on a left-right scale or had no position.
positions (2006, 52-53). Notably, in a 2005 poll of voters in Mexico City – the political and intellectual heart of the country – the left-right dimension still had no content for 40 percent of those polled. For those who did have associations, they were rather of abstract nature or value judgments such as “positive, legal, appropriate” of the right, and “negative,” and “bad” of the left (2006, 53-55). Estrada and Parás conclude,

The agenda of ideological interpretation in Mexico is in its infancy... we observe that the traditional scale of measuring ideology is not valid... and that very few interviews relation adequate public policies with the terms left and right.10

Earlier, the ideological confusion among voters, and within the parties themselves, has been signaled as a cause for split-ticket voting, and little ideological attachment to parties among voters (Bruhn and Levy 2001, 101-102). Even if the 2006 elections may be designated as the first election in Mexico’s history that were defined as a struggle of left vs. right, the usefulness of this dimension as a heuristic for voters’ attachment to parties still appear to have left much to be desired. As rightist parties in general have a vested interest in downplaying their ideological position and as such may be expected to do so, the burden is even greater on leftwing parties such as the PRD to give true content to this label. For the 2006 election, however, the party appeared not to have fulfilled this task. Much of this, as will be argued below, I attribute to the fundamental disagreements within the party as to what being “left” truly entailed, or whether the party should indeed even assume this label.

Fault lines of the movement-party: 1) To engage or not in self-criticism

Despite having become the second largest party in Mexico, the PRD faced a very difficult post-electoral situation. The party continued to insist on the electoral fraud, and polls did indicate a significant part of the population shared this sentiment. A late November poll, following AMLO’s declaration as “Legitimate President,” found that 42 percent of the population agreed with PRD’s former presidential candidate that fraud had indeed taken place in the July 2 election – notably, a proportion far surpassing even AMLO’s and the PRD’s vote.11

Yet at the same time, the lingering suspicion of electoral fraud did not extend to actually supporting the PRD’s post-electoral mobilization and radical actions. While the PRD had successfully prevented outgoing President Fox’ last address to the parliament by storming the dais of the parliament speaker, a massive 71 percent of voters disproved of the party trying to repeat the feat to prevent Calderón from giving his first speech in the Chamber of Deputies. In

11 7 de cada 10 desaprueban eventual boicot al cambio de poderes. El Universal, Dec. 1, 2006. With TEPJF’s rejection to give investigators access to ballots, doubts will for many linger on of who won. La negativa a abrir boletas electorales, golpe a la democracia, reclama el PRD. La Jornada, April 27, 2007
addition, a very high 74 percent disproved of the PRD’s continued “civil resistance,” and wanted the party to refrain from mobilizations such as the plantón and disruptive street manifestations. And despite AMLO’s assumption as Legitimate President, 66 percent of Mexicans wanted the party to recognize Calderón.12

The PRD would pay a price for ignoring the public will. Even before the party’s highly contentious internal election of March 2008, an El Universal poll in August 2007 revealed that only 17 percent of voters held a positive opinion of PRD, compared to 43 percent of the PAN, and 33 percent of the PRI. Perhaps even more alarming, the party had a rejection rate of 48 percent, or nearly half the electorate.13 Faced with this level of rejection, the unity that had been maintained throughout the fraud protests would be increasingly strained, as the party would draw very different lessons from the July 2 election and its aftermath. While one sector was increasingly aware of the general rejection of the party’s most radical actions, the sector most identified with AMLO continued to insist on mobilizations and protest.

The first clash between the two sides had to do exactly with 2006 election, and the PRD’s own role. The question of whether the party should assume any self-criticism would largely consume its 10th national congress, and draw the internal battle lines between the two sectors.

Following internal election for its delegates in July,14 the PRD’s highest organ met from Aug. 16-19 2007, just as discussions over how to cooperate with national government without recognizing Calderón were becoming increasingly heated. The main dividing line in the congress was not, however, whether the party should recognize Calderón as president of Mexico or not – on that subject the party was united – but on whether the party should accept any self-criticism for its electoral results, fraud or no fraud. The party’s first congress after the July election was therefore bound to be a stormy affair.

Already before the gathering, Dolores Padierna of the corriente IDN, representative of the most “radical” sectors of the PRD, accused its main enemy the “moderate” Nueva Izquierda

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12 7 de cada 10 desaprueban eventual boicot al cambio de poderes. El Universal, Dec. 1, 2006. This did not prevent the party’s legislators from engaging in fist fights with PAN deputies in the Chamber of Deputies. In a preventive maneuver to avoid a repeat of the Fox incident, a more numerous PAN delegation managed to wrest the dais from the PRD legislators, though not without fistfights and casualties. Trifulca en San Lázaro; el PAN toma la tribuna por miedo al PRD. La Jornada, Nov. 29, 2006.

13 Ciudadanos reppruban a PRD y aprueban a PAN. Aug, 27, 2007. The level of the rejection did not appear a temporary event; more than one year later, in November 2008, it retained at 47 percent nearly the exact same level of rejection. Alista el perredismo su reposicionamiento. Milenio, Nov. 16, 2008.

14 1,100 of the delegates are elected in secret and direct vote by the party base. The total number, which often edges close to 2000, also include: Presidents and secretaries general of all 32 state committees; 8 delegates elected by each state council; the council members of the National Council; and 5 delegates from every state committee in the United States (states with presidents and secretaries general were California, Illinois, New York, Texas, and Washington). PRD (2007b, 96). DF alone sends 156 delegates to the congress, and Mexico State 143.
of committing fraud in the election of delegates.\textsuperscript{15} NI had in February held an internal conference to discuss the 2006 elections and the PRD’s possibly own mistakes.\textsuperscript{16} Following the video scandals in 2004, NI had seen great gains in support to the detriment of particularly IDN. As no evidence was presented for Padierna’s claims, and as the party’s electoral service only reported minor problems in the election of party delegates, the table below offers a useful picture of the relation of strength of the party’s internal currents in 2007.\textsuperscript{17}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corriente</th>
<th>Delegates</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Alliances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nueva Izquierda</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>42.32</td>
<td>59.63 (NI-ADN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADN</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDN</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td>12.86 (Izquierda Unida)\textsuperscript{18}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izquierda Social</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNYR</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foro Nuevo Sol</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various local groups</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civicos</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movimiento por la Democracia</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents/no faction</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moron</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDIR</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1283</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: PRD 10\textsuperscript{th} national congress delegates breakdown by corriente.\textsuperscript{19}

NI and ADN, a corriente based in Mexico State but rapidly expanding throughout the country, were sailing up as allies, and ran on a common list in Mexico State. Together, they accounted for nearly 60 percent of the elected delegates.

The congress would modify the party’s Political Line, statutes, and electoral organs, including the designation of the PRD as a socialist party.\textsuperscript{20} Yet the two issues that would draw the

\textsuperscript{15} No doy ninguna certidumbre al Proceso interno del PRD, dice Dolores Padierna \textit{La Jornada}, July 17, 2007; Apoya Padierna a Encinas para que presida el PRD. \textit{La Jornada}, July 23, 2007.

\textsuperscript{16} “Autocrítica” de Nueva Izquierda se centra en errores de AMLO y el PRD. \textit{La Jornada}, Feb. 17, 2007.

\textsuperscript{17} Reportan robo de urnas en elección de delegados de PRD. \textit{El Universal}, July 15, 2007.

\textsuperscript{18} The coalition \textit{Izquierda Unida}, formed to back Encinas’ bid for the presidency, would see later more following the congress.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{La guerra por la presidencia y contra Los Chuchos. Milenio Semanal}, Oct. 29, 2007. Figures are approximate and were disputed by several interviewees; they should not be treated as gospel. They do, however, clearly indicate the dominance of the NI/ADN coalition, which landed 60 percent of delegates. With the addition of local groups and independents, NI was reported to have around 44 percent of all delegates, while its allies in ADN had 27 percent – a total of more than 70 percent of the delegates to the PRD’s highest party organ.
most controversy, including causing a significant minority to mar out of the congress, had to do with the PRD’s relations with the federal government, and whether the party should accept any self criticism for its 2006 electoral defeat.

Speaking on the first day of the congress, and foreshadowing the brewing intraparty fight, AMLO noted that “a legitimizing left is nothing more than a timid and simulating right.” The PRD, he argued, had to define whether it wanted to be a party “only for electoral competition, or to seek, as a project, a profound transformation of the country.” The anti-institutional implication could hardly have been clearer: The value of attempting to reform Mexico’s existing institutions was for all intents and purposes dismissed. AMLO asked, “Isn’t it every time more evident that the institutions have been separated from the constitutional mandate, that they have been taken over, degraded, and put at the service of a minority?”

Yet the first main conflict pertained to the 2006 election. NI and its allies wanted to include in the party documents a certain amount of self-criticism, particularly pertaining to what they called the “parallel structure” of the party, or the Redes Ciudadanas. They were opposed by leaders such as Alejandro Encinas and Jesús Martín del Campo, and corrientes such as IDN, IS, and UNYR. Fernando Belaunzarán of NI argued,

If we would have had representatives in all the ballot stations, we would have won. 400 million pesos went to two virtual structures; the PRD delegated its responsibility. What do we want to hide? There was arrogance on part of everyone because we thought that July 2 was just a formality.

Martí Batres, a leader of Izquierda Social and representative of the most intransigent sectors of the party, responded,

They tell us to engage in self-criticism. No! It is PAN that should engage in self-criticism, because this party carried out the electoral fraud. Calderón is in Los Pinos not because of our errors, but because they carried out the fraud!

IS, and other corrientes such as IDN and UNYR, repeatedly accused NI of wanting to recognize Calderón. Escobar, one of the men behind the newly drafted party documents, replied, “there is no doubt that there was an electoral fraud, and this is in the text! The difference we have is if we could have avoided it, and we believe we could.” He received a barrage of insults in response, and shouts of “What mistakes? There was fraud!” Escobar responded with an old joke,

20 Technical changes to party following its 10th Congress: The Comisión Técnica Electoral was no longer autonomous, but was made responsible to the Comité Político Nacional, a new consultative organ. Also, a Comisión de Afiliados replaced the Registro Nacional de Afiliados, and was made responsible to the CEN. The Comisión Nacional de Vigilancia also lost some of its functions of sanction and vigilance. Cf. Comunicado 65/07. PRD, Aug. 21, 2007; Rosalía Vergara: Unirse... o Desdibujarse. Proceso, no. 1606 (Aug. 12, 2007): 20-23; Rosalía Vergara: Acuerdos de Cristal. Proceso, no. 1608 (Aug. 28 2007): 28-31; Calderón Salazar and Santos Villarreal (2007).


22 Cero diálogo con Calderón y respaldo total a AMLO: PRD. La Jornada, Aug. 18, 2007.
“You are of the kind that when Andrés Manuel asks what time it is, you respond, ‘whatever you say it is, Mr. President!’ This is not the way you help AMLO!”

As the PRD was to vote on its Political Line in the closing day of the congress, matters came to blows as the intransigent sector wanted to add once more a paragraph on not recognizing Calderón, and prohibiting any dialogue with his government. Jesús Ortega accused this sector of “inventing ghosts,” noting that “the government of Felipe Calderón is illegitimate in its origins, and there is no dialogue.” When the PRD finally to vote over the already agreed-upon Political Line, NI and its allies won the day, with 660 to 447 in favor. The losing group, above all IS, IDN and UNYR, marched out of the building in protest. Armando Quintero, head of UNYR, declared, “Here inside they win, but in the streets they are a minority.” The battle, in other words, would be between the official party organs, and the mobilized masses in the streets.

Following the congress, a group representing the Frente Política de la Izquierda, the coalition that rejected any dialogue with national government or self-criticism, and later known as Izquierda Unida, warned it would impugn the resolution to the TEPJF – the same tribunal they had scorned when it declared AMLO winner. Although it eventually desisted from this attempt, it maintained its rejection of the vote.

According to one of the principle members of the Frente,

We resolved a unanimous agreement of the non-recognition of Calderón, and later they won the specific debate whether to go on to discuss with him. We broke with the congress; four hundred of us delegates left. We walked out in order to denounce them.

Even so, they would later accuse NI and its allies of breaking the line the majority of the congress settled on. According to a central leader of the IDN,

Corrientes like Nueva Izquierda and ADN principally, are putting into practice or developing politics distinct from what one agreed to in the Congress, through their very actions.

A central member of the Movimiento, however, had a highly different reading of the congress and its aftermath:

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23 En el congreso del PRD, el 2 de julio acaloró el debate. La Jornada, Aug. 18, 2007.
24 Cero diálogo con Calderón y respaldo total a AMLO: PRD. La Jornada, Aug. 18, 2007. Ortega later denounced Padierna for having introduced a document to the congress proposing discussion whether it was “viable” to continue on the electoral path. PRD tendrá con el gobierno trato institucional, coinciden. El Universal, Feb. 28, 2008.
27 Versión 192/07. PRD, Aug. 20, 2007. They were: Gerardo Fernández Noroña (MOBI), Dolores Padierna (IDN), Luis Bravo (UNYR) and David Cervantes (IS). They desisted in this move the next day.
One entered once more in a false discussion about who is closer to Andrés or not, in a very false discussion in two manners, one: it there should be any self-criticism of last year, of the election of 2006, or if there shouldn’t be any self-criticism, and to me it appears that the manner in which on was dealing with this was utilized very demagogically. And later they said by this self-criticism one was throwing the blame on Andrés Manuel, or one was throwing the blame on the forces of the movement, when the approach was about whether one could have avoided the fraud or not. The fraud existed, but it could have been avoided, or to what extent could one have avoided the fraud if we had corrected a series of errors, and this discussion was laid down in a manner such as to say that we did not recognize the fraud. To me it was an infantile, absurd, truly ridiculous act, but it caused much resentment, much internal discussion with shouts and cheers… The other problem is that we didn’t discuss problems as complex as this of the relation with the governors, municipal presidents, etc. This remained pending, and I think that there is fear of approaching this subject. So I think one moved forward somewhat, despite all this noise in the debate that to me appeared very demagogical, but the discussion did not culminate.30

**The extra-party citizen networks: Failure of the movement-party structure**

In the parliamentary group every time in this political class there are less who are with Andrés Manuel, but in the streets there are ever more with him.31


There are many PRDs.32

*Principal corriente leader, IDN, Nov. 2007.*

One of the issues that the NI had tried to address at the congress was to critically assess the role of the Redes Ciudadanas, the extra-party networks that had played such a central role yet controversial role during the 2006 election.

To be sure, there remained basic disagreement of what their principal role had actually been. Both before and after the election, press reports had indicated serious problems with the Redes, including in many cases not showing up to “defend the vote,” that is, as election watchers at the ballot boxes. José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti, one of the main coordinators, and not a member of the PRD, responded that it was not the task of the Redes to “promote and defend” the vote, but rather to proselytize and arrange meetings to drive up turnout. As such, they were not intended to supplement what he called the “insufficient electoral structure of the PRD.”

More than a year after the election, those associated with the Redes continued to blame the PRD’s lack of organization rather than the networks themselves. One former coordinator argued this was the case even in the states where the PRD actually governed:

*The party was very disorganized and didn’t help sufficiently. Including in the states where we had the government they didn’t do the work of guarding the ballot boxes, and this was a great mistake.*33

30 Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Nov. 21, 2007.
Yet many reports point out that the *Redes* in the end were given a much greater role than merely proselytizing for AMLO, and did in some places completely transplant the PRD’s structure. This was, however, not a mere accident, but appears to have been part of an explicit plan.

Camacho and Alan write that “for some strange reason Andrés Manuel held fast to the idea that *perredismo* should not participate. He believed more in the citizen power than in the faith that all the *perredistas* had given him” (2006, 107). In January 2006, AMLO had placed Alberto Pérez Mendoza, one of his closes confidants, in charge of the electoral structure of the *Redes*, in practice of guarding the more than 130,000 ballot boxes, while Francisco Yee, secretary of public safety in the administration of Leonel Cota in California Baja Sur, was to promote the suffrage. Even the coordinators of the *Redes* were to obey them in all decision (Camacho and Almazán 2006, 105-106). When asked about this subject, a range of *perredistas* confirm that AMLO did lack confidence in the PRD, principally because NI, which was less inclined to subordinate itself fully to AMLO’s leadership, controlled much of the party’s structure.

The *Redes* appeared to have served more roles than merely creating publicity for AMLO, the external candidates, and the PRD. One member of NI on the PRD’s national executive committee confirmed what he called a “usurping of functions”:

One year before the election, or actually even earlier than that, he named Alberto Pérez Mendoza in a parallel structure so that they wouldn’t steal the election from him. ‘They are going to steal the election from me,’ he said. So they made this structure, without keeping the party in mind, a structure distant from the party, and parallel to it. During an election, the two most important functions of a political party are to keep an eye on the ballot boxes, and to promote the vote. Well, Andrés Manuel decided to do both.34

In other states, some *corrientes* of the PRD actually operated as part of the *Redes*, but again in parallel to the main party, and not responsible to its party organs or AMLO’s official campaign coordinator, Jesús Ortega. According to a national legislator from the state of Tlaxcala, To Andrés Manuel, *perredistas* were not trustworthy to leave the process in their hands, so he then started to construct his *Redes*. In many states surely they were citizens, up until business men and *ex-priistas* – not *perredistas*. But in states like mine, *perredismo* is so strong that in the *Redes* there was of everything, and most of them were *perredistas*, but with this mindset of not trusting, and not wanting *Nueva Izquierda* in Tlaxcala, the *Redes* were led by people like Bejarano and Dolores Padierna. They did a very poor job, they were obviously feeling like kings, excluding all others, but they did very unreliable work, and in Tlaxcala they neglected ballot boxes, in municipalities where we had won with the PRD… there was one case, the most pathetic of them all, it is called Ixtacuixtla, one of the medium-sized municipalities, in economic size. Of 34 ballot boxes we left 26 without covering them. To me it is very serious not to trust in the party, if anybody is loyal, it is we activists. If anyone is ready to defend it, to enter the defense of the vote, it is the activist; he of the *red* would probably do it, but there was no accompanying training, to

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34 Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Jan. 14, 2008.
defend and promote the vote. They did their best effort, I am not saying they didn’t, many for sure
did, but they didn’t really have la camiseta bien puesta.35

In addition to what was regarded a sidelining of the PRD, it also created much resentment
among the party cadres, as, rather amazingly, many of those charged with defending the vote
were said to be characters identified with “the worst vices of priísmo” (Garavito Elías 2007, 44).

According to a national deputy from the ADN corriente,

The opponent does what he has to do to win and you do what you have to do to defend yourself,
and if you have red lights in states like these, where there is a PAN clientelism muy cabrón, what
do you have to do, logically? Well, you are going to send your best men. And what did Andrés
Manuel do? He utilized the Redes.36

Another national deputy noted,

He creates a parallel structure to the party, he puts the party to the side, and this affects everyone,
how the hell wouldn’t it, you have a gentleman in the province who has fought with the PRD since
its foundation, he is with you, and when the moment comes, when he feels they are going to win,
you don’t take him into consideration, how do you want him to feel like an individual, who is
ideologically of the left, who has fought for the left, and then some guys come who don’t know
him nor has ever been in the streets, who have never fought for our rights, and they tell him all of
a sudden that they are the ones who are going to coordinate, and they are the ones who are going to
look after the ballot boxes.37

A leading member of the Cívicos, who would support Encinas for the party presidency,
still argued,

Here, one of the mistakes that it seems to me that AMLO did was to create a parallel structure,
rather than taking advantage of the party…the party has electoral experience, but we didn’t take
advantage of this – he didn’t take advantage of this, but preferred to create a parallel structure that
was very costly and inefficient, that is to say, we didn’t have the capacity to demonstrate with
observers what was the real preference of the voters. We missed many, many ballot boxes because
we didn’t have any electoral structure, and this was a mistake of Andrés. The party should have
said, ‘this is what we have and this is what we will furnish; don’t create another thing for us.”38

The complaints from the PRD itself had indeed grown louder as election day neared, as in
many cases perredistas were reportedly prohibited from forming part of guarding the ballot
boxes. Then, the first large effort to coordinate propaganda efforts between the PRD and the
Redes through weekly meetings was made, though only in the last weeks of campaign.39 Even
more startling, only a week before the election was the PRD allowed to intervene to help
coordinate the election vigilance by actually receiving the list of representatives who were to
observe the ballot boxes. When the PRD’s representatives went to check who the Redes
representatives were, they found that many had PAN or PRI political propaganda on their houses.

35 Confidential interview, PRD senator, Feb. 21, 2008.
38 Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Jan. 11, 2008.
One PRD representative said that when they went on election day to look for representatives who had not showed up at the ballot box, leaving the polling stations without Coalition representatives, they were told that while AMLO’s men had given them 200 pesos to watch the election, “others” had given them upwards of 1000 pesos to not show up. In the end, while the Coalition had registered representatives at 97 percent of the ballot boxes, it was clear that many of them in fact did not show up, whatever their motivation. In places such as Guanajuato, only 66 percent showed up, while in Jalisco, the Coalition only covered 51 percent of the ballot boxes. In the country as a whole, an average of 30 percent of its representatives stayed home on July 2.40

It is worth noting that where the Coalition had representatives at the ballot boxes, AMLO scored on average of 12 more votes per ballot box, while where they did not, Calderón won with an average of 46 votes.41 While clearly the PRD was most likely to have representatives in areas where the party’s vote was strong, and while the Redes in particular operated in states where the party had little presence, in light of the highly contested electoral results, the lack of presence was an error of the Coalition’s own making. As a CEN member of NI noted,

Jesús Ortega insisted that Andrés should get involved with the political structure, so when he [AMLO] tells us that we lacked party organization, yes, that is correct, we lacked much organization, but it is also true that what organization we had there was from the party, but [AMLO] depreciated it.42

Fault lines of the movement-party: 2) What government is legitimate?

“Under no circumstance will the PRD recognize Felipe Calderón as president of Mexico. With Calderón there will be no dialogue, nor any negotiation.”43

They say, although it is not a legitimate government, it is legal, and this is a stupidity, it does not withstand any analysis, because precisely because it is not legitimate it is not legal.44
- Secretary, Legitimate Government, Dec. 2007.

They meet in secret with Calderón.45
-PRD national deputy, Izquierda Social, Dec. 2007

Despite the PRD’s declarations in its official documents that the party would not recognize Calderón, it was a very different matter to dismiss any contact with the federal

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43 PRD (2007c, 194).
executive altogether. Yet what exactly the level of contact should be was an increasing source of contention. On the one side, the PRD’s governors, whose state governments depended directly on federal transfers, early on acknowledged that they would have to cooperate with the national government.46 On the other side of the spectrum, AMLO and the sectors of the party most closely associated with him, dismissed virtually any contact with the national government.

The party’s national legislators tried to stake out a middle position, though the PRD’s parliamentary groups were internally highly divided, as subsequent events would demonstrate.

One national deputy of NI outlined what he regarded to be the main positions:

We have been schizophrenic in terms of the party’s Political Line. We have really three coexisting political lines: One political line is to have nothing to do with the government, that is, a war with no prisoners, absolute confrontation. Another political line is that of the governors, which is the other extreme, that of “here everything is ok, nothing happened, we are living in a happy world, there is no problem between us,” as if to say this is the real life of the Republic. And in between there is another political line which was given above all in the in the Congress of the Union, which is to say, “let us transform the country starting with the institutions, in an honest manner.”47

Many PRD legislators noted what was regarded an increasing conflict with AMLO over the legislators’ contact with the national government, and with PAN. A legislator from NI, who argued that “they stole the presidency from us, there is no doubt,” still noted,

In virtue of being legislators, this leads us to talk with certain legislators from Acción Nacional, but this generates a conflict with Andrés Manuel because he wants there to be no kind of deals with the deputies from Acción Nacional… But we have the obligation with the municipalities that we govern, the people that we represent, to look for agreements with the federal government, and recently we established communication with some sectors of the federal government, secretaries of state, area directors, undersecretaries, department chiefs… With them we established communication, and I think that this has been the dynamic that Andrés Manuel has not liked.48

Another deputy, also of the NI, took the view which was increasingly reported in the media, which is that the radical posture was losing support among the populace.

[AMLO] has been losing influence ever since radicalizing against the government, something the people do not view as being all for the good, no…they conceive of an Andrés Manuel who is permanently in confrontation with the government. I think it is correct that one points out errors, one must do that in every trench, but this does not compel one, this is not a motive for you to be quarreling over absolutely every subject.49

The reality of the functioning of national institutions was a common theme for the legislators who defended such contacts. According to a deputy from the corriente ADN,

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49 Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 15, 2007.
We do not conceive that [Calderón] has arrived at power in a legitimate form, but he is the one managing all resources, he is the one that gives orders in all the public agencies.50

Another ADN deputy added,

He is illegitimate, yes, he is illegitimate, but he is the one exercising the budget… all right, this is used to condemn us, to say that “you already recognized Felipe,” but no, we continue saying that he came here by a fraud; that is undeniable. He is a person who defrauded democracy, but he is there.51

Some legislators insisted on a separation of the terms “illegitimate” vs. “legal” to describe Felipe Calderón. According to a NI deputy,

If this was an illegal government its actions could not be legal, right? And if would deny the legality of the government, everything would be worth nothing, because there would not be a budget; here in the Federal District there would be no police, because the president of the republic appoints it; all the laws that come from commerce that the president had to sign would have no validity. So it puts us in a limbo, and because of this I say that we need to recognize that the acts of the government are legal, and we make a distinction, we say that it is not legitimate, understood more as a moral characteristic because it arrived through an electoral fraud.52

A deputy from the Movimiento also observed,

Calderón didn’t win legitimately, but as a matter of that he is a president, and I think we need to accept the two realities, whether we like it or not, and the party did resolve this. He did not win legitimately, with regards to the resolution of the party, but whether we like it or of, in all the cases he is functioning as a president. Yes, it is contradictory, but that is how it is.53

When PRD deputy Ruth Zavaleta (NI) became president of the executive board of congress in Sept 2007, she declared, “The opposition cannot put their hopes on the federal government failing.” 54 Indeed, the choice of working with the federal government was a subject whose alternative was regarded by legislators to be to abandon the political path altogether. According to a national deputy from NI,

We must start out from reality: The usurper is there, in front of the power, whether we like or not… but he is there, and we must create conditions for the following battles. We believe in the political system, we believe in the rules we have given ourselves up until this day, they must be perfected, but we don’t conceive of another method for arriving at power, and I think that there are those who consider trying other methods, but that we are not for risking that.55

However, for the critics of this approach, which included above all legislators from IDN, IS, and those from the state of Tabasco, this participation had the effect of legitimizing the Calderón government. According to a legislator regarded as close to AMLO,

We said, we are not going to do this, we are not going to engage to discuss what they want to discuss and approve what they want to approve, in a partial manner… if they engage, how nice, because then we’ll say that this government is democratic, and that one has now finally resolved the disagreement that was before, that nothing really took place in 2006.. This is what we said; we

50 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 6, 2007.  
51 Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 9, 2007.  
52 Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 15, 2007.  
53 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 15, 2007.  
54 La oposición no puede apostar a que falle el gobierno federal: Ruth Zavaleta. La Jornada, Sept. 25, 2007.  
are not going to approve partial reforms if there is no intention of making a real process of modifications to benefit all sectors, and not just some.\textsuperscript{56}

The view was shared by a principal IDN leader, who suggested that the Calderón government could actually fail, and that the PRD should not engage in cooperation that would strengthen it:

The case of Calderón and the case of Salinas, with us… we have never had dialogue with them. But now, to talk of the present, we cannot negotiate nor give away nor agree on anything with those that stole the presidency from us, with those who represent the violation of the popular will and the violation of the Constitution. And they say, ‘he’s already there, we know already that he came in by a fraud, but he’s already there, so it’s better, for the good of the country, for the sake of stability, let’s go on talking, without losing sight of this, let’s move on.’ We say no; they are weak. Calderón is weak for being illegitimate, so let us take advantage of his illegitimacy to weaken him even more, and throw out the right.\textsuperscript{57}

An IDN deputy outlined what she regarded the dividing line between the PRD legislators:

They, the “moderates,” with their dialogist, collaborationist line, are helping, are being the baton of the right. We, here on our flank, are consistent with the project, and are accumulating strength.\textsuperscript{58}

Other deputies, notably of NI and ADN, agreed there were two postures of the PRD, but had naturally a very different take on the actual content. They also suggested sections of the party were going even further than AMLO himself in claiming to interpret “his will.” A PRD member of the Chamber of Deputies’ leadership noted,

There are, on the one hand, legislators who express their opinion on what is the desire of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, to follow very strictly, to the letter, what he says. What would this mean? Well, in reality: to have absolutely no relation with anything from the government of Felipe Calderón, with the secretaries of the state, with the institutions that one has today. In order to be consequent with this vision it would be this. Or there are, on the other hand, those who say, ‘fine, no question about it, there was a process, there was a fraud, and there is a president who is illegitimate, but who definitely is the one who is exercising the budget, signing decrees, who decides what to in cases of disaster.’\textsuperscript{59} He is the one who is doing this. So we need to accept this reality, and we need to establish links with this government. There are also those that say not with Calderón, but with the rest of the federal public administration and the federal executive, but these are two postures.\textsuperscript{60}

Another deputy of the NI corriente, which was increasingly accused of “betraying” AMLO by entering into dialogue with the Calderón government, also suggested that his loyal supporters went even further than their leader in their rejection of dialogue.

We believe in the National Democratic Convention, but we also have made a decision, which is that we cannot radicalize because then we might lose everything - carrying the country to a place nobody wants it to be. One needs consensus and one needs to search for it, everyone must concede, without this implying legitimacy, without betraying Andrés Manuel, which is what one is accusing us of. We represent the chamber of Deputies, and [Zavaleta] must have a necessary relation with the government. They don’t want her to have this, but it is impossible. It is

\textsuperscript{56} Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Jan. 18, 2007.
\textsuperscript{57} Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 6, 2007.
\textsuperscript{58} Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 6, 2007.
\textsuperscript{59} A reference to the Oct.-Nov. 2007 flooding of Tabasco, which affected more than a million residents.
\textsuperscript{60} Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 9, 2007.
impossible because [Calderón] is the representative of a power, and she must speak with her counterpart. So these are the differences, but I don’t think they are necessarily with Andrés Manuel, but with the people who surround him.61

**New organizations beyond the PRD: The National Democratic Convention**

We are going toward the construction of the Fourth Republic.62

Following the contested July 2, 2006, AMLO decided to hold a series of “informative assemblies” that attracted hundreds of thousands of people. Following the PRD 46-day encampment in the heart of Mexico City, AMLO declared he would create a “national democratic convention” (CND), or a massive citizen movement that would continue the post electoral mobilizations.63 In all essence, the CND was a continuation of the Redes, and the discussion of the actual function of the CND revealed much disagreement on what should be the proper role of the new organization, and what should be its relationship with the PRD. While the movement-advocates within the PRD in general argued the party should abide by the resolutions of the CND, which was generally characterized as “much wider” than the PRD, another sector emphasized independence for this extra-party organization.

The first official assembly of the CND was held Sept. 16, on Mexican Independence day, during which AMLO declared himself Legitimate President of Mexico. The CND was funded by donations by deputies and senators, and the goal was to incorporate all those that had attended the post electoral mobilizations.64 Its leadership included representatives of the three parties of the Coalition, as well as the Redes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CND leadership member</th>
<th>Background</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rafael Hernández Estrada*</td>
<td>PRD, Technical Secretary of CEN, Nueva Izquierda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Cervantes</td>
<td>PRD, National coordinator for Izquierda Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dante Delgado</td>
<td>Convergencia, national senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socorro Díaz</td>
<td>Businesswoman, ex PRI politician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roselia Barajas</td>
<td>PRD party activist (Vera Cruz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herón Escobar</td>
<td>PT leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertha Maldonado</td>
<td>Publicist and writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando Schütte</td>
<td>Businessman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesusa Rodríguez</td>
<td>Actress and social activist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2: **Convención Nacional Democrática** leadership, 2007-2008.66

63 See CND web site. www.cnd.org.mx/
65 Hernández Estrada, as a member of NI, was the “odd one out” of the Coordination.
On March 24, 2007, ahead of its second national meeting the next day, 700 delegates from all over the country met in a plenary meeting of the CND to approve – unanimously – the resolutions of its working group, which called for the transformations of the country’s political institutions, as well as launching a political trial of Felipe Calderón for “usurping” the presidency. The CND would hold later mass meetings on July 1 and Nov. 18 that year, and on March 18 and Oct. 19 in 2008, the latter two tied particularly to AMLO’s mobilization against the energy reform.

The PRD as such was not technically subjected to the resolutions of the CND, yet even before the later conflict between the CND and the PRD over the energy reform, it was far from clear how the relationship should be. One of the leaders of the corriente IDN, for instance, insisted the PRD should be subject to the decisions of CND and AMLO, and found it “absurd” that the party should assume different positions:

The immense majority of us who are participating in the Convention are also part of the PRD, and we have insisted in the PRD that the PRD should assume the positions of the Convention, and not the other way around…because who decides is the convention, which is the people, the citizen, they are the 15 million who voted for Andrés Manuel, which is greater than the PRD…it would be absurd that we would recognize and take decisions in the Convention and later the PRD would resolve in the opposite direction, that the PRD would recognize Calderón, no hang on, this you can’t do. But also because the Convention is greater than the PRD, the PRD must follow it. Now to me it remains very clear who decides, it is the Convention, with humbleness in the case of the PRD, the PRD is nothing without the people, the parties of the left, their reason for being, is the people, without people we do not exist. We are not a vote-getting party? No, we are a party that represents causes, and the causes are in the Convention.

One leader of the smaller corriente REDIR expressed similar views, emphasizing the participative nature of the CND:

The National Convention must be a space for construction of popular power on a base of direct democracy, it is constructed from the bottom to the top in a participative manner, and to be the sovereign expression of this patriotic and democratic movement that should convert itself in a wide majority to displace from the country the vendepatria and the anti-people. From this point of view, the PRD should be subordinated to the CND and should be the promoter of the CND, constructed from below to the top, as popular power. The PRD should thus seek to influence in the decisions of the CND in accordance with its project, but in order to have the right to be within it must accept the idea of subordinating itself to what the CND decides, because it is the expression of popular power.

However, more than a year after its creation, much uncertainty remained on what the CND actually stood for, beside supporting AMLO’s Legitimate Government and project. A prominent PRD founder from Michoacán, when asked his opinion of the CDN, said

66 Source: Based on interview data. This current (2008) Coordinación Operativa was designated in the Second Assembly of the CND, held March 25, 2007.
It is not clear to me what the political line of the convention is, so then it will be difficult to say
that one should follow it or not follow it. The PRD has a declaration of principles, a program;
many subjects are in these documents. That is, I could not give an opinion of the convention
because it is not clear to me what it is pursuing.\textsuperscript{70}

One prominent PRD national legislator belonging to the \textit{Movimiento}, pointed out,

We have statutes and we have methods and we have party organs, and we have defined how
decisions are taken in the party, and because of this it cannot be, in my opinion, that the decisions
of the Convention be the decisions of the PRD.\textsuperscript{71}

The question of the proper role of the CND, and particular its relationship with the PRD,
found very different answer depending on what \textit{corriente} member was asked. One federal deputy
belonging to \textit{Izquierda Social} noted a tension between the CND and the “moderates” in the PRD
itself, but regarded the CND to represent a much bigger population:

DM: Is there a tension between the PRD as a party, and the Convention?
I: In the PRD, as well, the moderate wing has a majority. So to be sure, there is a contradiction.
DM: So should the PRD follow the Convention, in its declarations?
I: I think it is obligated to, because the calculation of whatever \textit{perredista} in the bureaucracy, those
who benefit from the party bureaucracy, they see it in terms of convenience. If we continue with
the Convention, we will continue to be an option of government, a real political force. If we
abandon the Convention, we will be left without half the hardcore vote.\textsuperscript{72}

A principal leader of NI, the \textit{corriente} most often regarded as “moderate” due to its
willingness to engage in limited cooperation with the national government, similarly noted a
tension, yet from a very different vantage point.

JOM: Yes, there is a tension. Because some \textit{compañeros} think that one can achieve things without
the party; I don’t think this is possible, I think that one can achieve things with a party, with a
program, with an organization.”
DM: Has it been resolved what should be the rations should be between the PRD, the CND, and
the Legitimate Government?
JOM: No, they are not resolved; I must say with frankness, they are not resolved.
DM: Who should follow…
JOM: Who should follow whom, you put it well. It is such that the social organizations are not
active in a party. I am not saying they have to be party militants, but what I am saying is that the
party should be leader of the movement.\textsuperscript{73}

Another member of the \textit{Movimiento} on the party’s CEN noted,

I think that this discussion is also false because nobody can think that the party is going to
subordinate itself to an organism that is so open, so theatrical, so loose, no? This is impossible; it
makes no sense whatsoever. But yes, I think the party needs to support the Convention and that it
must, not subordinate itself, but respect its political program and defend it.”
DM: And what does AMLO want with the Convention?
I: No, I don’t know, I think one must discuss this, because it is not a problem of whether he knows
and the others don’t, I don’t think it is a secret, I think it is a problem of an inconclusive debate,
and what you are asking no one is reflecting over, we haven’t had this debate, we haven’t
concluded this discussion…. There are many things that are still loose.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{70} Confidential interview, PRD founder, Dec. 6, 2007.
\textsuperscript{71} Confidential interview, PRD legislator, Jan. 23, 2008.
\textsuperscript{72} Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Dec. 4, 2007.
\textsuperscript{73} Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Jan. 15, 2008.
\textsuperscript{74} Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Nov. 21, 2007.
In parallel to the CND, the three members of the coalition *Por el Bien de Todos* all set up the *Frente Amplio Progresista* (FAP) to coordinate the legislative work of the three parties, which together accounted for a significant presence in the Mexican Congress, with 158 national deputies, and 36 senators. One member of the FAP council noted,

The original idea was that they, the FAP and the Convention, were going to be two branches, one political, and one social branch, which were going to unify. I... I am not sure that these branches are going to unify, I rather see them parallel and in separate places, and I think the electoral logic is incompatible with the insurrectional logic, and there are some within the radical wing who follow an insurrectional logic, and this logic is counterproductive to those who are in the institutional process.\(^{75}\)

Yet as one member of the CEN noted, the “one is trying to make it parallel to the party, but the majority of the population doesn’t distinguish; for them the PRD and the *Convención Nacional Democrática* is the same.”\(^{76}\)

The CND also received criticism from members of *corrientes* regarded close to social movements, yet who felt that the CDN was becoming something else than they intended, and now appeared chiefly an instrument of AMLO. According to a national legislator from the *Cívicos*,

I think that Andrés committed a mistake, because the Convention was a very, very wide movement, where the syndicates, campesino organizations, intellectuals, artist were, very wide, and Andrés Manuel should have left this space and not converted it into this instance that only he convokes at a certain time to give a speech. There was to have been three distinct spaces: The Legitimate Government as the axis of opposition; the Convention as the articulation of all of this wide social movement, with its own demands, and on another side, the political parties, participating electorally. But he limited to making it his social base, the social base of his government, and it never turned out like that.\(^{77}\)

Another *cívico* noted that the movement had as well become increasingly vertical, with little input from its member, and had little life beyond its infrequent mass meetings:

It is not democratic, because he is the one who gives agency to it, it doesn’t organize, there is no organizational, formative work, and it was reduced to a series of actions that were very isolated, with little resonance, and in practice the Convention exists only when it gathers – there is no continuity... My observation of Andres Manuel is that he is not helping to generate, not with the Convention nor the Legitimate Government, nor did he do it in government, what we could call a conscious participation, organized by citizen empowerment – that is, that people are not only waiting for him to arrive, receiving from him a certain paternalism.\(^{78}\)
Challenging Mexico’s political institutions: The Legitimate Government

It is a movement that we understand to be revolutionary, because what we are putting forward is the refoundation of the Republic.79
-Secretary, Legitimate Government, Dec. 2007

Well, in reality this movement goes much further than the PRD.80
-Secretary, Legitimate Government, Dec. 2007.

At the first official meeting of the CND, held on Mexican Independence Day, Sept 16, 2006, AMLO declared himself to be “Legitimate President” of Mexico.81 More than two months later, on Nov. 20 – the anniversary of Mexican Revolution – on what was an unusually cold night he took the oath as president in front of 300,000 of his supporters.82 The PRD’s national council, meanwhile, had agreed it would do all in its power to impede the swearing-in of “the usurper” Felipe Calderón on the following Dec. 1.83

Beyond the PRD’s comparisons of Calderón with the usurper of the Revolution, Victoriano Huerta, there were more recent historical parallels for AMLO’s actions. In 1992, July 16, 1992, Cristóbal Arias, defeated PRD candidate for governor of Michoacán, declared himself to be “moral governor,” and called the cry for Independence, the task of the governor, on Independence Day.84 Four years earlier, following the fraudulent 1988 presidential elections, PAN’s Manuel Clouthier had as well formed a short-lived “alternative cabinet,” whose “minister” of agriculture had been none other than Vicente Fox.85

Shadow cabinets are indeed common in many parliamentary systems, although they are significantly rarer in presidential systems.86 Yet there is a significant and obvious difference with those arrangements and the Legitimate Government of AMLO: shadow governments accept the legitimacy of the national government.

The Legitimate Government drew heavily on the personnel of AMLO’s Mexico City government, and from his time as president of the PRD’s CEN. While it therefore included several of PRD extraction, the government also included many non-party figures:

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81 AMLO, "presidente legítimo"; toma posesión el 20 de noviembre: CND. La Jornada, Sept. 17, 2006.
82 AMLO se compromete a defender al pueblo y la soberanía nacional. La Jornada, Nov. 21, 2006.
83 PRD (2007a, 210).
84 Pivron (1999, 250).
85 López Obrador se proclama 'presidente' para luchar por un nuevo México. El País, Nov. 21, 2006
86 Menem’s short-lived “Cabinet of Light” in 1999 comes to mind as an exception.
The idea of a Legitimate Government came from AMLO himself. According to one of the Legitimate Government “secretaries,” many at first opposed its creation:

It is interesting to note that many of us who formed part of Andrés’ team in that moment, we did not agree with this of a Legitimate Government. We thought it was an extravagant idea, but later we have understood, at least I have, that it was a very intelligent idea...Andrés remains the leader, and it is like confirming an agreement, a pact, between the mass of people and him, and not between the political class and him. The political class, those sectors favorable to him, was a bit swept away by the decision, but the majority was not in agreement.89

AMLO, as an IDN leader pointed out, could not simply be head of the opposition, “because this would imply the recognition of the other, as there is no opposition without a majority,” that is, of the government of Felipe Calderón.90

Yet while some of its members, particularly Ortiz Pinchetti, Laurell, and di Costanza, would maintain an active presence in the media, the majority of the cabinet, as one report noted,

<table>
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<th>Secretariat</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bernardo Báez Vázquez</td>
<td>Justice and Security, GDF attorney general, PRD deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Itzel Castillo Juárez</td>
<td>Settlements and Housing, GDF urban development and housing, PRD deputy, PRD CEN of AMLO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åsa Cristina Laurell</td>
<td>Health, GDF health, PRD CEN of AMLO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mario Alberto di Costanzo Armenta</td>
<td>Public Finance, Writer, AMLO collaborator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gustavo Iruegas Evaristo</td>
<td>International Relations, Former career diplomat and ambassador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis Linares Zapata</td>
<td>Economic Development and Ecology, Political analyst and La Jornada writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertha Elena Luján Uranga</td>
<td>Work, GDF comptroller general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Elia Pérez Bejarano</td>
<td>Welfare, GDF social development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octavio Romero Oropeza</td>
<td>Honesty and Republican Austerity, GDF chief administrative officer, PRD deputy, PRD Tabasco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo</td>
<td>National Patrimony, GDF environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raquel Sosa Elizaga</td>
<td>Education, Science, and Culture, GDF culture, social development, PRD, AMLO CEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti</td>
<td>Political Relations, Federal deputy PRD group (not party member), GDF secretary 2000-2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3: AMLO’s gobierno legítimo, 2007-2009.88

87 Di Costanza declared publicly he would leave the PRD following Jesús Ortega’s victory, though it remains unclear if was actually even a member. Ordena Ortega el desalojo del Frente Amplio Progresista de la sede del PRD. La Jornada, Dec. 2, 2008.
88 Source: www.gobiernolegitimo.org.mx and news reports
“appears non-existent,” with little presence in the public view.91 One year after its creation, AMLO’s “government” appeared to focus principally on signing up people as its “representatives,” a process that included signing a letter, declare one’s allegiance to the Legitimate Government, give fingerprints, and be photographed. In Mexico, to have anyone providing this information, it should be noted, is no mean feat. Such a registry would be extremely valuable for future electoral mobilizations– and, to be sure, for a future political party.

The brunt of the adherents, which in early 2008 numbered more than 2 million people, came as AMLO embarked in January 2007 on a massive crisscrossing of the country, with the goal of holding a public meeting in every single municipality of Mexico, which drew crowds ranging tens of thousands to a couple of dozens – including national intelligence agents.92

An Aug. 11, 2008 Milenio article estimated that AMLO, from his precandidacy in Aug. 2005 through the next three years, had traversed more than 200,000 km, equivalent of more than four times around the world.93 The former presidential candidate would spend most of the midweek working in his office in Mexico City, while from Thursdays until Sundays he would be holding meetings, many times as many as 7 daily. The goal of the affiliation process was to reach upwards of 5 million people, once every single of the 2,438 municipalities in Mexico had been covered.94 According to a member of the Legitimate Government,

> Once one has achieved widening the base toward five million people…and extended this to the whole country in all the municipalities, it is going to be a political force with which to reckon. If one goes on this path, it could be not the largest party in the world, but the largest, most numerous movement that has existed in Mexico.95

Given the establishment of new organizations beyond the PRD, and AMLO’s open support of the intransigent sectors of the party, media increasingly speculated that he would actually leave the party. While AMLO expressed no intention to leave the PRD, on more than one occasions he would feel obliged to deny rumors to the contrary. At the same time, despite leading a “Legitimate Government,” he strongly condemned violence reiterated the pacifist nature of the movement that in essence was challenging the legitimacy of Mexico’s political institutions.96

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94 By Oct. 2007, he had visited am impressive 1,000, and appeared very much set on covering all.
96 Descarta AMLO llevar al pueblo a las armas. Milenio, Aug. 11, 2008. Toward the end of 2008, in a worsening economic climate, the Legitimate Government as well felt the pinch, and despite contributions from its supporters was forced to leave its main headquarters as it could not pay rent. It was first forced to leave its location in Ejercito Nacional as it could not pay the rent. When PRD later wanted to regain control over its historic location in Monterrey 50, its remaining (Nov. 2008) building was its Condesa location. Also, its secretaries would reportedly forego their earlier salaries of 5,500 pesos per month. As 2009 drew
Fault lines of the movement-party: 3) To follow the decrees of a personalistic leader who rejects institutional reform, or to follow a party line that advocates it

There were two moments. In the first, all of us approved the reform, and then in second moment after the intervention of Andrés Manuel there were already abstentions. Federal Deputy, PRD, on the COFIPE vote

It is an irony that it should be AMLO and the Consejo Coordinador Empresarial who most question the electoral and energy reforms.

-Member of the PRD’s national executive committee.

Throughout 2007 there were increasing tensions within PRD’s parliamentary group between lawmakers following the opinions of AMLO, who asked his supporters to vote against several major reforms, and those national deputies and senators who in most cases had played major roles in shaping those laws, and were backed by the majority of the party’s executive committee in their effort. This opposition was not merely tactical; as an advisor to the FAP noted, “The rejection was part of a profound distrust of institutions comes from a radical posture that mistrusts the legal and institutional path.” AMLO’s call to reject what appeared to be highly significant reforms cannot be understood unless seen through this lens. Particularly, the manner in which he actively intervened to block an electoral reform that would moreover greatly benefit his old party, made the debates over the various legislative projects in essence showdows of power between the PRD’s official structure and its former presidential candidate, who held no executive position in the PRD but was still by many regarded its most important leader.

In July 2007, AMLO’s call for legislators to reject a fiscal reform created divisions not just in the PRD, but also within the PT and Convergencia, who tended to follow the opinions of AMLO) with very few exceptions. A judicial reform also drew criticism, and despite modifications to the text’s wording to accommodate PRD criticisms, of 127 PRD legislators, 62 voted in favor, mostly from NI and the Movimiento, while 43 legislators voted against, three abstained, and 19 did not go to the session.

Yet a case that would more than any other draw the battle lines and define positions, was the 2007 reform of constitutional law pertaining to electoral matters, and COFIPE electoral code closer, despite a record number of affiliations, the future and long-term viability of the Legitimate Government remained highly uncertain. Cf. Falta de fondos hunde al “gobierno” del Peje. El Universal, Nov. 22, 2008.

99 Confidential interview, central FAP member, Dec. 6, 2007.
100 Divide al PRD rechazo de AMLO a la reforma fiscal. La Jornada, July 3, 2007.
regulating Mexican elections. Even more than previous clashes over the COFIPE, such as in 1994 and 1996, the battle over the 2007 reform would bring out the major fault lines of the party, including aspects such as reform over rupture, emphasizing the party over the movement, and the power of AMLO vs. the PRD’s official organs. It was a case where AMLO appeared to push the interests of his movement over that of the PRD and its consolidation, yet it was also a case where despite his pressure, his influence was not heeded by a majority of the party. AMLO’s hold on the PRD, and his ability to control its orientation, was seemingly growing weaker.

The 2007 reform has been described as the “seventh grand electoral reform of our transition to democracy” (Córdova Vianello 2007a, 10), and was the first integral reform since 1996, in that it covered a vast amount of aspects pertaining to federal elections and political parties. Among the most significant aspects of the law were:

- Constitutional prohibition of parties to contract publicity in electronic media. Instead, parties are now allotted public publicity, administered by the IFE, of which 30 percent is equal to all registered parties, while 70 per cent will be allotted according to party vote.
- Earlier prohibitions against private persons contracting propaganda in favor or against a candidate or party – blatantly breached in the 2006 campaign by AMLO’s opponents – were elevated to constitutional ranks, now with clear penalties.
- Government publicity to be prohibited during federal and local campaigns. As TEPJF had noted in 2006, Fox’ interference in the 2006 election had run the risk of canceling the elections. Such interference was now effectively banned as elections were expressed to be contests between political parties, and not with other institutions.
- Elevated to constitutional rank prohibition of denigrating institutions or parties or person. Propaganda of personal character was to be banned, in favor of political propaganda of “institutional character.” The expressed goal was to end the “black propaganda” prevalent in 2006, where personal attack ads, chiefly against AMLO, were funded by often unknown donors.
- All elections could now be annulled, including the presidential election, though only following specific criteria outlined in the law, such as less than 1 percent difference between winner and runner-up, and full recounts could be initiated. This was a clear response to the 2006 election and its unsuccessful calls in 2006 *voto por voto, casilla por casilla* for a full recount, for which no provision then actually existed.
- The President of the IFE council to be elected for six years with one possible reelection. Other IFE councilors renovated every three years, up to nine years.
- Like before, designation of IFE councilors required a 2/3 majority in the Chamber of Deputies, but a “wide consultation among society” was now also required, also partly in response to PAN and PRI’s appointment of the 2003 IFE council, done without any consultation with the PRD.
- IFE functionaries’ prohibition on holding public office less than two years after retiring was made constitutional law.
- The TEPJF was by law declared to be highest authority on elections, and not the Supreme Court.
- State elections should be coordinated to be held on the first Sunday of July to avoid “permanent confrontation” derived from successive elections.
In order to reduce the length and cost of elections, presidential campaigns were reduced to three months, and deputies/senators to 2 months. “Pre-campaigns” were reduced to 2/3 of this, or 8 and 6 weeks respectively.

In terms of public party funding, 30 percent to be divided equally among parties, while 70 percent would be based on the party’s vote share. More funds were as well allotted for activities such as party training of members. It also aimed at strengthening the fiscal auditing of parties, and end secret bank accounts.

Set in constitution that the law would determine when intervention of the electoral authorities in political parties is appropriate.

Presidential candidacies could only come from political parties – not from individual citizens.102

Yet what would cause particular consternation for AMLO and his party allies PT and Convergencia was the reform of articles 95-96 of the COFIPE, which had to do with the subject of coalitions, whose provisions made out an unhappy compromise desired by none.

In the existing electoral law, coalitions of parties would compete under one banner, yet would need to present a common electoral list. The parties would then have to negotiate in advance the candidacies to be awarded to each party – in practice, the number of “safe” seats allotted to each coalition partner – and smaller parties, while offering their support for a larger party’s presidential candidate, could somewhat free ride on the coalition’s electoral list. Earlier, this had been a major source of contention with PRD and its coalition partners, above all the PT and Convergencia, whose legislative presence in congress was much greater than its own vote would warrant. Now, however, the law was changed so that the smaller parties would have to compete on their own to obtain legislative seats, even if in coalition with a larger party. While a common candidacy was still allowed, they would have to compete with their own weight, and their own party emblems. These meant that they could no longer piggyback on the PRD to retain their legislative presence.

As a mechanism of compensation to smaller parties, it was also suggested that parties would require 2 percent of the national vote to maintain its registry, but that a larger party could “loan” its smaller partners up to one percent of that total. By its opponents, many in the PRD, it was somewhat disparagingly referred to as the “Law of Eternal Life.” In addition to maintaining the registry – and the many perks and financial benefits – of minuscule parties, it also went

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against the notion that the vote should not be transferable, and was struck down by the Supreme Court in July 2008.103

The vote over the COFIPE reform would be a direct measure of the clout of AMLO over the party’s legislative group, and by extension, over the PRD in general. The law was the most significant revision of Mexico’s electoral law since 1996, and went a long way toward addressing the problems of the 2006 election. Of the PRD’s own proposals during the negotiation of the COFIPE, a notable 76 out of 96 were incorporated.104 Moreover, a little over a week before the first parliamentary vote, key legislators such as Carlos Navarrete and Javier González Garza, coordinators of the PRD group in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, and Manuel Camacho Solis of the FAP, had seemingly managed to convince AMLO to support a reform that his party was likely to benefit greatly from.105

Yet as the vote drew near, AMLO would express increasing skepticism about the reform, noting that “the problem is not the laws, but that they are not followed.”106 Then, just one day before the senate vote, he sent a letter to the PRD’s national senators and deputies, expressing his “absolute disagreement with the so-called electoral reform.” AMLO noted that the law, “rather than contributing to the country retaking the path toward democracy, consolidates the predominance of the conservative block that robbed us of the presidential election of 2006.”

The letter, addressed to the parliamentary coordinators but disseminated widely, ended on a direct appeal to reject it: “nothing justifies that the legislators of the PRD lend themselves to this antidemocratic maneuver, and even less that they promote it.” Finally, “I ask that you transmit this point of view to the PRD legislators, so that ever one will act in conformity with their conscience.” It was, then an appeal over the heads to the party leadership and the parliamentary coordinators, who were all in agreement with it.107

What lay behind AMLO’s opposition to the electoral law? Earlier, the national executive committee of the PRD voted overwhelmingly to approve the reform, although party president

103 Quite ironically, a case was brought to the Supreme Court by the small parties, who launched a general complaint on other aspects of the law, above all the clause on coalitions. Yet the Supreme Court ended up striking down the one aspect of the law that did benefit them – the “eternal life” clause – but which violated the principle that votes are not transferable. The parties’ ill-advised complaint would thus likely cost them dearly. “Agoniza la ‘vida eterna’ de partidos. El Universal, July 3, 2008; Unánime: fin a ‘vida eterna’ de partidos. July 4, 2008.
104 Confidential interview, PRD senator, Feb. 5, 2008.
106 López Obrador se dice “escéptico” de cambios a las reglas electorales. Milenio, Nov. 29, 2007; Las reformas pueden provocar un retroceso electoral, advierte AMLO. La Jornada, Nov. 29, 2007.
107 The letter was made public immediately before the vote, and published on the front page of La Fuerza del Sol, the PRD-DF party organ. Andrés Manuel López Obrador: A los Coordinadores de los Grupos Parlamentarios del PRD. La Fuerza del Sol (530), Dec. 5-11 2007.
Leonel Cota was notably absent, reportedly taking care of a health problem in Cuba. Only Gerardo Fernández Noroña, and Dolores Padierna of the IDN, voted against the law. The two accused NI leader Jesús Ortega of wanting to break the FAP, the legislative coalition of the PRD, PT, and Convergencia, and deemed the reform in any case inadequate. According to Padierna

We all saw in the media how the ex-president of Spain Aznar came to help Felipe Calderón directly, in the middle of the electoral campaign. This is prohibited by the law, and what happened? Nothing.

Media reports emphasized the opposition to the COFIPE by PT and Convergencia as AMLO’s main motivation to oppose it, as the two small parties, both staunch allies, would likely suffer as a result of not being able to extract candidacies in return for electoral support.

According to a member of the leadership of the ForoNuevo Sol group in the PRD, the subject of the coalition was indeed the main reason for AMLO’s rejection of the COFIPE, though the FNS member downplayed the significance of the vote:

Andrés and Porfirio know that this was beneficial, and they knew that we were going to achieve it, but Andrés doesn’t want to break with Convergencia and the PT, so Andrés asked the party to vote against, but it was nothing dramatic, Andrés did not “tear up his clothes” over it.

Even if AMLO opposed the COFIPE merely to defend the electoral coalition with PT and Convergencia, his intervention nonetheless demonstrated priorities that diverged highly from the PRD. The COFIPE itself would not end the PT and Convergencia; their low voting percentage, which had often left them on the verge of losing their registry, would. Moreover, the fact that AMLO would nonetheless push to reject a law that significantly reformed the institutions of the state, and would likely prove highly beneficial to the PRD, indicated that his priorities was not the PRD, and which appeared to now have increasingly diverging interests than its former presidential candidate. Moreover, the FAP, to recall, was the direct continuation of the Por el Bien de Todos, a coalition created for the ostensibly common project of AMLO’s presidency, and the FAP would continue this cooperation in the legislative arena. Yet if the subject of the coalitions was enough to break the FAP – that is, if the PT and Convergencia would break with the PRD if they could not use its coalition partner to obtain more seats – it indicated that the

109 Rosalía Vergara: En Riesgo, el Frente Amplio. Proceso, no. 1623 (Dec. 9, 2007): 22-25. According to Acosta Naranjo, there was one abstention and one vote in contra, but Noroña said both he and Padierna voted against.
113 Confidential interview, PRD central member, Jan. 31, 2008. This PRD member also noted that Encinas was in agreement with the law, though Encinas would later state his opposition to the COFIPE not only for the “eternal life” clause but also for change to coalitions, which would likely benefit the PRD yet hurt the PT and Convergencia.
interests were far more instrumental than any programmatic affinity with the PRD, and even AMLO.

A range of prominent perredistas, legislators and others, did, however indicate that AMLO’s opposition went further than affinity for the PT and Convergencia. According to the national deputy of the PRD who participated in negotiating the reform, for the PRD it was a major step forward:

This electoral reform is a tremendously important step for Mexico…it is coming to stop a phenomenon that exists in Mexico which is the abuse of money, of the groups of money, those that we call groups of power, or of informal power, but which are very efficient…and very real. That is, there are great and very rich businessmen who have favored corrupt politics, in the past, and today practically decide who is president. They decided that it would not be Andrés Manuel that it would be Felipe Calderón, and they achieved it. And they achieved through very diverse means, and it is this that this law blocks. Definitely in the 2009 elections and later in 2012 there will be no possibilities that they do so again… So, we need to stop this, because the Mexican political system will be in danger if we do not. And this electoral reform helps tremendously. I can tell it to you like this: The way the electoral law was in that moment, it in practice said that the PRD could not have the presidency. The way it stands now, it says that the PRD can compete and accede to the presidency of the Republic.114

The many positive aspects of the reforms were also emphasized by national senator belonging to the ADN, who in particular expressively linked the reform to the role of parties, as opposed to those of social movements.

Look, as an antecedent to the national corriente, I militated in the social movements, and the practical experience I gained is that the social movement can walk in parallel to the party, and that it is a necessary complement to the party, if it has a vacation for power. Before the electoral reform – and one needs to see how the electoral processes will develop now with the new law – but before, he who had money was he who could win; fundamentally, he who had access to the media. And this obliges you to negotiate with the powers that be. In the case of the left, this path was vetoed because it represented interests contrary to the owners of money, and because of this you couldn’t penetrate through the communication media.115

When asked why AMLO nonetheless asked his own party to vote against the COFIPE, several of its supporters came up short of an answer. One party veteran of NI, one of the internal groups that had particularly pushed for the reform, said,

I don’t have a rational explanation for the hard opposition of Andrés Manual to this new COFIPE... I don’t have an answer because I am convinced the principal beneficiary of the constitutional reform in electoral matters and the reform of COFIPE is Andrés Manuel, with the hypothesis that he will be candidate of the republic in 2012.116

One senator belonging to NI, when commenting on the letter AMLO sent to the PRD’s legislative groups, suggested it represented an increasingly intransigent attitude on part of AMLO:

It was very tough, the letter, it was quite aggressive to us, and all these disqualifications he has done lately. I appreciate him, I have respect for him, but I don’t like his style. He became more

114 Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 9, 2007.
116 Confidential interview, PRD central member, Jan. 17, 2008.
hard as a result of the loss, but I don’t think this is the right path; one can have more success with other attitudes.\textsuperscript{117}

A national legislator belonging to the \textit{Cívico corriente} also lamented the letter.

To me it was a mistake, this manner of Andrés Manuel of conducting himself, suddenly to send a letter and say, “reject the law.” when there had been consensus, there had been councils, one was discussing. So at least what Andrés should have done was to say, “I want to meet with the leadership of the party, deputies and legislators, and let us debate and my opinion is that one shouldn’t vote…” It is therefore incorrect; it was of the last minute.\textsuperscript{118}

According to an intellectual associated with the FAP, the passing of law strengthened the sectors in the PRD in favor of negotiation with the regime:

The constitutional electoral reform was a signal; it was a message, in the following sense: That \textit{yes, one can} make profound institutions in this country through the institutional path. That is, to delimit the powers that be, in television and radio, no less, but this one could do through a purely institutional and legislative process, without the necessity of mobilizations, social pressure, insurrectional strategies, on the purely institutional path one make a profound transformation that affected the extremely powerful interests of the television companies. This is a message that strengthens the moderates.\textsuperscript{119}

One federal deputy confirmed the divide within the party over the COFIPE reform:

Of the electoral reform, more than 50 percent of its provisions are from the PRD, so it is then an absolute incongruity to vote against something that you did yourself. Those who voted against the COFIPE were the radicals… it was the \textit{pejebancada} who voted against it, because it went against their aspirations.\textsuperscript{120} That is, for them there are positions of Fatherland or Death, or of all or nothing. They don’t negotiate. You either give it to me, or you give it to me. And let’s be honest, we were all in agreement, until Andrés Manuel went out in the media, “no, vote against it, because it don’t like it,” without even knowing it, and they changed.\textsuperscript{121}

Given the seeming benefits to the PRD of the reform, many legislators regarded AMLO’s rejection as much more than a support of his two coalition partners, but as something much more profound, including a depreciation of the legislative arena more generally. According to a PRD deputy and member of the congressional leadership, “He does not believe in this [reform]. He has showed resistance to this, and I think that it is clear now that he does not believe in the role of legislators.”\textsuperscript{122}

What was more notable than this reading of AMLO from the moderate sectors, was that many legislators and others considered close to AMLO went a long way to confirm it. According to a veteran political operator considered one of AMLO’s closest advisers, the main reason for AMLO’s rejection did indeed go far beyond his support for PT and the \textit{Convergencia}.

\textsuperscript{117} Confidential interview, PRD senator, Feb. 21, 2008.
\textsuperscript{118} Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Jan. 11, 2008.
\textsuperscript{119} Confidential interview, central FAP member, Dec. 6, 2007.
\textsuperscript{120} Name given to the group of deputies most loyal to the opinions and directives of AMLO, such as Valentina Batres, Gerardo Villanueva, Aleida Alavez, Alejandro Sánchez Camacho, and around a dozen others.
\textsuperscript{121} Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Feb.7, 2008.
\textsuperscript{122} Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 9, 2007.
I: I think this is a calculation that one cannot trust the characters of formal politics. I think that he arrived at the conclusion that they betrayed him when the issue of… the scandal of Bejarano, where people with whom he had been on good terms, television, president Fox himself, put in all human resources to liquidate him politically by setting up an operation - a complot, as he called it…Andres Manuel, then, is betting on the same, he is betting on polarizing the country, and is betting on discrediting the political class, and there is no exit left for neither the government of Calderón nor the political class, because he believes that finally they are going toward failure and that moreover they are not confinable.

DM: That the system is going to fail?

I: That the system is going to fail. Exactly. So he believes they are not trustworthy, so when he does that with the letter, he does it because he does not want to compromise himself with a negotiated exit of a political crisis, but rather that the cost of the political crisis is carried by the political class as a whole. No, this is a thing much more profound than the PT and Convergencia.123

Legislators and activists considered loyal to AMLO did confirm a deep disbelief in the ability to reform Mexico’s political institutions. Even though the Legitimate Government included prominently in its program a call to reform institutions, the COFIPE was not considered a relevant contribution toward that effort by its members. According to one secretary, who lamented that the Legitimate Government had not been consulted on the COFIPE, “In no way represents a transformation of the institutions which, like you say, is the basic point for us.”124 Another secretary said he was against the reform as “it does not solve the profound problems, because what it is doing is to give a vote of confidence to the spurious government and the parties, through Congress.”125

One member of the Legitimate Government with a long past in the PRD, expanded on this argument, which went beyond the merits of the actual reform itself, explaining her opposition due to the belief that it would serve to legitimize the Calderón government:

The act of having negotiated a reform of the state, well frankly it makes no sense, and yes, it has a role in legitimizing. What we would really have wanted was for the congress to be a space where one really would discuss the great problems in the country, and not what the political class considers to be the great problems of the country.126

Similarly, according to a member of the PRD’s national executive committee who is considered a leading proponent of the radical line,

There is a pragmatic position of the governors and a position of our legislators that they believe they can negotiate reforms so that the country will go in another direction. They don’t realize that in this country, our country, one does not respect the law and that they violate it with ‘one hand on the waist,’ and they can return to do a fraud and violate the law again. Because the rule for the left is: You can win governorships, senators, deputies, municipal presidents, but for the presidency of the republic the rule is, if you lose you lose, and if you win, you lose. That is, they are not going to acknowledge us. And under this conclusion, I maintain that we can only govern the country with a very powerful popular movement of the organized masses... They don’t think so; these compañeros believe that by making changes in the laws they are going to respect our triumph.”

123 Confidential interview, FAP central member, Jan. 24, 2008.
DM: Then, can one say that what one deals with is to believe or not in the institutions?

I: This is the discourse, but the discourse is false. You cannot believe in the institutions in a country where the institutions are corrupted.127

The heated discussion around the COFIPE, then, ultimately pointed to much more profound differences within the PRD than the issue of the PT and Convergencia. It revealed a profound distrust on part of those loyal to AMLO, not just of the COFIPE in particular, but of the value of institutional reform more general. Crucially, this divide was not between the various “faces” of the PRD, but ran deeply throughout most of its organs. Yet within the parliamentary group, however, the supporters of the electoral reform had the upper hand, having given much successful input on what the most significant reform of Mexico’s electoral law in more than a decade, a reform that would address most, if not all, of the party’s grievances from the 2006 election. Yet a significant group of both the PRD’s parliamentary group, however, voted with the PT, Convergencia, and the two other small parties, PVEM and PANAL, against the reform.

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Table 6.4: COFIPE vote, Senate, Dec. 5, 2007.129

The level of polarization between the two camps had by the time of the Senate vote reached such a level that when a majority of the PRD’s senators voted 16-6 in favor of the reform, AMLO felt compelled to publicly deny that he would actually leave the PRD.130

When the Chambers of Deputies voted on the reform a week later, out of the PRD’s 127 deputies, 62 voted in favor of the reform, and 43 voted against.131 There were three abstentions, and 19 absences.

128 They were: Ricardo Monreal, Yeidckol Polevnsky, Salomón Jara Cruz, Lázaro Mazón Alonso, María Rojo, and Rosalinda López Hernández.
130 “No dejaremos” que una corriente domine el PRD. La Jornada, Dec. 7, 2007. Carlos Navarrete at one point notably suggested a fusion of the three parties to end accusations that they wanted to “break” the FAP. Formaliza Navarrete su propuesta de fusionar PT y Convergencia con el PRD. La Jornada, Dec. 12, 2007.
The vote was, in the end, a victory of the party’s organs, its CEN and its parliamentary coordinators, over the wishes of its former presidential candidate. Yet one federal deputy of Izquierda Social predicted a wider break within the party against its leaders as the next controversial issue was sailing up, namely the energy reform. The comments were prescient:

The defense of the petroleum is going to lead to another confrontation internally in the parliamentary group, as there are deputies who are going to continue in their self-interested line with this usurping government…. And we are going to rebel, if it is necessary, against our coordinator in the Chamber of Deputies…In the parliamentary group every time in this political class we are less who are with Andrés Manuel, but in the streets there are ever more with him.132

**Fault lines of the movement-party: 4) To maintain an ambiguous and national ideology, or to establish the PRD as a socialist party in an international context**

The PRD already is a party that in general has elements of social democracy, *a la Mexicana*.133


It doesn’t help nor harm; it is simply a patch that one threw in there with no discussion, that is, there was no reflection. We will need to make a much wider theoretical reflection to see what socialism in Mexico is.134

- PRD candidate for party leadership, Nov. 2007.

To be sure it is important for me. It is what I would have wanted, a democratic socialism in the country.135


The path toward a more precise ideological and programmatic definition was very long for the PRD. As noted in Chapter 5, it took a decade from the July 2, 1988 fraud until the PRD declared itself a party of the left. It would take almost a decade more for the PRD’s next ideological development, when it during its 10th congress in Aug. 2007 declared itself to be a socialist party. The definition was hailed by both Jesús Ortega and Alejandro Encinas, the two frontrunners for the party presidency to succeed Leonel Cota. Encinas noted, “they are not minor these agreements.”136 Yet opinions within the party differed greatly not only over the relevance of the changed programmatic orientation, but also of the desirability of declaring the PRD to be socialist. While the party groups are often divided into groups labeled “moderates” and “radicals,” the attitude toward the definition as socialist was not that apparent based on one’s background as, notably, it was mainly the most “radical” sectors in the party that questioned the decision the most.

Even though no other election in Mexico’s history had so clearly been a contest between the left and the right, the PRD and AMLO had in 2006 not produced a program that was clearly

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133 Confidential interview, PRD central member, Feb. 11, 2008.
134 Confidential interview, PRD central member, Nov. 27, 2007.
135 Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Jan. 23, 2008.
defined as left. Notably, AMLO had particularly angered pro-abortion and gay rights group in his attempts to gain support of parts of the church, as he decidedly put social issues typical of the international left on the backburner. The PRD’s inclusion of many highly dubious candidates of both priista and panista background – and seemingly rightwing leanings – had added to the confusion of the PRD’s ideological identity.

Despite the campaign’s focus, as is slogan heralded, on “first the poor,” if was paradoxically far from clear what the PRD stood for. As Salazar Carrión noted, even after a highly polarizing campaign, the campaign left many of its supporters “not knowing if the force that achieved so considerable advances in the last election, the so-called Coalition for the Good of All, even deserves the name of ‘left.’” To AMLO and the PRD, “left” appeared to mean above all a critique of provisions of NAFTA, but the meaning of “left” remained vague. Following the post-electoral troubles, according to Salazar Carrión, “left” increasingly had to do with “confrontation and street mobilization, than with an ideologically defined proposal beyond its anti-neoliberal rhetoric” (2006, 48). According to García Ponce, “The term ‘left’ has until today not been deserving of serious debate inside the party. The obradorista tactic of ‘first, the poor’ does not serve to this effect; populism is fundamentally a political practice, not an ideological system” (2005a, 62).

One year following the elections, however, the PRD made a further step toward locating the party in a wider context, as a socialist party. The party’s revised program now contained numerous references to the PRD as a “left” party, and its Declaration of Principles stated,

In 2007, we ratify its founding call to assume as members of a political party of the left: broad, plural, modern, socialist, and democratic.137

The majority of perredistas point to two major factors why the party took so long to arrive at either its 1998 and 2007 decision: The figure of CCS, the party’s dominant leader, who eschewed ideological definition in terms of left and right, and the historical fall of the Berlin Wall, which had the effect of questioning the viability of alternatives to capitalism worldwide. According to a national senator with a past in PRD’s socialist forerunners PMT and PMS,

First, the fall of the Berlin wall was very fresh. We all remained in an ideological identity. In second place this party was born behind the figure of el ingeniero Cárdenas, and el ingeniero Cárdenas is not an activist of the left. He has sympathy for the left, but as I am sure you know, he comes from a nationalist root, which has points of agreements with the left, but which is not of the left.138

A principal leader of NI noted that had not happened before “because it didn’t matter much for many people.

137 PRD (2007c, 14).
For everyone, in practice we were already a party of the left before 1998, everyone knew we were a party of the left, but we didn’t define ourselves because the leadership was opposed to the definition of a party of the left. Now, someone put in the concept that we are democratic socialists because... to those that were in the congress, it appeared great, but those who were not had left, a part not very large, but these were those that could have objected. Because I am a socialist, democratic, I am a democratic socialist and my compañeros we could perfectly well define us as socialist democrats. The problem is not this; the problem is that who leads the other part does not assume themselves as democratic socialist, they assume more as nationalists, like a radical cell, I don’t know what to call them.139

The added dimension of “moderates” and “radicals” add another, and highly significant, distinction within the PRD that moreover appears to transcend the term “left” itself. Within the PRD, corrientes such as IDN and IS, which stem largely from the social left, are commonly considered to be the most radical of PRD’s corrientes. However, and somewhat paradoxically, this is far from being a mere matter of being moderate in left-right leanings. While virtually any left party elsewhere is likely to contain with it moderate and radical wings that are less or more to the left and fight over defining the party’s position, in the PRD, “radical” refers principally to the strategic orientation and methods of political struggle. More than a decade after the 1994-1995 internal battle between, respectively, the intransigent opponents of negotiation, and the proponent of dialogue with the regime, this cleavage, always latent, was significantly revived by the 2005-2006 events. While the “moderates” of today are willing to negotiate with the regime and emphasize legislative work, the “radicals” favor mass mobilization, and while many are represented in Congress, often appear disdainful of the parliamentary struggle altogether. This classic division within movement-parties remains extremely relevant within the PRD today, and defines both methods and strategy.

The “moderates” and the “radicals” are not separated by their degree of being to the left. While to the “radicals” the concept of social democracy is disliked to the point of bordering on treason, the opposition toward it is principally based upon their associations with social democracy as being too willing to negotiate, and of the prioritizing the legislative fight for the party.

Yet the “radicals” are also highly skeptical or outright hostile to the definition of the PRD as a “socialist and democratic party,” and notably advocate a movement-organization rather than the building of a traditional party. The table below illustrate the remarkable connection in three dimensions, where those who opposed the formation of a more traditional party organization within the PRD are also against, or indifferent, to the PRD’s definition as a socialist party. Finally, they are also largely synonymous with the “radicals,” which are noted in parenthesis, and

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139 Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Jan. 15, 2008.
are identified by their general dismissal of the feasibility of genuine institutional reform carried out in the country’s legislative arenas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Agree with and support PRD declaration as “socialist”</th>
<th>Against or indifferent to definition of PRD as “socialist”</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRD should remain a “movement” or “movement-party”</td>
<td>7 (2)</td>
<td>18 (16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRD should assume a more “traditional” or “European” party organization</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td>3 (0)</td>
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</tbody>
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N=54

Table 6.5: PRD elites’ preferred future organizational and ideological model of the PRD

Why the opposition? According to a national deputy from Izquierda Social, generally regarded a “radical” social-movement corriente,

As it is very stigmatized the term, it is better to call the party “social” and nothing else, and to let us avoid any lecturing or byzantine deliberation with no end, about what type of socialism it is. That is, to us this means, why did we get mixed up in this dead-end doctrinarian street that will take us nowhere? f one calls it socialism, well, fine, but it would mean throwing us into a very narrow canal, and for what? We don’t want socialism like the one the Zapatero brings; this socialism is more similar to the foxista liberal right.

One national legislator from the PRD’s Movimiento attributed much of the controversy over the definition as “posing,” arguing the internal ideological divide was overstate:

In reality, we are all, practically all of us are closer to social democracy than we think – all of the corrientes of the party, just like all of the corrientes have also much of the old priista political culture, so I think it is therefore very much a position of political posing, to say “I am a social democrat” or “am not a social democrat,” which has nothing to do with content, as we are in reality applying social-democratic policies in all our governments. We are not proposing a nationalization of everything, or the dictatorship of the proletariat, the destruction of capitalism, not one of our governments, starting with the one of López Obrador. And there is more: to me Marcelo Ebrard appears more of the left in his policies, more liberal, than what was López Obrador, for example.

While Marcelo Ebrard was AMLO’s preferred choice to succeed him as mayor of Mexico, and has been among AMLO’s most loyal supporters following the 2006 protests, he was also noticeably more socially liberal than the former presidential candidate, having enthusiastically endorsed PRD initiatives such as gay civil unions, euthanasia, abortion rights, and most recently, the decriminalization of marihuana.

140 Source: Interview data.
142 Confidential interview, PRD central member, Feb. 12, 2008. Notably, though, Vivero Ávila (2006, 290) also finds that among legislators, compared with other left parties in Chile, Uruguay and Brazil, the PRD has the widest span of left-right attitudes. For a further elaboration of PRD legislators, see Rangel Rivera (2005).
Within the PRD itself, however, these issues remain highly controversial, and have in 2007 still been coined “taboo subjects too many.”143 It was all the more a step forward, then, when the PRD as well during the 10th congress refined its political program to specifically call for the protection of rights such as sexual diversity and legal rights of same-sex couples.144 When asked about the PRD’s definition as socialist, a member of the CEN from NI specifically pointed to this increased focus on social issues, long part of the programs of socialist parties elsewhere:

I will tell you what have been the advances that we have had: The law of civil unions, which the Legislative Assembly [of Mexico City] brought forward; the decriminalization of abortion; the ‘automatic divorce’; the passive euthanasia. These are four points that will give an idea of where the party stands, and they are profoundly of the left, and I would also say socialist.145

Among the PRD’s political elite, opinions of the merits and significance of the party’s move to declare itself as socialist were highly divided. One of the key men behind the proposal, moreover, also admitted that the proposal was passed largely “by chance”:

I never thought the proposal was going to win, it was a surprise, and now it needs to be explicated, there has been very little debate with regards to this, three or four press articles, of Monsiváis, Sánchez Rebolledo wrote about it, but it was for the following: There was a proposal, the definition of what type of left the PRD represents, where it said “open and plural and democratic left,” to remove this and put in “patriotic and nationalist left,” which for at least my generation is very connected to something very different. I belong to a generation, we are the ‘children of the 68’, that is, very related with the ’68, in my corriente there are people of my age and leaders of ’68, so then we opposed this of “patriotic and nationalist,” puta madre, what the hell is this…it sounds echeverrista, even chavista... And then as a strategy to combat this we used ‘open, social and democratic left’ - it is a good definition. We said that it is incorrect, it must continue being “open, plural and democratic” in any case if we are going to modernize this definition of the left, and this the moment when we put in “socialist” because if the PRD revindicates a program, a program that is very modern, very open, it must define itself as socialist in accordance with this modern vision of socialism, we are thinking of a socialism that fights for equality, that clearly sees itself as within democracy, that is even liberal. That is, it is this vision of socialism; it is a vision that is more similar to European socialism, to French socialism. Now, I wanted to put in both “socialist” and “liberal,” but that was too much! In the plenary meeting, I defended the idea... and then, before the discussion I had spoken with Alejandro Encinas and Jesus Ortega, and both told me that as both of them come from socialist parties, well, then it was like, why don’t we put in “socialist.” Well, in the plenary, I proposed it, I defended the idea, and an old ex-communist deputy of the first communist congressional delegation of 1979 rose to defend it as well, and one voted...it was a nice surprise. And it won, and it is now in the statutes, but like Monsiváis, who asked in an article what it means… it is still not explained well.146

One Movimiento member particularly stressed the ideological inheritance of the PRI, which ruled Mexico for 71 years, and from which the PRD in many ways had originated,

Here they say that Mexicans, we all have a small priísta inside of us. That is, practically 90 percent of all Mexicans were born under the PRI regime, and the political culture of the PRI is everywhere. It is not always easy to escape it.147

One member of NI who was also one of the key people behind drafting the proposed change, emphasized the continued need to break fully with the ideological heritage of *priísmo*, and suggested this was one of the main motivations behind the proposal.

In the PRD, for wide sectors of functionaries, local authorities, governors, functionaries of provincial governments, leaders of the party on all levels, candidates, there is a real ideological subrate that is different from the formal program of the party, which is based on, still in this year of 2008, a diffuse real, if not formal, revindication of the principles of revolutionary nationalism. From that we can see the ease with which some cadres of the PRI went to the PRD as candidates or affiliates, because these *priístas* felt we were only following the formal ideology of the PRI!148

One leader of the *Cívicos*, however, was still hesitant to accept the designation of the PRD as socialist:

Ours is not a socialist party; it is a wider party, more plural. There are socialists, but it is not a majority; the program is democratic and progressive... It is difficult to say we are a socialist party. Of the left, yes, we are a party of the left because fortunately now one is delineating more clearly the camps, the left and the right, before it was more complicated for us, but now it is clear: There is a left, many lefts, and, well, there is a right.149

A member of the PRD CEN agreed that the subject of ideology in the party remained “very confusing,” and was obfuscated by the controversies of the alleged fraud, but nonetheless was moving toward a clearer position due to the coming to power of governments of “the right”:

The ideological debate is very backward here; it is a very marginal subject, and in practice we don’t give full discussion.....First we have thus subject of the fraud or no fraud, of the political situation after 2006 And to me it appears that it is understandable, perhaps not desirable, but yes, understandable, and it is going to capture more the attention of the candidates. Now there is another matter, next to this subject, that by having the political right, a very clear right, in power, obliges us to define ourselves every time more as left, in order to confront positions, so curiously the party tends to... identify itself, to group together more, every time as left in order to differentiate itself from the PAN and the right, so in the last congress, not only did one maintain the concept that we are a party of the left, but for the first time one accepted that we are socialists. This surprised me because...Cárdenas didn’t even call himself of the left, and moreover it was by acclamation, right? Yes, one felt there were many people going ‘Yes, yes!’ without knowing much about what one was talking about, but there was still a perception, a movement, and I think this perception is a product of this ideological polarization before the right, which arrived moreover with Fox and partly with Calderón, the ultra right – the very conservative, very religious. So as a reaction toward this you agree to contrast, so I think it is because of this we have this ideological slide, but it is not a very conscientious slide nor very elaborated and discussed, but I say that this is fine because it helps to open a subject for discussion that has not had much importance, and I think it is good that we do this, to me this appears very healthy that the party would acquire this ideology, this belonging, right?150

One national legislator pointed out the importance of combating the continued ideological confusion in the PRD:

It is not so that the ideology glues together, the ideology is very flexible, and there are very basic principles that differentiate us from the right, but it is very elementary, neither are the differences very profound. The PRD is more a party of groups, of personalistic leaderships, local, regional,

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149 Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Jan. 11, 2008.
150 Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Nov. 21, 2007.
some more modern than other, some less, and very open as well, where practically you can leave
the PAN and be a candidate of the PRD.151

Yet as one of its principal founders pointed, it was still far from clear what was meant by
either “left” or “socialism” in the PRD, and the party still needed to outline these terms:

I was always opposed that the party should define itself by geometry, because to me it seems that
one must think more on contents, because if we look for example at parties that have said they are
left... that is to say, in the left one calls oneself social democrat, and in the same are
Scandinavians, Acción Democrática in Venezuela and... they are totally different, so I think that
more important than saying what is of the left, this thing of socialism, I didn’t hear anything about
it, one would need to say what one understands by ‘left’ and what one understands by ‘socialism,’
in any case, one must go really toward contents.. The change in the declaration of principles, the
change in the party program, it is not relevant. It is not relevant; I refer to the great guidelines. One
must look at the contents to see if there really was change, in order to call oneself left or not.152

One national deputy also noted that little programmatic change had taken place:

When we designated ourselves ‘left,’ we didn’t change our program nor did we change our
strategy, we only changed... we only assumed the name, we overcame the stigma. But it was not a
change of proposals or principles, because we were already of the left.153

One senator thought it was important, but that much remains:

Look, I think that there is a hegemony of activists of the left in the PRD, as the great majority of
those that came they chose Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, are already on the outside, they are not where
decisions are being made. We, already more of the left, what now is lacking to define and which is
going to generate great debate in the next years is, are we socialists, are we social democrats, what
are we? And as a function of this we are going to have to define our Political Line. In the last
congress they decided that we are now socialists, according to the statute... democratic socialism,
no? But still we need to define what we mean by democratic socialism.154

Finally, there also remains the challenge of transmission. A member of NI, who was
greatly responsible for the redefining, pointed to the continued problems of a common content for
the party’s leaders on the label’s meaning, as well as the challenge of disseminating its content to
the wider party.

Do you know what the profound problem is? The problem is that there is a small group of leaders
and intellectuals, we who have a certain comprehension and perception of the values and
principles of the Socialist International, and international social democracy, but there is no effect
of transmission of the programmatic visions and perceptions of these programmatic definitions
toward the group of provincial and local leadership, and not even the national leadership of the
party has done the effort of comprehension of the significance it represents that the PRD assumes
as a democratic and socialist party, that is, as social democratic, of such a manner that while the
program, I believe, is very advanced and the definition of ‘socialist’ and ‘democratic’ is of
enormous historic importance, it is still lacking that the PRD as a whole – and not just some of the
intelligentsia and leadership – does the work of educating and comprehending of what this
represents.155

151 Confidential interview, PRD central member, Feb. 12, 2008.
155 Confidential interview, PRD central member, Jan. 17, 2008.
AMLO as a “radical”: Ambiguous ideology from the leader of the movement

Andrés has said it, with his letters he has said it: the country can change through the will of one person. And this is important: The will of one person, but helped by the people.156
- Secretary of the PRD National Executive Committee, Jan. 2008.

Andrés Manuel has been a social leader, state functionary, party leader, and leader of Mexico City, but he has never been a councilman, local deputy, federal deputy, or senator. He does not have knowledge of how Congress works; he doesn’t know its ways and manners, and I think he also has a certain rejection of the ways of Congress.157

In the traditional terminology of left and right, it remains a paradox that AMLO, despite the common characterization of him as a “radical,” appeared very much a moderate in traditional ideological terms. During the 2006 campaign, he did refer to himself as “left,” as opposed to his earlier opposition to assume an ideological stance around the left-right line. But even so, it remained far from clear what was meant by this.

His “50 Commitments,” published in 2005, outlined his basic program for the 2006 election at a time when he was still competing with CCS for the PRD nomination. Yet the “Commitments” did not outline what being left meant to AMLO; the 229-page document, which contained proposals ranging from bullet trains to ending pensions for former presidents, did not even once mention the term “left” at one occasion. Nor did his 2004 “Alternative Nation Project,” published during the height of the desafuero debacle.158 In 2007, his book “The Mafia Stole the Presidency from Us,” an autobiographical account of his views of the 2006 events, he concluded with a poem in homage to Carlos Pellicer, a poet and writer who was also his teacher:

A last a personal reflection, destined toward those who have asked me how I define myself politically, and ideologically. To those that inclusive, in a very simplistic manner, want to know that I am closer to Chávez or to Lula. I will take the opportunity right away to tell them that I consider myself of the left, and pelliceriano. I am of the left because on this side the heart is located, and pelliceriano because this teacher protested against social injustice, and wrote poems out load, always full of hope (2007, 300).

However, in May 2005, he told The New York Times in an interview that he was a “centrist” and should not be confused with other left leaders of the region.159 On the campaign trail, he was described –and often denounced – as a populist, and criticized for not being of clear representative of the left but rather representing “the recovery of revolutionary nationalism.” According to Loaeza, AMLO during the campaign “resorted to revolutionary nationalism as a catalyst to crystallize diverse forces in a political struggle that went beyond the electoral

158 See López Obrador (2004a). The “50 Commitments” are found at www.amlo.org.mx/50compromisos
competition” (2007, 411, 413). There was, clearly a defense of the poor against the oligarchy, but this was primarily defined as an “us against them” that transcended classic conceptions of class struggle. As mayor of Mexico City, Loeaza notes, AMLO “assumed the mission of defending and protecting the ‘people’ from foreign and oligarchic exploitation, and from the corruption of traditional politicians” (2007, 416). There was inherent a wider rejection of the political class as a whole, with was continually contrasted with a rather ill-defined “people.” Guevara Niebla, who also insisted on the designation of AMLO as “populist,” argued that AMLO “appeals constantly to ‘the people,’ he self identifies as ‘representative of the people,’ he calls himself ‘defender of the people,’ and he fights against the ‘enemies of the people’ (Guevara Niebla 2006, 16).

Yet AMLO’s confrontational and polarizing rhetoric – witnessed even more fully in the post-electoral debacle – stands out in a clear paradox to his very moderate economic program. This is a point that is particularly notable as it not only applies to AMLO, but also his most “radical” followers. As Salazar Carrión observed of “this presumed neo-populist left” candidate, “it is notable that despite the radicality of its rhetoric, this populism does not propose measures that are properly anti-capitalist, but rather assuming economic policies that are relatively orthodox and even conservative” (2006, 43).

As noted earlier, to AMLO and his followers, being “radical” is something else than being radical in classic left-right terms. While AMLO had introduced a range of social programs as mayor of Mexico City, and aimed to pursue them on a national level as part of what is unquestionably a deep commitment to improving conditions of the lower classes, to AMLO, and his followers, “radical” appears first and foremost to be about methods, and about the attitude toward existing institutional setups. This was as well witnessed by his reaction when the group NI emphasized its identity as “social democratic,” which was perceived primarily as a question of tactics and strategy, and not of ideological position in terms of left and right. According to a national legislator of the IDN faction,

You should know that when they [NI] declared themselves to be social democrats, Andrés called upon us to have a meeting, because he was afterwards going to hold an assembly of the Convención Nacional Democrática, and he used the occasion to answer this declaration of having erected themselves as social democrats. Andrés told us that this thing of a ‘moderate left’ and of social democrats, this is only about the ones who want to sound good in the media, and in reality are endorsing everything that the right does. So don’t be worried or surprised, because they will even play victims, like they are now with Ruth Zavaleta, and are always going to label us as of the worst. Because of this, this ting of “social democracy” or “socialism,” it is not important, it doesn’t exist, it has never flourished, and moreover it is about losing identity… In this occasion he (AMLO) told us that precisely by assuming as social democrats they were losing identity and playing the game once more of the right, because they can deal if a ‘modern’ left, modern, that
would be ready for dialogue, and that we could not accept this. They were there, they were in the first line, they left upset, and, fine, Andrés fortunately told them this.160

What is particularly noteworthy is that a significant section of the PRD elites regard AMLO not to be clearly a political leader of the left. While this also applies to some of his supporters, his opponents in primarily NI emphasize what they regard as his conservative traits. One federal deputy with a long trajectory on the political left before the PRD was founded, particularly noted what he called nationalist features of AMLO:

Now, there are those on the left who do not believe in gradualism. But, I would not venture to think that López Obrador is a man of the left. He has features of the left, he has reformist features, and he has features of a conservative, of this conservatism of the PRI. And López Obrador is not a person strictly of the left; he is a person who claims to be nationalist. This nationalism is the nationalism originating from General [Lázaro] Cárdenas, from Benito Juárez, the defense of the interests of the nation. This is fine, but this defense of the poor, it is beyond socialism, beyond statism, beyond the theoretical conception strictly left or socialist. Because he does not have this political formation. In spite of that we studied the same – him and I studied in the same faculty of political science at UNAM – I see him shaped by these nationalist features more than any socialist features and… for example, with abortion, with abortion he didn’t want to be involved. He didn’t get involved; Marcelo Ebrard did. He said, “wait a little.” Nor did he want to enter into the discussion of [the law of] cohabitation.161

AMLO’s opposition to the Mexico City legislature’s push for social reformism such as offering legal rights to same-sex couples was a point noted by several. According to a former national deputy,

Did you know that Andrés Manuel personally blocked the approval of the same-sex unions in 2003? He colluded to do so. Ok, this is confidential, but…through Encinas he colluded with four or five city legislators here in the local congress so that they would go to the bathroom or whatever, but so that one would lose the vote in the ALDF. Because one must never fight with the cardinal. He didn’t want to fight with the cardinal, or the church.162

The emphasis of Mexican nationalism rather than placing the political struggle in an international context was a point used by several perredistas to illustrate what they regarded to AMLO’s lack of interest in international affairs.163 As president of the PRD, AMLO had openly declared he did not see the point of having a secretary of international relations on the party’s national executive committee. Also, while CCS has travelled extensively in Latin America and is highly regarded and known among the international left, AMLO has showed little interest in international affairs. As party president of the PRD, he reportedly passed up a meeting with U.S.

160 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Feb. 6, 2008.
162 Confidential interview, PRD central corriente member, Dec. 6, 2007.
163 The writer Enrique Krauze, a harsh critic of AMLO who before the election coined the term “Tropical Messiah” to describe the presidential candidate, wrote that “López Obrador would repeat tirelessly that his project was of the ‘left.’ He would never feel the necessity to explain the significance of this word in a world following the fall of the Soviet empire, a world in which China is the rising star of the market economy. But this is natural: The world is not interesting for López Obrador” (Krauze 2006, 17).
President Bill Clinton, who wanted to meet all of Mexico’s party leaders during a visit to Mexico. One former deputy of the PRD offered a more recent anecdote:

Marco Aurelio García of the [Brazilian] PT, whom I have known for many years, came with a personal letter from Lula about the matter of the desafuero. Marco Aurelio came with the ambassador to Brazil to visit Andrés and personally hand over the letter, a greeting from Lula and his solidarity, but he didn’t receive them. I wanted to… because moreover, I was the one who had arranged it. I wanted to die of shame!

One of the leaders of NI drew a clear connection between AMLO’s ideological positions, and his lack of interest in international affairs.

The left is not nationalist and even less so chauvinist; the left is internationalist. It is the same struggle, the left is international par excellence, and here is a great problem: I respect Andrés Manuel in many respects, but this is something I do not share with him, this isolationism, when he says that “the best foreign policy is to have an efficient interior policy,” meaning that one does not need to link oneself to the world.

Many also note the exclusive grounding of AMLO’s ideology in Mexican history, above all the rule of Benito Juárez, the Mexican Revolution, and the 1934-1940 presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas. According to a central member of the Movimiento,

He denies totally to define himself as left, as a socialist. Andrés Manuel is not afraid, as a matter of fact he says it very clearly, in the discourse of Andrés Manuel he will say that he is of the left, but if you ask him to tell you what it means… or if you read in his discourse what left is, it is a concept of the left that has more in common with the defense of sovereignty, with Benito Juárez, right?

A left intellectual with a long trajectory in the PRD added,

Andrés Manuel does not express the ideology of the Socialist International; he does not express the principles of the Socialist International; he does not seek to do it, because he has no problems of identity. He is a politician profoundly anchored in this side of patriotic and revolutionary nationalism, which carries him to the ultimate consequences in the fight against foreign domination in our country, against the privatization of energy, congruent with the principles of revolutionary nationalism in this side, including congruent with what was the economic policy of the government of general Cárdenas and the cardenistas. In economic policy it is a moderate posture, removed from any left radicalism.

If AMLO’s program was not radical, why is he nonetheless regarded a political radical? One national deputy of the PRD argued that his “radicalness” above all pertained to his disregard for political parties, and preference for mass movements, which in 2004-2005 had played a central role in defending his later presidential candidacy.

What I can tell you is that, first, López Obrador is not a socialist, nor a person of the left. He is a nationalist who fights for what he says is the people. He does not believe in parties, but in the movement, and he believes in the mobilized people; he believes in the power of the mobilized people. This is the power, and this will take him wherever he wants to go. When they wanted to strip him of his immunity and impeach him, it was this mobilization that saved him… He wants to

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165 Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Jan. 15, 2008.
166 Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Dec. 6, 2007.
167 Confidential interview, PRD central member, Jan. 17, 2008.
be a martyr, he feels he is illuminated, he feels he is an illuminated man, a charismatic man, an illuminated leader, born to make history.\textsuperscript{168}

More paradoxes abound. AMLO, following the 2006 protests, went to great lengths to dissuade his supporters from changing the focus of the protests from the non-violent to the violent. Nonetheless, AMLO’s seeming all-or-nothing approach toward legislative reform, where gradual changes are dismissed as useless in favor of a more “profound” transformation is, from an institutional point of view, radical. It is also anti-institutional, as existing institutional frameworks are dismissed as inadequate, and reform dismissed in favor of an entirely new setup.

Moreover, not only is AMLO perceived as a radical, but as a result of the post-electoral protests, so is the PRD. According to a national deputy of the PRD,

People here in Mexico do not want a guerrilla, no, it frightens them, we are not ready to set ourselves on fire, we don’t want this, but with Andrés Manuel it is all against all, and if someone makes a small step back, then this not a good member, through him out. He proposes something, and if someone says it is good, everything is fine, but if you say no to this, then you as well are of no use. It is, then, a totalitarian attitude. White or black, there are no shades for him in society, in politics. In the world there are shades, it cannot be all good or all bad. That is, it seems to me that, for example in every initiative, the judicial reform, there are many good things, but also bad things, right? But it is not all against or all in favor… and these positions do not convince, they do not convince the citizenry, the party, they don’t convince the public institutions, and this is what makes us start to isolate itself and this is not… and then they start to say that it is not Andrés Manuel, it is the PRD itself, it is the PRD that is crazy. Before it was ‘Andrés Manuel is crazy,’ but now, no, now it is the PRD; it is an anti-establishment party.\textsuperscript{169}

One national deputy of the Cívicos suggested that AMLO’s confrontational, “with-me-or-against-me” approach served a distinct instrumental function, which is to polarize politics into followers and opponents, in order to ensure the loyalty of the former:

What Andres Manuel did was in his vision to entrench himself in this movement, to tighten the ropes. But I think this is incorrect to say that the only manner I have to pressure them so that they don’t go for the other side, is to make things more tense and radicalize the position from this side, so that the others pull toward here, and don’t go to the other side. I do not agree with this.\textsuperscript{170}

One of AMLO’s own advisers in the FAP largely assented, and also pointed to the dangers of this approach, or becoming ensnared in a logic of confrontation, pushed by radical supporters as much as pulled by AMLO himself,

I think that Andres Manuel, in order to satisfy his followers, is becoming radicalized, I think he is a negotiator who carries things to the extreme; he tightens the string to the maximum in order to be able to raise his sails. But he ends up committing a mistake because what this is generating…he is generating tensions, hurting egos, hurting personal relations, so therefore in the end he is going to have to go back/retrace everything, because if the entire objective was only to be able to negotiate from a condition of strength, there could be other people who took it all to be serious, and now wants to hear nothing else…. I think he can get trapped in his own logic. I think that he still has the possibility to negotiate well, but he is so emphatic in his struggle against any

\textsuperscript{168} Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Oct. 31, 2007.
\textsuperscript{169} Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Feb. 26, 2008.
\textsuperscript{170} Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 20, 2007.
negotiation with the government within the left itself, that the moment will arrive when perhaps he will remain trapped in his discourse.171

One NI member on the PRD CEN noted what he regarded an increasing resistance to change and correct strategies, and notably pointed to the issue of the petroleum reform, which then lay a year ahead in the future:

Andrés Manuel is a fox; he is a strategist. The problem is that before I saw Andrés with a very strong capacity to correct, when things were not going well, he was capable of rectifying but now…. Now I feel he doesn’t find the bridge to rectify; this is the matter. It is like he burned his ships and cannot find the path to rectify, even though his strategy is not giving him results. Because of this, he sees in the matter of the petroleum an opportunity to take, and to say, ‘look, I was right.’ Andrés is absolutely emotive, or he wants to put it like this, white or while, so whatever thing you would like to negotiate, he will tell you that you are opening the door to the enemy. Because he does not want an agreement.172

One legislator said that AMLO had “returned to all this,” or the movement-advocacy upon which he had built his political career in Tabasco, as he was considered to have been a very moderate president of the PRD. One of the principal leaders of NI who worked on AMLO’s national executive committee disagreed, noting that the attitude was highly consistent with AMLO’s thinking. The difference, pointedly, was about winning or losing elections:

If he had won clearly in 2006, I have no doubts he would have been very plural, very open. But the problem is, as Felipe González used to say, that democrats are not measured in victories; they are measured in the defeat. And Andrés Manuel has not turned out well in his behavior in the electoral defeats; he has been won over more by emotion than by reason in the juncture of defeat: He has not taken well the electoral defeats.173

PRD’s de jure national president overshadowed by PRD’s de facto leader

Cota did what Andres said, and later, when we met in the CEN, we would realize that the decision had already been made.174
- Member of PRD’s national executive committee, Feb. 2008.

AMLO is very authoritarian, and I think this is also attributable to what I told you about Leonel [Cota], it is like common denominator, for those who do not come originally from the left.175

It is a characteristic of personalistic movement-parties that the top leadership is not institutionalized, and more often than not, real power lies not with the party’s elected leader, as former leaders or “strongmen” continue to exercise what is often decisive influence over party matters. This trait is particularly clear in the case of the PRD.

171 Confidential interview, FAP central member, Jan. 24, 2008.
175 Confidential interview, PRD senator, Feb. 21, 2008.
Even though CCS had not been official PRD president since 1993, he would remain the party’s most important single member – and, according to many perredistas, the PRD’s true leader – for another decade. Similarly, AMLO was PRD president only from 1996 to 1999, but as mayor of Mexico City, sailed up as the PRD’s de facto leader. While the 2000-2002 presidency of Amalia García was ineffectual and undistinguished, Rosario Robles brought the party to near financial ruin and wreaked havoc on its organization. Considered the candidate of CCS, her fall was to a great extent also his. While CCS was still regarded by many as the PRD’s “moral leader” – a term once coined by PML when he was party president to signal CCS’ continued dominant role in the party – by 2003, AMLO had become the PRD’s de facto leader.

The end of the Robles presidency and CCS’ reduced influence allowed AMLO to place his preferred candidates Leonel Cota and Martí Batres as presidents of the national and Mexico City party branch respectively, though he broke earlier promises to not interfere. But AMLO’s hegemony over the party and its official leadership would not bring stability to the PRD. The continued fall-out with CCS and many of his supporters – CCS only very reluctantly stepped down from what would have been his fourth try at the presidency – was noted by many members of the PRD’s elite as a significant cause of the PRD’s instability, and even official loss.

Later, CCS would openly criticize AMLO for his refusal to accept defeat in the 2006 election, as well as his decision to proclaim himself legitimate president, in the first interview he gave following the 2006 election:

I: Do you approve that López Obrador rejects institutions and does not recognize Felipe Calderón as president-elect?
CCS: It is a grave mistake that may have a high cost for the PRD and the democratic movement. I am worried about the current situation of confrontation...
I: How do you judge that López Obrador has named himself “legitimate president”?
CCS: I don’t think one should proceed this way. It is a grave mistake that will have a very high cost for the PRD, and the democratic movement around it. One must respect the institutions. The path of confrontation, to destroy and not respect a constitutional order, will not give the best results for the country.

CCS would receive much criticism from sectors of the party for not having participated actively in the 2006 campaign, as well as his acceptance of Calderón as the election’s winner. According to a central member of the corriente REDIR, the notion that CCS had in a way “betrayed” AMLO remained strong with several party members:

He was not supportive with the campaign of Andrés. Anything could have happened with the campaign if el ingeniero, despite his phobias, had joined in what was the essential of a campaign that was not just Andrés, but which was of the left and the progressive people in this country. The

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176 Castillo (1996, 16).
177 The interim party presidency of Leonel Godoy, though uniformly praised by perredistas of all sections of the party, was primarily concerned with damage control after Robles’ term ended abruptly.
178 La actuación de López Obrador golpeó a la Izquierda. La Vanguardia, 2006.
figure of the engineer would have grown, I am not exaggerating when I say almost of the size of his father, but unfortunately he did not have the magnanimity needed... he was not present in the campaign, and his isolated criticism and disqualifications weighed even more. And moreover, if one is to sum it up, I thing if he had joined decisively against the fraud, he could have given the weight we required to win despite everything.179

According to federal legislator from Izquierda Social, this had also reduced further the influence of CCS in the PRD:

The truth is that for many militants, and it hurts to say so, but Cárdenas already does not represent more than an important episode in the history of the struggle for political and social rights in the country, but nothing more, and he didn’t know how to control his personal weaknesses. Envy is something very egoistic; political jealousy is something that does not suit a statesman, and for his he is not a statesman.180

Writer Elena Poniatowska, for example, claimed in La Jornada that CCS, as well as Marcos of the EZLN, “didn’t help AMLO out of envy.”181 In a heated response, however, CCS repeated his earlier critiques of what he regarded AMLO’s lack of left credentials, but particularly that he had surrounded himself with people signaled as responsible for executing and whitewashing the 1988 fraud.182

The fall-out was interpreted differently by the various party sectors. One central member of IDN considered CCS’ lack of support to be tantamount to treason:

I think the strongest accusation against a politician is that you are a traitor to your project, this is the hardest one, because one can accuse you of being ingenuous, a lazy bum, of not doing your tasks, but traitor is another thing, a traitor is he who is aware that he is going against what he claims to represent, it has a very emotive load, socially very harsh. Because people may forgive you for being a bastard, but they cannot forgive that you are a traitor. Because of this Cárdenas stopped being what he was, because when we needed him the most in the desafuero he went with Fox, and people were not born yesterday; to the people Cárdenas is a traitor.183

The contentious relationship between CCS and AMLO should not, however, serve to obscure the fact that until around 2003, the two traditional strongmen of the PRD agreed on most party matters, and had very similar programmatic and organizational visions of the PRD. As a former deputy of the PRD noted, “One is the political student of the other.” CCS’ support of AMLO in 1996 was important for the latter’s victory in that year’s internal election, and both were considered to emphasize a movement-like organization over that of a more traditional party. Both, moreover, were explicit in their rejection to define themselves in terms of left and right.

This, however, began to change, and as what was from the beginning primarily a personal rivalry would later reveal increasingly diverging political orientations. For one, while he had eschewed a left-right categorization for years, CCS would in 2005 criticize AMLO for not

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181 Marcos y Cárdenas no apoyaron a AMLO por envidia. La Jornada, Sept. 10, 2006.
presenting a program clearly of the political left, and he would deem the “lack of a candidacy of the left” a major reason for the PRD’s loss in 2006.184

But the real break between the two party founders came with the desafuero protests in 2004-2005, when CCS was signaled as not being sufficiently supportive of AMLO’s defense.

According to a PRD deputy, “the two have a conception of authority that has much to do with the priista matrix.”185 When seen against the background of the personalistic movement-party, it is also a clear testament to the difficulties of transferring power within parties that are tied intimately to personalistic leaderships, and where the official process for selecting new leaders is hardly respected.

By 2000, AMLO was already a rising star in the party, and with his victory in 2000, and CCS’ defeat in that year’s presidential election, he was early sailing up as a candidate for the presidential nomination. Despite having lost three times, CCS insisted on internal elections. One PRD member with intimate knowledge of the process gave a balanced appraisal of the enveloping confrontation between the PRD’s two de facto leaders for its existence:

For the 2006 candidacy, an internal election never took place, because when they made opinion polls, Andrés Manuel had a preference of more than 90 percent among the base, so it was very complicated. So from then on el ingeniero starts to distance himself very strongly from López Obrador, who is now assuming as the grand leader of the PRD. And he knows this. Then, when the party needed to choose a new president, Andrés Manuel brought and imposed his candidate, and it was Leonel Cota. That is, here Andrés Manuel demonstrated that he had the control of the party. El ingeniero got really mad (se encabrona). He got very angry, and distanced himself from López Obrador, and then the desafuero came. Here the problem is that Cuauhtémoc evaded giving his support, when everyone else was in the street defending López Obrador. He was saying, “well, but one needs to investigate and follow the law,” and then people became angry with Cuauhtémoc, and López Obrador started to strongly reproach against him. In the last march against the desafuero, the one that was decisive, when a million people came out in the streets, el ingeniero decided to come to the march, with all the historic leaders of the party marching arm in arm. Pablo Gómez took him by the arm and I saw how the people responded, and 90 percent applauded, “bravo, ingeniero, how good that you are here,” but three or four insulted him. And this was sufficient for him to leave, that is, he left the march. Later, when the issue of the desafuero was resolved, we encouraged Cuauhtémoc and Andrés Manuel to meet, to hug and reconcile, and I think at this point Cuauhtémoc was conscious that he had committed an error when he evaded giving him support, when López Obrador was becoming the grand leader and candidate. And Cuauhtémoc told us, he told Pablo Gómez “I am disposed to meet with López Obrador,” and we resolved for others to tell Andrés Manuel, “the engineer is ready, why don’t you reconcile,” but Andrés Manuel responded, “No. Now I am the one who doesn’t want to,” and I understand because he felt offended. But Andrés Manuel has much blame, and seemed to express that this is the way Cuauhtémoc had been in the beginning of the party when he was the great leader, the caudillo. And now it was his turn. And López Obrador says no, and the problem is that he was already a candidate, and the campaign had started, with him much ahead of the others. But I think that it was also up to Cuauhtémoc to say, at least to say, “one must vote for López Obrador.” But

he didn’t even say this. The only thing that he said was that “I voted for the candidates of my party.” He didn’t defend López Obrador in the fraud; he didn’t call for people to vote for him, he never appeared in a campaign act, so when after July 2, with Cuauhtémoc saying, “for me there was no fraud,” or relativizing it, even more so as a functionary of Fox ahead of the bicentenary celebrations, then obviously… people felt betrayed by him.186

The weakening of CCS’ clout in the PRD throughout 2003-2005 helped AMLO greatly in his quest to plant two loyal collaborators, Leonel Cota and Martí Batres, as head of the national and DF branches of the PRD respectively, sidelining CCS.

Although Cota would oversee the PRD’s most successful election results in history, he was in general regarded to be subordinate of the de facto leader of the party, its presidential candidate, and was by many characterized as a “pawn” whose main task was merely to keep the party in control. One principal leader of NI suggested that Cota was neither a compromise nor consensus candidate, but was hastily agreed upon as a temporary candidate pushed by AMLO:

The problem is that Cota was elected president of the party for the purpose of the presidential election of Andrés Manuel. He was not elected or named to project the party forward, to strengthen it. He was a product of circumstances, and of thinking that we were going to win the election, so Cota never thought that he would be president at those dates, he was thinking that in July Andrés Manuel would win and that he would go to a cabinet position and the PRD, well, let’s see what happens, in a manner that a president with this vision naturally is not going to be an effective one. This is as well part of the dilemma that we have now, if we want a president who is attentive to what Andrés Manuel says and is subject to what he says, or if we want a president who does what the party wants and what the party decides, and I think the second.187

One PRD member who actively opposed Cota’s candidacy regarded the PRD’s agreement to AMLO’s candidate a reflection of the party’s “caudillismo,” and of a desire to remain on good terms with the person likely to be Mexico’s new president:

I’ll tell you that when Andrés Manuel designated Cota to be the president to fight for the path toward 2006, all the forces were in verbal disagreement, but in one month they joined in because Andrés Manuel was almost surely the president, and one had to be thinking in not getting into a fight with this sure-to-be president in order to be in the new government… All the talk of the autonomy of the party, that we should not submit to intentions of a leader that may come – caudillismo – all this one forgot in just a few days, and soon they were there with him.188

This contention was confirmed by a central member of the corriente ADN, who further criticized Cota’s leadership as largely reduced to “following the commands of AMLO”:

For the 2006 context, we considered it right because what we were fighting for was the presidency of the republic, so Andrés Manuel had to be in complete freedom to achieve the ends; nobody could, from the party, be a miser in this sense, and restrict him. But as it turned out, Leonel Cota, although Andrés Manuel had much confidence in him, is not a character that has really bothered with the party. No, he knew he was there just to control it, and that once we had won the presidency, his idea was to take up a cabinet position, to go for this. And he has not excelled at

being a full leader of the party, and because of this we have this crisis we are now living through.\textsuperscript{189}

In general, while several \textit{perredistas} acknowledged that Cota had contributed to holding an increasingly fractured party together during his 2005-2008 presidency, most were critical in their general assessment of this leadership. One leading member of the Movimiento argued in 2007 that “the problem we have with our president is that it is an inexistent president.”\textsuperscript{190} Another PRD deputy argued that this had benefited the group of Jesús Ortega: “[Cota] is a president with little capacity of decision and presence, which has easily been compensated by NI.”\textsuperscript{191}

Some emphasized Cota’s relatively short tenure in the PRD – he joined the party in 1998 only after losing the PRI’s nomination as candidate for governor of Baja California Sur – as a further reason for what was denounced as his authoritarian manners of leading the party. According to a national senator,

\begin{quote}
He has no roots in the PRD, and led the party as an extension of the gubernatorial practice, that is, in an authoritarian manner, giving instructions – instructions to do what he said just because he said so. One listened to this, one complied with it but, we didn’t really have discussion about them, and in a party like ours, democratic even in its name, this doesn’t work. So there I think he failed.\textsuperscript{192}
\end{quote}

Finally, several members of the PRD’s elite noted that under Cota, the PRD was increasingly subordinated to AMLO’s movement and his new creations, the Legitimate Government, and the National Democratic Convention. According to one member of the PRD CEN,

\begin{quote}
This is what happened with Cota: The path of the party was always subordinated to the decisions of Andrés Manuel, whether you call it the \textit{Convención Nacional Democrática}, whether you call it the \textit{Frente Amplio}, whatever it is called, and linked to the \textit{gobierno legítimo}, which in the end never allowed the PRD to grow as a party. This is what I saw; he did not allow the PRD to mature and to grow as a party, he was always over there, handcuffed, and all the decisions had to do with this, with what Andrés Manuel regarded should be the path of the party.\textsuperscript{193}
\end{quote}

\textbf{Two watershed state elections: Tabasco 2006, and Michoacán 2007}

The absence of López Obrador in the Michoacán campaign was noticeable; this was very clear.\textsuperscript{194}

\begin{flushright}
-Principal PRD founder, Dec. 2007
\end{flushright}

He didn’t go to Michoacán and we won, he went to Puebla and we lost, he went to Tlaxcala and we lost. Nonetheless, I think it would be very cruel to say this was because he went there, I don’t think that is correct.\textsuperscript{195}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{189} Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 9, 2007.
\textsuperscript{190} Confidential interview, PRD central member, Nov. 27, 2007.
\textsuperscript{191} Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Jan. 11, 2008.
\textsuperscript{192} Confidential interview, PRD senator, Feb. 21, 2008.
\textsuperscript{193} Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Feb. 14, 2008.
\textsuperscript{194} Confidential interview, PRD founder, Dec. 6, 2007.
\textsuperscript{195} Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 15, 2007.
By the end of 2007, AMLO had already signed more than a million Mexicans as “adherents” to his national government; by the following year, the number was reportedly doubled. Yet while many associated these trips with the PRD, they went beyond the party. Moreover, many within the PRD were highly skeptical of the real value of AMLO’s giras, as the PRD appeared to reap little or no electoral benefits. Whereas AMLO’s presence in 2006 had clearly lifted the PRD to new electoral heights, his post-July 2 activism appeared not to have had the same effect.

Causes of electoral defeats are multiple, and one should moreover be careful to extrapolate too much from one single election. In the first state elections to be held after July 2 debacle, moreover, in Chiapas on Aug. 20, 2006, the PRD won the governorship with almost 47 percent of the vote, although it should be noted that its candidate Juan Sabines, son of a former governor, had been a PRI member up until that very year.

Even so, the last state election held in 2006, and the last state election of 2007, deserve particular attention given the actors involved and the lessons they drew from it, as well as their locations: Tabasco, AMLO’s home state, and Michoacán, the cradle of both cardenismo and the PRD. While PRD’s candidate Leonel Godoy in Michoacán was arguably a much stronger candidate than the PRD’s candidate in Tabasco, César Raúl Ojeda in Tabasco, the party’s decisive victory in the former contest and its loss in the latter represented both symbolically and substantially a notable change in the PRD’s strategies and orientation: A sharp turn away from confrontation, the return of CCS in its active campaigning of CCS in favor of Godoy, and the absence of AMLO in the campaign.

In 2006, despite intensive campaigning by AMLO on his behalf, Ojeda lost decisively in the Oct. 15 election to become the new governor of Tabasco. A significant number of perredistas argued that the results were much due to growing resentment toward the PRD’s radical tactics of street blockades and mass mobilizations. The result can thus be read as the first instance of the decreasing electoral gains of the PRD’s movement tactics

In Tabasco, Raúl Ojeda, a former priísta first recruited to the PRD by AMLO himself, lost against PRI’s Andrés Granier by almost 10 points.196 Fernando Moreno Peña, a member of PRI’s national secretariat, laconically summed up the election: “Andrés Manuel López Obrador is like the elephants. He came to die in his land.”197

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>AMLO 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chiapas</td>
<td>Aug. 20, 2006</td>
<td>Governor Local</td>
<td>46.98</td>
<td>553,270(^{198})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabasco</td>
<td>Oct. 15, 2006</td>
<td>Governor Local</td>
<td>42.15, 42.17</td>
<td>355,669(^{199}), 356,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatán</td>
<td>May 20, 2007</td>
<td>Governor Local</td>
<td>2.66, 3.82</td>
<td>22,496, 32,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chihuahua</td>
<td>July 1, 2007</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>40,390(^{200})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango</td>
<td>July 1, 2007</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>22,141, 22.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacatecas</td>
<td>July 1, 2007</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>31.38</td>
<td>165,501, 35.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aguascalientes</td>
<td>Aug. 5, 2007</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>6.87</td>
<td>22,400, 21.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baja California</td>
<td>Aug. 5, 2007</td>
<td>Governor Local</td>
<td>2.32, 2.53</td>
<td>20,003, 21,830(^{201})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oaxaca</td>
<td>Aug. 5, 2007</td>
<td>Local deputies Municipalities</td>
<td>23.39</td>
<td>201,915(^{202})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veracruz</td>
<td>Sept. 2, 2007</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>10.47</td>
<td>273,497, 35.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiapas</td>
<td>Oct. 7, 2007</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>32.17</td>
<td>493,712, 43.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michoacán</td>
<td>Nov. 11, 2007</td>
<td>Governor State</td>
<td>37.87, 32.32</td>
<td>551,340(^{204}), 477,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puebla</td>
<td>Nov. 11, 2007</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>10.86</td>
<td>200,487, 32.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaulipas</td>
<td>Nov. 11, 2007</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>6.05, 2.36</td>
<td>68,579, 26,764(^{205})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tlaxcala</td>
<td>Nov. 11, 2007</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>20.02</td>
<td>86,610, 44.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.6: PRD state election results after July 2, 2006 through 2007.\(^{206}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party List</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percent(^{207})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>Andrés Granier Melo</td>
<td>436,836</td>
<td>51.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Por el Bien de Todos</em> and PASC.(^{208})</td>
<td>César Raúl Ojeda Zubieta</td>
<td>355,669</td>
<td>42.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>Francisco Cáceres de la Fuente</td>
<td>29,616</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Verde Ecologista de México</td>
<td>Pascual Bellizzia Rosique</td>
<td>4,099</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Nueva Alianza</td>
<td>Manuel Paz Ojeda</td>
<td>1,566</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.7: Tabasco gubernatorial election, Oct. 15, 2006.\(^{209}\)

\(^{198}\) With PT and *Convergencia*.

\(^{199}\) With PT, *Convergencia*, and PASC.

\(^{200}\) With PT and *Convergencia*. Results for election of local deputies.

\(^{201}\) Results for election of municipalities.

\(^{202}\) Results for election of municipalities, held separately on Oct. 7, 2007.

\(^{203}\) Sum of two coalitions, PRT-PT-*Convergencia*, and PRD-PT-*Convergencia*-PVEM. Local deputies.

\(^{204}\) Results for coalition of PRD-PT-*Convergencia*-PAS.

\(^{205}\) In six additional districts, PRD-PT had a coalition. Figures reflect vote in these districts.

\(^{206}\) Own calculations based on a variety of news articles, state electoral institutes, and data from secretariat of electoral affairs, PRD. Unless noted, results are for election of local deputies of SMD districts. These results closely mirror those from the PR lists, as well as votes for municipalities. Percentage is total votes, including null and non-registered candidates.

\(^{207}\) Percentage of total votes, including null votes and non-registered candidates.

\(^{208}\) Founded in 2005, the *Partido Social Demócrata* was known as *Partido Alternativa Socialdemócrata y Campesina* until 2007, and until 2008 as *Partido Alternativa Socialdemócrata*. It achieved 1,128,850 votes, or 2.7 percent, for its 2006 presidential candidate.
The PRD, including general secretary Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo of NI, dismissed the suggestion that defeat represented “the end of AMLO,” and pointed to the level of repression from the state government as the culprit. The elections were indeed filled with irregularities and outright violence committed chiefly against PRD activist, and many local members in particular were brutally beaten up by the police and held incommunicado in the state capital of Villahermosa. When Horacio Duarte, the party’s national representative to the IFE, and PRD’s human rights lawyer, tried to gain access to the detainees, he was evicted by force. Senator Rosario Ibarra, a historic human rights activist and president of the Commission of Human Rights in the Senate, and PRD’s group leader in the Senate, Carlos Navarrete, called on PRI governor Manuel Andrade Díaz, to stop the repression, and party leader Leonel Cota demanded the deployment of the Mexican army to stop the harassment of PRD activists by the local police. Several prominent national lawmakers such as Senator Rosalinda Hernández were attacked and tear gassed by police and riot troops; some, such as Nancy Cárdenas, PRD legislator in the Mexico City legislature, were also arrested, though held on no charges. Jesús Ortega, leader of Nueva Izquierda and rarely prone to make dramatic declarations, raged,

It is a barbaric and primitive attitude that we have not seen for many years in this party. It was an election rigged by the state, where one used public force to assault citizens, above all in those municipalities where we were in the lead.

The PRD impugned the election to the TEPJF, which accepted that irregularities had taken place but annulled only seven ballot boxes, not enough to alter the election. Yet the PRD’s candidate Ojeda, while noting the irregularities, also admitted that the final results did not favor the PRD. The PRD won half of all legislative seats for local congress, yet the party lost four municipalities, winning only seven against the PRI’s ten. Particularly bitter was the fact that the PRD lost in the town of Tepetitán, no less than the birthplace of AMLO, as well as in the Galaxias neighborhood in Villahermosa, where he has his Tabasco residence.

209 Source: Final data after TEPJF verdict, from Instituto Electoral y de Participación Ciudadana de Tabasco, www.iepct.org.mx
211 Se reditó la tortura de los 60 y 70: Lucano Herrera. La Jornada, Oct. 17, 2006.
212 Llama Rosario Ibarra a Andrade a que cese la represión en contra de perredistas. La Jornada, Oct. 17, 2006.
213 Xenofobia, tensión, violencia y robo de urnas, la tónica que imperó en Tabasco. La Jornada, Oct. 16, 2006.
216 Instituto Electoral y de Participación Ciudadana de Tabasco. www.iepct.org.mx/
Plenty of ammunition was found for those who claimed the Tabasco loss was an indication of the waning influence of AMLO. AMLO had indeed personally taken over Ojeda’s campaign on Aug. 26, and had for the three weeks campaigned actively on his behalf.217 This led the national magazine *Proceso* to declare, ahead of the election, that the outcome “would define the viability of the project headed by Andrés Manuel López Obrador.”218

Yet while most *perredistas* at least officially dismissed that the result meant the end of AMLO, many did admit that the campaign had been run poorly, with an unpopular candidate. Ojeda, a wealthy businessman of PRI origins, had little supporters within the PRD, and had twice already tried to gain the governorship. AMLO was now the active promoter of his third attempt, a move that was greatly opposed within the PRD.219 According to a PRD member actively involved in the Tabasco campaign, there were also advanced negotiations for Andrés Granier, the eventual winner, to run as the PRD’s candidate rather than PRI’s, as he had the support of many local PRD leaders.220

But the campaign was also a further indictment on the *Redes Ciudadanas*, which were operating in 17 electoral districts. It was reported that many had actually switched their loyalty to the PRI candidate, in yet another indication of the feeble loyalty of these extra-party networks.221

Nor was the burgeoning internal conflict in the PRD absent from the Tabasco election. The group NI, considered AMLO’s principal internal opponent in the party, had sent several of its national legislator to Tabasco to help with the campaign. Indeed, even *La Jornada*, a leftwing newspaper as critical of NI as it is uncritical of AMLO, wrote that “The legislators who were tossed around on electoral day, and the PRD militants who were jailed and tortured, are in their majority, members of NI.”222 Even so, however, many NI members would later complain of their exclusion from the AMLO-led campaign. According to a national senator from the PRD,

Many of us went to help in Tabasco. “Fine, so they already robbed us that one, but this one, no!” We went with many people from *Nueva Izquierda* to help and everything…. But they told us that everything was already done; and minimized us; they didn’t give us any information; they didn’t allow us to act. They blocked us.”223

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219 Lost 1997 nomination in to a municipal presidency, and then left the PRI. He was also implicated with Carlos Ahumada, having received money for his legislative campaign. Jesusa Cervantes: Los Enredos de Döring. *Proceso*, no. 1428 (March 14, 2004): 12-13.
220 Confidential interview, central PRD member, Feb. 12, 2008.
223 Confidential interview, PRD senator, Feb. 21, 2008.
NI would also draw a clear lesson from the electoral defeat. While not blaming AMLO directly, members of NI did read the results as a rejection of PRD’s strategy of mobilization employed almost continually since July 2, 2006. One member of the PRD’s CEN argued,

To opt for destabilization is until now not electorally profitable; on the contrary, you pay electoral costs for the logic of rupture. This logic costs us; it made us lose Tabasco, when he already had it bagged.224

In particular representatives from NI, but also from corrientes such as ADN and the Movimiento, regarded the party’s continued losses throughout 2007 – with the single exception of the last election of the year, Michoacán – as a result of general rejection of the PRD’s tactic. Furthermore, while the PRD’s historic high vote in 2006 owed much to AMLO’s candidacy, AMLO’s intensive touring of Mexico’s municipalities appeared to have little effect on the PRD vote in 2007. To use one example: Ahead of the Nov. 11, 2007 state election in Puebla, AMLO had held meetings in every single municipality in the state. Yet the PRD would only pull 10.86 percent of the vote, having lost nearly two out of three voters from its 2006 election results.

According to a principal founder of the PRD,

This tour that [AMLO] is doing now to create a movement – this is what we are in any case seeing – had no electoral impact. That is, the states and municipalities where there has been presence of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, we have just had very recently, next to the election in Michoacán, the election in Puebla, and there he toured the 217 municipalities of the state. And this was one of the most important news stories in the days close to the election, but the electoral result was not… I’ll just say that there was presence in 217 municipalities and the electoral result was very poor. 225

Some, such as a PRD legislator from Michoacán, argued that AMLO’s continued mobilizations, either through the National Democratic Convention, or the Legitimate Government, had indeed become a liability for the party:

Andrés Manuel can travel around the country and make criticism, as this is pressuring the government, but trying to strengthen the image of the party and not to weaken it. Because to me it appears in moment that he is weakening the image. All the strength that he transferred to the party, in the same manner that he gave this, his is now taking it away.226

It remained clear that the “moderates” and “radicals” within the PRD would nonetheless draw very different lessons from the Tabasco loss and subsequent losses in 2007. While the former group took the electoral results to signal a clear rejection of the confrontational approach, the latter group pushed for further emphasis on the movement and its tactics of mobilization. The comments from one of the principal “radical” agitators loyal to AMLO are highly perceptive in this regard:

To me something impressive happened when the plantón was here in Mexico City last year. We went to Tabasco, where they did these atrocities to us… they did what they had not done for a long time, which was to kidnap our compañeros. It was a very brutal case, and I returned

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convinced that we had to go with everything against Calderón, and I met with [Manuel] Camacho, and I commented to him what happened in Tabasco, and he said, ‘no, now more than ever we need to negotiate reforms, to make changes,’ and I… what is striking is that with the same situation, our conclusions would be completely opposite. Every part, in every event, strengthens one’s viewpoint rather than reconsidering the matter.227

Upon the PRD’s electoral victory in Michoacán in November 2007, PRD’s Saúl Escobar noted that the results “allowed the party to close the year with a victory after little satisfactory results” (Escobar Toledo 2007, 64). It was hardly an overstatement. Before Michoacán, the PRD had not won one single state election in 16 months. In states such as Yucatán, Chihuahua, Durango, Baja California, and Sinaloa, the PRD’s election results, when compared with July 2, 2006, had been particularly disastrous, achieving less than a quarter of AMLO’s 2006 votes. As the cradle of cardenismo and the PRD’s historic bastion, an additional defeat in Michoacán would have dealt a disastrous blow to the party.

Yet the PRD election in Michoacán was also significant for two other major developments: One the one hand, it signaled the return of CCS to an active role within the PRD. AMLO, while actively touring Mexico’s municipalities, did not show up for any campaign event. As governor-elect Godoy would stress at a meeting in the PRD’s national council, the victory belonged to the entire party, and not one particular corriente, and was therefore a great victory for its unity.228 Yet with AMLO’s conspicuous absence, it was at the same time clear that the victory gave particular momentum to the “moderate” sector in the party, which eschewed confrontation and mobilization.

Leonel Godoy had a long political trajectory, and his candidacy for governor was long in preparation.229 Within the PRD itself, he had most recently stepped in as the party’s interim president to deal with the aftermath of the double disasters of Robles presidency and the 2004 video scandals. His work as “fireman” in the party was greatly lauded across all the party’s sectors.230

As a senator on leave, Godoy during the battle for the PRD’s nomination emphasized the importance of the elections: “A defeat in Michoacán would not only be an electoral setback, but also an ideological defeat of the left in the state where the PRD came into being. Michoacán must

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228 Speech at the 10th extraordinary plenary, PRD national council. Personal observation.
230 Members of virtually all corrientes were in agreement that given the party’s very difficult situation, Godoy had been a very competent interim leader.
be looked after as the most precious jewel.” Pointedly, he also added, “A confrontational election, of conflict, can carry us on the path to defeat.”

Godoy was elected in a successful – peaceful – primary, against CCS’ preferred candidate, Enrique Bautista Villegas. Godoy had had a run-in with CCS at the PRD’s 8th congress in 2004, but had always been close to the PRD founder. The two reconciled, but CCS had given one condition in order to actively campaign for Godoy. According to a national deputy with knowledge of the process,

*El Ingeniero* told him, “that’s fine Leonel, listen, I don’t have any problem with this; invite Andrés Manuel, bring him to the sierras, I don’t have any problem with Andrés Manuel being there. I will only tell you one thing: If they put a microphone to me and ask me, as I leave the podium, if Felipe Calderón is the president of the country, I am going to tell them my position.”

This was likely not a problem for Godoy, but it all but ensured that AMLO would not participate in the campaign. Regardless, when quizzed by a student during the campaign, Godoy still stunned many in the party, by declaring, “It is evident that one would have bad mental faculties to not accept that Calderón is the president of Mexico. Period!” While he immediately clarified he was not talking about AMLO, it appeared a clear rebuff. During the campaign, Godoy also made it clear that if elected, he would work closely with the federal government, including Calderón.

In the end, despite a media barrage from PAN reminiscent of the dirty campaign in 2006, and alleged intervention from teacher unions on behalf of the PAN-PANAL candidate, Godoy won a convincing victory with nearly 38 percent of the votes. The PRD and its allies won the most seats for the local congress, although the PRI recovered to capture 49 municipalities, four more than in 2004, including the capital Morelia, against 41 of the PRD.

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237 Eleven out of 24 SMD seats for the local congress, against nine of PAN-PANAL, and four of PRI. The PRD also won 3 PR seats, against 6 of PRI, 3 of PAN, and 1 each of *Convergencia*, PT, PVEM, and PANAL. The PRI won 49 municipalities; PRD 41; PAN 18; PT and *Convergencia* 2 each; and PVEM one. Se confirma la victoria de Leonel Godoy en comicios de Michoacán. *La Jornada*, Nov. 13, 2007.
Supplemental data from Congreso del Estado de Michoacán de Ocampo. [www.congresomich.gob.mx/](http://www.congresomich.gob.mx/)
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Table 6.8: Michoacán gubernatorial election, Nov. 11, 2007.

Godoy was very careful not to construct his victory as a defeat for lópezobradorismo. Yet he at the same time made clear that AMLO was “not the leader of the PRD.” According to Godoy, AMLO was “an opposition leader of a national standing who has a position the majority of the PRD supports.”

The magazine *Proceso* nonetheless called the election a victory for both NI and CCS, and noted that wherever Godoy and CCS campaigned together, the plazas were full of PRD supporters – a marked contrast to AMLO’s campaign in Michoacán in 2006. Godoy, while reportedly a member of the corriente Movimiento, was also close to NI, and Jesús Zambrano, the national coordinator of NI, was the main strategist of Godoy’s campaign.

AMLO’s lack of presence in the campaign was noticeable, even more so as it was repeatedly reported he would appear. Godoy did try to enlist both AMLO and CCS to join the campaign, but without success; later, however, his lack of presence appeared the result of an agreement with the candidate. According to a member of NI who was active in the campaign,

I think that Godoy first wanted to involve both, Cuauhtémoc and Andrés, but Andrés said, “I am busy, I have giras, if you want me come and look for me.” And then Cuauhtémoc said, “one must recognize Calderón,” which was enough to tell Andrés, “don’t come.” Because if not, there would have been a conflict. More than a tacit agreement, it was implicit, “don’t come.”

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238 Percentage of total votes, including null votes and non-registered candidates.
239 The Green candidate had a de facto alliance with Godoy and eventually declined in favor of him, yet not in time to withdraw its candidate from the ballot.
244 Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 20, 2007.
245 Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Jan. 14, 2008.
Another CEN member pointed to another consideration for AMLO’s absence, which was to avoid giving ammunition to the PAN’s candidate, Salvador López Orduña, who explicitly sought to tie Godoy to AMLO through his campaign ads:

Michoacán is the only electoral triumph that we had last year. It is the only triumph of our hard vote, where we more or less defended ourselves. To stop the wounds from bleeding, to go in it together, to have a discourse of unity, of conciliation, and to approach other sectors, and to not polarize. There is more: Here, the dirty war in 2006 was about linking Andrés Manuel with Chávez. In Michoacán, the strategy was to link Godoy with Andrés Manuel.  

According to a PRD member with a leadership position in the PRD’s national council,

I think that they must have talked, Andrés Manuel in any case is very gifted for politics, he has his weaknesses like any human being, but he is quite flexible and knows that...he says that sometimes one must “swallow frogs,” though the problem is that the frogs can’t be so large that they choke you, nor so toxic that they kill you, right? So I think Andrés Manuel knows when to moderate his presence, and when to accentuate it.

According to a member of the PRD’s leadership from Michoacán, the agreement to not appear was even explicit:

Even though at first one would say all the time that [Godoy] was the candidate of Andrés and that Cárdenas would not help him, el ingeniero did go to campaign with Leonel, and Andrés never went to his campaign, and this was a political decision, precisely to avoid these blows, because they would use anything to strike against us, to use whatever Andrés says to give it a negative spin.

Fundamentally, the issue appeared as well to touch upon the more general strategies and tactics of the PRD itself, namely what had become its chief dividing issue after the 2006 campaign: To be a more traditional political party, stressing moderation and negotiation, or to emphasize the methods and strategies of the movement-party, with a more polarized and confrontational approach, and its particular reliance on mass mobilization. According to one of the central actors in the campaign,

I think that Godoy spoke with him, and he remained more or less convinced that it was better not to appear. I think that Andrés Manuel understood this, but in any regards one is here raising an even more complex problem, which is how to combine mobilization with the electoral struggle, which now does not seem to be effective, this combination, and appears moreover to go on two distinct paths.

Crucially, the majority of PRD elites involved in Michoacán appeared to be very cognizant of the decreasing electoral gains from the movement-logic. They now were stressing a campaign of moderation, where avoiding an image of the PRD as a party of confrontation was a crucial consideration. According to a central PRD member who participated actively in Godoy’s campaign,

246 Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Jan. 14, 2008.
249 Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Nov. 21, 2007.
I consider that this is what also Leonel Godoy perceived, in this case, the very electorate of Michoacán, which wants to move forward in a constructive sense, in unity, and which is not looking for confrontations for the sake of looking for confrontations. When one needs to face up to them, fine, there is no way around, but not to be looking simply to confront for the sake of confronting.250

Indeed, several key members of the PRD elite drew a more general lesson from the post-2006 events, applied it to Michoacán, and argued for a change in both tactics and strategy for the PRD. One principal leader of the corriente ADN also linked the Michoacán victory to the efforts of the national PRD to reforming Mexico’s national institutions, such as the 2007 electoral reform:

Andrés Manuel travelled all over the state of Puebla, and Tlaxcala, in the totality of its municipalities, and we didn’t win… I think it is a triumph of politics distinct from those of Andrés Manuel, added to how the own Congress of the party resolved it, which is an addition over the form in which one proposed and achieved the electoral reform, and what is now culminating with the electoral triumph in Michoacán.251

A central member of the Movimiento explicitly outlined the choice as between either emphasizing the movement or the party, arguing that this had returned as a crucial division within the party:

Michoacán does reflect a problem, which is that the movement is not helping to win elections, and that sometimes in order to win elections one shouldn’t mix in the movement. And this is a serious problem because one might say, one should say, that while the more we incite, into the line of the movement, the more we are going to lose in the elections, so therefore it is a serious conflict, very difficult….yes, in a certain sense it is an old discussion, but one that at times we have been able to resolve better; now it is a very pressing discussion, very distressing one, because we came from the fraud of last year, so now it is a strategic problem that we have to resolve, while before it was a problem of ways and manners.252

“Radicals” vs. “Moderates” not about left vs. right

In societies as strongly conflicted as ours, one does not decide things in congress.253

I think we are living in a situation that is extremely dangerous.254

The good thing is that they are not all; it is a small sector in comparison. When we speak of the 127 deputies that we are, the andresmanuelistas are 25, no more. So we’re talking about a small universe, but what scandal they make!255
- PRD national deputy, AND, Feb. 2008

As detailed in Chapter 5, for the first decades of existence, the debate to work for the reform or rupture of existing institutions was a recurrent theme in the PRD. Starting around 1995,

252 Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Nov. 21, 2007.
the dialoguistas appeared to have won the upper hand, as it became clear that the country was indeed becoming increasingly democratic, as the reforms of its institutions, such as the IFE and COFIPE reforms, clearly moved the country in a democratic direction.

Yet while CCS bowed to the will of the party and the new party line in 1995, it was also clear that a significant sector of the tendencies calling for a rupture with the national government, while diminishing in strength, never fully accepted the primacy of the existing institutional framework. This sector again resurfaced particularly in 2000-2001, where despite a clean national election that saw the PRI leave the presidency, they successfully promoted a ban on any cooperation with the new PAN government.

In 2007-2008, the debate – or rather, division – on the feasibility of institutional reform had again resurfaced as a major fault line within the PRD. Both sides acknowledged the existence of what “two visions.” One the one hand, one group within the party, which included a significant number of legislators, proclaimed deep loyalty to AMLO and the Legitimate Government, rejected most criticism of the PRD’s conduct in 2006, and backed the candidacy of Alejandro Encinas, who was clearly AMLO’s candidate. Crucially, they were profoundly skeptical of the feasibility of institutional reform, and many openly called for the refoundation of Mexico’s current institutional framework. Some, particularly members of the Legitimate Government, appeared convinced that the Calderón government would eventually collapse.

Notably, even a significant sector of the PRD’s own legislators explicitly favored the “movement” over the party and remained very skeptical of the main role of legislators, which is indeed to overhaul existing institutions and laws or introduce new ones.

While this debate had died down somewhat within the party, it clearly was given external impetus by the 2004-2005 desafuero proceedings, which did certainly raise very serious questions on the impartiality of institutions given the blatantly political use of the federal prosecutor. The 2006 elections, then, for many served as a vindication of the struggle of the movement over institutional reform, and by 2007 this sector juxtaposed the larger movement with what it denounced as inadequate and “false” reforms. The connection between one’s support for the larger movement, and lack of faith in institutions in general and the possibility of reform, was notable.

The PRD agreed that Calderón was an “illegitimate president.” Yet the two sides of the party profoundly disagreed on what should be the consequences of this statement – that is, to improve institutions in order to avoid a similar outcome at a later date, or to accept that the existing institutions cannot be reformed. These “two visions,” which are thus in practice two aggregated and highly diverging conceptualizations of the party and its role, remain the most fundamental divisions within the PRD today.
While the *corriente* NI, with approximately 50 federal deputies, was the largest of the various sections in PRD’s parliamentary group, it does not on its own represent a majority. Yet in the “two visions” of the party, NI is most often singled out as the number one opponent of the movement-party advocates in the PRD, and generally regarded the greatest rival to AMLO’s dominant position in the party.

At the national level, NI is a self-declared social-democratic current. The groups closest to AMLO, in turn reject “social democracy,” a label imbued with various meanings, and disdainfully refer to NI and its allies as *modositos*, loosely translated as “excessively well-mannered.”

Yet the rejection is not principally about ideological positions. “Social democracy” in this context refers primarily to their emphasis on negotiation and primacy of reforming institutions, in contrast with giving priority to the social movement and entirely new institutional setups. As such, while NI and its allies were repeatedly accused of collaboration with the political right, this pertained principally to issues of tactics and strategy rather than diverging ideological positions of left and right.256

The opposition to NI was also clearly expressed in PRD’s parliamentary group in the Chamber of Deputies, where several deputies openly rebelled against Ruth Zavaleta (NI), who in 2007-2008 was president of the executive board of congress, and had shown much inclination to cooperate with the Calderón administration.

One deputy of the IDN faction, who was often in confrontation with party colleague Zavaleta, noted, “There are those of us who do not recognize that Ruth Zavaleta herself is part of the PRD”:

Unfortunately, we see that *Nueva Izquierda* brings a very different logic to what we conceive of as the political tasks (*quehacer*), in the sense that they privilege much dialogue, as if we were in normal times… After an electoral fraud in which they snatched the presidency of the Republic from us, well, I think the conditions changed a lot, and *Nueva Izquierda* is behaving as if everything was normal, as if Calderón arrived at the presidential chair in a legal and legitimate manner, sitting down with them, making agreements, trying to promote an agenda totally distinct from the one we value.257

As an example of such agreements, the deputy attacked the new COFIPE electoral code:

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256 As an example, one of the principal opponents of Jesús Ortega’s NI attacked several of the PRD-supported projects in Congress, stating that, “I believe that we should not have to help putting make-up on, putting a nice little face on, a model that is profoundly conservative.” The same leader – who in the past paradoxically had been regarded a social democrat – at the same time acknowledged there were no real differences “in terms of left and right” between Encinas and Ortega. Confidential interview, PRD central member, March 14, 2008

257 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Feb. 6, 2008.
Really, it is a series of concessions that one is doing to the right in order to legitimize a reform of a state that is completely corrupted and twisted in its institutions.  

One national deputy not allied to either faction described NI’s dilemma in pushing for legislative reform, which when opposed by AMLO was often labeled as “treason”:

They want to send the message that they are the left with more possibilities of finding political exits, but they have on the other side the counterweight that if they sit down and look for an agreement with Calderón, they will remain like traitors of the movement, and finally Andrés Manuel can lead a campaign against them.

One principal leader of the IDN in Mexico City clearly outlined the struggle as between one side prioritizing the parliamentary struggle, and against another prioritizing the social movement, a struggle happening on both national and state levels:

The two great corrientes of thought in the Federal district are in the same positions as what today Jesús Ortega and Encinas represent on the national level, that is, the party was born with two visions, one vision of a party with a social-democratic profile that puts emphasis on the parliamentary struggle, in the congress, in the chambers, which proposes a democratic civility, which is the social-democratic option that comes from Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, this inclination, of Pedro Peñalosa, René Arce, Jesús Ortega, all of this inclination…It has changed name at various moments; here in the federal district it was called CRD, this was the first corriente in 1992 and lasted until 2001, one fine day Rene Arce, who was its leader, said, “it’s finished,” and it disappeared with a pen stroke, and afterwards reappeared as the Nueva Izquierda. In our case, the other inclination of the party, is a left that while recognizing it is by the ballot box, its principal quality is the social struggle, it is the political mobilization for social causes, and parliament is part of this struggle, but it is not the end of the struggle, this is the profound difference between these two visions.

One national deputy from Izquierda Social, aware of their label as “radicals,” nonetheless vindicated the attitudes of intransigence as aligned with those of AMLO:

The other deputies have come here to tell us to behave well, that people are sick of us taking the rostrum, that we keep on creating disorder. I tell them, let’s see, what was it that one acknowledged in Andrés Manuel? That he negotiated, that he came to agreement? No. What people acknowledged in Andrés Manuel, in addition to his work and resource allocation, to the most poor it was that he fought, there was an unjust ruling, and he didn’t recognize it, and he faced up to it, and mobilized. This is what the people acknowledged in Andres Manuel, not going here in the photo having a coffee in the luxury restaurant to see how one hands out the budget.

One legislator from IDN insisted that the larger movement represented a majority of the general populace, but that the electoral option was no longer viable, and that greater organization from below was needed:

We have no doubt, we have and we had the majority of the population, but the majority was not sufficient. It was not sufficient. There are, then, many paths, but one of the paths that we have chosen, what Andrés Manuel is propounding, is that one needs to do two types of very important work; the first is an organization of the people from below that not only goes to vote but that forms part of a great national organization.. It is another concept. And this is independent of what one thinks of the party and how it grows. And the other thing is something that we call “the

258 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Feb. 6, 2008.
revolution in the consciences,” if there is no clarity of what is happening, that one has corrupted all the institutions, it will be very difficult to arrive at a transformation, because then we are going to continue accepting all the time the rules of the game that from the very outset are unfavorable and that do not have, we do not have any possibility to triumph in those; it is not practical. But for things to change, it is needed that the majority activate itself in this direction.262

The inability to block desired legislation, or the perceived inadequacy of reforms, was often given as a rationalization for opposing them. As one legislator from IDN noted,

They say we are very radical and that we want to oppose everything, but in reality we don’t see translated into the legislative work a form of attending to what is problematic in the country. Ruth [Zavaleta] fills her mouth saying that we need to think of the country, we need to attend to our work. Fine, if what are we going to propose that will be of total transformation when we cannot see it anywhere? “With the reform of the law of ISSTE they cancelled the responsibility of the state of social security and we, what? Nothing more than voting against the law, done, and this is our role”263

The concept of contrasting reforms deemed inadequate with the power of AMLO’s political movement, was a theme also expressed by a leading member of the new coalition Izquierda Unida, which rallied around the candidacy of Alejandro Encinas for the PRD presidency, and incorporated most of the social-movement advocates:

Are we going to settle with the right to make little reforms (reformitas) and partial reforms of different things? Or are we creating a social movement that had 15 million votes, which they won over fraudulently with 200,000 votes?264

In sum, among the most ardent advocates of the movement logic, several of PRD’s political elites today appear highly ambiguous about both the feasibility and desirability of reforming the system. It is a marked paradox that this rejection also extends to leading members of its parliamentary group, principally the corrientes IDN and IS, and a group of independent legislators closely allied with AMLO, which together number around 30 legislators. A significant percentage of the PRD’s legislators, in other words, question the usefulness of what is their principal role, which is to introduce and reform legislation.

Among members of the Legitimate Government, however, little ambiguity exists: Reform of the institutions of the Mexican state is no longer considered a viable option. One secretary of the government expressed the lack of faith in reforms, and even the workings of political parties, in favor of a refoundation of the institutions:

Their activities ensure that the population is worse every time. The situation is very serious, the issues of the country every time more difficult, and fine… The political parties function within a system, and what we are setting forth is that one needs to make the republic anew, the Fourth

263 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Feb. 6, 2008. The congress voted in March 2007 to reform the ISSTE, the Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers, which provides benefits for state workers. The reform increased contributions from state workers and reduced guaranteed minimum pensions.
264 Confidential interview, PRD central member, Jan. 23, 2008.
Mexican Republic. We are thinking on another constitution, another social organization, everything, everything. We are not thinking then in parties.265

Another secretary confirmed that this rejection also applied increasingly to the PRD itself, as the emphasis on institutional reform of its “moderate” sector led to increasing tension with AMLO’s movement:

There is confrontation; for sure there is confrontation. When Andrés Manuel sends a signal and accuses the political class of being corrupted, he is thinking of everyone, including the PRD, why? Because they make concessions, for example, this electoral reform there is now… It does not benefit us, because we won the election with the previous law, and every time there is a fraud they give us a reform, because they know the problem is not how the law is, but to break the law, so to us, it does not benefit us. Many of those people have accepted things that for the movement is unacceptable, for example there is this conviction that there was a… that the government accepted this reform in exchange for the fiscal reform, and the fiscal reform hurts the people, and the measures of raising the prices, that is, they exchange interests of the political class for popular interests.266

Another secretary of Legitimate Government, with long trajectory in the PRD, summed up a general sentiment that the nation was moving closer to a precipice, with the collapse of its institutions:

DM: But what should one do, then, except for waiting for the next presidential election?
I: Look, I don’t know what is going to happen this time; the truth is that I don’t know. But what I am seeing is that it is collapsing. I didn’t think that it was possible to destroy a fish of this size, the riches and population of Mexico…. and the elections in 2006, it was the ultimate opportunity we had to reconstruct the nation, simply put.”267

The possibility of the fall of the existing system was a not uncommon theme among the members of the PRD itself, and the wider movement around AMLO. Several even lamented the restraint AMLO had showed in 2006. As one member of the Legitimate Government noted, “Even his sons said, “What, are we not going to fight?”268 One PRD member of the radical sector of the party said he believed AMLO did not go far enough during the 2006 post-electoral protests:

In my understanding, the movement boxed itself into the great concentrations in Mexico City, when we could have paralyzed all the institutions of the federal government and the state government, which in the most cynical matter participated in this violation of citizen will, because it was a movement of millions prepared to make is strength felt, and to show that against this power, civic popular, one could not govern. I believe that here there was an error of leadership of Andrés Manuel and an incapacity of the party leadership to lead this. Personally, I sent a letter so Andres Manuel over this, about July 2, and as a matter of fact on July 8 we convened as a political expression, as the situation was extraordinary, to conform a patriotic and democratic movement… but we couldn’t reach the sufficient repercussion in order to generalize the struggle, to confront from the bottom to the top.269

Yet while the mass protests had largely subsided by 2007, several argued that the actions of Calderón’s government may bring about its own collapse, but that it must also be pushed.

According to one secretary of the Legitimate Government, this also implied rejecting the electoral path:

The collapse of the government is not a fantasy, the government is doing what it can because of this, it is doing a thousand things for this to happen, but we, we cannot sit and wait to this to happen; we need to act. But fine, in the electoral setting, if we know that the last four elections, two of them the right won and we respect that, but two the left won and they stole them from us, then we cannot go to a fifth election only with the vote, because to use the vote is of no use, our vote does not count, we have to go with organized popular power.270

Within the PRD’s parliamentary group, and within the official party organs,271 there is, however, a majority position for seeking negotiations with the federal government. On the one hand, some defend it as a mere practical question. With the exception of Mexico City, which has

271 The PRD’s official organs, according to its 2007 party statutes: National Congress: Supreme authority of the PRD. Its agreements and resolutions are obligatory for all other party organizations. It meets regularly every three years, and in extraordinary circumstances when the National Council convenes it (e.g. the case of the 10th Congress). Composition: Party president and secretaries-general for all states; eight delegates elected in every PRD State Council through proportional representation; and 1,100 delegate, elected at state level in open and secret elections and distributed according to proportional representation. The National Council and State councils also sends invited delegates, maximum 320, with right to voice, but no vote. Once installed, by at least half of members, the congress is valid, even though groups may leave, as long as a quarter of delegates remain (again, a real case during the 10th congress). Among its functions: To reform the statutes, declaration of principles, and party program, as well as deciding political line and form of party organization. It also elects 64 additional members to the National Council, on a PR basis; 15 honorary council members, by a 2/3 vote, and the CEN Secretariat of Youth. National Council: Highest authority of the party between congresses, and meets at least every three months. It consists of: 192 national councils elected in open mass elections through proportional representation on state level; 64 councilors elected by the PRD National Congress; president and secretary general; governors and, should it be the case, President of the Republic; one councilor for the exterior (United States) and president and secretary general from councils abroad; a quarter of Federal Senators and Deputies; ex presidents of the party; 15 emeritus councilors; and state party presidents. Among its functions: Carry out political work and organization of the party following the basic documents and the resolutions of the National Congress, and making sure its representatives and functionaries follow the political line and party program. It also issues the electoral platform. It elects the National Political Committee, and National Secretariat (except its president and sec. general, who are elected directly), and evaluates its work. It organizes election for candidates for public office, has the power to expel members of national leadership, and elects members to the Comisión Nacional de Vigilancia by a 2/3 majority. Its resolutions and agreements are binding. National Political Committee: A new creation following the 10th congress. The CPN is the superior authority between councils. It meets at least every month, convened by the party president. It consists of 32 members elected proportionally from the corrientes; president and secretary-general of the national secretariat (formerly CEN); governors; coordinators of parliamentary groups; former party presidents; one local deputy; one municipal president; and, if it should be the case, the president of the nation. Its main functions are to present the party’s political position; make pronouncements on legislative votes and on actions of PRD governors; apply national council resolutions; ratify or rectify decisions of the national secretariat; present proposals to the national council. Note: There is in principle no salary or economic compensation for being on the CPN. National Secretariat (formerly national executive committee): Develops and leads the political, organizational, and administrative work of the party. Meets at least every 15 days. Integrated by 15 members, and the president and secretary general. Among its functions: Leads the party on day-to-day basis. Maintains party relations with other political organization and social and civil movements on national and international level; applies resolutions of National Council and CPN; informs council and CPN of its resolutions; presents proposals to Council and CPN; works closely with state and municipal organs to develop local party organization; and administer party’s resources. Cf.PRD Documentos Básicos 2007.
significant non-federal sources of income, most Mexican states are highly dependent on federal transfers. This was acknowledged as a pragmatic reason to seek negotiations with the regime from a federal legislator from the Cívicas, a group otherwise closely aligned with social movements:

We don’t share the idea that governors cannot sit down and negotiate, to enter into dialogue with the government. They need to do this, if not how can they govern? Our governments need to negotiate, because 95 percent of the budget they handle is from the federal executive.272

Notably, with the exception of Marcelo Ebrard, all of PRD’s governors have met with Felipe Calderón as well. While none of them come from the most “radical” corrientes within the party, the issue, however, goes beyond one of mere pragmatism. Within the PRD, the groups opposed to radical intransigence, such as NI, ADN, and in general the Movimiento, also acknowledge the “two visions,” within the party, which in essence mirrors that of their opponents – confrontation or reform – though they naturally draw clearly distinct implications from their competing visions. According to a PRD leader in Mexico State,

For us, the most important is to position a political vision of social-democratic orientation, which is gaining territory within the party, and toward the outside of the party, in society….In the party two great visions have come about in confrontation. One that sets out a total confrontation with the state, with the government, without negotiating anything, without recognizing anything, and another vision, of which we form a part, which is a vision that is determined to seek the grand reforms of the political regime. This is the difference: Either we go on a path of total confrontation, or we go on a path that advances reform.273

One federal deputy from the corriente ADN argued that no real alternatives to negotiation exist:

It is true that we can’t do everything. For example, the fiscal reform where the PAN and PRI came to an agreement and then threw in an increase in the price of gasoline, well, it was difficult to stop them; they win us by votes. [AMLO] recommended us that we should take the dais. But how long did this work? A few hours? A few days? How much can this strategy be of use to us? In the end…we cannot hold the dais until 2012, right?274

A national senator from the historic left noted that the criticism of the “reformists” was a historic one within the PRD, and expressed a lack of faith in the viability of a social movement coming to power on the heels of the system’s collapse:

In things political, I also come from a party of the left, which in the 1970s was called Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores, and in which we always insisted that we must elaborate our own concept of how the left should be. In that moment, everyone was criticizing us for being reformists, because what we tried to do, when there was no possibility to participate electorally, we tried to participated electorally, we sponsored reforms that would permit us to penetrate, because we were convinced to try to accede to power through the electoral processes, and this is a primary difference that through events we have come to have with the movement of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and we do believe that we cannot bank on that the economic and social

274 Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 9, 2007.
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“激进派”和被称为“现代左派”的“进步左派”可能进行的辩论是两个政治立场和派别内PRD的分歧，将会按照这些政治立场和派别的更大政治立场来决定。

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有一个在PRD的CEN的成员建议，这是部分地是出于在激进主义受欢迎的党基中的虚张声势。

然而，一些立法者承认，激进派对政治体系和改革的可能性是真实的，因为他们明确地反对剧烈改变而不是谈判解决。

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1910, and they think that in 2010 magically this will repeat itself... and as this is their vision of the history and future of Mexico, they therefore say, ah, in this conjuncture, with this great social mobilization we will burst in and arrive at the presidency. To them it is obviously cyclical, and that every hundred years or so there will be a great mobilization of society that will erupt and push something new, and we don’t believe in anything like this... The conditions must be formed little by little, and we are in favor of advancing through the exercise of social democracy a la Mexicana, here in Mexico, a social democracy that will allow us to push and change conditions, change the laws, change the balance of forces... through this route we can also accede to power, to run this country. They appear antagonistic, but we have the same objective.\footnote{Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Nov. 9, 2007.}

A member NI particularly pointed to the issue of the upcoming petroleum reform as the spark that the radical groups within the party hoped could be an opportunity to be seized:

I think there is a hope; there is a species of wagering, expectative hope that there could be a political collapse. And take note: The issue of the petroleum is logical in this sense. I think that Andrés regards that of the petroleum like one used the gas in Bolivia... at least he has not rejected the possibility of this, the collapse of the system, a crisis, that the crisis elevates his figure... I think he does not rule it out. I see in the attitude of Andrés not a logic to put oneself to discuss how do we change PEMEX to make it better, more competitive; he sees it as an opportunity, as emblematic, this is my impression.\footnote{Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Jan. 14, 2008.}

### Preference for party or movement parallels “two visions”

We need to move from the tactics of social mobilization separated from the political struggle, to the strategy of a political party that seeks to obtain power, which is an actor of social changes in the country. It is indeed the same as in 1996.\footnote{Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Jan. 15, 2008.}


I would put it this way: to be a movement-party, or to be a docile left to the regime. These are the two types of “left” that live in the interior of the PRD.\footnote{Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 6, 2007.}

-Principal corriente leader, IDN, Nov. 2007.

The examination of the “two visions” within the PRD demonstrates a further – and tight – link between how its elite members evaluate the existing institutions of the state, and their preferred organizational mode of their own party. Interviews with the PRD’s political elite reveal that those that are the most skeptical of the feasibility of political reform, and of the value of working within Mexico’s institutions, are most inclined toward a movement-type organization, which moreover is valued more as primarily a means to an end, ultimately the transformation of society. On the other hand, the attitudes of those who promote a more institutionalized and traditional party are generally mirrored in a similar conviction of the value of working within existing institution, and to seek to improve rather than discard them.

One national legislator of the PRD pointed out the historical parallels to these current divisions:

This debate is not new. This debate within the Mexican left is an old one, meaning relatively old and just not from this era, but from another era as well. I remember in 1995, twelve years ago, el...
ingeniiero Cárdenas proposed, together with López Obrador, this idea of a movement-party; that is what they called it. And we proposed, with Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and Heberto Castillo – I was part of the group of Castillo – we proposed an organic party, and they proposed a movement-party. That is to say that the PRD would be necessary as an instrument to obtain power, but that the party would sustain-maintain itself much in the movement, mobilized, in the plazas, in the streets, in the syndicates, in all places. We proposed that, without being a static party, the PRD should not convert itself solely into a party-movement but rather into a party that would create the necessary organization in order to be competitive and influence with a good image of proposals in society to win elections. So this is what one proposed in 1995 and in 1995 the proposal that the PRD should not be a party-movement won. One spoke in this movement of a government of national salvation…this is what el ingeniero Cárdenas proposed, a government of national salvation, and Muñoz Ledo then said that the great saviors, those that claimed to be saviors of the nation, had later ended up as dictators. A government of national salvation would then bring with itself a great savior. And it is this position that López Obrador now has.284

One national deputy from the ADN corriente suggested that support for a permanent and institutionalized party over the movement equals nothing more than accepting elections as the exclusive path to power:

We say that we ventured into this fight in order to obtain power, through the institutional route, through the electoral route, and that we cannot now give up on this. We arrived at having this political space precisely through this path. We cannot deny to ourselves, we cannot that during many years we have been searching for power, but through the pacifist path, the electoral path, through the path of the population’s vote. And then, the principal difference lays here in this situation, that is to say, those that privilege the party, and those that privilege the leader, or that is, those that scorn the party, and does not give it the weight it should have. The central difference, then, stems from this – the others are just differences in form.285

One national legislator from NI argued that AMLO’s support for the National Democratic Convention and the larger movement revealed a lack of support for the PRD beyond that of an instrument for the wider cause:

I am telling you this story because I am one of the PRD founders, from 1989, and this idea of a movement-party for López Obrador has never removed from his mind, because he believes more in the movement than the party, because he believes that a charismatic leader – which he is, with everything and the image he has created – that a leader has something that the ordinary citizen can identify with, above all the poorest people, and he believes more in the National Democratic Convention than in the PRD itself, and him, all his decisions are based on what the Convention says, but it is a manipulated convention, with two hundred, three hundred thousand people, “Are we going to do this?” “Yeeeeeeyes!” That is, nothing is organized, nothing is debated, and nothing is analyzed. It is a case of manipulation that a political leader of the masses can do; it is an act of manipulation of the masses. And the proposals he puts forward are accepted, because they are attractive proposals from a political point of view. Because of this I say he truly does not believe in political parties; he believe that parties serve as a franchise in order to get in power, but in reality, he believes in social movements. The thing is that there are people who do not believe in parties. They have another conception, when to get in power you only need the party because the Constitution establishes you need a registry, but in reality if there were another possibility, he wouldn’t even be thinking of the PRD but rather of how to make his national movement. The party is like a formality to him.286

According to national leader of the ADN,

285 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 6, 2007.
The problem of the PRD is that one has not formed a majoritarian corriente that could represent 50 percent plus one, if you want as a minimum, which could allow it to assume the responsibility of being the majority, staking out the party course.287

According to several members of the ADN, which also defined itself as a social-democratic current, the desire to create a majority alternative within the party was a major consideration in its alliance with the corriente NI. According to a national ADN deputy

In this moment, we coincide most with the Nueva Izquierda because they have privileged maintaining and giving strength to the party; they have not scorned it like other groups. Unfortunately, Andrés Manuel has provoked much, because he has been disdainful of the party, from his own campaign, many of the PRD militants were thrown to the side.288

Another leader of ADN argued that the lack of a common ideological identity was moreover a significant contributing factor that exacerbated the party’s internal fights, and lack of respect for party rules:

One grave problem in the PRD is that sometimes people are looking for positions for the sake of having positions. The other is to have very clear rules, and that every one discipline themselves according to these rules. This is the only way... and I would say a third one is the necessity of making ourselves more uniform ideologically, because everyone carries his own project, and what we need is an identity that would allow us to not just be fighting over the party, but over identified objectives... Now we have a problem and that is that the party cannot continue living like this, and what we want is to institutionalize the party, because of this we went to the [party] congress to try to give ourselves rules, to try to give it a political line to the party, because precisely in the congress we defined the path of reforms, and it is only like this that our deputies and senators can work, no? Now we need to institutionalize ourselves, and we have to make a very critical revision of that which has been the corrientes, how they have affected the party, and understand that we need to define very clear rules, and that everyone must attach themselves to these.289

Among the PRD’s corrientes, the Foro Nuevo Sol is in a particular position in that it early identified as a social-democratic current, but nonetheless aligned with Alejandro Encinas’ candidacy, principally due to political agreements with Mexico City Chief of Government Ebrard. However, the FNS ended up divided over this decision. One of the key members who supported Ortega’s candidacy explicitly spoke out against movimentismo as a counterproductive strategy.

The movementism within the party entails that the leadership and party organs are with a strategy of radicality, and that they are assuming radical actions by being an opposition that constantly calls for road blocks, the taking of public buildings, this type of strategies, of tactics that the party cannot assume, must not assume...with this strategy of radicality we do not get the confidence of people, it generates their rejection. Because of this we say that this strategy serves the right. It is convenient for the right that the party is violent, quarrelsome, oppositional and radical to the extreme; all this is convenient for the right because they will go on saying, “now you see why you cannot be supporting these people.”290

It must be noted that the corrientes that argued for the primacy of a traditional party organization over the movement did not oppose linking the party with social movements; the

288 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 6, 2007.
emphasis, rather was that the PRD should not assume their tactics or even strategies. According to a national senator with a long trajectory in social movements, they should be “separate, but very closely linked”:

Look, there is a Mexican saying that states, “Every monkey for his own rope,” and I think that this must be the correct. The political party has tasks that it must accomplish just like the social movement, and there must be a relation of solidarity between them… I think they should run in parallel, but respecting one’s field of action.\(^{291}\)

In particular representatives of the Movimiento charged against the “false dilemma” of putting the movement up against the party, and pointed out their complementary roles. According to a national legislator,

I would say that it is a complementary effort. I would say that there are those who do not see it and do not understand it this way; there are those who considered that as deputies we must not look for agreements but rather reject everything, like perhaps there are those who consider that the movement should not pressure that much, but be less hard. Our position is that this is complementary and necessary, and it does not seem to us that one should confound the movement with the legislative labor, nor the legislative labor with the movement.\(^{292}\)

Similarly, another member of the Movimiento noted,

Members of the Movimiento in particular sought to dismiss both “radicals” and the “moderates,” who they argued were principally covering up more mundane fights for power. According to a leading member of the group,

I maintain that the discourse today, very radical, very much of the left, very much in favor of López Obrador, is spurious, that the others are traitors…in the case of the corrientes it is the discourse that works the best for them in order to maintain their clienteles… three-quarters of the things that the radical lopezobradoristas say about Nueva Izquierda is slander. That is, Nueva Izquierda are not stupid; that is to say, it is false that they are, for example, negotiating with Calderón. This doesn’t exist; I know them. Yes, they have an internal line that tends toward this, but they know they cannot do this. They still have a minimum of consistency and intelligence that tells them they cannot do this.\(^{293}\)

One national deputy from ADN also pointed out the complementary, yet separate roles of the party and the movement:

The problem is, how do we achieve that the movement strengthens the party as well, or that it operates close to the party, but not as a part of it? Because we say that there are two distinctive paths, which are that of the social movement, and that of the party – they are two distinct paths, but this does not mean that one should assume the route of the other. The movement has assumed, has taken position that it imposes on the party, but that are not decisions taken in the heart of the party, this is the big problem… We say that the social movement should not elevate itself on top of the party, but they should rather go in parallel lines, like the party should also support the movement, a matter that one has often forgotten in the party as well… but they have distinct objectives, and as such every one of them should be respected.\(^{294}\)


\(^{292}\) Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 15, 2007.

\(^{293}\) Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Dec. 6, 2007.

\(^{294}\) Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 6, 2007.
Yet among a significant minority within the PRD, it is exactly this emphasis on social mobilization that is the essence of the PRD, and distinguishes it from other parties. Negotiations with a regime that is still regarded as illegitimate and illegal, are scorned as concessions, in favor of a strategy of intransigent rejections, and the “bureaucratic” wing of the PRD is similarly rejected in favor of the wider movement, with its corresponding mobilizational tactics.

The pro-movement wing in the PRD particularly contrasts the larger movement with the “political class” or institutions that are deemed inadequate. A member of the Izquierda Social leadership characterized the party itself as a tool rather than a means in itself:

I personally think that the question of political parties - and this is a personal position and not one of Izquierda Social - I think they are a necessary evil in the historical development of our society, in the development of human beings, and right now we are living through this stage, were one needs political parties, these political organizations. I think that these, in a future I don’t know how far, these things should be different.\(^\text{295}\)

What is noteworthy is the similar rejection of institutional reform by some of PRD’s own national legislators. One national deputy from the same current argued,

While there is hunger, extreme misery, while there is injustice and abuses of power, a movement should exist in the streets, beyond us, including despite of us, despite of these good-for-nothing (hecha mierda), garbage institutions. And still, we have leverage here, we are the spoilsports... and neither do we believe much in the grand agreements, the great consensus, this farce of politics, right? There is consensus for this, and not consensus for that, why is there no consensus to reduce the bureaucracy in half? Why is there no consensus to give a universal citizen pension to all the old ones in the country, Why is there no consensus to increase the minimum salary beyond inflation? Why is there no consensus to destitute Ulises Ruiz who killed 26 citizens, and not all of them Mexican, in Oaxaca?\(^\text{296}\)

There is in the apparent rejection of the possibility of genuine institutional reform, a similar rejection of the “bureaucratic” and “sellout” majority of the party that engages in such reform. According to an IDN legislator,

I think what is in play in this polarization of the PRD is whether to be an authentic left, or the vision of Jesus Ortega, to be a government-sponsored, semi-official (paraestatal) party, a party of simulation…We have the PRD which is behind Calderón, very obliging, very docile, submissive… in change for an electoral councilor in the IFE? In change for what? Of presiding the executive board of the chamber? What great change, oh what great change! Or that is, to win more money, to have more privileges, to have more public recognition, and for the movement, what? This the most profound part of the contradictions, nevertheless, to the voices who say that one is going to make a new party with Andrés Manuel, we say no – they are the ones who will have to go!\(^\text{297}\)

Another legislator noted,

We within the PRD are observing that there is a denial to represent the people that manifest themselves beyond the PRD. Or that is, what happened before, during, and after the elections of 2006 was a grand national movement of the reindication of political democracy…The political

\(^{295}\) Confidential interview, PRD corriente leader, Dec. 6, 2007.
class, having arrived at its seat, already arriving at the Chamber of Deputies, gets on very well with the traditional political class moreover, until it confuses who is who.298

One prominent IDN leader in the Federal District argued in favor of division of labor between the “electoral” vs. the “movement-party,” where the “bureaucratic side” of the party should only come to life during elections. Between elections, the movement side should be sovereign within the party:

Our stand is that of the movement-party, the other is of an electoral party, the social-democratic vision, which is the party, it is a party whose end goal is to win elections, so they have to be an efficient electoral machinery, in terms of campaigns, this social-democratic vision. We start out with a vision of the movement-party… from where do the votes come from? That is, for the people to go an vote for the left, for the PRD, one must have empathy with the movement of our society, of our people, we are representing causes of our people, so then as long as the PRD is intertwined with the movements, people are going to vote for the PRD, because they are not going to vote for the PRD because of a good television campaign, although it also helps, but our nature, our reason for being of the left is that the party represents social causes. So what we say, when there are no elections, the year there are no election, like now in 2008, we must go to the movements, we must go toward that side and when the election of 2009 comes we must be a good electoral party, but we win the votes in the movements, that is, the votes we don’t win then in the campaign, but in the causes. So these are then the two visions of the party, and electoral party, and a movement-party, that says when there are elections we need to be a good electoral machinery, and when there are not elections, we need to promote social movements; that is where our votes lie.299

Finally, among many of the advocates of the PRD as a movement-party, further emphasis was given to the social movement being “much larger” than the PRD itself. In the run-up to the vote for the PRD presidency, one member of the Legitimate Government with a long trajectory in the PRD argued that “many people who have belonged, who belong to this great movement, who have never been perredistas are also enrolling in the party to vote for Alejandro Encinas.”300

According to another member of the Legitimate Government with a long trajectory in the PRD, the party should primarily serve as an instrument for the movement, and its “proposals need to be endorsed and embraced by the same movement.”301

It is the first time historically that there is that wide participation of the people who are conscious and participate within what is this social movement. So they need to be together, and I consider that in this case the PRD is an instrument of the struggle. Finally we could point out that it is a vehicle and not an end in itself…It is important as well to point that the social base of the same movement and of this [legitimate] government does not necessarily respond to the interests of the three political parties, and is because of this much more wide. And Andrés Manuel, then, finally what we point out is that he is as well above the political parties themselves.302

301 Confidential interview, secretary of Legitimate Government, Jan. 15, 2008.
**Bifurcation within the PRD: Internal corrientes align around “two visions”**

The PRD should follow the political line of the convention, this is our position. It is the position of the IDN and the position of Izquierda Unida; we respect, we endorse and support the struggle of López Obrador, and the National Democratic Convention.  

- PRD Mexico City legislator, IDN

The PRD must stop being a conglomerate with diverse groups, expressions, programs, and political positions; we need to be, in the classic sense of the expression, a true party with a basic and ideological identity, obviously with a programmatic identity, and without doubt, a strategy.

- Jesús Ortega

The years 2004-2008 saw a great reaccommodation of the power and role of PRD’s internal corrientes de opinión. While the 2004 video scandals in the PRD had led to increased demands for the abolition of the PRD’s internal groups, they had not only survived, but in many ways grown in strength, to the point of being more powerful than the PRD’s official party organs. This development appears the result of dialectic. One the one hand, throughout the party’s existence, the corrientes have been accused of acting as “parties within the party,” where their clamor for power had been a major cause of internal conflict, with the PRD’s party president forced to spend much energy as an arbiter among the competing factions. They are, in many ways, the real “meat” of the party, and thus have an active agenda. On the other hand, however, party president Leonel Cota was regarded by most perredistas as a leader with little protagonism of his own given the fact that many saw him as an imposition of AMLO. When coupled with AMLO’s preoccupation with his candidacy and post-candidacy role in the movement, the corrientes as well had in many ways simply filled a vacuum in the PRD’s national organs.

Factions or interest group exist in virtually every party, particularly on the left, and the corrientes are officially allowed and regulated in the party’s statutes. In the PRD, however, they have often been singled out as a main cause of instability, yet at the same time, as much of the “meat” was found within them – they hold their own conferences, recruitment drives, training of leaders, and other prime party functions –the party remained dependent on them. According to a national legislator from the ADN group,

> The corrientes have been the strength of the party, but at the same time have been its weakness. They have been the strength because they are the ones that nourish the party, but the problem is when they substitute for the party, in its different organs… We say that we have to give it institutionalism, to let the party fulfill its functions. This does not necessarily mean ending the corrientes, but just that they shouldn’t substitute for the party. This is the great problem.

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304 Quoted in Alcocer (2002, 8).
306 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 6, 2007.
During the party presidency of Leonel Cota, AMLO was generally recognized as the real leader of the party. At the same time, however, given the corrientes’ clout within the party’s formal institutions, much power as well rested with them. One national leader of ADN argued that AMLO’s imposition of Cota as the PRD’s party president had as well exacerbated the party’s internal situation, and the fight between its corrientes:

Power is with the corrientes. Leonel Cota didn’t know how to put himself in front of the party, in the beginning he had, we placed in him the representation of the PRD and he could, if he had sought equilibrium between Andrés Manuel and the party. But as one closed completely around Andrés Manuel, well, the corrientes have come reconstructing, and have created another instance of taking decisions, and thus Leonel has been left behind. Fine, these are the corrientes.

The general impression that real power lies with the corrientes was confirmed by many perredistas. According to a national legislator from ADN,

I: Unfortunately, the problem we have lived with is that decisions are not taken in the interior of the party; they are taken in the center of the corrientes, not by the party organs that exist precisely for this.

DM: Because on paper, there is a very clear structure.

I: Yes, but the real power is outside…. what happens is that decisions are taken outside, totally, of the party, and the party activists do not feel these decisions are their own, and because of this we have a weak party, a party that does not have the possibility of taking strong actions as a party…

A member of the PRD’s CEN confirmed the decentralization of power:

The dynamics, already informal, established in our party today, is that the leadership and the heads of the internal forces of the party outline agreements, which are then later formalized in the PRD authorities/organs.307

While clearly personalistic power considerations play a major part in the PRD’s internal battles, as in other parties, some basic fault lines within the PRD – on organization and ideology, and tactics and strategy – have been with the party from its foundation. The differences that separated the corrientes were in reality often substantial, as they had fundamentally diverging conceptualizations of where the PRD should be heading as a party. In addition, as detailed earlier, there has been a significant bifurcation where the PRD’s groups have increasingly aligned along either side of these divisions.

Already in August 2006, AMLO was in open conflict with particularly NI over who should lead the PRD in Congress. Despite AMLO’s opposition, the PRD’s parliamentary group chose Javier González Garza and Carlos Navarrete as their respective coordinators in parliament. While AMLO was occupied with arranging the post-electoral demonstrations, his successor as Mexico City mayor, Marcelo Ebrard, pushed Miguel Ángel Navarro, who was not even affiliated with PRD, and Ricardo Monreal, in PRI until 1998, as his preferred choices. Their defeat in favor

Within the PRD, an increasing differentiation would then ensue, where one group of the party would emphasize the PRD’s legislative work and the construction of a party more autonomous from AMLO, while another declared its allegiance to AMLO, and was generally skeptical to the merits of institutional reform. The first group, principally consisting of NI, ADN, and parts of the Foro Nuevo Sol, was a social-democratic alliance behind the candidacy of Jesús Ortega for the PRD presidency. The other group, Izquierda Unida, came around officially after the PRD’s 10th national congress, and while highly diverse and at times internally contradictory, drew in all the social movement-oriented corrientes within the PRD, rejected negotiations with the Calderón government, and advocated full alignment with the wider movement of AMLO.

**Izquierda Unida: The candidacy of Alejandro Encinas**

While Alejandro Encinas would not officially declare his candidacy for the PRD party presidency until 2008, Izquierda Unida formed officially on Sept. 22, 2007, as a counterweight to the NI/ADN majority in the party’s congress and council, and with the clear purpose of backing Encinas candidacy. Alejandro Encinas Rodríguez was paradoxically not regarded as belonging to the “radical” group within the PRD; he had even backed Jesús Ortega’s earlier bid for party president, and was by many regarded as of social democrat leanings. However, he had grown much closer to AMLO after assuming positions in the GDF government, until becoming his second in command in 2003. When AMLO stepped down to pursue the presidency, Encinas became interim Mexico City mayor, and he supported AMLO and the PRD’s plantón as part of the post-electoral process. Formerly of the Mexican Communist Party, he had been regarded as close to the social-democratic Foro Nuevo Sol, though he did not belong to any particular corriente. The same was the case for one of his principal backers, Ricardo Ruiz, who became president of the PRD-DF after Martí Batres stepped down to join Marcelo Ebrard’s government.

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<th>1. Izquierda Democrática Nacional (IDN)³⁰⁹</th>
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<td>The video scandals of 2004 principally involved Rene Bejarano’s corriente CID, which subsequently changed its name to Izquierda Democrática Nacional (IDN). The group retained its social-movement focus, and included organizations such as the pirate taxi organization Panteras, parts of the social movement Frente Popular Francisco Villa, and the housing organization Asamblea de Barrios, although one of its main leaders, Javier Hidalgo, and other CID members,</td>
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 ditched the IDN for the new *Izquierda Social* of Martí Batres. IDN was one of the principal opponents of NI, and the mobilization and recruitment drives ahead of the PRD’s internal election saw the IDN rebound. While René Bejarano was eventually released from prison, his wife Dolores Padierna took over as official leader of the *corriente*. It was very loyal to AMLO, and supported the former presidential candidate’s new organizations in a mutually beneficial relationship, even though AMLO had vetoed Padierna’s candidature for a Senate seat in 2006. According to several of its leading members, IDN had become less personalistic in nature and more collegiate in its leadership after 2004. In 2008, key IDN members were Dolores Padierna (Rene Bejarano); Agustín Guerrero; Manuel Oropeza Morales; Alejandro Sánchez Camacho; Aleida Alavez Ruiz; Agustín González Casares; Leonel Luna; Alejandro Carbajal González; José Remedios Ledesma García; Guillermo Sánchez Torres; Enrique Vargas; Adrián Pedrozo.

2. *Izquierda Social (IS)*

IS was created in January 2006 when its leader Martí Batres was president of the PRD-DF, following his increasing separation from his mentor Rene Bejarano. It was officially constituted in October the same year. Like IDN, it was a declared opponent of the “moderates” within the party, principally NI. While it was in many ways an excision from the IDN, it also drew in non-IDN members, such as its national coordinator David Cervantes Peredo, a social movement leader from *Asamblea de Barrios-Patria Nueva*. Its leader – or at least its public face – Martí Batres would as new head of the powerful Secretariat of Social Development in Marcelo Ebrard’s government in Mexico City hold a particularly powerful position, as it is the secretariat that receives the most funding, and interacts with social groups. During the run-up to the 2008 PRD internal election, Batres was accused of engaging in massive clientelism to influence the vote. Key members include: Javier Hidalgo; David Cervantes; Benito Mirón Lince; Faustino Soto; Gerardo Villanueva; Valentina Batres Guadarrama, Lenia Batres Guadarrama; Francisco Chiguil Figueroa; Roberto López Suáres; Adolfo Uriel González Monzón; Alejandra Barrales.

3. *Unidad y Renovación (UNYR)*

When it was formed in 2004, UNYR had attracted a range of historic PRD members who were close to CCS and Rosario Robles (hence “RosCas”). Following the video and corruption scandals that deeply involved Robles, UNYR disintegrated to become a local *corriente* in Mexico City. Most of the former UNYR members left for the new *Movimiento por la Democracia* (see below). Its leader Armando Quintero, former PRD-DF president, was a historic rival of Rene Bejarano in Mexico City, though UNYR shared much of CID’s social movement emphasis. For its support of Marcelo Ebrard, Quintero gained the important secretariat of transportation in the Mexico City government, charged with, among other task, legalizing taxis and cracking down on illegal ones. Key members include: Carlos Reyes Gámiz; Sergio Ávila Rojas; Avelino Méndez Rangel; Edgar Torres Baltazar; Luis Bravo Pérez; Héctor Guijosa Mora; Gilberto Ensástiga Santiago; Erasto Ensástiga Santiago.

4. *Izquierda en Movimiento (IM)*

310 See official Web site. [www.izquierdasocial.org.mx](http://www.izquierdasocial.org.mx)


While Mexico City Mayor Marcel Ebrard was backed particularly by IDN, IS, and UNYR, the relationship remained somewhat uneasy. While aided by AMLO and Manuel Camacho Solís, his old mentor, Ebrard lacked a powerbase on his own within the party, and IM was formed ahead of the 10th Congress. While he remained loyal to AMLO, Ebrard clearly harbored his own presidential ambitions, which might eventually end his longstanding alliance with AMLO. While considered a moderate and social democrat, Ebrard was nonetheless on bad terms with the corriente NI, which despite its size as the second largest corriente in Mexico City would hold no secretariats in the Mexico City government. Conflicts with the NI-dominated Mexico City legislature were rampant throughout 2007. In 2008, however, relations appeared to be greatly improving, and Ebrard recognized Jesús Ortega’s victory in the internal party election. A key operator of IM is the former priista Alejandro Rojas-Díaz Durán, whom Ebrard unsuccessfully sought to push as president of the PRD-DF.

5. Foro Nuevo Sol

Most of the FNS’s historic leaders had a past in the Communist Party, such as its leader, Zacatecas governor Amalia García, and was generally regarded as a social-democratic current, an orientation paradoxically loathed by most of Encinas’ other allies. The support for Encinas can be explained partly by a common past in the PCM, but also by more instrumental reasons: In 2005, FNS supported Ebrard’s bid to gain the PRD candidacy in the areas governed by it in Mexico City, and was rewarded with important positions in the GDF. While clearly closer to NI both ideologically and in its support for a more institutionalized and traditional party organization, its national leadership went on to support Encinas over Ortega. Hortensia Aragón was declared Encinas’ running mate. This resulted in a split for the 2008 elections, as a group led by Martha Dalia Gastélum and José Luis Jaimes supported Jesús Ortega. Key members: Amalia García; Eloí Vázquez (national coordinator), Hortensia Aragón; Claudia Sofía Corichi; Antonio Mejía Haro; Juan José García Ochoa; Iván García Solís; Juan Manuel Ávila; Malu Micher.

6. Red de Izquierda Revolucionaria (REDIR)-Rueda

REDIR continued as a small corriente that had undergone a split in 2005, when Camilo Valenzuela sought the PRD presidency, while Antonio Rueda, another principal leader, backed Leonel Cota Montaño. Valenzuela, president of the PRD’s national council, would again seek the presidency in 2008, while Rueda’s group backed Encinas. REDIR retains a social-movement focus, although the corriente has a strained relationship with IDN. Key members backing Encinas were: José Antonio Rueda Márquez; Pablo Franco Hernández, Alejandro García Rueda, Fidel González Zurita; Javier Cahuich; Saúl García Pacheco.

Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria / Movimiento Cívico

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313 Offered Jesus Zambrano a position, which was rejected. Rechaza Zambrano cargo en el GDF; es una cartera virtual, dice. La Jornada, Dec. 6, 2006.
317 Eloí Vázquez, national coordinator since 2005, claimed the FNS did not break and that rather Gastélum was no longer part of the FNS, a claim she denied. On Sept. 30, FNS declared its support for Encinas. Versión 215/07. PRD, Sept. 21, 2007.
318 See official Web site. www.redirmexico.net
Finally, while the small Movimiento Cívico was not part of Izquierda Unida, it supported Encinas’ candidacy. While its key members had long trajectories in the struggles of social movements, including as guerrillas, the corriente was still very moderate in orientation in comparison with IDN and IS. Its national coordinator remained Mario Saucedo Perez. Key members included: Humberto Zazueta, a national deputy; Leticia Burgos Ochoa; Eliana García Laguna; Francisco Saucedo Pérez.

Groups supporting the Ortega candidacy

1. Nueva Izquierda (NI)³¹⁹

Unlike the other corrientes, Nueva Izquierda had since its 1999 foundation survived without any significant fractures or excisions, and was the single most powerful corriente in 2008. NI had lived through a period of solid growth, and particularly in Mexico City, where its group was lead by Senator René Arce, gained from the 2004 video scandals. The group had held the secretary generalship on the CEN since 1999, and appeared set to finally win the party presidency in 2008. While NI is commonly reported to be led by the two Chuchos, Ortega and Zambrano (national coordinator), its collegiate leadership includes as well Carlos Navarrete, current coordinator of the PRD’s senate group; Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo, 2005-2008 secretary-general of the PRD; former federal deputy and NI leader in Hidalgo, Miguel Alonso Raya, and senator René Arce. Other key members are Ruth Zavaleta Salgado, who was president of the Chamber of Deputies 2007-2009; Víctor Hugo Círigo, head of the ALDF; Minerva Hernández Ramos, national senator; Isaiás Villa González, ALDF Deputy; Verónica Juárez Piña, on the PRD CEN; Carlos Sotelo, national senator; Fernando Belaunzarán, on the PRD CEN; Octavio Martínez Vargas, national deputy. While membership numbers are notoriously unreliable in Mexico as everywhere, central members of NI estimated the corriente to have more than two million of PRD’s members affiliated. The corriente has the control of 22 state executive committees,³²⁰ and in the last membership drive ahead of the 2008 election obtained at least 600,000 new affiliations. It is particularly strong in Mexico State; Veracruz; Oaxaca; Nuevo Leon; Guanajuato; Tamaulipas; Chiapas; Hidalgo; Morelos; Puebla, Veracruz; Guerrero; and the Federal district. Ortega’s running mate in 2008 was Horacio Duarte Olivares from the Grupo de Acción Política in Mexico State, and PRD’s IFE representative. While GAP leader Martínez Miranda was often reported as belonging to NI, Martínez Miranda, who headed the PRD group in the Mexico State legislature and was backed by NI for governor in 1999, retained his own group. The leader of NI in Mexico State remained Javier Salinas Narváez.

2. Alternativa Democrática Nacional (ADN)

Alternativa Democrática Nacional was NI’s most important ally in the 2008 contest, and shared its social-democratic orientation. Yet the ADN was not only noticeable for its meteoric rise – it came into being in early 2007 and rose to become the second most important current in the PRD – but for the great internal change it went through, from a social movement-type organization that scorned the “bureaucracy” the NI was said to represent, to advocating the building of an institutionalized, autonomous party separate from the social movements. In 2007, ADN entered into an alliance with NI – they shared lists for the elections to the 10th party congress – and

³²⁰ According to one report, NI presides over 25 state committees, and accounts for more than half of the PRD’s national membership. Rosalía Vergara: Dispuestos a Todo. Proceso, no. 1630 (Jan. 27, 2008): 28-31 (29).
declared itself social democratic, and in favor of building an institutionalized party autonomous from the social movements. While PMT as a party had always prioritized the political struggle, the experience of governing as well has been attributed to a changed emphasis from social struggle to political organization. ADN is based primarily on the social movement *Movimiento Vida Digna* (MoviDig), which originated in Netzahualcóyotl in Mexico State, and from 1985 onwards had gained several regents in the area. This had the effect of drawing in many social movement people who would never have entered politics. While ADN is led by a collegiate body, Héctor Miguel Bautista López, the first regent of MoviDig, is often regarded its principal leader, and is currently a senator. Most of the MoviDig-ADN members had, like Bautista, a past in the PMT of Heberto Castillo; others, such as Luis Sánchez, came from the *Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo*, a 1970s social organization, and banded together in social work in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1996, PRD won the major city Netzahualcóyotl in 1996 as its first major city – it represents on its own nearly a third of the voting mass in Mexico State – and it has remained a PRD bastion ever since. Bautista became mayor in 2000, and was superseded by Luis Sánchez. Neza remained within the ADN when Bautista’s brother was elected mayor in 2006. In addition, ADN had a rapidly growing presence in the states of Oaxaca, Veracruz, Guerrero, and Michoacán. Key members are: Luis Sánchez, a vice president of the Chamber of Deputies; Juan Hugo de la Rosa, national deputy; Hugo Martínez Padilla, national deputy; Ángel Cedillo, on the PRD CEN; and Graco Ramírez Garrido-Abreu, a senator (and, as it were, the man who introduced AMLO to CCS in 1988).

**Third Candidacy: Alfonso Ramírez Cuellar and Movimiento por la Democracia**

Finally, the new *Movimiento por la Democracia* presented its own candidate as PRD president, Alfonso Ramírez Cuellar, a founding leader of the debtor organization *El Barzón* with a long trajectory in the PRD, who gained further fame when he entered the national congress on horseback. The *Movimiento* was started only in March 2007, and most of its members came from UNYR. It lacked a larger social base and was above all, as a national deputy described it, “an intellectual current,” which drew in former members of the PCM, *Punto Crítico*, and members of the 1968 student movement. The *Movimiento* presented an “independent candidature” in the sense that it did not support either the NI/ADN block or *Izquierda Unida*, but wanted to be an “equilibrium” between the proponents of the party, and the proponents of the movements. Its leaders repeatedly condemned the “false debate” between these two options, and called for unity between AMLO and CCS. Its campaign focus was above all on demands for stricter economic control of the PRD’s *corrientes*, and a call for them to be externally audited. Its main creator was Pablo Gómez, and members included Javier González Garza, coordinator of the PRD group in the Chamber of deputies; Juan Guerra, federal deputy; Inti Muñoz, former federal deputy and Ramírez Cuellar’s campaign coordinator; Saúl Escobar, on the PRD CEN; Ricardo García Sainz, former national deputy; and Salvador Martínez della Rocca, currently an ALDF deputy.

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321 In the words of an ADN national deputy, “I joked to Héctor, when we said we are going to establish social democracy in ADN, that, yes, we are going to be a social democracy, but a *guadalupana* social democracy!” Confidential interview, PRD federal deputy, Feb. 7, 2008.
322 Bolos (2003, 106).
323 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 6, 2007.
324 Personal observation, Dec. 8 Conference, Movimiento *por la Democracia*.
325 Version 270/07. PRD, Nov. 17, 2007, and interview material.
Internal mass elections despite history of disasters

In the PRD, while his opponents would criticize him as a caudillo, CCS had pushed internal democracy in the party from the beginning (Cárdenas 1990a, 6). This included a democratic vote of PRD’s organs on issues such as candidate selection, party program and electoral platform. In terms of selecting the PRD’s national leader, the method had by 1996 become one of absolute internal democracy, namely a vote by the party’s members, which moreover reflected the PRD’s characteristic as a heavily mobilizational party, as the process turned into huge events where more than a million of its members turned out.

While clearly reflecting the “democratic ideology” inherent to the PRD (Prud’homme 2003, 115) – the party was the only one to do so – selecting its national leader has been a process wrought with problems. With no exception, every internal election – held 1995, 1999, 2002, and 2005 – has been fraught with irregularities and claims of fraud. Some, above all the 1999 elections, have been outright disastrous for the PRD’s image, due to widely published reports of internal infightings that at times appeared to lead the party on the verge of breakdown. Accusations of internal fraud and clientelism was particularly damaging to a party that came into being following an electoral fraud perpetrated against it, and which had purported to represent a “democratic revolution,” as its name signified.

While one is hard pressed to deny the democratic merits of mass base elections to select a party’s leader, given the PRD’s troubles with this process, it is nonetheless remarkable that it has not been abolished in favor of more indirect voting by the PRD’s internal organs. The manner in which a party selects is capable of replacing its leaders is clearly an important measure of its level of institutionalization. By this standard, the PRD is clearly in trouble: Every single election has faced accusations of being, to varying degrees, a cochinero, or as dirty as worthy of pigs.326

The 1996 election that brought AMLO to the PRD presidency, while he clearly won a large majority, contained numerous reports of irregularities. Technically, as more than 20 percent of ballot boxes were invalidated, the election should as well have been annulled. The small state of Tabasco alone contributed almost a third of all votes, with 60 percent of all members voting, as opposed less than a quarter on average.327 Given the sweeping victory of the “unity” formula AMLO-Ortega, the irregularities were swept under the carpet, though it cost the party much work to convince Heberto Castillo from desisting from legally denounced the election.

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326 For a historical summary of elections, see Corona Armenta (2004, 112-132).
Remarkably, nothing was done to prevent a future fraud in the 1999 election (Levario Turcott 1999). The PRD would pay dearly for this negligence, as it would go through its hitherto “worst crisis in history.” The two leading candidates were Amalia García and Jesús Ortega. The candidature of Garcia was said to have been “promoted artificially” by CCS, López Obrador and Ricardo Monreal, in order to prevent Ortega, who had a two-to-one lead in the polls, from becoming party president (Sánchez 2001, 53, fn 89).

Yet the election, held March 14, 1999, was a complete fiasco. More than half a million people voted, but a third of the ballot boxes had serious problem. Chaos reigned above all in Oaxaca, Zacatecas, Chiapas, and Campeche. In Mexico City, Carlos Ímaz and Dolores Padierna fought a similarly bitter battle over the PRD-DF presidency. Ortega warned of the difficulty of “extirpating the priísta culture,” where groups loyal to both candidates were accused of perpetrating fraud. The irregularities eventually resulted in the annulment of the elections, which were to be redone. After extended top-level negotiations, Ortega declined in favor of Amalia García, who won the July 25 elections.

Yet given the heavily publicized internal debacle in the PRD, the damage was by then already done. One the one hand, García’s term as party president would be marred by the previous results, and is not regarded to have been an effectual period. Even more important, however, the elections were clearly detrimental to the upcoming 2000 election, as they seriously tainted the PRD’s image, and have been signaled as a significant contributing factor to the PRD’s dismal electoral results that year (Anguiano 2001, 264-265).

The 2002 elections that brought Rosario Robles to power, held March 17, 2002, were almost as controversial as the 1999 election, and furthered the image of the PRD as a contentious


333 To top it all off, it should also be noted that Félix Salgado, despite García’s victory of 55.8 percent, refused to accept defeat, and demanded the secretariat general.
Robles, backed by both CCS and AMLO, ran with Higinio Martínez against a NI-FNS ticket of Jesús Ortega/Raymundo Cárdenas. On election day, 872,275 of PRD’s registered 4 million party members turned out to vote, in what would turn out a worst-case scenario. In a range of states, reports abounded of the burning or stealing of ballot boxes, the “shaving off” of opponents from the member lists and removing their ballot material from the voting stations, and other serious irregularities. In the key state of Michoacán, 30 percent of boxes were simply not installed, and in the Federal District, a massive 600 out of 1650 ballot boxes. The Robles team, however, dismissed these concerns, and claimed to have received a majority outright, which according to party rules would allot them both the president and the secretary-general. Yet NI condemned the election, and pointed to figures from the PRD’s own electoral service that indicated more than 31 percent of ballot boxes had not been installed, which would have been grounds for annulations. Robles’ representative Juan Guerra attacked the electoral service in turn as “factious and partial.” Her other team members Ramón Sosamontes, Carlos Ímaz and Pablo Gómez dismissed allegations of serious fraud, and claimed that as long as their victory was “determinate,” the irregularities could be overlooked. Robles in turn refused to cede the secretary general to the NI-FNS alliance. During the election, 110 members of the PRD saw their party rights suspended for their behavior on election day. They included two federal deputies, the delegation chief of Gustavo Madero, Joel Ortega, and the secretary-general of the PRD-DF, Agustín González Casares (IDN), who were accused of harassing members of PRD’s electoral service, and for tarnishing the election. The PRD’s own watchdog committee CNG received more than 300 official complaints, and the IFE two.

In the end, Robles was declared winner March 24, a week after the election. Yet she was forced to cede the secretary general, as it became clear she had not won a majority in the election. The final tally of the CNG was 441,193 votes to Ortega’s 280,996. The commission,

however, threw out the results from the states of Michoacán, Puebla, Querétaro, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, México and Hidalgo,\textsuperscript{343} which meant that 19.96 of ballot boxes were not installed - within an inch of invalidation.\textsuperscript{344} According to some reports, however, the total percentage was in reality above 30.\textsuperscript{345}

Sosamontes demanded a commission of ethics and values against those who tarnished the election.\textsuperscript{346} Yet when it became clear that the investigation kept uncovering more dirty work that put the electoral results in doubt, Robles threatened to audit the outgoing CEN, and the process died down.\textsuperscript{347}

Finally, in 2005, Jesús Ortega again wanted to run for the party presidency. Yet as it became clear that AMLO would impose his own candidate, Ortega declined, and NI’s Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo became Cota’s running mate. Even so, however, there were several reports of irregularities on election day March 21, 2005, such as the burning, stealing, and stuffing of urns. Many perredistas, including CCS, were missing from the voting registry and thus unable to vote.\textsuperscript{348} Only around 550,000, or 10 percent of registered voters, participated, but the PRD was nonetheless forced to suspend elections in the states of Oaxaca, Tabasco, and Tamaulipas, and also reported serious problems in Yucatán and parts of Mexico State.\textsuperscript{349} Camilo Valenzuela, Cota’s only opponent, and who became the president of PRD’s national council, claimed irregularities in 22 out of the 28 states that held elections, though he eventually desisted from legally denouncing them.\textsuperscript{350}

There is something very valuable and intrinsically democratic about allowing the mass base to elect party president. In Europe, when the new Green parties surged in the 1970s and 1980s, their emphasis on internal democracy was exactly a counter reaction to what they perceived as closed-off political elites isolated from their party based.

Yet as a review of PRD’s history of internal elections show, this feature has cost the party dearly, exacerbating internal tensions, battering its organs, and leaving the public with a negative image of the party as not only quarrelsome and prone to violence, but outright contradictory: While the PRD has been a crucial agent of democratization in Mexico in its short history and

\textsuperscript{343} Suspenden derechos a 110 miembros de PRD. \textit{El Universal}, March 27, 2002.
\textsuperscript{344} Suspenden derechos a 110 miembros de PRD. \textit{El Universal}, March 27, 2002.
\textsuperscript{345} Romero Miranda and Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2002, 67).
\textsuperscript{346} Asumirá Robles en una semana. \textit{El Universal}, April 4, 2002.
\textsuperscript{348} En medio de irregularidades, gana Cota la presidencia del PRD. \textit{Milenio}, March 21, 2005.
\textsuperscript{349} Escasa participación e incidentes, la tónica. \textit{La Jornada}, March 21, 2005; Leonel Cota, virtual presidente del PRD. \textit{La Jornada}, March 21, 2005.
continues to argue for the further democratization of Mexican institutions, it has repeatedly revealed the existence of fraudulent and even violent practices in its own midst. The party has so far not been able to rid itself of this mobilizational aspect so typical of mobilizational movement-parties of the personalistic kind.

In view of the PRD’s history, its decision to hold a mass vote election in 2008 appears particularly unwise given the massive polarization within the party along the “two visions,” which as 2007 progressed had even internally in the party furthered a “with-us-or-against-us,” all-or-nothing approach to internal party politics as well.

Yet it must be noted that the practice of internal mass elections has not been without its critic. In particular, Jesús Ortega and NI have repeatedly sought to alter the practice in favor of one by a vote of the party’s national organs, which are also elected by the mass base. Critics of Ortega and NI often dismissed this corriente as representing the “bureaucracy” of PRD, and explained their support of indirect elections based on their control of a majority of the party organization. By contrast, the movement-party advocates in the PRD claimed to have a majority of the party base itself, and was loath to discontinue this practice.

However, Ortega has been a principled opponent of the practice of mass elections for the PRD presidency since before the NI was even officially established, and far before this group slowly gained the support of most of the PRD’s organization through controlling its state committees. In 1997, as secretary general of AMLO’s CEN, Ortega wanted to limit the use of universal elections, arguing against the “absurdity” of trying to “solve all affairs” by a universal vote (Ortega Martínez 1997, 47). This went against the grain of PRD’s emphasis on internal democracy and mobilization but Ortega argued it brought too much risk for internal chaos, and was moreover inefficient. After the disastrous 1999 election, he criticized the increasing practice of “affiliations of swallows,” where massive groups were allowed to affiliate at the last minute to the party up until election day, a practice, he argued, more reminiscent of the corporatism of the PRI than of a genuinely democratic party (Ortega Martínez 2000, 31). It also meant an increasing blurring of the boundaries between the PRD and other affiliated organizations, and clearly served to water down the party’s true identity.

Following the contentious 2002 election, Ortega explicitly fought for a deal with party president Robles to end direct election of president, in favor of a vote by an elected assembly.351 The proposal was finally brought up at the PRD’s 8th national congress, but lost by a margin of 359 to 279.352 Ahead of its 9th party congress, it was a declared major goal to continue to push for

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351 Ortega pide a Robles incluir sus propuestas; ésta ofrece apertura. El Universal, April 8, 2002.
an end to direct elections, but as this congress was completely dominated by the desafuero of AMLO, the proposal failed to materialize.353

On the other side of the debate have been the sectors that favored the direct involvement of the mass bases in the election of the PRD’s national leader. In 2008, they were above all represented by the candidature of Alejandro Encinas, and the loose and generally movement-oriented coalition supporting his candidacy. During the PRD’s 10th national congress, these groups remarkably pushed for completely open elections where anyone, regardless of being a member of the PRD or not, would be able to cast a vote for the party’s president. Given the mass affiliation to AMLO’s CND and Legitimate Government of activists who were not a member of the PRD, and the possibility of e.g. Convergencia and PT members casting a vote, Encinas’ candidacy clearly stood the most to gain.

In the end, the vote failed almost five to one in the congress, where momentum was rather building for a limitation of the mass vote.354 Yet the proposal, remarkable in its radicality, offered yet a further demonstration a conflict between the emphasis of mass involvement in the election – whether fueled by a “democratic ideology” or more mundane power plays – and a more pragmatic course that took lesson of one of PRD’s heavily flawed practices that had proved repeatedly to be detrimental to the party.

2008 election: Movement-party, or traditional party building

I was recently reading a biography of Churchill, and on one occasion they say he said something that is very appropriate of this struggle: “There are world wars, there are civil wars, and then there are party members.”355

- PRD senator, ahead of 2008 internal party contest.

Never in modern history, at least in the West, has one seen a process of vote counting that would last that long. It is a Guinness Record.356

- Reneto Sales, member of PRD Comisión Nacional de Garantías.

Despite a history of disastrous internal elections in the PRD, the majority of the party had voted to maintain the mechanism of mass base voting to select the party’s national leader. Given the level of polarization within the PRD in 2007-2008 – and PRD’s 800-million debt – the decision to push for a full-blown mass election that would involve more than a million party members was remarkable.

354 The vote was 445-93. Ceden los chuchos; fraude, via para consumar la imposición. La Jornada, Aug. 19, 2007.
356 El PRD, a un paso de la anulación. MIL, July 8, 2008.
The PRD’s elites were unanimous in their characterization of the period as the environment as the most polarized in the party’s history. Despite some internal contradictions in the make-up of the two dominant coalitions, in all essence all of the PRD’s major fault lines converged into the choices of either Alejandro Encinas or Jesús Ortega as the next party president. Fundamentally, the election was about whether the party should maintain a close alignment with the larger movement of AMLO and remain a movement-party subordinated to his cause, or to take on a more traditional organization much more autonomous from the “Legitimate President.”

Ortega’s victory was long in the making – it was his fourth attempt – and a stunning further eight months of debilitating internal fight would pass before Ortega was finally declared the PRD’s president by the highest electoral tribunal in Mexico on Nov. 12, 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Posts to elect</th>
<th>Registered</th>
<th>Formulas (planillas)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>PRD National president/secretary general</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRD national congress</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>5,227</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRD national council</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>1,37</td>
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<td>PRD state presidents/secretaries general</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>414</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRD State congresses</td>
<td>20,840</td>
<td>53,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerrero State municipalities</td>
<td>23,679</td>
<td>16,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49,302</td>
<td>93,550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.9: Total number of offices elected March 16, 2008.

AMLO had earlier made a deal with the PRD leadership not to intervene in the internal battle of the PRD. In a speech to his NI group, Jesús Ortega emphasized the adherence to the statutes and internal regulations of the party in the upcoming elections. In a veiled reference to AMLO, he criticized the “vulgar dedazo” of PAN, which had recently selected its new party

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357 The coalition supporting Ortega's bid consisted of the corrientes NI, ADN, and parts of the FNS. Among non-party organizations, Ortega was backed by parts of the Frente Popular Francisco Villa, and Alianza Mexicana de Organizaciones Residenciales (AMOR). Alejandro Encinas' Izquierda Unida was a loose coalition of the corrientes IDN, IS, UNYR, IM, most of FNS, and part of REDIR. In addition, Encinas was supported by the small Cívicos group, and by GDF Secretary of Work Benito Mirón Lince's Aquí Estamos, which was composed by El Barzón Metropolitano; STUNAM; Cooperativo Pascuala; Frente Común de Extrabajadores de Ruta 100, the syndicates of Colegio de Bachilleres and IMSS, Unión Nacional de Trabajadores Agrícolas, the Coordinación de Redes Ciudadanas, Confederación Democrática Nacional, Conservación Social del Patrimonio Cultural, and the Comisión de Mexicanos Migrantes. Crucially, Encinas had the backing of AMLO, and the many movements and groups associated with his Legitimate Government. Cf. Rosalía Vergara: Dispuestos a Todo. Proceso, no. 1630 (Jan. 27, 2008): 28-31.


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president in a highly top-down manner. Yet a few days later, AMLO would come out openly to declare his support for Encinas’ candidacy. On Dec. 18, 2007, he said that backing Encinas was “a matter of identifying with the project.” In a stab at Ortega, he declared, “I am a follower of what Ocampo used to say: The moderates are nothing more than enlightened conservatives.” Encinas, in turn, added, “We don’t want a docile left, a left that legitimizes, a modosita left.” In the words of Salvador García Soto, writing in *El Universal*, the statements amounted to a “declaration of war.”

For months, verbal barbs had been traded between representatives of the two groups. Fernando Belaunzarán of NI declared the issue of recognizing Calderón, a “byzantine debate” as the PRD congress had months earlier decided the party’s position. As Belaunzarán argued, “It is impossible to be part of the system and to not interact with the government.” Yet NI and its allies faced increasingly heated accusations of meeting in secret with Calderón or otherwise seeking to recognize the “spurious president,” particularly as Ruth Zavaleta, of René Arce’s subgroup of NI, said she regarded Calderón as “Legal, but not legitimate.” But the issue was rather of whether to have any relations at all with the federal government, than of recognizing Calderón.

While some members of the PRD’s elite had first sought to ignore the public name calling, in the end months of aggravation had created what Ortega denounced as “pure Stalinism” and a “climate of hate,” where some, like Chamber of Deputies PRD group leader Javier González Garza and the PRD’s Senate group leader Carlos Navarrete, faced verbal and physical attacks in public by supporters of AMLO and Encinas.

The vote over the 2007 COFIPE reform further aggravated tensions. Gerardo Fernández Noroña, PRD’s secretary of social communication, and one of the most public opponents of NI, accused Ortega of being behind the legislation, which was also supported by ADN and the Movimiento, with the goal of destroying the FAP. Harsh attacks were also launched by the corrientes IDN and IS. Against the accusations of being “modositos,” Jesús Zambrano retorted

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360 Manuel Espino Barrientos, president of PAN 2005-2007, was replaced by Germán Martínez Cázares in the dedazo-style of the PRI.
that NI as a *corriente* was “not one that consumes itself in internal quarrels, and continues projecting an image of quarrelsomeness, a Noroña-Padierna image.”

Fernández Noroña also accused Zavaleta, the president of executive board of Congress, of having “handed over her body” to the federal government, after her statements that she regarded Calderón the constitutional president of Mexico, and after having participated in a meeting with Calderón’s wife. The public fight between Zavaleta and Noroña became the central subject of the PRD’s 10th plenary of the national council, which rejected and disavowed the statements of PRD’s former spokesperson, a post from which he had earlier been demoted.

In response to further statements and actions by Noroña Fernández, Secretary General Acosta Naranjo declared,

> It seems to me that Gerardo Fernández Noroña has turned himself into an idiot and a provocateur that constantly gets us into problems, and who doesn’t comply with any rules, and if anyone is doing Felipe Calderón a favor he’s called Gerardo Fernández Noroña. Every time he talks he damages the movement of the left in Mexico; every time Fernández Noroña does something he seems to be representative of Felipe Calderón.

In the months preceding the votes, both sides hurled accusations and complaints against alleged frauds, particularly regarding the membership registry drive, and PRD’s bloated electoral rolls. Both sides kept the PRD’s CNG busy, as well as on at least a dozen occasions going to the TEPJF, which the party had condemned following the 2006 electoral debacle.

Both sides engaged in a massive process of affiliation to increase the number of PRD members who could vote in the March 2008 election, which led to a storm of complaints to the PRD’s newly appointed *Comisión Nacional de Garantías*. Many were drawn in from the larger movement presided over by AMLO, and members of the Legitimate Government admitted that most of the new party members would affiliate merely in order to be able to vote – “*Vota y te vas*” – and then simply leave the party. Ahead of the registration deadline, *Izquierda Unida* announced 1.4 million new affiliations, while NI obtained at least 600,000 new members.

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373 Confidential interview, PRD central member, Jan. 20, 2008.
Mexico City Mayor Marcelo Ebrard, while keeping a relatively low profile, was still accused of intervening directly on behalf of AMLO and Encinas.\textsuperscript{375}

One of the most visual and blatant breaches of PRD party rules was a mass letter from AMLO to at least a million members of the PRD where he explicitly asked them to vote for Encinas. While it was not illegal for AMLO to voice his opinion, the use of extra electoral resources was, as both parties had agreed to a limit on spending. The CNG ordered the mailing stopped.\textsuperscript{376}

By the time of the election, the polarization had divided the party in two, and in practice permeated its internal organs. On one issue, the two warring groups were in agreement, however:

The historical importance of the elections. According to a central member of the Izquierda Social,

> I think that we are now living the most important moment in the party, the most decisive…what the party will do in the coming months will define much of the future of the country, of the left in general, the left that participates institutionally.\textsuperscript{377}

According to a member of the corriente UNYR,

> They are very important because they are about defining the future course of the party. It is more important still because some of us believe that the party should turn toward its original postulates, and recover and rescue what gave origin to the party, which is the people, social movements, syndicates, popular sectors, and because of this respond to the interests of the people….Our positions imply then, in synthesis, the importance of the election means, that either we put the PRD in front of the fight for the people, to transform and defend its sovereignty, constitutional, human, workers rights, or we just tone this down, and give us over to the positions of the right.\textsuperscript{378}

While most central members of the party would in fact deny in the media that the election was in reality a vote for or against AMLO, in interviews both sides agreed that the question of AMLO’s leadership in the party was a central defining issue, and was reflected in the other fights, such as the battle over the 2007 COFIPE reform.

According to a left intellectual of the NI,

> [The election] is about the perception of what should be the role of Andrés Manuel López Obrador. To Nueva Izquierda he is an outstanding leader who has a role in this democratic struggle but who should not conceive his actions as unipersonal decisions that one imposes on the totality of the party. To the group closes to Andrés Manuel López Obrador, his decisions are accepted as those of the strategic leadership of the struggle, accepting the special role he has as a charismatic leader of the democratic movement. And in a country like Mexico, you have these two perceptions: Andrés Manuel as a prominent but not the defining leader of the country’s struggle, or Andrés Manuel as a charismatic leader whose decisions one takes on in a direct form. Yes, it constitutes an important separation.\textsuperscript{379}

\textsuperscript{375} Crispación por relevo prende ‘focos rojos’ en PRD. El Universal, Nov. 4, 2007.


\textsuperscript{378} Confidential interview, PRD central member, Feb. 26, 2008.

\textsuperscript{379} Confidential interview, PRD central member, Jan. 17, 2008.
One national deputy who remained neutral in the battle, suggested that should Ortega win, several sectors around AMLO and Encinas might even leave the PRD itself:

My sense is that if Jesús Ortega wins, there might be a detachment of Alejandro or the people around Alejandro from the party because of this polarization. There might be a detachment toward some social or civil organization, toward other parties; it could be Convergencia or PT. I do see a very strong polarization and that in the end they are not going to remain in the same party, unfortunately.380

A central leader of Izquierda Unida rejected a separation from the PRD, added, “I see a distancing of the PRD from Andres Manuel and much internal conflict. Let us hope that this will not happen.”381

One advisor to the FAP noted that in addition, the election was about what lessons to draw from the 2006 defeat, and who to blame for it:

It is not a normal election. In reality what we are setting forth is the outcome of 2006 with the reaccommodation of power of the left and the entire political system, so it is not just the fight over one election within the party, but really a reinterpretation of what happened in 2006, who were to blame for the defeat in 2006, and who are the responsible for the falling approval of the left in the subsequent elections.382

The same adviser, moreover, said AMLO would not leave PRD, “at least for now,” but said the main argument was merely lack of possibility of a “citizen candidacy” for the next presidential election: Only candidates of political parties can run for the office. He also emphasized emphatically the risk of a rupture within PRD itself:

This is the gamble of the right; this is the gamble that the government is going for, and what they are doing is to provoke, putting out information so that the sides are fighting. I believe that there exists a real risk that the party breaks, and I have been pushing against it, I have done my political tasks to avoid this, and I have achieved that it has been postponed. They have entrusted me a bit to make the strategic plans, and I have convinced them, though not sufficiently. That is, I convince them to gain a couple of weeks but the matter continues to be present, and I think that, yes, there is a real possibility that this ends very badly… there is a real risk of a rupture of the left, and the breaking point is the PRD elections.383

The candidacy of Alejandro Encinas was also long in the making. Already the previous April, Armando Quintero, head of what remained of UNYR, had presented him as its candidate.384 Yet based on Encinas’ history in the PRD, the ensuing level of polarization might first appear puzzling. In the Ortega camp, many perredistas pointed out that Encinas had always been a moderate who had supported Ortega in the past.385 As secretary of the environment,

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381 Confidential interview, PRD central member, March 14, 2008.
382 Confidential interview, FAP central member, Jan. 24, 2008.
383 Confidential interview, FAP central member, Jan. 24, 2008.
384 Destapa Quintero a Encinas como candidato a presidente del sol azteca. La Jornada, April 1, 2007.
385 A point noted by several interviewees; see also Fransisco Ortiz Pardo: La Sucesión en el PRD se Reduce a Pactos de Interés. Proceso, no. 1165 (Feb. 28, 1999): 16-20.
Encinas had held a high profile in the Mexico City government of CCS\textsuperscript{386}. After having been elected delegation chief Álvaro Obregon in 2000 and lost it after a controversial court decision, Encinas was the only top functionary kept on by AMLO when he took over as chief of government in 2000. He was first Secretary of economic development, and in 2002 became Undersecretary of government. When José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti left to become a federal deputy in 2003, Encinas finally acceded to the highest position in the DF government after the mayor, Secretary of government.\textsuperscript{387} After AMLO stepped down to campaign for the presidency, Encinas would take his place as interim mayor, and lead the city skillfully through the 2006 post-electoral chaos. With a past in the PCM, Encinas had always been considered a “man of the party,” yet in 2007 he increasingly noted the necessity of a movement that “goes beyond the ranks of the party.”\textsuperscript{388}

Notably, both members of Izquierda Unida and allies of Ortega denied there were any significant ideological differences between Encinas and Ortega. With rare exceptions, members of both camps answered simply “no” to the question of whether the candidates differed in left and right terms, including the most ardent opponents of NI. The same was the case for supporters of Ortega. One principal PRD party founder noted,

\begin{quote}
I would say that if we look at the documents of Nueva Izquierda, if we look at the documents that the group around Alejandro Encinas has produced, that is, if we compare them directly, document against document, we are not going to find mayor differences.\textsuperscript{389}
\end{quote}

At the height of the electoral battle mere days before the vote, this was also accepted by a prominent leader of Izquierda Unida:

\begin{quote}
DM: But are there differences in terms of left and right between you and Ortega?
I: In terms of ideology… there are no differences.\textsuperscript{390}
\end{quote}

One national legislator belonging to ADN returned to the issue of paths to power as the fundamental dividing line between the groups.

\begin{quote}
I don’t think there is a question of ideology. I think the differences lie elsewhere, when we consider that we have to gain access to power. What is the path? It we consider that we need to make a revolution – “to hell with the institutions” – this a very different question, right? Here, yes, there is a difference; here there is a profound difference. If we are consistent, we have to accept that this is the path that we have chosen, and on which we need to go. And if the moment comes when we will say, “No, this is no longer possible,” well, then we will adopt a different path, perhaps a revolution. At one time we were of this idea, but we later adopted the idea that we need to arrive through the electoral path, and this is the one we are focusing on now.\textsuperscript{391}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{386} Ward and Durden (2002, 17).
\textsuperscript{388} Rosalia Vergara: La Izquierda, el Dilema... Proceso, no. 1600 (July 1, 2007): 14-17 (20).
\textsuperscript{389} Confidential interview, PRD founder, Dec. 6, 2007.
\textsuperscript{390} Confidential interview, PRD central member, March 14, 2008.
\textsuperscript{391} Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Nov. 6, 2007.
One central NI leader argued the coalition was a tale of strange bedfellows: They are antipodes in many positions, they are contradictory in many positions, so why are they together? They don’t share a proposal or program; they are together because Alejandro unifies them… I don’t understand it. I don’t agree with it; I don’t agree with him on this position, but I understand that in terms of accumulating strength he sacrifices his true positions in order to assume others foreign to him.392

A member of the corriente Movimiento, which decried the “false polarization” between Encinas and Ortega, said

Encinas is very different, he comes from the best of the left, the best of the traditions, he is a great guy, he is an intelligent guy, but he has a wrong strategy with is to obtain the help of many groups that have become corrupted… he is not going to be able to do anything. He is going to owe them the presidency.393

An adviser to the FAP also argued there was a contradiction with his earlier moderation, and his coalition of the most “radical” groups in the PRD:

I think he has personally always been a social democrat, but now he is leading a movement that obliges his to radicalize, but I think that deep down inside he is a moderate.394

A member of NI on the PRD’s CEN also argued Encinas was “trapped into this,” and pointed out additional contradictions of his backing by PML and Amalia García of the FNS:

I would never have imagined Alejandro Encinas going against the moderates, calling them modositos, when he has always been a moderate…. Also, you have two confessed social democrats like Amalia García and Porfirio [Muñoz Ledo], who are now going along with a totally distinct line. You tell me, if Amalia has been a “radical” in her government! And her relationship with Calderón has been completely smooth, I would say even edulcorante. Because of this I say it is a problem of double standards.395

A member of the Cívicos, which backed Encinas, nonetheless expressed worry that Encinas would be “held hostage to the extremists”:

We have already talked with Encinas twice, and one of the things that our compañeros are questioning Encinas for is this relation of groups that are supporting him, because they give the impression that he is a hostage of IDN and Izquierda Social. And second, we have questioned Encinas on appearing as a subordinate of Andrés Manuel. That is, we don’t question his sympathy and support of Andrés Manuel – we respect the leadership of Andrés Manuel – but we are not uncritical, and we have criticisms of this polarizing vision of Andrés Manuel that sometimes in a manner is being taken advantage of by the right in order to say, “look, they are all extremists,” right? But finally we told him that Andrés Manuel should not appear as the leader of the party…. as with Cota.396

From the opposite camp came complaints that Encinas was not confrontational enough with Ortega and his allies. According to a federal deputy from the IDN,

Sometimes as well it worries me the attitude of Encinas, who has not been very given to confrontation, not because I want to see him confronting, fighting, but I think one needs to mark

394 Confidential interview, central FAP member, Dec. 6, 2007.
more this difference that there is between us and the Chuchos, because if not he would appear to be in between the two, right?397

A national legislator of ADN also argued,

Look, I think the objective is the same, but the problem is how to accede, how to achieve power. I am convinced that deep down they coincide with us that there is no other manner in which to accede to power than through elections, which is our position. But with the experience lived last year, one has not been able to overcome a problem, which is that that many of us brought up on the left are not democrats. I can accept that there were grave anomalies in the electoral process, but I as a democrat have to continue to opt for perfectioning the system, I have to be opt for convincing the electorate, and I need to bet on winning in the electoral processes, and the problem is that I think it is this anger that has made them avoid making those associations, it is the only thing I think that have happened.398

One member of NI stressed that the Ortega-Encinas rivalry was not primarily a fight between two candidates, but of two positions of the left:

It is such that, including Andrés Manuel said it this way, the election is not between Jesus and Encinas. I’ll tell you that the Jesus and Encinas that we know have few differences, but it is rather what Encinas is today representing: He is representing a left that is backwards, a left of confrontation, a left that is also clientelist, because the clientelist groups are on that side, and Encinas have been fighting them forever, but above all what Encinas represents is, nevertheless, those who believe what should be valued in the party is the “Supreme Will” and not what I would call democratic institutionalism.399

Finally, several members of the PRD also noted that the very relationship between AMLO and several of the component members of Izquierda Unida is in itself a “marriage of convenience,” or one where AMLO and his allied reap mutual advantage of the alliance. One senator of ADN noted,

Look, I can tell you with all honesty that Andrés Manuel only represents himself, but there are groups that have grown and have strengthened and have benefitted within the shadow of Andrés Manuel, and the truth is they have no own political development, nor the organizational capacity to exist outside or far from Andrés Manuel himself, and that is why they are there. To me it seems they have no proposals; they are waiting for the rupture of the political system, just like Andrés Manuel, in order to present themselves as an option.400

One federal deputy allied with Encinas but opposed to IDN and IS, argued,

IDN, which is Bejarano, although now his wife Dolores Padierna now heads it, and Izquierda Social, they are two small groups in the Federal District but they want to grow on a national level, so therefore this discourse… it is they who have exaggerated this discourse, and for what reason? Because they want to present themselves as an option. And it is a bit artificial, because Nueva Izquierda is not going to go there, nor are they really the traitors. These groups plant themselves in this hard criticism in a very maniquean manner; they are very maniquean, in that they present everything in terms of good and bad, when it is not really like this… I know people from Nueva Izquierda, and there are as many good people as bad. And in any case, with what authority can Bejarano and Dolores Padierna say that they are the good ones! Because of this I am telling you it is maniqueism, and they are using Andrés Manuel and Encinas to grow as a group.401

397 Confidential interview, PRD national legislator, Feb. 6, 2008.
399 Confidential interview, PRD CEN member, Jan. 14, 2008.
One member of the Movimiento argued,

The subject matter is that this artificial polarization generated by the corrientes that have an interest in polarizations, now converges with the election of the national leadership. There are interested parties in this fight.  

**Eight months of uncertainty: Yet another traumatic leadership succession**

The protracted battle over the presidency – eight months would pass from election day to the final court decision – was a clear demonstration of the uninstitutionalized nature of the PRD’s top leadership, where the party’s de jure and de facto leaders, in line with the logic of the personalistic movement-party, battled for power in what would be a highly traumatic leadership succession battle.

Ahead of the election, PRD senator Arturo Núñez, head of the party’s electoral commission, predicted matters would likely end up in the TEPJF, as he noted it had become a “practical sport” in the party to impugn the results. In particular, Izquierda Unida was active in denouncing irregularities and referring to the process as a “cochinero” before the results were even in. The election itself, though some irregularities occurred, would however pass relatively peacefully, and Núñez rejected that the complaints should be cause for annulment of election.  

When two quick counts by polling companies IMO and Mitofsky surprisingly showed Encinas winning, Izquierda Unida went from denouncing the election to lauding it. However, it became clear that the methodology of the pollsters had left much to be desired. PRD president Leonel Cota, in a bizarre reversed-mirror image of the 2006 process, inexplicably shut down the PRD’s PREP, or preliminary count, when it indicated a different result. Both sides braced themselves for the aftermath.

Following weeks of confusion regarding the full results, the Electoral Commission closed its count on April 7, and Encinas declared himself winner. Ernestina Godoy, president of the CNG, three weeks later declared that 83.95 percent of the ballot boxes had been installed, and the victory valid. CNG’s proclamation was absurd, as only 30 percent of the full vote returns had actually been counted, and Ortega consequently did not accept the results.

On April 22, the mandate of Leonel Cota expired, and the party found itself with no official leader. Moreover, if no president was appointed by May 4, when the current CEN’s period officially ended its mandate, the PRD would lose its official party registry. External events

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405 Con sólo 30% de la votación, la comisión electoral del PRD cierra el cómputo. *La Jornada*, April 8, 2008.
also interfered and made a solution appear even more distant, when in the Congress, NI opposed yet another taking of the dais in order to protest what AMLO, and Izquierda Unida, claimed was an alleged privatization attempt of state oil company PEMEX.407

As an emergency measure, the PRD’s national council voted to designate Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo as “Substitute President” of the PRD. While there were several historic precedents for this in the party – Roberto Robles Garnica, in 1993, Pablo Gómez in 1999, and Leonel Godoy in 2003 had all been designated interim presidents408 – the session, with 114 votes in favor and 8 abstentions, was boycotted by Izquierda Unida.409

On the party’s 19th anniversary the following day, Encinas and Ortega fittingly held separate celebrations. Ortega referred to the internal party war and the division over whether to physically shut down the country’s national congress, and argued they were manifestation of a division in the party that went all the way to its 1995 Oaxtepec party conference.410 Substitute president Acosta Naranjo declared that “the one-man party has been left behind.”411

Encinas, on the other hand, claimed Ortega had controlled the party “bureaucracy” ever since he was secretary general, and accused NI of selling candidatures and colluding with the PRI. Acosta Naranjo’s designation was rejected and impugned to the TEPJF, and Leonel Cota, whose mandate as president had just expired, declared his conviction that he would soon take up again the presidency.412 Cota argued that “the defenders of Ortega are the same that attacked us in 2006,” and while he had as PRD president usually spoken in measured terms, ominously declared, regarding the upcoming battle over the petroleum reform, that

Today to criticize the movement which is in the streets today, which was in the Chamber of the Senators, and is in the Congress of the Union, and which is presided over by López Obrador, is synonymous to treason.413

Their supporters took the cue, and responded with shouts of “Traitors, Chuchos get out!” Two days later, the TEPJ gave a verdict, but not on Acosta Naranjo’s presidency, but on the absurd decision to count only 30 percent of the votes: The tribunal ordered the PRD’s electoral

412 IFE declared that Acosta was the legal president of the PRD, but the IU still refused to accept this. Then, on June 26, the TEPJF ratified the appointment of Acosta and Gastélum and validated the national council meeting of May 4, ignoring IU’s complaint. Acosta, líder espurio: encinistas. Milenio, May 24, 2008, and Declara el TEPJF legal la designación de Acosta. Milenio, June 26, 2008.
413 Traición, criticar a AMLO: Cota. El Universal, May 6, 2008; Cota, convencido de que retomará la presidencia del PRD; critica a Ortega. La Jornada, May 6, 2008; “Un golpe de mano,” elección de Guadalupe Acosta, dice Cota. Milenio, May 6, 2008
commission, from which Arturo Núñez had renounced, to count all the votes. It complied, and on
May 9 declared its final results, which had Ortega head of Encinas with 16, 214 votes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates for President/Secretary General</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesús Ortega Martínez/Horacio Duarte.</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>557,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro Encinas Rodriguez/Hortensia Aragón</td>
<td>46.12</td>
<td>541,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina Rocío Navarro González/ Raúl Delgado Ibarra</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>30,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfonso Ramírez Cuellar/Rosa Albina Garavito Elías</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>18,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Camilo Valenzuela Fierro/Adela Román Ocampo</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>17,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel León López/Diocelina Sánchez López (withdrew)</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>9,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,174,066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.10: PRD internal election final results, March 16, 2008.414

Yet the saga of PRD’s internal election, which the newspaper Milenio fittingly characterized as a telenovela, did not end here.415 Ernestina Godoy, head of the CNG, proceeded to annul Ortega’s victory, having suddenly come to the conclusion that less than the required number of ballots had been installed. She argued now that the election had been “the electoral process with the most irregularities in the 19 years of PRD’s existence,” and laid the blame squarely on Ortega.416

Encinas declared that he would “under protest” acknowledge the annulment of the election.417 Ortega complained that AMLO – who also agreed to the annulment – had again vetoed him.418 He impugned the decision to the TEPFJ, whose verdict would only be pronounced half a year later.419

In the meantime, the telenovela continued in full force. Godoy eventually renounced from the CNG, claiming fraud and illegalities and favoritism of other members to Ortega, though she offered no proof.420 The two remaining functionaries, Dolores de los Ángeles Nazares and Renato Sales Heredia, denounced Godoy as a liar, yet their press conference was interrupted by the rabble-rouser Fernández Noroña.421 Supporters of Izquierda Unida would proceed to occupy the

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414 Cédula de Publicación, May 9, Comisión Técnica Electoral. Document provided electronically.
417 Encinas acatará “bajo protesta” la resolución emitida por la CNG. La Jornada, July 21, 2008.
418 Encinas: voy de nuevo; Ortega: me vetó AMLO. Milenio, July 21, 2008; Decisión correcta, la anulación de los comicios del PRD: AMLO. La Jornada, July 21, 2008.
419 Garantías acumuló las casillas anuladas. Milenio, July 29, 2008; Jesús Ortega exige ante el TEPJF que no se anulen los comicios del PRD. La Jornada, July 29, 2008.
421 Ernestina Godoy, mentirosa y sin ética, dicen Sales Heredia y Názares Jerónimo. La Jornada, Aug. 5, 2008. Noroña gained national fame by throwing himself around the feet of then-president Zedillo in a
buildings of the CNG, and then the party headquarters. The usually measured Encinas called for “A fight to the death,” and declared ni madres that he would accept an Ortega presidency, even if the TEPJF should rule in his favor. Izquierda Unida set up a plantón outside the party headquarter to demand new elections, and eventually kicked out PRD party workers from the building. When the PRD national council sought to convene, Izquierda Unida supporters blocked it as well, forcing a change in location. In the city of Nezahualcóyotl in Mexico State, 157 members of the 300-plus council met, and Acosta Naranjo declared the Council and not Calle San Luis Potosí – the street where AMLO’s headquarter in Mexico City is located – the highest authority in the PRD. La Jornada declared it the “definite rupture” of the party.

While the PAN, PRI, and other parties were busy preparing for the upcoming 2009 national election, the tragic comedy of PRD continued, where Acosta Naranjo was forced to hold party meetings in hotels and restaurants, yet was followed by groups loyal to Encinas who tried to prevent the substitute president from functioning. The blockade of the national party headquarter was lifted just two days before the final vote in the PRD-led referendum on petroleum reform, although Izquierda Unida members continued to block the location of the party’s CNG.

The March 16, 2008, election had also elected new members to the PRD’s national congress. As a significant section of the party refused to accept Acosta Naranjo as substitute president, and as the final decision on the presidential vote was still pending, the party again faced problems with its registry if it ignored its own requirement to hold a national congress. While the congress, which was held over two sessions in September and October, produced no radical changes – it raised quotes for party members, and opened up for common candidatures protest against the debt crisis. According to a PRD activist who retold this story, AMLO, as president of the PRD, paid his bail.

422 Clausuran encinistas oficina de Acosta Naranjo en sede nacional. Milenio, Aug. 6, 2008.
426 Ruptura definitiva entre los chuchos e Izquierda Unida, vaticinio en el sol azteca. La Jornada, Aug. 17, 2008.
428 Luego de siete días, liberan la sede nacional perredista. La Jornada, Aug. 23, 2008.
with the PRI\textsuperscript{430} – the make-up of its delegates was a further indication of the PRD’s internal power relations. Most of the delegates to the congress had been elected on March 16, 2008, and NI and its allies totaled 63 percent, against 37 percent of Izquierda Unida.\textsuperscript{431} Despite the massive new affiliations in support of the two candidates, the shift in power relations toward the “moderates,” underway for quite some time, was not reversed, and NI-ADN and its allies were now the dominant coalition within the PRD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corriente</th>
<th>Delegates</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nueva Izquierda</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>29.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADN</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>22.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDN</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>16.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNS</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>6.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movimiento</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.11: PRD 11\textsuperscript{th} congress distribution of elected delegates by corriente.\textsuperscript{432}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of List</th>
<th>Corriente</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Council members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesús Zambrano Grijalva</td>
<td>NI</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>41.22</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro Sánchez Camacho</td>
<td>IDN</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>18.16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Héctor Miguel Bautista López</td>
<td>ADN</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>17.13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigoberto Ávila Ordoñez</td>
<td>Izquierda Unida</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>16.18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elías Miguel Moreno Brizuela</td>
<td>Izquierda en Movimiento</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfonso Ramírez Cuellar</td>
<td>Movimiento and Cívicos</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1162</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.12: PRD 11\textsuperscript{th} congress vote on national council members: Corriente strength.\textsuperscript{433}

\textsuperscript{430} The September session was held principally held to comply with a formality, and approved some modifications to the party statutes. The Comisión Política Nacional (National Political Commission) was cleared to be set up with 15 members representing all the corrientes of the PRD; the salary contributions from PRD members in elected office went from 10 percent up until 25 percent of the salary, destined principally for political training; the Electoral Technical Commission became an autonomous organ called the Comisión Electoral Nacional (National Electoral Commission) and was enlarged to five members, as was the Comisión Nacional de Garantías or National Vigilance Commission. What caused the most controversy, however, was the opening up for the possibility of electoral alliances with the PRI – to be approved by a 2/3 vote of the National Council – ending a transitory prohibition on such alliances. The vote was won 637-492. Cf. Acuerdan las corrientes del PRD reformar estatutos, línea política y reglamento. La Jornada, Sept. 21, 2008; Cohabitán todas las tribus en un nuevo órgano. Milenio, Sept. 21, 2008; Rompe el PRD candados que impedían las alianzas abiertas con PRI y PAN. La Jornada, Sept. 22, 2008; Izquierda Unida los tacha de vendidos. Milenio, Sept. 22, 2008; Comunicado 136/08. PRD, Comité Ejecutivo Nacional. Sept. 21, 2008. www.prd.org.mx; Conferencia de prensa por Guadalupe Acosta presidente Nacional sustituto del PRD. Presidencia PRD, Sept. 23, 2008. www.prd.org.mx.

\textsuperscript{431} IDN intenta reventar el congreso, denuncia NI. Milenio, Sept. 19, 2008.

\textsuperscript{432} Independents made out the rest. ‘Chuchos’ y aliados definirán congreso. El Universal, Sept. 19, 2008.

\textsuperscript{433} Nueva Izquierda confirma su mayoría en Consejo perredista. La Jornada, Oct. 13, 2008. Minimum votes to get a consejero was 58 votes, a 5 percent threshold.
Izquierda Unida, moreover, started to fracture, as IDN presented its own list for electing members of the national council. The distribution of the congress vote is a further demonstration of the power of the NI-ADN coalition, which gathered almost 60 percent of the votes.  

Finally, on Nov. 12, the TEPJF in a unanimous decision revoked the CNG’s decision to annul the outcome of the presidential election, and declared Jesús Ortega the PRD’s new national president. Notably, Mayor Marcelo Ebrard, a likely contender in 2012, declared he would respect the verdict of the electoral tribunal. 

Alejandro Encinas, however, did not. He pledged he would “rescue the PRD from the bureaucracy,” and attributed Ortega’s victory to “government intervention.” While he said he would not leave the party, he renounced his right to be PRD’s secretary general, which divided his Izquierda Unida allies. Moreover, he announced the creation of a new “national movement” that would be the backbone of Izquierda Unida, his loose coalition in the PRD, which in turn would be the backbone of the National Democratic Convention. The newspaper La Jornada declared that the “the debate party versus movement-party is reborn.” Yet as noted earlier in this chapter, this debate had returned as the main dividing line in the PRD much earlier and in its various manifestations increasingly defined the party’s internal struggles.

In his first speech as president, Jesús Ortega defended social democracy as the future path to follow for the PRD. In reference to his opponents within the party, he also noted,

The precise and plain definition that the left will accede to power through the democratic path, through the path of elections, must not be understood as surrendering. While most of Ortega’s’ opponents grudgingly accepted him as the new PRD president, he received no reprieve from AMLO, who pronounced his own verdict of the election: “I will accept no ruling from the electoral tribunal because I maintain it is controlled by the mafia of politics in Mexico.”

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435 Decreto el TEPJF el triunfo a Jesús Ortega. La Jornada, Nov. 13, 2008.
436 Voy a pugnar para que no se divida el partido: Ebrard. Milenio, Nov. 14, 2008; Debo acatar el fallo del TEPJF, afirma Ebrard. La Jornada, Nov. 14, 2008.
438 La decisión de Encinas divide opiniones entre perredistas. La Jornada, Nov. 19, 2008.
440 Doble anuncio: el rescate del PRD y los combates que vienen. La Jornada, Nov. 19, 2008.
443 AMLO: no acepto ningún fallo del Tribunal. Milenio, Nov. 20, 2008; El Tribunal está controlado por la mafia, afirma AMLO. Milenio, Nov. 14, 2008.
The breakdown of the Frente Amplio Progresista

I think that the PT and Convergencia would like that the PRD would break, I think they would like this to happen.444

-Secretary of the PRD national executive committee (NI).

The loss of AMLO’s candidate to lead the PRD as a component yet subordinate part to his larger movement, led to increased speculation that rather than to accept the result, he would leave the party. Already in 2007, following the successful passage of the COFIPE reform, which he adamantly opposed, AMLO had felt obliged to publicly state he was not planning to leave the PRD, or planning another party.445 Following the protracted internal battle in the PRD, however, he would distance himself from the party and move ever closer to his unconditional allies PT and Convergencia. In addition, Ortega’s victory would lead to the final breakup of the coalition formed between the three party to bring AMLO to the presidency in 2006.

The FAP was declared on Sept. 15, 2006 to “promote the pacifist civil resistance against the imposition” and to “push for the radical transformation of institutions.”446 It was a kind of emergency solution to respond to the galling question of what to do with the Por el Bien de Todos coalition’s 160-strong contingent in the Chamber of Deputies, as well as its group in the Senate.

AMLO, however, was at first hostile to the FAP, as he wanted the focus to be exclusively on the Legitimate Government rather than on the coalition’s work in parliament, which he found to be of subordinate value, but he eventually agreed to FAP’s creation on condition that it would not contradict the legitimate presidency.447 The PRD national council, then, approved AMLO as the “Legitimate President,” and that it would back the CND.448

Yet as noted earlier, divisions would rise within the PRD on what should the party’s main focus: To support AMLO’s extra-parliamentary movements, or to push for reform in the parliament. In addition, it was also clear the electoral coalition of PRD-PT-Convergencia from 2006 was increasingly dysfunctional.

In early 2007, for instance, the PRD’s on-off backing of Ana Rosa Payán for governor of Yucatán – the first election under the Calderón government– left the party ridiculed. A member of the PAN’s far right wing, she only left the party when she lost its gubernatorial nomination, and was subsequently promoted by AMLO as the PRD’s candidate.449 Following massive internal

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446 PRD (2006b, 70-71).
448 PRD (2006b, 78).
449 Acosta Naranjo: “The person told us that we should go with Ana Rosa, if not the PANAL would go, is called Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and I say it here, and I am not hiding it. And who sent us to say
protest within the PRD itself, the proposed candidacy never materialized, and the national council vote 350 to none against supporting her bid. This did not stop Convergencia and PT from then seeking her as their candidate, another display of the incessant opportunism of PRD’s former allies.

The coalition did not hold up in several of the state races in 2007. In Zacatecas, PRD Senator Ricardo Monreal, a rival of Governor Amalia García and among AMLO’s most unconditional allies, supported the PT, did his brothers. As a result of the split vote, after the Feb. 25 election the PRD went from governing 30 to 18 municipalities, from 14 to 8 SMD local deputies, and it lost the state capital to PAN. Monreal and his two brothers had their party rights suspended for six months by the PRD national executive committee, although the TEPJF overturned the decision on a technicality.

Yet following the internal election in the PRD and the reaccommodation of forces in the party, it became clear that AMLO himself was also moving away from the PRD. In the Oct. 5, 2008 election in Guerrero, a PRD stronghold where the party held the governorship, the PRD’s national council specifically demanded of AMLO that not to support non-PRD candidates, as it became apparent he was supporting the candidates of the party Convergencia, which had not reached an electoral agreement with the PRD since 2006, rather than those of the PRD. Due to the splitting of the vote, primarily with Convergencia, the PRD lost 20 out of the 44 municipalities it held. In the important city of Acapulco, which was won by PRI’s candidate with 76,172 votes, AMLO – and prominent allies such as Encinas and Monreal – supported the PT-Convergencia candidate Luis Walton, who came in second with 71,093 votes, while the PRD’s Gloria Sierra López got 66,026. The split effectively handed the victory to the PRI, and demonstrated that AMLO would defy the PRD and support its electoral opponents if he didn’t agree with its candidates. It was a giant qualitative leap forward in his relations with his old party. Similarly, in Mexico State, PRD President Luis Sánchez Jiménez complained that Dante Delgado
of *Convergencia*, Alberto Anaya of the PT, and Alejandro Encinas were trying to create a new FAP in that did not include the PRD.\(^{457}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>AMLO 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baja California Sur</td>
<td>Feb. 3, 2008</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>42.81</td>
<td>70,621.(^{458})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quintana Roo</td>
<td>Feb. 3, 2008</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>18.42</td>
<td>63,536.(^{459})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>Feb. 17, 2008 Nov. 9, 2008</td>
<td>Local deputies Municipalities</td>
<td>19.82</td>
<td>126,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nayarit</td>
<td>July 6, 2008</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>23.71</td>
<td>87,125.(^{460})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerrero.</td>
<td>Oct. 5, 2008</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>32.73</td>
<td>371,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coahuila</td>
<td>Oct. 19, 2008</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>25,744</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.13: PRD state election results 2008 compared with AMLO July 2, 2006 results.\(^{461}\)

Earlier, in January the same year, AMLO had furthermore provoked a large sector of the PRD by pushing PML as coordinator of the FAP to replace Jesús Ortega, who stepped down to compete for the PRD party presidency.

The designation of PML was particularly meant as a blow against NI, a principal opponent of his candidacy, but many more within the PRD in private expressed great discontent with the designation of a man who had even been expelled from the PRD for supporting PAN in 2000. In doing so, moreover, AMLO broke a previous agreement that the replacement would be decided upon by the PRD’s CEN.\(^{462}\)

After his stint as ambassador under the Fox administration, PML had been away from the limelight until he returned in full force as FAP leader.\(^{463}\) He had not been part of AMLO’s close circle in the 2006 election, but the ever ambitious PML now saw an opportunity to return to the


\(^{458}\) In coalition with PT and *Convergencia*.

\(^{459}\) In coalition with PT and *Convergencia*.

\(^{460}\) In coalition with PVEM.

\(^{461}\) Own calculations based on a variety of news articles, consultations on state electoral institutes, and data from the PRD’s Secretariat of Electoral Affairs. Where available, results are for election of local deputies of SMD districts. This vote in any case closely mirrors those elected on PR list, as well as votes for municipalities. Percentage is of total votes, including null and votes for non-registered candidates.

\(^{462}\) It also led to a rare reprimand by AMLO of party president Leonel Cota, to whom he declared, “if you are not capable of achieving this agreement, better that you renounce once and for all the presidency of the PRD.” Cf. Muñoz Ledo dirigirá al FAP. *El Universal*, Jan 9, 2008; Rechazan en PRD que Muñoz Ledo lidere FAP. *El Universal*, Jan. 11, 2008.

\(^{463}\) In January 2000, PML was thrown out of the PRD just as he was to make public a letter of resignation arguing that the PRD and its leaders were “not worthy of respect or friendship.” Having lost the nomination to be PRD’s presidential candidate, he sought to run as candidate of PARM – coincidently, the party of CCS’ first run – yet due to lack of support he threw his weight behind the candidacy of PAN. He was rewarded with a coveted ambassadorship in Brussels for the EU and Belgium. La directiva perredista suspende en sus derechos a Muñoz Ledo. *La Jornada*, Jan. 13, 2000; Renuncia Porfirio al PRD, que ya lo había expulsado. *El Universal*, Jan. 13, 2000.
political front stage. His designation as coordinator of the FAP – the PRD, PT and Convergencia – was particular galling for many who saw him as having betrayed the PRD.  

According to an adviser of the FAP,

Porfirio saw that his opportunity lay in running toward the left, and he went far, far to the left, toward position that for me frankly appeared irresponsible, almost justifying violence, these sorts of things. And for an Andrés Manuel who was very much hurt this was “this one takes risks, this one is brave,” right? Moreover in the plaza he is a great speaker, so there he became a part of the circle of confidence….and also, to have Porfirio was like slapping Cuauhtémoc with a white glove… Porfirio took refuge in the PT and Convergencia – they are exactly the same, there is no difference – and he starts to punch, he is a great debated, he starts to punch at the PRD, and he goes against Nueva Izquierda. 

According to a central leader in NI, who took note of PML’s past support of Vicente Fox, 

How nice that he rectifies, but it causes a lot of trauma that we are now making him the leader of the Frente Amplio. It causes trauma among the perredistas who saw him leave for PAN. It did not sit well with the perredistas, how could it, to see that someone who went with our ideological opponents now returns to lead us. It was not the best proposal, there could have been a better one, but in order to not provoke, we accepted it. We didn’t agree to it, but fine, we accepted it.

A central member of the FAP also regarded the designation as an example of AMLO’s hardening attitude toward his opponents in the PRD, and lack of will to negotiate: 

I said: Let us negotiate everything, so that the FAP coordination responds to a package of negotiation that resolves the entire conflict of the PRD, which is the most vulnerable point. But Andrés Manuel says no, and why? Because gamble is on mobilizing against the privatization, he needs something else…sometimes he is a bit… hard. Hard with people, that is, he almost take away all their authority, this is not good, not only for relationships, but also for political reasons. No, he negotiates nothing, and thinks too little of people, he thinks he is superior, and this is not good.

Another central member of NI agreed PML’s designation signified a further break with the PRD:

It was for various reasons, one because Andrés wants someone there who responds to him, but it was also an act of revenge, the revenge of PT, of Convergencia, for the reform of the electoral law, because it is an insult… Imagine, he was the president of the PRD; here is a provocation toward the PRD, but beyond all that I feel that Andrés Manuel needed here an act of authority to demonstrate that he is still in charge.

PML had earlier called for the “radicalization” of the CND and AMLO’s movement, and suggested measures of protest against Calderón such as a general strike. As the coordinator of FAP, he would get the chance to practice what he preached with the debacle over the 2008 energy reform, the clearest example to date of the divide whether to work within the institutions, or continue the fight their decisions by way of plebiscites and mass protest.
The 2008 petroleum reform: Institutional reform or plebiscitarian mobilization

In 2008, paralleling the intense leadership fight over the PRD, a further debate was raging over how to respond to what some in the party argued was an attempt by the PRI and PAN to privatize PEMEX, and others argued was a much-needed reform to modernize the state petroleum company. This battle proved a near-perfect demonstration of the two competing visions of the PRD, and of the logic of the personalistic movement-party: While one sector – the majority of the PRD – eventually moved toward supporting and to a great extent draft the wording of the petroleum reform, AMLO, after a rather bizarre incident when he failed to have a dozen words inserted into the final text, called for mass mobilizations that sought to block the legislative democratic process, backed by recently created “brigades” that only marginally overlapped with the PRD’s party structure. It is worthwhile to address the events in some detail.

As the Mexican Congress in early 2008 was moving toward addressing a major energy reform, AMLO announced plans for a nationwide “consultation” on the subject, to be arranged principally by the machinery of the CND and the Legitimate Government rather than the PRD. AMLO had long displayed penchant for polls, plebiscites and referenda, from his days in Tabasco to Mayor of Mexico City, and he wanted now to consult the Mexican people directly on whether PEMEX should be privatized.470

Then, on April 10, without warning PRD’s Senate group leader Carlos Navarrete, or the president of the Chamber of Deputies Ruth Zavaleta – both from Nueva Izquierda – a significant section of the PRD, with PT and Convergencia, launched a “taking” of the legislative tribunes in both chambers of Congress, justifying the act on grounds of an alleged imminent fast-track legislation that would privatize PEMEX. Congress would remain occupied for more than two weeks, although legislative activity continued in alternative locations without the PRD present.471

The occupation, however, drew increasing criticism from Nueva Izquierda and its allies, as well as from CCS, as it reinforced negative perceptions of the PRD as overtly mobilizational and disrespectful of institutions and the legislative process.472 To add, no proof existed that any fast-track legislation was imminent. Again, the two diverging future paths were brought into stark contras: Working to influence legislation by participation, or to reject reform and seek to block it by extra parliamentary means.

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471 Caos, gritos y toma de la tribuna estremecieron ayer al Senado. La Jornada, April 11, 2008; Zavaleta, rebasada; diputados del FAP tomaron la tribuna. La Jornada, April 11, 2008.
472 Un error, la toma de las tribunas del Congreso, opina Cárdenas Solórzano. La Jornada, April 30, 2008.
AMLO again acted as if he were still the leader of the PRD, and told the leaders of the party’s parliamentary groups to await his later decisions. Senator Navarrete, a reluctant participant in the “sit-in,” exasperatedly asked AMLO, “So that it all remain clear for us, Andrés Manuel: You are the movement?” AMLO responded, “Yes, I am.”

On May 5, 2008 – the anniversary of the PRD’s creation – Manuel Camacho, a close adviser to AMLO, again felt obliged to state that AMLO still pushed for “an electoral end and not toward insurrection to accede to power.” At the same time, however, FAP coordinator PML suggested that Calderón would not finish his mandate, which prompted PRD substitute president Acosta Naranjo to declare that the PRD was not “advocating coups,” and that PML did not speak in the name of the party. Fernando Belaunzarán, a NI intellectual on the PRD’s executive committee, declared, “We cannot be with one foot in insurrection, and the other in the institutional fight,” and called on AMLO’s supporters “not to sacrifice themselves behind a messiah.”

Later, when PML in September said the FAP wanted to remove Calderón through a political trial of “treason of the fatherland,” PRD’s Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo accused him of planning a coup. AMLO joined the war of words, and noted that Acosta, although designated president by a majority of the party’s council, “did not necessarily represent the PRD.” When Javier González Garza, PRD’s coordinator in the lower house, and Michoacán Governor Leonel Godoy declared PRD had never suggested the toppling of Calderón, PML responded by calling them “lackeys” and accused them of treason.

Opposition to the alleged privatization continued on two fronts. While on the one hand, the PRD’s legislators stated they would work with other forces, including the government, for a comprehensive major energy reform, AMLO continued his “consultation” on the alleged privatization of PEMEX. In the end, more than 2.5 million Mexicans voted, and 9 out of 10

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474 “Que se echen un volado”: Camacho. Milenio, May 6, 2008.
477 Juristas denunciarán a Calderón por “traición a la patria”: FAP. La Jornada, Sept. 5, 2008.
479 El PRD nunca ha discutido “sustituir” al Presidente. Milenio, Sept. 5, 2008. In what El Universal referred to as a “debate of insults,” Acosta Naranjo stated “I have never charged anything on Calderón’s account. I didn’t leave the democratic movement to support Fox. He who has betrayed 10 times his convictions is called Porfirio Muñoz Ledo. He did it with the left in Nayarit in 1975; he did it in the interior of the PRI; he did it by abandoning the PRD in order to support Fox, and later he betrayed the same Fox in order to come and support Andrés Manuel when he thought that he could win.” Líderes de FAP y PRD “debatén” con insultos. El Universal, Sept. 5, 2008.
opposed privatization. Izquierda Unida said it would not accept any initiative that went against the results of this “citizen consultation,” and declared it would again take the podiums.

Following intense negotiation in the Senate over the energy reform, the PRD national leadership in the end lauded the proposed legislation on petroleum reform. Senator Navarrete said the party’s input was a “reason to celebrate,” and declared there was no rationale for “taking” Congress again. AMLO, however, dramatically called for 200,000 mobilized brigadistas to be on alert to prevent a supposed privatization. While he had recently negotiated an agreement with the PRD leadership not to intervene, he demanded the inclusion of 12 additional words in the final legislation. In a last-minute vote, AMLO “asked” 12,000 followers on what course of action to take; not unexpectedly, the already mobilized masses voted massively to act. The “National Movement for the Defense of the Petroleum,” which included several legislators from the PRD, next moved to physically block the Senate from voting over the reform, clashing with the police, and hurling insults of “traitors” to the senators, who were forced to vote in an alternative location, where in the end a massive 114 out of 128 voted in favor.

The vast majority of the PRD’s leadership had lauded the reform, including CCS, who for years had actively fought against the privatization of PEMEX, but called the reform the “best that

481 Sin incidentes acaba la consulta. La Jornada, Aug. 25, 2008. The actual wording was: 1) Actualmente la explotación, transporte, distribución, almacenamiento y refinación de los hidrocarburos son actividades exclusivas del gobierno. ¿Está usted de acuerdo o no está de acuerdo que en estas actividades puedan ahora participar empresas privadas? 2) En general, ¿Está usted de acuerdo o no está de acuerdo con que aprueben las iniciativas relativas a la reforma energética que se debaten actualmente en el Congreso de la Unión? The final vote was, respectively, 2,356,891 No vs. 177,945 Yes, and 2,223,417 No vs. 232,591 Yes. The final result drew little news coverage, and was tellingly published not by PRD but by Convergencia. www.convergencia.org.mx/.

482 Perredistas se dicen listos para tomar tribunas ante amago de privatizar Pemex. La Jornada, Aug. 11, 2008.


487 The PRD senators voting against were Ricardo Monreal, Yeidckol Polevnsky, Salomón Jara and Rosalinda López. Rosario Ibarra from the PT also followed AMLO’s call to oppose the reform. La reforma se abre paso... entre golpes. Milenio, Oct. 24, 2008; Nueve horas de resistencia no logran frenar la reforma. La Jornada, Oct. 24, 2008
could happen to PEMEX,” as it opened up for a significant restructuring and modernization of the state giant. In an attempt to defuse the confrontation with AMLO, he was invited to present his arguments against the reform in the Chamber of Deputies. As soon as he had left the building, an Izquierda Unida group led by Martí Batres tried again to storm the podium to block the vote, but to no avail, as the deputies went on to vote overwhelmingly for the various components of the Energy reform. AMLO’s 12 words were not inserted.

Conclusion

Following its historic electoral record in 2006, the PRD’s vote the ensuing months would plummet. By the end of 2008, the party governed four million less people than it had in 2006. While AMLO’s presidential candidacy had undoubtedly boosted the PRD’s fortunes in 2006, the continued mobilizations of the movement around the PRD’s former presidential candidate, which incorporated parts of the PRD but was also significantly broader, now appeared to have the effect of pushing away voters already saturated with the post-electoral protests.

Even before the victory of Jesús Ortega in the PRD’s last internal election, and the breakdown of the FAP, AMLO’s priorities appeared to lie with his movement first, and the PRD second. After Ortega was finally named the PRD’s national president, AMLO would increasingly campaign for the candidates of the PT and Convergencia, even in cases where this support directly hurt the electoral prospects of his own party. Throughout the history of the PRD, three former national presidents have ended up leaving the party, and while AMLO continued to insist he would not leave the PRD, his relationship to the party had clearly changed following his failure to install his preferred candidate as the party’s official leader, to the point of refusing to accept Ortega’s triumph, and aid the party’s electoral opponents.

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that the internal dynamics of the PRD can be examined most fruitfully through the lens of the personalistic movement-party and its particular characteristics. The PRD’s failure to institutionalize – to acquire organizational stability, and to rally around a clear and consistent programmatic and ideological preference schedule – is principally caused by a fundamental disagreement between its elites on the party’s organizational


491 Roberto Robles Garnica left the party altogether; Rosario Robles renounced before her imminent expulsion; and PML was kicked out for backing PRD’s opponent, Vicente Fox of PAN, in 2000.
form, where one sector of the party even questions the very concept of party institutionalization, instead preferring a much looser movement-type formation. Moreover, paralleling this preference is a sharp divided on the party’s officially established ideological position, which remains openly contested by the same party sectors.

The debate whether to retain the movement-party focus, or to assume a more traditional party form, resurfaced in full as the dominant divide and source of most intra-party conflict after the 2005 desafuero process, and the 2006 electoral process, in an even more dramatic and defined fashion that at any earlier point in the PRD’s history. Following the July 2006 elections, the party’s internal battle fronts were increasingly aligned along either one of two visions, where the major fault lines were: Whether to accept self-criticism of the PRD’s own performance in 2006, or merely continuing to denounce the fraud, perceived or real; to align the PRD after AMLO and his larger movement, or to stake out a more independent course and identity; to denounce Mexico’s political institutions and emphasize mass mobilization and extra-parliamentary measures, or to work within the institutional framework in order to improve them; and, finally, whether to align the PRD’s ideological and programmatic focus with that of AMLO’s, which stressed the Mexican historical heritage, downplayed the left-right divide, and heaved toward nationalism and social conservatism rather than a clear position as left, or to rather continue on the path of aligning the PRD along international frames of references such as the Socialist International and to pursue the implications of the PRD’s definition as a socialist party.

While both coalitions contained exceptions and contradictions, in general these two visions defined the 2008 internal struggle over the party leadership. Within the PRD, the usage of the terms “radicals” and “moderates” thus cannot be understood on the basis of positions along a left-right line. The “radicals,” on the one hand, regarded the PRD as a subordinate part of the larger social movement led by AMLO. Based primarily on the social left, the 2007-2008 events, above all the battle over the COFIPE and energy reforms, demonstrated this sectors ambiguous attitude toward Mexico’s institutions: To the “radicals,” if the proposed reforms were deemed detrimental to the movement and its “cause,” they were adamantly opposed by parliamentary as well as extra-parliamentary means. Given the stated desire of many of AMLO’s supporters for an entirely new institutional setup and their dismissal of the value of reforming Mexico’s current institutions, the loyalty of the group to the existing system, through their discourse and action appeared contingent rather than absolute.

On the other hand, Nueva Izquierda, the group that would gain the upper hand in the party’s central organs – including, with Jesús Ortega’s victory, the national party presidency – wanted the PRD to continue on the path of reforming Mexico’s institutions, and to take the fight
to the Mexican Congress rather than to the streets. This majority sector of the party was increasingly aware of the PRD’s potential institutional impact as the second largest party in Mexico, and rather than subordinating the party to AMLO, they emphasized an autonomous position, in terms of both identity and organization, toward their former leader.

NI and its allies, principally the ADN of Héctor Bautista, seemed painfully aware of the general electorate’s rejection of the methods of blockades and the “taking” of Mexico’s institutions. To them, the PRD’s much-needed victory in Michoacán was regarded as a result of having learned the lessons of the public’s seeming rejection of the tactics of mobilization and confrontation. Their opponents within the party, however, had drawn and continued to draw very different lessons from these events, and above all felt their anti-institutional belief were largely vindicated following the 2006 fraud, whether real or perceived. They continued to push for confrontation and extra-party mobilizations, even when it was clear, as in the case of the COFIPE and the energy reform, that they were opposed by the majority of their own party.

Two final lessons can be deduced from this divide. First, the argument that parties are primarily driven by external events – above all electoral results – is, if not rejected, greatly qualified. As this chapter has shown, the party was far from a unitary actor, and the two opposing groups in the party drew vastly different lessons from the 2006 election and ensuing events.

The case of the PRD, moreover, demonstrates that the tension between being a movement-party or a more traditional party, is extremely hard to resolve. In 2007-2008, just like in 1994-1995 and 2000-2001, the hard core of the movement advocates rarely changed their position; their emphasis on the movement carried over far beyond the point when Mexico had actually become a liberal democracy. The increasing support within the PRD for institutional reform, ideological precision, and the building of a more autonomous party beyond adherence to AMLO, was thus a result of elite transplantation rather than elite conversion. Only in rare cases did the “radicals” reorient this conceptualization. Whether they – or even AMLO himself – will eventually choose to remain in the PRD or increasingly look for alternatives, as happened in 2007-2008, remains to be seen, though excisions appear more likely than not, if any prediction may be ventured. At the same time, the PRD has proven capable of nonetheless surviving in such an uninstitutionalized state of unresolved tension for extended periods of time, and the brunt of the movement advocates may as such still remain within the party.

A final note regarding the social movement surrounding AMLO is in order. Many analysts of Mexican politics dismiss the followers of AMLO’s movement as of low income and low education, “easily cooptable through selective incentives” (Estrada and Poiré 2007, 84), and drawn to his rallies principally for clientelist reasons. My own personal experience jars with this
image. By attending mass rallies of the CND, I was struck by the highly multiclass nature of what was a most orderly audience, who hardly appeared to attend for any materialistic payoff, but rather out of their own conviction that the 2006 election was indeed stolen. Moreover, even if the movement draws primarily on the marginalized sectors of Mexican society, the fact that millions have been drawn into national politics through their interaction with the CND and the Legitimate Government should not principally be feared as destabilizing to democracy, but lauded as an example of bringing marginalized into the political process.

Yet while AMLO has never advocated violence, it is also clear that he has increasingly and ever more openly depreciated and dismissed the value of gradual reform of Mexico’s institutions, in favor of changing the entire political system itself. In 2007 and 2008, he repeatedly fought against reforms that clearly were beneficial not only to the PRD, but to Mexican democracy as a whole. If, as PML noted in 2007, more than a third of the population still regard fraud to have taken place in 2006, and 15 percent regard armed fight as the only solution, the importance of avoiding ambiguity in defending Mexico’s existing institutions can hardly be overstated.492

Moreover, while AMLO’s agenda has increasingly diverged from that of the PRD,493 it is noticeable that he is followed rather unconditionally by significant majority within the party itself, even to the apparent detriment of their own party, which they do express to be subordinated to the larger movement. Clear differences between these movement advocates and the PRD’s party builders clearly exist, and are openly recognized by both parties.

Whether Ortega and his allies will be able to turn into the PRD into a unified and truly autonomous party remains of course an open question. Yet what is clear is that while six of the party’s nine presidents have hailed from PRI, Ortega was never a priísta, and he is the first party leader not imposed by the PRD’s historic strongmen. Given this sector’s advocacy of the party over personalities, autonomous organization over the loose movement, negotiation over mobilization and confrontation, and a clearly defined left-socialist ideology over vague appeals of nationalism, for the PRD’s process of institutionalization, it appears an important step forward.494

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493 Rather symbolically, the Web site of his Legitimate Government, no longer maintain links to the PRD.
494 Far from the populist spectacles conservative writers and others described them as, the *asambleas* had a very middle and working-class audience, who appear far from lured by clientelist considerations. Personal observations.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: THE DANGERS OF DUALITY

They are good for nothing. They are parasites. They are there for nothing more than just to raise their hand and receive orders from the political mafia.¹
- Andrés Manuel López Obrador, May 2009, on the subject of national deputies.

Here in Tabasco one must vote for the PRD, because other places I am asking that one votes for the PT and Convergencia, but here in Tabasco for the PRD.²

As Mexico and Argentina moved toward midterm elections in the summer of 2009, two of their largest parties followed patterns of behavior that seemed highly at odds with the way more traditional political parties tend to behave ahead of electoral contests.

In Mexico, even though his party had maintained month-long mobilizations and even “taken” institutions such as Congress to protest what they regarded to be an electoral fraud in 2006 – and was risking bankruptcy for the fines and penalties imposed for this behavior – Andrés Manuel López Obrador was not primarily campaigning for the PRD, but for its electoral opponents the PT and Convergencia.³

Having failed to impose his favored candidate in that party’s internal election months earlier, the PRD’s former presidential candidate rejected the legitimacy of Jesús Ortega’s victory, and seemingly did all he could to sabotage the leadership of PRD’s new national president. This, remarkably, extended to campaigning for the PRD’s former coalition allies in the 2006 context. While nominally of the left, the PT and Convergencia had since more often than not opposed the PRD in various state elections, yet had remained fully loyal to AMLO’s commands to vote against legislative reforms deemed inadequate, and lined up behind his Democratic National Convention and Legitimate Government, where a premium was put on mass mobilization and

¹ No sirven para nada la mayoría de los diputados: AMLO. La Jornada, May 20, 2009.
³ While he held open the possibility of campaigning for the PRD in the states where the party’s local organization was considered sufficiently loyal, AMLO declared he would principally campaign for the Salvemos a México, or “Let’s save Mexico,” a coalition of the PT and Convergencia, in 30 out of 32 entities. The parties declared themselves electoral enemies of its erstwhile ally PRD, and said they would actively seek defections from the party given Ortega’s victory. AMLO hará campaña para Salvemos a México. LJ, Feb. 12, 2009.
system change rather than gradual institutional reform. On the campaign trail for the PT and Convergencia, AMLO repeated that the country’s problems could not be solved through Congress. In the state of Veracruz, while members of the PRD demanded that he support the party that had backed him through the recent tumultuous period, he responded, “No way – I have already decided.”

In Argentina, while former President Néstor Kirchner had taken over leadership of the official structure of the PJ, in the upcoming midterm elections Kirchner and the government led by his wife was again nominally fighting its own party as its main electoral opponent in the country’s most important province, Buenos Aires, and other districts. The “dissident” PJ’s electoral list was headed by businessman Francisco de Narváez, who spent lavishly of his own fortune to bankroll the campaign, and the group was set to be the largest opposition block in the Argentine Chamber of Deputies. Among its allies were the mayor of the Federal Capital, Mauricio Macri, and his non-peronist center-right party PRO, as well as a wide array of peronists of the right who banded together in an uneasy coalition held together principally by their opposition to Kirchner and the left-wing government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

This dissertation has argued that the internal dynamics and outward behavior of such parties can best be examined through the new theoretical construct of the personalistic movement-party. In both contexts, the seeming contradictory behavior of the parties – and their leaders – can best be understood as a product of this party type’s characteristics, reflecting the lack of a stable and institutionalized party organization, unclear party boundaries, and lack of a binding and common ideology, and, particularly in the case of the PRD, an emphasis on mass mobilization over the institutional path.

In Argentina, the PJ’s travails can be tied directly to its failure to forge a common ideological position within the party, and where the further lack of clear boundaries for what exact structures make out the official party has allowed a range of political options to present themselves as the “true” heirs of peronism. After the party’s collapse in 2003, following years of infighting, the failure to establish a new and dominant leadership ensured that as a legacy of the

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movement-logic, the mantle of peronism would continue to be claimed by forces ranging from the far left to the far right.

In Mexico, it was clear that when party reformers, who emphasized building the party over the mobilized movement, and crucially promoted legislative reform over system change, won de jure control over the PRD, the party’s de facto personalistic leader, rather than accept the changes, would campaign for and support two minor parties that showed considerable more willingness to follow his course.

This dissertation has primarily focused on Latin America, where such traits have long been considered a product of a historic emphasis on movimentismo. This party type, to be sure, exists in other contexts of the region as well. In Peru, the Partido Nacionalista Peruano of former presidential candidate Ollanta Humala continues to resort to mass mobilizations such as its marchas nacionalistas, road blocks, and so forth. The party’s appeal is notoriously heterogeneous, drawing in both leftwing and rightwing forces, and social progressives and anti-gay and anti-Semitic social conservatives, and the one unifying factor that ties the party together appears to be the promise of a future electoral victory of its leader.\(^8\) It is a clear example of a personalistic movement-party.

Yet these parties are not limited to the Latin American setting. Rather, the construct can be used to make sense of the internal traits and externally manifested behavior of parties in other settings far beyond this region, as existing categories of parties fail to account for the particular logic expressed by this highly mobilizational family of parties.

In Thailand, when the country’s richest man in late 1998 set up a new mass party, the Thai Rak Thai (“Thais Love Thais”), it was reported that Thai politics had “never seen anything like Thaksin Shinawatra before.”\(^9\) Telecom tycoon and “political barnstormer” Thaksin sold himself as an anti-party candidate who appealed directly to the voters, and explicitly sought to distinguish himself from his rivals, whom he dismissed as “party politicians” with narrow experiences.\(^10\) Thaksin built a huge mass organization that at some point was estimated to have attracted 14 million followers, mostly farmers and rural poor, and which he at first ran directly out of buildings belonging to his business empire. At the same time, as The Economist noted, “Thaksin [did] not seem interested in giving the party a life of its own,” as the Thai Rak Thai appeared primarily a tool to bring Thaksin to the premiership.\(^11\) Thaksin’s “ideology” was a

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\(^8\) Witness the premium put on mass mobilizations and nationalist appeals in the material posted on its Web site, at [http://www.partidonacionalistaperuano.com/](http://www.partidonacionalistaperuano.com/)


curious amalgam of left and right, described as “neoliberal populism,” in that it blended privatization policies with proposals such as free health care and subsidized loans. While Thaksin won sweeping electoral victories in 2001 and 2005, as prime minister he did “not seem too exercised about democratic niceties,” and he was accused of human rights abuses, ruling as an autocrat, fighting constraints on his power, defanging watchdog agencies, and in addition of massive economic corruption.

While Thaksin still enjoyed considerable public support, another movement was formed to protest him, ironically as well by another media mogul, Sondhi Limthongkul, which arranged mass mobilizations and street protests for months, and eventually forced Thaksin from office in what was essentially a mob attack, and which would soon thereafter induce a military coup.

In May 2007, the Thai Constitution Court eventually banned the Thai Rak Thai, which it deemed to have “no political ideology beyond its leader's ambitions,” and found Thaksin guilty of having used the party for its own benefit, and orchestrating electoral fraud in 2006.

However, the Thai Rak Thai did not disappear, but simply took on a new name as the “People’s Power Party” (Phak Palang Prachachon, PPP), which won the following election. Its front man, Samak Sundaravej, described as a “fiercely right-wing leader,” openly admitted to serving as a mere proxy for the party’s real leader, the “indestructible” exiled Thaksin. At the same time, the opposition movement founded by Sondhi notably continued to mimic the Thai Rak Thai’s proclivity for mass protests and rallies, fighting the police with guns, bombs, and sharp staves. United under the banner Alliance for Democracy, the loose movement in 2008 went on to seize Bangkok’s main airports, trains, and even the government house of the prime minister. The sieges were only lifted when a court banned Thaksin’s PPP and other allied parties. The PPP’s cadres, however, remained mobilized, and continued to engage their opponents not in the legislative arena, but in pitched street battles.

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13 Thaksin's way. The Economist, Feb. 3, 2005
14 A blow to Thai democracy. The Economist, April 6, 2006; Thailand's dangerous coup. The Economist, Sept. 21, 2006.
16 The indestructible Mr Thaksin. The Economist, Nov. 1, 2007; Good riddance. The Economist, Jan. 34, 2008.
18 Hardy political perennials in Thailand and Bangladesh. The Economist, Jan. 7, 2009; The First Hurdle. The Economist, Jan. 15, 2009
The persistence of non-institutionalization

In Latin America, as elsewhere, the designation “movement” is used rather frequently to describe and define political formations of both the left and right. Indeed, one can make the argument that there is a certain bias toward using the term, as “movement” appears to signal a broader and presumably more mass-based, popular organization than the more limiting “party.” Yet this in itself hardly warrants the designation as the party-type detailed and analyzed in this dissertation, the personalistic movement-party. This comparative exercise has sought to define and analyze a distinct party type that not merely assumes the mantle of the movement, but is designated so due to its particular approach toward organization and ideology, manifested through the application of the movement logic in the arena of party competition.

Among the many remarkable features of this party type, one in particular stands out: While the electoral logic, and other internal and external pressures, should expect these parties to eventually change, or perish, personalistic movement-parties, such as the cases investigated in this dissertation, nonetheless continue as political parties for decades, but they do not institutionalize. While at times there have been made significant strides toward institutionalization, as will be explored below, the road toward party change appears long and winding, filled with as many setbacks as advances.

In the preceding chapters, I have sought to demonstrate that the failure of personalistic movement-parties to institutionalize – to acquire organizational stability, and to rally around a clear and consistent programmatic and ideological preference schedule – can best be understood as a product of a fundamental disagreement between its elites on the party’s organizational form, where one sector of the party even questions the very concept of party institutionalization, instead preferring a much looser movement-type organization. Paralleling this divide on organizational form is a further sharp divide on the party’s officially established ideological position, which remains contested by the same party sectors: Whereas party builders prefer to rally around more ideologically and programatically defined party identities, movement-advocates prefer much looser ideological orientations. Finally, the second major impediment to party reform remains the dominance of a personalistic leader who disdains or otherwise neglects party reform and have a vested interest in opposing such initiatives, which would run the risk of blocking the leader from freely deciding on issues such as programs, electoral strategy, and candidate and leadership recruitment, and above all, chartering the programmatic and ideological course of the party and the defining its “cause.”

During my fieldwork, when interviewing the political elites of the PJ/FpV and the PRD, I was even surprised to hear how alive and well this debate remains within the respective parties.
Whether to be a party or a movement-party, which in essence is an unstable equilibrium between the party and the social movement, is not a mere abstract theoretical question, but represents two highly diverging future paths of party organization, on which the party elites of the PRD and the PJ remain divided.

The importance of the personalistic movement-party

The logic of the movement-party manifests itself in different ways in the cases under discussion. Yet this dissertation has argued that the party type in general fails to fully perform the functions of more traditional parties, which can represent grave dangers to the stability of the institutions of liberal democracy. Internally, the party type appears particularly instable, as few mechanisms exist or are recognized by the party as a whole to solve intra-party differences. Its ideological pragmatism or inconsistency, moreover, not only prevents the building of an ideological cement to tie the party’s elite together in a common project; the failure of the party to clearly define itself ideologically prevents them from grounding their vote in universally recognized terms. Finally, the ambiguity of a significant sector within the movement-parties toward the very value and feasibility of engaging in institutional reform prevents them from fully engaging in the crucial function of legislative reform, as emphasis is rather put on mass mobilization and confrontation than compromises in the legislative arena.

Regarding ideology, the case of France diverges from the Latin American cases. In France, the terms of left and right were already in full use before de Gaulle entered upon the country’s political stage – indeed, this particular ideological divide was invented there – and while de Gaulle and many prominent gaullists sought to transcend it, they ultimately failed. Yet de Gaulle’s substitute was hardly a coherent doctrine, but rather boiled down to what was in essence the general’s highly personalistic interpretation of French reality. Yet as the party at first had virtually no autonomous identity beyond supporting de Gaulle, it set itself up for remarkable electoral instability, depending not only on whether de Gaulle was on the ballot or not, but also on his popularity, with which the party in the first years of its existence rose and fell. While the Gaullist Party finally managed to move beyond its founding leader and establish its own identity, this project took a very long time, and viral infighting between its left and right sections not only prevented the party from consolidating, but also reaching executive office for more than two decades.

In Argentina, the issue of a poorly defined ideology takes on a paramount significance. Here, I argue that the PJ failed to serve as an ideological anchor. In no other country in Latin America does a similar confusion exist regarding the meaning of the left-right divide than in
Argentina, and the almost complete lack of the usefulness of the left-right line as an ideological device is stunning. While I do not argue that the PJ alone is wholly to blame for this, I do argue that the party failed to ground the loyalties of its voters and elite programmatically in terms of left and right. Given its corresponding status as the predominant mass party of the working class, the party’s failure to do so left Argentina’s lower social strata with few other relevant actors to present them with such ideological cues.

While the confusion regarding the meaning of left and right in Argentina has been noted before, this study in particular highlights the continued confusion among the party elite itself. A unique responsibility for producing ideologically grounded and programmatically coherent political parties lies with a party’s political elite, yet this function can hardly be served when a massive disagreement exists not only just on the degree, but even on ideological direction. Zechmeister (2006, 157) has noted how Argentine citizens “are on their own” when it comes to interpreting left-right semantics in Argentina, as the elite does not do it for them. I argue that one of the main reasons for this lies in the PJ’s internal characteristics as a personalistic movement-party where agreement over the party’s ideological direction – a dominant ideological preference schedule – has yet to be established.

This confusion has at times caused severe trauma for the PJ throughout its historical trajectory. Juan Perón was barely capable of keeping the lid on the tremendous contradictions he actively promoted within the party. He was the only interpreter of his extremely vague and eclectic doctrine, and it is therefore little wonder that massive infighting, latent under the surface just like the case of the Gaullist Party, would explode after his death. While Carlos Menem’s control of the all-important executive managed to quell open discontent in the party, the PJ during the Menem years abdicated completely its responsibility of serving as an institutional check on the Argentine president’s power. After Menem, moreover, the contradictions erupted again, and Kirchner’s assumption to the presidency in 2003, which three peronists from left to right had claimed in the name of peronism, was rather a product of the party’s division rather than a clear ideological turn to the left of the party itself. Indeed, in the years 2003-2008, the party label was not even useful to determine whether it supported the president or not, let alone whether it was left or right, as Kirchner repeatedly fought the PJ as his principal enemy in the brunt of the electoral battles of the period.

In Mexico, the PRD’s vote in the early years swung greatly depending on whether its founder Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was on the ballot. This phenomenon has been repeated in 2006; whether for AMLO’s decreasing popularity, or for the fact he was not on the ballot, the PRD has lost greatly in the 2006-2008 state elections. While sectors within the party have long worked to
establish the PRD’s autonomous identity, it remains a crucial fault line whether the party should primarily serve the project of its former presidential candidate, or pursue its own agenda. This has had real implications. The sectors within the PRD behind AMLO in general regards the PRD as only a part of a larger movement, and do not actively promote the forging of an autonomous identity or organization. Crucially, this sector has moreover at times opposed PRD’s own legislative proposals or those otherwise backed by the party’s official leadership, which at times produced rather surreal scenarios: Particularly with regards to the 2007 COFIPE and 2008 petroleum reforms, whereas the majority of the PRD’s legislator and members of its executive committee participated actively in the shaping of the reforms, another sector not only voted against them, but went to extreme lengths of physically “taking” the congress to seek to prevent its national deputies and senators from fulfilling their prime function, which is to legislate.

Levitsky’s (2003) careful study of the PJ details how the lack of formalization of a movement-party can be a great asset in that it makes the party flexible and capable of withstanding both sharp ideological shifts and renovation of its leadership, and under certain circumstances make it more durable than institutionalized parties. While Levitsky does not eschew negative implications of this organizational type, these principally relate to the party’s failure to represent its erstwhile constituencies.

This study draws primarily attention to the negative aspects of this party type for the party itself. The lack of institutionalization can lead to two very diverging paths both detrimental to party stability. Levitsky builds on Gerlach and Hine (1970), who argue that it is the polycephalous and decentralized organization of the social movements add to their survivability. Indeed, the movement-party logic does appear a particularly successful strategy in times of repression, as the structures are “highly adaptive in that they promote the growth of the movement, prevent effective suppression of it, and facilitate the desired personal and social changes” (1970, 65).

Yet the authors also note that within such movements, “none of them can make decisions binding on all of the participants in the movement, and none can speak for the movement as a whole.” Rather, they can only exert influence in that sector of the movement for which they happen to be the organizational and ideological leader (1970, 35). On the one hand, this can lead

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19 Yet see Samuels (2004), who argues that even though the Brazilian PT was a “bureaucratic” party – as opposed to the PJ – the party was still able to undertake substantial internal changes precisely due to its internal democracy and grassroots participation in the formation of the party program. Prud’homme (1996) also argues that formal institutionalization can enhance a party’s ability to respond to changes in its environment as a high degree of organizational institutionalization allows the party to use a greater range of strategic options without putting the organization's survival at risk, either through governmental cooptation or disintegration of the organization” (Prud’homme 1996, 341-342).
to organizational chaos, where the party’s official leadership fails to keep even nominal control of its organization. This is particularly witnessed in the years after Menem, where the PJ’s internal contradictions at times nearly tore it apart. On the other hand, such low level of formalism can lead to the pure verticalism of Menem, which Kirchner currently appears unwilling or unable to fully implement. In either case, the party’s role as a stable and predictable actor suffers.

Institutionalization, on the other hand, offers such elements of predictability. The manner in which a party determines its program and recruits its leaders and candidates is of utmost importance to the party’s stability. When a significant minority of a party’s elite does not regard the party’s rules to be fully legitimate, and where no real mechanisms exist for enforcing them, the party remains a highly unstable, and unpredictable, actor, which may leave it incapable of performing a crucial function of parties, which is to channel political conflict. The movement-party advocates are far from anti-democratic in orientation, but the fact remains that they do not, whether in the case of the PJ or the PRD, fully respect the party’s decisions, as they act according to a higher authority: that of the cause, or the movement. The party is indeed regarded a means to an end rather than an end in itself, and the instability is maintained as loyalty toward party decisions is further predicated on whether it is believed to promote a goal that is deemed higher than that of the party’s own program. The questioning of the value of legislative reform in the final instance follows from this logic: Just like loyalty to the party is contingent upon it serving the movement, so is participating in reform of a country’s political institutions.

The theoretical propositions: Partial support, and new research directions

This study has analyzed attempts at party change discussed earlier in the literature, and has also identified and discussed two recent attempts at party change in both the PJ and the PRD. In all cases, the parties made significant steps toward party institutionalization.

The case of the Gaullist Party offers the clearest example of a protracted yet ultimately successful case of party institutionalization, and thus served the dual purpose of presenting the case that personalistic movement-parties can change, as well as to offer some theoretical propositions on what makes the party elite advocate party building.

As observed in Chapter 2, the Gaullist Party under Pompidou’s tutelage from 1967 onward made significant strides toward the forging of a common programmatic orientation that went beyond earlier support for whatever de Gaulle himself had pronounced. De Gaulle, clearly, never relented in his contempt for party and opposition to party-building, yet Pompidou gave the Gaullist Party a much clearer conservative orientation, and also pushed for the building of a party organization. The existing literature on the party has primarily presented Pompidou’s necessity to
create his own political base with a project that went beyond de Gaulle’s own ambitions as the prominent motivation for his renovation of the Gaullist Party. In addition, the party’s near-loss in the 1965 presidential contest and its disappointing 1967 electoral result have as well been indicated as significant external impulses for party renovation.

At the same time, it is also notable that a significant section of the Gaullist Party opposed Pompidou’s shift toward the right, and while Pompidou kept the party somewhat at bay as president, infighting over power and ideology exploded once Pompidou passed away. It would take another attempt by Chirac in 1976 to complete the process started in 1967, when his RPF relaunched as a decidedly conservative party.

Outside of the European context, the cases of the PJ and the PRD moreover show two parties that were similarly capable of transcending their founding fathers (though less clearly so in the latter case), yet remained in an uninstitutionalized state for a significant time. This review of the two parties suggests that the division over whether to remain movement-parties or assume a more traditional party organization in general went to the heart of the parties’ internal conflicts. Electoral loss, however, appears far from as decisive as in the French case, as the party did not read the message from the urns as a unitary actor.

The PJ’s first attempt to renovate the party structure under conditions of full democracy did follow from the disastrous 1983 election. Yet here, it is clear that just as the Cafiero sector pointed to the loss as a need for the party to renovate, the Orthodox sectors fought tooth and nail against any attempt at party change. While the fight turned particularly vicious given that they stood to lose out positions of power in the party, there were little cases of genuine conversions – where the elites actually changed from advocating a movement-organization toward building a party – and as a result, the PJ in the mid-1980s split.

Some original renovators, most prominently Menem, had indeed been Orthodox advocates of the movement earlier, and would later in turn ditch the renovation project. In both cases, the motivation appears principally one of pursuing personal power; when he realized that Cafiero would be the PJ’s likely presidential candidate, Menem immediately switched again to the most Orthodox movement sectors of the party. When elected president, moreover, he would completely disregard the PJ.

One may also make the argument that Cafiero as well was instrumentally motivated, given that the Renovation project, by ending verticalism and the union tercio, at the same time simply attacked his internal opponents in the party in a ploy for power. Yet Cafiero appears to have had a much more genuine conviction that the party did indeed need to build a more institutionalized organization, and end the internal highly authoritarian verticalism within the PJ,
and he in any case drew the lessons of the 1983 electoral loss where he advocated ridding the PJ of its most authoritarian aspects, both in terms of organization and programmatic expression. However, while the PJ’s national party organs clearly began to function and verticalism was ditched, he did not as party president oversee a corresponding ideological renovation, but rather went to great lengths to dispel suggestions that he was ditching the PJ’s doctrine of “beyond left and right” in favor of a dominant and consistent programmatic and ideological expression.

As detailed in Chapters 3 and 4, Kirchner’s role as head of peronism in 2003 came somewhat by default and was as such not fully respected by many remaining sectors of the PJ. From early on in his term, he would notably fight his own party as his main electoral opponent in a range of provincial elections, which culminated with the 2005 “mother of all battles” in Buenos Aires province, the heart of peronism. What was moreover noteworthy was not only peronism’s failure to accept Kirchner’s unquestioned leadership, but that Kirchner’s battle against the PJ, while clearly also one for power, was notably also a battle along ideological lines: While Kirchner from 2003 until the time of writing was repeatedly battling peronists of the right, on not one occasion was he outflanked by or had to fight off peronists to his left.

Given the state of the national PJ, whose internal contradictions had torn it apart, it was clear that the battle to renovate the party would face particular challenges. While often mixed with or obfuscated by pure wrangling for power, this analysis suggests that a prime reason Kirchner did not take over the party was that most of its sectors opposed to him would not have accepted his leadership, and as such, given his disadvantageous starting point of coming to power with barely 22 percent of the votes, these sectors had to be defeated through the urns first. The party’s disastrous 2004 attempt at reconciliation was a particularly case in point. Kirchner had always represented a minority sector of the party – left peronism – and therefore, somewhat paradoxically, even as national president of Argentina he needed to build up more power to finally become head of the party, and not the other way around.

The case of the PRD also presents two clear cases of party renovation. The PRD in 1995 went through real and significant changes, where the party congress voted to abandon a line teetering on insurrection and certainly emphasizing movement mobilization and extra-parliamentary pressure over legislative reform of the country’s institutions. When the salvacionista line was voted down, the party effectively ended – for the time being – its anti-systemic stance, and accepted the possibility of institutional reform. The dialoguistas, as they were known, notably also fought for the PRD’s conversion into a more traditional party formation, away from the movement-emphasis of CCS. Noteworthy here was also the push for the PRD to join the Socialist International, which allowed the PRD the possibility to assume the
ideological referents of this international group of left-leaning parties, and accept the universality of its political struggle. One further important step was the PRD’s 1998 designation in its program as a party of the left.

What motivated this change? Clearly, electoral loss was significant, as the party’s 1994 defeat in what was arguably a fairly democratic election seriously weakened CCS’ clout in the party. Yet it is also clear that CCS, and the pro-movement sector around him, read the electoral defeat in a very different manner than renovators such as Ortega and PML, and the party line only changed when the party congress –elected from the party base –voted to overturn CCS’ line. More than a year after the painful electoral loss, CCS and the movement sectors continued to advocate complete transformation of Mexico’s institutions, despite the proposals apparent limited appeal. To his credit, when this line was overturned, CCS immediately accepted the changes.

I identify a second major attempt at party change as having begun in 2006, and with increasing intensity having continued throughout 2007 and 2008. Following the 2006 electoral debacle, the PRD showed marked interl differences as to what lessons to draw from the 2006 result, and I argue this formed part of a larger schism that I referred to as the party’s “two visions.” One the one hand, one sector of the party refused to accept self-criticism of the PRD’s – and AMLO’s – actions in 2006. This same sector clearly put the defense of AMLO’s wider movement ahead of the PRD’s own interest, which translated into several highly related fault lines: to engage in reform of the country’s national political institutions or dismiss its possibility; to advocate the building of a formalized organization, which included respecting the autonomous decisions of internal party organs, or to continue a movement emphasis under the leadership of AMLO; and whether to engage in the forging of a clear ideology, or to reject this enterprise.

In many ways this fight paralleled the earlier attempt at party change. Just like in 1995, fights erupted over changes to the PRD’s party line, and over what lessons to draw from the electoral urns. At that time, CCS was not the party’s former leader, though he was regarded by many as its de facto boss. Similarly, in 2006, AMLO held no executive position in the party, yet it was clear his influence was great. Yet while the “moderate” sectors won at the PRD’s 2007 congress – which also saw the PRD’s definition as a socialist party – unlike CCS, AMLO appeared less than willing to accept the PRD’s emphasis on working for legislative reform. Significantly, the sectors within the party allied to him, repeatedly fought against legislative reforms promoted by the official leadership but opposed by AMLO. In general, they were not inclined toward accepting official decisions by the party leadership or the PRD’s main organs – its national council and congress – when these were deemed to be against AMLO’s and their own interests. The victory of the party builders in the highly contentious March 2008 decision to elect...
a new leadership – and a corresponding majority in the PRD’s congress and national council – may be regarded, then, as a significant step forward for the PRD’s institutionalization.

In analyzing the trajectories of three personalistic movement-parties, it is clear that some of the earlier postulated propositions on party change may be discarded, while others received qualified support. What is most notable, and will be discussed below, is how the party’s elite have consistently read external changes in very different manners, and acted accordingly, to the point that elite conversion has been an exception, rather than a rule.

1. If party leaders perceive that in order to win elections they must tone down radical anti-system rhetoric and/or behavior, they will move away from the movement logic, and 2. Movement-party change is a direct consequence of electoral defeat.

While I maintain these two propositions are both theoretically and empirically autonomous, given the way they played out within the PJ and the PRD, they will here he discussed as one. Of all the findings, it was most surprising to see that while one sector of the movement-party clearly saw the need to moderate its discourse and build a more institutionalized organization after experiencing electoral defeat, to another sector electoral loss appeared to have no effect at all.

Two examples stand out: The 1983 electoral loss appeared to have triggered the PJ’s process of renovation. Yet it is noticeable that the victory of the renovators came years later, and rather through the transplantation of the party’s elite rather than a change of heart within the elite per se. The PRD’s 1995 loss – like the party’s performance in 2006 and in subsequent state elections – did indeed precede its first attempt at party change. Yet like in the Argentine case, the party’s elite were highly divided in reading the message of the urns. Its 2000 electoral loss saw little organizational or ideological change, and by 2002 the movement advocates, led by Robles, even returned to power. Both the movement-advocates and the party builders, it must be noted, have proven highly consistent in these positions, which were nearly fully maintained even after the PRD’s 2006-2008 state losses. The external shock of electoral loss may therefore trigger party change, but it appears neither sufficient nor necessary: Just like electoral loss did not convince the movement-advocates to change their orientation, the party builders were already convinced of the necessity of forging a more institutionalized party before the actual electoral losses.

3. If a movement-party finally gains executive power, its leaders will desire a more institutionalized loyalty from their base, and end the movement-logic.

Little evidence is found for this proposition. While Menem did indeed build an extensive clientelist network base of low-income voters, he completely disregarded the party for most of his two terms in power. The PJ under Kirchner similarly offers little support, as he did virtually nothing to build the PJ when he was president of Argentina. However, as he engaged in party
building upon stepping down, with his wife now president, this can as well be construed as a need to build institutionalized support for the new CFK government.

In the Mexican case, the PRD has yet to accede to the country’s highest office, yet it is clear that AMLO, as chief of government in Mexico City, did little to build the PRD as a party, but rather preferred looser networks of support both for the 2005 desafuero defense, as well as the 2006 campaign.

4. When the original founder dies or is displaced, or too much time has passed from the party’s founding so that the original “cause” is exhausted or no longer relevant, party leaders will favor traditional party structures over the movement-party logic.

While some measures of party institutionalization have relied on mere longevity as an indicator of its institutionalization – the ability to survive elections – it is clear that the PJ and the PRD continued in non-institutionalized states far beyond the death or displacement of their founders, and the passing of time in itself appears to bear little relation to a change in elite’s attitude toward party change. This is particularly noteworthy within the PRD, where despite the coming of democracy and “throwing the PRI out from Los Pinos, the movement advocates passed resolutions banning cooperation with the new PAN government. After 2006, this logic – which with its opposition to legislative reform in its essence is anti-systemic – has been maintained.

5. When repression from government ceases, party leaders will discard the movement-party logic.

Gerlach and Hine note that the process of segmentation is the “best insurance against effective suppression (1970, 69), and the movement-orientation of both the PJ and the PRD appears to have been highly rational in non-democratic settings. The coming of democracy, with the end of repression, clearly preceded the PJ’s attempt at party change, although it is clear that the movement-advocates maintained their orientation far beyond the end of government repression.

In Mexico, the PRD’s second attempt at party change was also preceded by a marked reduction in the number of murdered/assassinated party members. These data also reveal, however, that while the 1994 elections were regarded as democratic, the PRD would see even a jump in the number of cadres killed, yet the period also saw PRD’s first attempt at party change. The evidence for this proposition therefore indicates that the end of repression is not sufficient, but neither, in the case of the PRD, does it appear necessary, for elites to advocate party change.

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20President Ernesto Zedillo was not, however, considered responsible for this development.
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Table 7.1: PRD reported assassinations.21

6. If political leaders believe institutional settings are permissive and that they have the possibility to achieve power, they will end the movement-party logic.

In Argentina, the peronists have at several occasions gained executive power—the ultimate test of the permissiveness of the institutional setting—yet as noted earlier, it is clear this proposition is not supported in the case of the PJ. In Mexico, this proposition cuts to the heart of the PRD’s current quandary, where a significant section of the party, as detailed in Chapter 6, are little inclined to believe the PRD will be allowed to take national power following the 2006 electoral debacle, where they argue AMLO and the PRD were cheated of their victory. As it is not clear that the sector that today does not believe in the possibility of achieving power ever did so in the past, the promise remain untested, though in itself, it is nonetheless notable that little evidence exist at all that sectors within the party did change this orientation, a potent reminder of the continued challenge of maintaining a common position particularly in one setting where the PRD is well represented, namely the legislative arena.

7. If party leaders perceive existing national political institutions to be an effective arena for advocating and implementing their program, they will favor traditional party structures over the movement-party logic.

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21 Source: PRD Secretary of Human Rights. 2008 figures up until March.
Given that the PJ has for extended periods dominated the legislative arena, this proposition is clearly rejected in the Argentine case. In Mexico, as discussed below, those who reject institutional reform and advocate the movement logic of organization, are remarkably almost identical, just like those who believe in the possibility of institutional reform are largely the same who advocate the building of a traditional party organization. A potentially highly important mechanism may here have been uncovered: If the “radical” sector could be convinced of the purposefulness and effectiveness of engaging in legislative negotiations, they could in turn be convinced to build a cohesive party organization. Yet the evidence from the Mexican case study is not very encouraging in this regard: Even though the PRD is the largest opposition party in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, and actively engaged in the shaping of significant legislative reform such as the 2007 COFIPE and 2008 energy reform, the “radical” sector seemed to reject even the value or purpose of engaging in negotiation with their political adversaries. While the evidence therefore remains inconclusive, and therefore not very promising, further inquires would be needed to establish when such perceptions are even capable of being altered.

8. If party leaders no longer have a ready extra-party source of social mobilization, they will favor traditional party structures over the movement-party logic.

This premise remains untested in the Mexican case. As the internal *corrientes* of the PRD appear to have largely maintained their sources of extra-party mobilization, principally consisting of a range of social movements attached to the particular *corriente*, it remains unknown whether a loss of such support would move leaders to advocate the building of the party structure itself.

The Argentine case, however, demonstrates that while the PJ had moved gradually away from relying almost exclusively on union support, the PJ during the Menem years did not focus on the building of an institutionalized party structure, but rather switched to another base tied only very loosely to the party, namely toward relying on clientelist networks. By doing so, the PJ in practice then traded one extra-party source of support for another.

9. If party leaders perceive they stand to gain power within the party through its official organs, they will advocate the building of the party.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the Vandor case is rather problematic not only given the limited democracy in Argentina at the time, but also that the evidence on party change are rather scant. Nonetheless, it appears that Vandor indeed stood to gain power by arguing in favor of an institutionalized party, as such a formation would provide him with a political power base. The background was clearly an external factor – a change in that national law regulating parties that required measures such as internal elections – and given the characteristics of the situation, by
advocating the building of an autonomous and non-vertical party organization Vandor would have sidelined Perón as head of the party.

Similarly, for the 1980s renovators, attacking aspects such as verticalism and union dominance in favor of more institutionalized processes of leadership selection and of running the PJ in general, clearly was an attack at the power of the Orthodox movement advocates’ power, and Cafiero’s support for Renovation could be read as support for this proposition. Similarly, while Menem was originally a pro-movement verticalist, he jumped on the renovation bandwagon when it was clear the Orthodox blocked his ambitions to power. Once he won control of the party, however – notably by allying with and rejoining the Orthodox sector to fight Cafiero over the nomination for the PJ’s presidential candidate – he did nothing to build the party once in control of its official organs.

In the case of Kirchner, some support is found for this proposition. I have argued that by 2007 he had defeated most of the significant peronist opposition, and therefore felt he was in a position to rebuild the party under his control, that is, through its official institutions. He had faced increasing pressure from the peronist right wing who sought to challenge the continued federal intervention of the PJ, though this group, which partially overlaps with the group of Duhalde, eventually chose not to seriously contest the PJ’s 2008 internal leadership election and measure their real support within the party as a whole.

Yet in the case of the PRD, evidence is decidedly less supportive. When the movement advocates under Robles won control of the party, rather than engaging in the building of the PRD’s own organization, focus was principally on extending the networks of party outsiders and paid professionals, and lavish spending on advertising. The focus remained on the movement, confrontation with the national government, and continued ideological confusion.

10. If opposition alternatives with clearly defined opposing ideological agendas appear as viable contenders for power, party leaders will favor traditional party structures over the movement-party logic.

In the case of France one of the main propositions identified in the literature as an explanation for the Gaullist Party’s turn’s turn to the right –and toward party building – was the growth of an increasingly stronger and ideologically cohesive opposition.

Given that the main axis of party competition in both Argentina and Mexico for years did not center on the left-right cleavage, any evidence for or against this proposition will be primarily based on highly recent developments, and must therefore be treated with much caution as tentative and suggestive.
In Argentina, it is clear that the right or center-right forces within peronism sought to gather in a common project that moreover included the non-peronist right, above all Buenos Aires mayor Macri. While it remains far from clear that the Argentine right will overcome its stunning level of personalism and unite, it is notable that Kirchner decided to take over the PJ as this sector appeared to gather force, as illustrated by Macri’s win in Buenos Aires. Kirchner, then, not only resurrected the PJ’s party organs, but embarked on tours promoting the party and its organization, and even expressed desire, as did other significant members of the PJ council, to incorporate the PJ in the Socialist International.

In Mexico, the evidence is less clear. The center-right PAN won the presidency already in 2000, yet the PRD as a party appeared to remain locked in a continued anti-regime discourse and advocacy of a movement to fight the official enemy. The PAN, it should be noted, did represent much continuity with the earlier PRI administrations, particularly in its economic policies, although its programmatic and ideological orientation were still markedly more uniform and clear than those of the PRI. The PRD, at the same time, remains a far more ideologically defined party when compared with the PJ – including its 2007 definition as “socialist” – and it remains to be seen whether the PAN’s continued hold on national power in Mexico will be followed by more attention to the PRD’s own party organization and common ideology. For this to happen, though, the PRD as a party must likely accept that it is not fighting “the system” as much as it is fighting a clearly defined ideological opponent that is moreover well organized in a political party. One sector within the party appears to accept that the PRD, rather than seeking to represent the “people” and the “nation” and organizing itself in corresponding movement, should fully accept the PAN as a legitimate party contender in Mexico’s political space, and engage it as such. Other sectors, principally centered on support for AMLO, still insist that that the same organizational and mobilizational tactics used against the PRI are equally well suited to fight the PAN.

The most significant findings that stand out from this comparative examination do not pertain to the discovery of unequivocal and clear support for one set of theoretical propositions, but rather, on the highly significant intra-party divide that exists over key propositions.

The categorization “very qualified” was introduced in order to account for a remarkably clear divide within the party on what consequences to draw from the external incentives. This is above all most clear with regards to electoral defeat. While one sector clearly realized the party’s needed to tone down its discourse, change its strategic anti-system orientations, and to strengthen the party’s own organization, either as a result of electoral defeat or in order to win future electoral battles, another sector drew the exact opposite lessons. This was evidenced particularly
well in Argentina in the 1980s, and perhaps clearer still in Mexico in 2006. There, the PRD remain significantly divided both on what lessons to draw from the 2006 events, and what strategies to follow for future elections. This very sharp divide is also registered in relation to whether national institutions are seen as permissive and effective: Whereas one sector emphasizes working within the system to seek to reform the country’s national institutions, another sector is wholly dismissive of this enterprise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Propositions</th>
<th>Evidence for changed elite orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Elite convergence</td>
<td>Highly qualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Electoral defeat</td>
<td>Highly qualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Gaining power</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Exhaustion of “cause”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Repression ends</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Institutions as permissive</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Institutions as effective</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 No extra-party source of support</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Internal majority</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Clear opponent parties</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2: Summary of findings.

While earlier reviews of the literature on the PRD and the PJ indicated internal division over a range of issues within the two parties, I was particularly struck by how alive and well this division is within the parties themselves today; indeed, to a great extent it remains the central cleavage. In Argentina, given the PJ’s nominal hold on national power, the divide over whether to work within institutions or to reject reform, clearly does not apply in the manner it does in Mexico, as the party nominally holds the country’s presidency. Yet in both cases, the divide over organizational form transcends the more usual suspects such as the age, background, and function of the political elites themselves. While no systematic mapping of elite backgrounds was carried out, significant evidence observed by personal observation can offer the following generalizations: The movement-advocates are found in all age groups, and being young or old had no impact over support for organizational form or ideological orientation of the party. Nor was background crucial: While in the Mexican case, many of the social-movement advocates indeed come from social organizations secondary to the PRD, on the other hand so do the party builders of the corriente ADN. In Argentina, similarly, many who advocated turning the PJ into a more traditional party organization, with a clearly defined political ideology of the left, came from social movements. Finally, in other settings such as the European one, one may arguably
discern between the different “faces” of the party, and expect e.g. the party base or central organs to have a very different approach than the party in the legislature (Katz and Mair 1993). As these two cases studies have indicated, attitudes in favor or against the movement-logic utterly transcend this divide, which runs through all of PRD’s organs. In the Mexican case, most notably, even among the PRD’s own legislators – whose very role it is to work to reform and improve legislation – a significant minority not only refuses to follow the party line, but moreover appears to negate the value of such negotiation, and the very function of legislating for institutional reform.

In sum, it is remarkable that electoral loss is not such a powerful instigator of change as previously believed, but for a different reason than what one would perhaps anticipate: The two main camps within the party – the party builders or movement advocates – draw radically different lessons from electoral losses, and whether the party will heed any lessons depend more on who controls the party, than on whether existing leaders are susceptible to persuasion. In all but a few cases, this research suggests they are not. For this reason, the path for movement-parties to party institutionalization is long and arduous, although as the case of the Gaullist Party demonstrates, the possibility does exist. Yet it is more likely to come from leadership supplantation or outright excision, than from elites acting on institutional or electoral incentives.

**Conclusion: Where next?**

What final lessons can be drawn from this? To be sure, the connection between advocating the movement and dismissing a binding ideology needs to be explored and further disaggregated. In both cases the parties appear to be stuck somewhat in a cycle, where the two characteristics appear to perform a complementary and likely mutually reinforcing role: Just like the movement logic, which dismisses or at the very least regards rules and formal organization as highly malleable, aims at transcending the traditional party and dismisses it as an obsolete or “European” creation, it also seeks to transcend traditional political ideologies, which are seen as equally outdated or divisive: The movement-party, rather, pretends to represent the popular masses or the entire “nation” or “people” rather than a mere group.

In the case of Argentina and Mexico, the movement-party advocates appear a blend of pure opportunists, and equally pure believers. The movement-logic, with is varying disregard for party organization, appears to thrive on ideological confusion, which in turn appears to provide fertile ground for both personalism and opportunism. How can this cycle be broken?

This research into the PJ and the PRD suggests that ideological vagueness – or downright opportunism – does not apply to the party as a whole, which on the contrary displays a very clear
internal divide over this very aspect. Within the party, this suggests that ideological debate should take center stage. In the PJ’s case, the question is absolutely fundamental, as the party’s elite cannot agree even in 2007 (or, seemingly, in 2009) on whether it is a party of the left or the right. While the PRD shows a markedly clearer orientation, as this examination of the party has demonstrated, massive internal confusion – and disagreement – persists as to what the party’s designation of “left,” and even more so “socialist,” actually entails. A profound internal ideological debate should not be postponed or dismissed as a sectarian exercise; it is on the contrary the lack of a common ideological framework that appears paramount in breeding internal instability and infighting, and excessive personalism.

This study moreover suggests new research into a new theoretical proposition: The movement-party logic may particularly thrive when the dominant dimension of political conflict is not one of left vs. right in the polity as a whole. One the surface, this appears a rather circular logic: If left-right is not the main line around which debate is organized, it is clearly a fault of the personalistic movement-parties themselves. Yet the cases of the PJ and the PRD suggest further lines of inquiry where this is at least partially externally imposed as well, namely as the level of polarization in the wider party system.

In Argentina, up until the end of the Alianza government in 2001, the party for half a century had really been divided into a battle between the UCR and the PJ. Yet peronism – anti-peronism was not expressed in the classic left-right form (Ostiguy 1998, Jozami 2004, 70); rather, the divide was greatly cultural – what Ostiguy has described in great detail as a battle between the “high” and “low,” between the educated elites (of left and right) and peronism of the lower classes. Notably, there were no great ideological differences between the UCR and PJR, and both contained within them a wide arch of left-right positions (Torre 2003, 663), and at times would even switch positions, against conventional theories of party placement (Downs 1957).

As Chapter 3 has detailed, the verticalist leadership and the Peronist tradition of ideological indefiniteness and opportunism put a lid on most dissent under Menem, but by 2003 it had returned with a vengeance, where the PJ was no longer able to withstand the ideological divide, and the party would fall apart. Yet it was likely not coincidental that the previous years had seen the even more spectacular collapse of the UCR, primarily due to its incompetence in power. In earlier years, the dominant divide had been peronism – anti-peronism, later expressed in more democratic terms as the PJ vs. the UCR, but when the UCR finally imploded, the PJ lacked an enemy against which it could define itself. The collapse of the UCR, however, may in turn also have had the effect of opening up the party landscape in Argentina for restructuration along the lines of a left-right continuum.
The Mexican case, despite its obvious differences, may have followed a similar logic: The PRD as a party was born as the result of a fraud, and for the majority of the party’s existence the pro or against regime was a major fault line both in the Mexican party system as a whole, but increasingly, as Mexico democratized, within the PRD itself. Yet the actions of the PAN and President Vicente Fox in 2004-2005, where the PAN did engage in a blatant abuse of political institutions for partisan gain, appear to have had the clear effect of strengthening the clout of those in the PRD already inclined to believe that the dice remain loaded: To them, the 2006 events appear to have merely confirmed this belief. While center-right parties are in general inclined to draw the discourse away from left-right, PAN may have effectively succeeded in doing so, by design or chance, through its political persecution of AMLO. In both cases, to sum, the anomaly of lasting personalistic movement-parties may have been clearly facilitated by the party system characteristics, and more research is needed into this matter.

Finally, while the case studies have emphasized the general division within the movement-parties over what strategies and organizational form to pursue, it is moreover noteworthy how very little “conversion” there appears to be between these two groups: These elites do have a distinct and highly diverging interpretation of political reality, and they appear little inclined toward changing it. While this is principally manifested in Argentina as excessive opportunism and lack of ideological loyalties where conversions are fleeting, this appears even more dramatic in Mexico with the added dimension of the continued anti-system orientation of a party minority. As institutional incentives appear to be far less effective than postulated – indeed, the very premise that elites may change is put into question as conversions appear to happen only on the margins – more research is needed to explore the resistance to such changes, and while a focus on external incentives should not be dropped, such resistance indicate that further attention should also be directed toward the psychological and socio-cultural attachments of the political elites, which may appear far more prominent than previously anticipated. They remain wedded to the movement-logic and loyalty to a leader rather than an ideological project. While party prerogatives and the perks of belonging to the PRD may prevent most from actually leaving the PRD itself, it is clear that a significant minority of the PRD continues to advocate the cause of the movement first and the PRD second. For those with independent power bases in social movements or otherwise, party excision appear more likely than accepting the rules of a party now led by their opponents.

For party reformers and leaders seeking reconciliation between the social-movement sector and the party builders, this may appear a rather sobering assessment. This investigation of personalistic movement-parties indicates it may be a realistic one.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Semo, Enrique. "What is left of the Mexican Left?" Latin American Perspectives 33, no. 2 (March 2006): 84-89.


APPENDIX A: PJ DATA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Male Members</th>
<th>Female Members</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires</td>
<td>599,717</td>
<td>631,136</td>
<td>1,230,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Capital</td>
<td>64,656</td>
<td>66,451</td>
<td>131,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catamarca</td>
<td>18,268</td>
<td>19,545</td>
<td>37,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaco</td>
<td>77,092</td>
<td>78,592</td>
<td>155,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chubut</td>
<td>18,401</td>
<td>16,291</td>
<td>34,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Córdoba</td>
<td>119,178</td>
<td>124,699</td>
<td>243,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrientes</td>
<td>39,917</td>
<td>42,583</td>
<td>82,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entre Ríos</td>
<td>76,945</td>
<td>81,361</td>
<td>158,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formosa</td>
<td>45,449</td>
<td>50,300</td>
<td>95,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jujuy</td>
<td>56,468</td>
<td>68,155</td>
<td>124,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Pampa</td>
<td>27,211</td>
<td>29,475</td>
<td>56,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Rioja</td>
<td>26,850</td>
<td>28,906</td>
<td>55,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendoza</td>
<td>43,812</td>
<td>45,540</td>
<td>89,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misiones</td>
<td>44,327</td>
<td>45,292</td>
<td>89,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuquén</td>
<td>11,443</td>
<td>10,688</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Río Negro</td>
<td>19,900</td>
<td>18,509</td>
<td>38,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salta</td>
<td>66,845</td>
<td>77,259</td>
<td>144,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan</td>
<td>25,469</td>
<td>29,235</td>
<td>54,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Luis</td>
<td>21,521</td>
<td>25,490</td>
<td>47,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz</td>
<td>14,793</td>
<td>14,467</td>
<td>29,260</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>148,308</td>
<td>152,255</td>
<td>300,563</td>
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<td>Santiago del Estero</td>
<td>64,277</td>
<td>71,023</td>
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<td>Tierra del Fuego</td>
<td>8,698</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tucumán</td>
<td>102,228</td>
<td>105,432</td>
<td>207,660</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,741,773</td>
<td>1,840,550</td>
<td>3,582,323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.1: PJ party membership, March 2008

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1 Source: Reported in meeting of the PJ electoral board March 7, 2008. Document provided electronically. It should also be noted that no general or national membership list exists in the PJ; rather, each provincial party branch reports its own figures, and may have highly diverging practices for counting its members. The list may also fail to include members; for instance, following Kirchner’s assumption of PJ presidency, it was discovered that key peronists such as Scioli, das Neves, Pérsico, Corpacci, Cantero, Vice Nirvana, and others, were actually not registered as members of the PJ. The PJ’s membership list should therefore not be considered fully reliable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official Spokespersons</th>
<th>Current Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juan Schiaretti</td>
<td>Governor of Córdoba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Alperovich</td>
<td>Governor Tucumán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gildo Insfrán</td>
<td>Governor Formosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis Beder Herrera</td>
<td>Governor La Rioja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Peralta</td>
<td>Governor Santa Cruz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floro Bogado</td>
<td>Vice Governor Formosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Carlos Romero</td>
<td>Ex Governor of Salta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Verna</td>
<td>Ex governor of La Pampa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florencio Randazzo</td>
<td>National Minister of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aníbal Fernández</td>
<td>National Minister of Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Reutemann</td>
<td>National Senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubén Marín</td>
<td>National Senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel Ángel Pichetto</td>
<td>National Senator, president of PJ group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Pampuro</td>
<td>National Senator</td>
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<td>Luis Viana</td>
<td>National Senator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedro Guastavino</td>
<td>National Senator</td>
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<td>Eduardo Fellner</td>
<td>President, Chamber of Deputies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agustín Rossi</td>
<td>President PJ parliamentary group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Vaca Narvaja</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugo Perié</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe Solá</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graciela Camaño</td>
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<tr>
<td>Héctor Recalde</td>
<td>National Deputy, and CGT Lawyer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mera Dalmacio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juan Irrazábal</td>
<td>National Deputy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerardo Martínez</td>
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<tr>
<td>Víctor Santa Maria</td>
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<td>José Ottavis</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastian Tapia</td>
<td>Leader, Juventud Peronista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eduardo Camaño</td>
<td>Ex president Chamber of Deputies</td>
</tr>
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Table A.2: PJ official “spokespersons” (voceros), March 2008

2 Source: Compiled from a variety of Argentine news sources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Rafael González (Chaco)</td>
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<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Beatriz Rojkes (Tucumán)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>José María Díaz Bancelari (Buenos Aires Province)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Julio San Millán (Salta)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Carlos Carranza (Santa Fe)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Official spokesperson</td>
<td>Fabián Rios (Corrientes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Official spokesperson</td>
<td>Alberto Miguel Mapuk (Jujuy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Official spokesperson</td>
<td>Juan Carlos Mazzón (Mendoza)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute spokesperson</td>
<td>Susana Beatriz Llambi (Neuquén)</td>
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<td>Substitute spokesperson</td>
<td>Eduardo G. A. López Wesselhoeft (Buenos Aires)</td>
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Table A.3: Electoral board, PJ national council, March 2008\(^3\)

\(^3\) Source: Compiled from a variety of Argentine news sources.
APPENDIX B: PRD DATA
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<th>Membership</th>
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<td>65,200</td>
</tr>
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<td>Campeche</td>
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<td>Coahuila</td>
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<td>Colima</td>
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<td>Chiapas</td>
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<td>“Exterior” (United States)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Table B.1: PRD party membership, March 2008.¹

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<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Political Origin</th>
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<td>PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nora Ruvalcaba</td>
<td>PRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baja California</td>
<td>Luis Arturo González</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jaime Martínez Veloz</td>
<td>PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baja California Sur</td>
<td>Francisco Javier Obregón</td>
<td>PAN (now PT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josefina Cota Cota</td>
<td>PRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campeche</td>
<td>Edilberto Buenfil Montalvo</td>
<td>PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ercilio Soberanis Sosa</td>
<td>PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiapas</td>
<td>Rubén Fernando Velázquez López</td>
<td>PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarain Osorio Espinosa</td>
<td>PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chihuahua</td>
<td>Víctor Emilio Anchondo Paredes</td>
<td>PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Margarita Edith Peña Pérez</td>
<td>PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coahuila</td>
<td>Raúl Sifuentes Guerro</td>
<td>PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liliana Batres de Garza</td>
<td>PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colima</td>
<td>Joel Padilla Peña</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Olivia Lara Villa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Durango</td>
<td>José Enriquez Herrera</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Héctor Francisco León García</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal District</td>
<td>Pablo Gómez Álvarez</td>
<td>PRD (PSUM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>René Arce Islas</td>
<td>PRD (PRT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guanajuato</td>
<td>Agustín Miguel Alonso Raya</td>
<td>PRD (PST)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Leticia Macías Salcedo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guerrero</td>
<td>David Jiménez Rumbo</td>
<td>PRI</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lázaro Mazón Alonso</td>
<td>PRI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>José Guadarrama Márquez</td>
<td>PRI (now Convergencia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Francisco Javier Berganza Escorza</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marisela Moguel Díaz</td>
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<td>México (State)</td>
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<td>Graco Ramírez Garrido Abréu</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Nayarit</td>
<td>Francisco Javier Castellón Fonseca</td>
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<td>Carlos Hernández Ibarria</td>
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<td>Lucilda Pérez Salazar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oaxaca</td>
<td>Gabino Cué</td>
<td>PRI (Now Convergencia)</td>
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<td>Salomón Jara</td>
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<td>Benita Villa Huerta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Querétaro</td>
<td>Gustavo Buenrostro</td>
<td>PAN</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Rosalba Pichardo Santoyo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quintana Roo</td>
<td>José Luis García Zalvidea</td>
<td>External Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gregorio Sánchez Martinez</td>
<td>External Candidate</td>
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</table>

Table B.2: Party Origin of *Por el Bien de Todos* candidates for Senate Seats, majority districts, 2006.²

² Source: Adapted from Apuesta el PRD a ganar senadurías con ex priistas; 29. La Crónica, April 2, 2006. May contain some errors; a few cases were identified as misplaced in the original news article.
Table B.2 Continued

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Legislator Names</th>
<th>Party</th>
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<td>San Luis Potosí</td>
<td>Elias Dip Ramé Luz María Anaya Castillo</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinaloa</td>
<td>Víctor Manuel Gandarilla Carrasco José Antonio Ríos Rojo</td>
<td>PRI PRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonora</td>
<td>Alfonso Durazo Montaño Patricia Patiño Fierro</td>
<td>PRI PRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabasco</td>
<td>Arturo Núñez Jiménez Rosalinda López Hernández</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaulipas</td>
<td>Juan Antonio Guajardo Edgar Eduardo Alvarado García</td>
<td>PAN PAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tlaxcala</td>
<td>Alfonso Abraham Sánchez Anaya Minerva Hernández Ramos</td>
<td>PRD (PRI) PRD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veracruz</td>
<td>Dante Delgado Rannauro Arturo Herviz Reyes</td>
<td>PRI (now Convergencia) PRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatán</td>
<td>Marbella Casanova Calam María del Socorro Hernández</td>
<td>PRD Convergencia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zacatecas</td>
<td>Tomas Torres Mercado Antonio Mejía Haro</td>
<td>PRD PRI</td>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>IDN</td>
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<td>FNS</td>
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<td>AMLO</td>
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<td>MDUC</td>
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<td>Izquierda Social</td>
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<td>Cívicos</td>
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<td>Independent</td>
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<td>Cota</td>
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<td>Movimiento</td>
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<td>UPREZ</td>
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<td>GAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNYR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total PRD legislators</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>100</td>
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Table B.3: PRD federal deputies by corriente, March 2008.³

³ Source: Own calculations based on field work. PRD won 126 legislators in 2006, and was joined by one more, to total 127 as of March 2008.
<table>
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<th>Senators</th>
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<td>Silvano Aureoles Conejo</td>
<td>Nueva Izquierda</td>
<td>Michoacán</td>
<td>Ex FNS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Héctor Miguel Bautista López</td>
<td>ADN</td>
<td>Mexico State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guadalupe Francisco Javier Castellón Fonseca</td>
<td>Nueva Izquierda</td>
<td>Nayarit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Claudia Sofía Corichi García</td>
<td>Foro Nuevo Sol</td>
<td>National List</td>
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<td>José Luis Máximo García Zalvidea</td>
<td>Nueva Izquierda</td>
<td>Quintana Roo</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Jesús Garibay García</td>
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<td>Michoacán</td>
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<td>Pablo Gómez Álvarez</td>
<td>Movimiento</td>
<td>Distrito Federal</td>
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<td>Nueva Izquierda</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>Ex PRI</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Jiménez Rumbo</td>
<td>ADN</td>
<td>Guerrero</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosalinda López Hernández</td>
<td>AMLO</td>
<td>Tabasco</td>
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<td>Lázaro Mazón Alonso</td>
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<td>Guerrero</td>
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<td>Antonio Mejía Haro</td>
<td>Foro Nuevo Sol</td>
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<td>Ricardo Monreal Ávila</td>
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<td>National List</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carlos Navarrete Ruiz</td>
<td>Nueva Izquierda</td>
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<td>Arturo Núñez Jiménez</td>
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<td>Tabasco</td>
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<td>Yeidekol Polevinsky Gurwitz</td>
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<td>Mexico State</td>
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<td>María Rojo e Incháustegui</td>
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<td>National List</td>
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<td>Tlaxcala</td>
<td>Ex PRI</td>
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<td>Carlos Sotelo García</td>
<td>Nueva Izquierda</td>
<td>National List</td>
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<td>Tomás Torres Mercado</td>
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<td>Zacatecas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubén Fernando Velázquez López</td>
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<td>Chiapas</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Table B.4: PRD senators by corriente, March 2008.4

---

4 Source: Own calculations based on field work. I particularly thank Senator Héctor Bautista and other ADN legislators for help with this table. Of note: The PRD in essence won 29 senate seats in 2006; three senators, however – Josefina Cota Cota, Francisco Javier Obregón Espinoza, and Rosario Ibarra – were elected as PRD senators, but were asked to switch in order to allow the PT to have an official Senate group, a status that offers substantial financial privileges.