

Letter

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PROFMEX Team at Tabasco Gubernatorial Elections

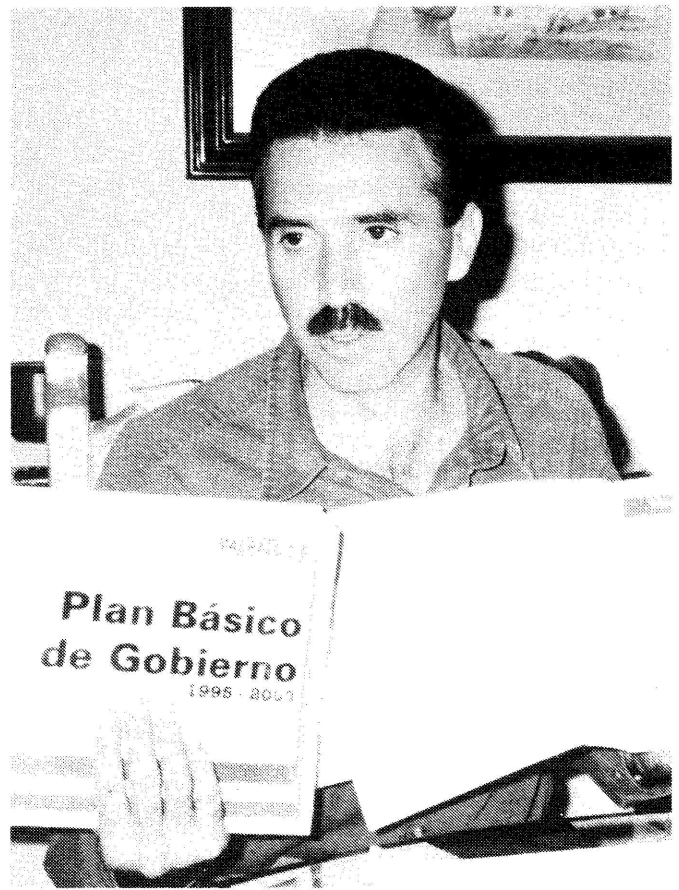
by Paul Ganster, Samuel Schmidt,
and Kevin Cottrell

A team of PROFMEX researchers observed the elections for the state of Tabasco, held November 21, 1994. The team included **Paul Ganster** (SDSU), **Samuel Schmidt** (UTEP), and **Kevin Cottrell** (SDSU). In Tabasco, the team linked with other U.S. researchers, including **George Grayson** (College of William and Mary) and **Tim Goodman** (private consultant, Washington, D.C.).

The elections were considered important because they were the first to be held after the August 21 presidential elections and it was felt that their outcome would be a harbinger of how the PRI under the Zedillo presidency would interact with major opposition parties in Mexico's states. The campaign and elections received extensive coverage in Mexican media and some mention in the international press. More than three thousand observers were accredited by the state electoral commission and half of these were from other states of Mexico. The observers represented business groups (CANACINTRA, COPARMEX), civil and voter rights organizations (Alianza Cívica, Cruzada Democrática), the teachers union (ONOEM), and others.

Pre-election polls indicated a tight race for governor, with the PRI candidate, **Roberto Madrazo Pintado**, favored over the PRD candidate, **Andrés Manuel López Obrador**. The PAN candidate, **Juan José Rodríguez Prats**, by all polls was figured to be a distant third and there were another six candidates from other parties also in the race.

By midnight on election day, the results of quick counts by five organizations agreed that Madrazo led with about 57%, López Obrador was second with about 37%, and Rodríguez Prats was third with about 3%. These outcomes were confirmed by preliminary results



PRI's Roberto Madrazo with his development plan

released by Tabasco's state electoral commission several hours later.

The PROFMEX team began its work on the day prior to the elections with lengthy interviews in the state capital of Villahermosa of the gubernatorial candidates of the PRI, the PAN, and the PRD. The headquarters of the three parties were also visited for discussion with staff members and campaign officials. Meetings

were also held with individuals from several of the organizations observing the elections and providing quick counts of election results.

PAN's Rodríguez Prats

For PAN candidate Rodríguez Prats, the central political question facing Tabasco is how can legitimate authority be restored in the state. He noted that "Mexico is in transition from an old Mexico that has not died to a new Mexico that has not yet been born." According to Rodríguez Prats, PAN offers a third alternative between the conflictive positions of PRD and PRI.

The PAN candidate complained about the difficulties of campaigning against the PRI. He charged that the PRI had exceeded the legal limit of campaign spending and indicated that the PAN would fully and publically account for all its expenditures the week after the elections. He also noted that the media is heavily tilted in favor of PRI. Radio is the most open to a diversity of position, television is more closed, and the newspapers are the most biased in favor of the PRI.

Rodríguez Prats felt that PAN had an opportunity to make some gains in Tabasco, possibly winning four municipalities and gaining four or six seats in the state legislature. He acknowledged that PAN had no chance of winning the governorship, but indicated that the race was important to build PAN's presence in the state for the future. Whatever the outcome of the vote, PAN will respect the rule of law, unlike the PRD which is afflicted by the "theology of the coup."

Rodríguez Prats has been in political and government posts for some 29 years. He resigned from the PRI and although he was courted by other political parties, he was drawn to PAN because the party impressed him with its moral position.

According to the PAN candidate, Tabasco is in a difficult position. The oil revenues were largely wasted and the economy of the state is in shambles. The state government needs to facilitate private initiative to diversify the economy and return to an emphasis on production of traditional agricultural products including copra and cacao as well as develop new nontraditional exports. Both the PRD and PRI have a paternalistic view of the state, which PAN opposes.

In his remarks, Rodríguez Prats stressed that citizens simply cannot wait for the state to do things for them, to take the initiative. For example, in the area of revitalizing agriculture in Tabasco, the state government can provide research, training, and credit and it can help with restructuring the market. This will enable individual producers to do what they can best do.

He noted that the state's relationship with PEMEX has deteriorated and that the oil monopoly has become a lightning rod in Tabasco. The regions of the state with the most productive agriculture are also the areas of greatest petroleum production. Thus, agricultural



UTEP's Samuel Schmidt and PAN's Rodríguez Prats

problems are directly blamed on the activities of PEMEX. Although PEMEX is blamed for significant negative environmental impacts in the state, he feels these claims are exaggerated.

PEMEX has generated employment and the outsiders it has brought to work and live in the state have changed life in Tabasco. This will continue as units of PEMEX administration are brought to the state. The approximately one thousand administrative jobs in the area of exploration and production that are being relocated to Villahermosa will have an important impact on the regional economy. Rodríguez Prats feels that PEMEX has brought positive outcomes to the state.

Rodríguez Prats pointed out that Tabasco has serious problems. In addition to high unemployment, there are profound problems related to basic public services in the state. There is a shortage of 500,000 housing units, potable water reaches only 70% of the houses, and only 40% have sewerage. Eight percent of the state's population is illiterate.

Many of these problems can be corrected with good administration. He would also reduce the size of the government, which is extremely inefficient and has more than 40,000 employees, not including teachers. Decentralization at both the state and federal levels will be important measures.

Rodríguez Prats concluded with a strong condemnation of the Comisión Electoral Estatal (CEE) of Tabasco. The CEE is unwilling to do a proper job in overseeing the elections, as was the case with the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE) in the recent presidential elections. The basic problem is that the electoral bodies are unwilling to monitor and enforce campaign spending limits. The PRI has spent more in Tabasco for the present elections than Clinton spent for his campaign in the United States and Zedillo spent twenty times that

for the presidential campaign. In Tabasco, PAN has filed complaints with CEE regarding PRI campaign spending and that is an area that PAN will continue to monitor.

PRD's López Obrador

Interviewed in his house in a modest middle class neighborhood of Villahermosa, PRD's gubernatorial candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador spoke passionately about the politics of the state and the elections. He studied political science at UNAM in 1976 and then returned to Tabasco to work for six years with the Indian communities in the state. He held various positions in PRI, including with the PRI think tank, IEPES, and as president of the party for Tabasco. He also was a federal deputy for PRI. His mission was to help democratize PRI and eventually he gave up and joined PRD.

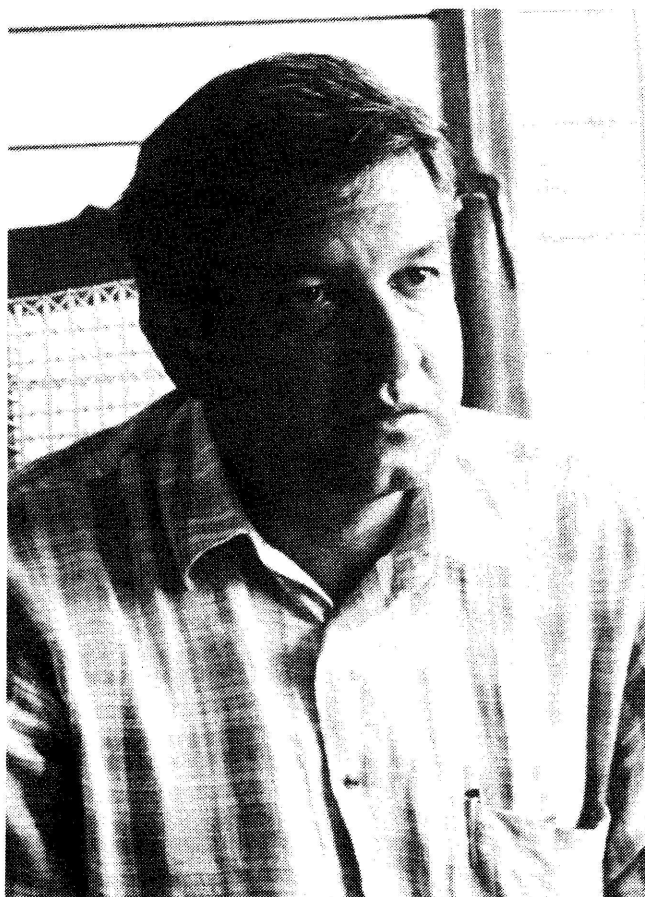
He stressed that the political contest is very unequal, given the huge resource advantage that PRI has. This provides a difficult dilemma for PRD. If they participate, they validate an unjust process. However, if they do not participate, it would only be effective if PAN would also boycott the elections. A PAN-PRD alliance would be difficult because of the national leadership. Regionally, an alliance would probably work because the relationship is one of respect, but fielding one candidate would be difficult.

López Obrador maintained that "the election process is flawed, is illegal." The PRD has proposed installing an interim governor from civil society—not a politician—for one to two years to create the right conditions for a fair election.

A basic question is whether or not PRI would accept a victory by PRD. Such an acceptance would mollify national and international concerns about Chiapas. Other than this, he feels there is little impact on the present elections from the events of Chiapas, despite the fact that the two states share a common border. He and the PRD have been working in Tabasco for six years and the recent events in Chiapas have not had an influence locally.

The Tabasco elections are of great interest to the PRI. The elections are rigged to favor the PRI. The approximately 5,000 observers from Mexico and from Tabasco will favor the PRI. The quick counts will also favor the PRI. A fair election would include no manipulation of the electoral rolls, no sending of outsiders to influence the election, no government resources to support the PRI. For these reasons, he will not accept the results of the election. López Obrador stated that PRD could not win an election organized by the state. PRI, he claimed, mobilized an electoral machine including 300 "delincuentes electorales" (electoral criminals).

López Obrador indicated that a low turnout would favor the PRD since its supporters were very committed



PRD's López Obrador

and would vote. The effort of PRI and its supporters to "get out the vote" favors the PRI.

The PRD candidate expressed great faith in civil society. "Civilismo," he noted, "is a democratic struggle, not a class struggle."

PRI's Roberto Madrazo

The PROFMEX team met with PRI candidate Roberto Madrazo the evening before the election in his home in an older upper class residential area of Villahermosa. Despite the rigors of the relatively long campaign, Madrazo showed great energy and enthusiasm during the long discussion with the U.S. scholars.

At the center of his thoughts, and of his campaign, were his concerns and plans for the economic development of the state of Tabasco. His economic development plan is contained in his *Plan Básico*, the platform for his campaign. This plan was developed prior to the campaign by a process of consultations and research projects and addresses all aspects of life in Tabasco. His campaign has completed a detailed version of this, which he showed to the PROFMEX team, that will be the basic guiding plan for his government.

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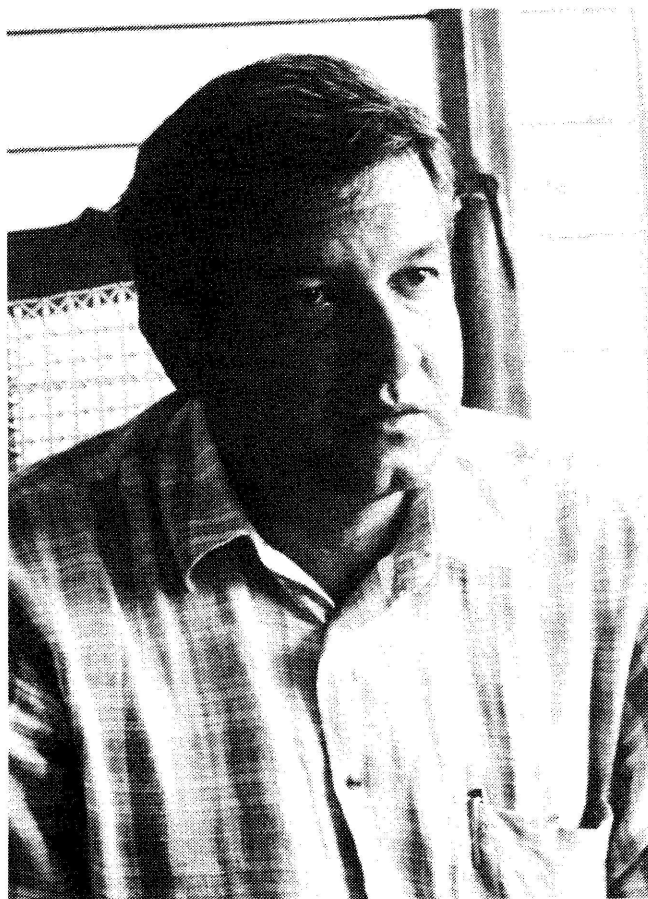
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In terms of the state's economy, Madrazo noted a history of problems and missed opportunities. A rich agricultural state that once produced large amounts of

copra and some 70% of the world's cacao, these traditional strengths declined in recent decades. During the 1950s and 1960s, the state became a large exporter of cattle for the Mexico City market and expansion of grazing land was accompanied by considerable deforestation. The petroleum boom of the 1970s also brought various distortions, including negative environmental impacts, neglect of traditional sectors of the economy, and wasted resources—an "espejismo brutal."

The task now is to put in place a sound, long term development plan that will diversify the state's economy, will create jobs, and will assure the prosperity of the state in the future. With respect to the petroleum zones, a number of actions need to be taken. First, environmental laws need to be improved and applied. Second, a new development commission for the petroleum zones needs to be designed to put in place effective development policies. And, third, the petroleum port of Las Bocas needs to be opened to general trade and development activities, so that the state can attract foreign capital and can more effectively compete with traditional and nontraditional exports. There is also a good possibility to support a petrochemical development zone anchored at one end at Las Bocas.

As a means of diversifying the economy and stimulating small and medium producers, Madrazo proposes a "Fondo de Riesgos," a risk capital fund, to support small and medium producers, especially in the development of nontraditional agricultural exports for the U.S. and other markets. Now that land tenure is being rationalized in Mexico new possibilities are opened up for small and medium producers to get involved in export activities.

Madrazo spoke at length about the finances of the PRI campaign in response to charges leveled by PRD and PAN. He pointed that funding for campaign activities came mainly from fund-raising events such as major soccer matches, concerts, raffles—over 180 such events. "Campaign funds did not come from the government as my opponents charge," affirmed Madrazo. Moreover, the candidate stated that the amount was about 1.2 million dollars, which is under the legal limit of 1.4 million dollars. Madrazo also pointed out that funds spent for ongoing PRI (or PAN or PRD) activities do not count as campaign expenses.

Madrazo acknowledged that fairness in the media is a continuing problem for democratization in Tabasco and in Mexico. For him, however, the privately owned media is free to support the party of their choice. He did avow that this campaign has been the best to date in terms of the media. Radio is probably the most open and even handed, but there has been progress in opening all the media. Part of the complaints of his opponents about the press coverage are inappropriate because more complete coverage of the PRI often is the result of the PRI providing timely press releases to jour-

nalists. As well, all of the newspapers provided space for regular statements by the candidates. PRI candidates were very good about providing statements, whereas space allotted to opponents often went unused since they did not provide materials. Finally, he stated categorically that the members of the press pay their own expenses on PRI campaign tours.

Madrazo cited PRD's failure to take advantage of free space in the newspapers as an example of the bad faith of that party in this election. From the start, he maintained, the PRD has attempted to discredit the process and not participate in an open fashion.

When asked about Chiapas, Madrazo indicated that Chiapas has close ties with Tabasco. Many from Chiapas come to Villahermosa for services unavailable in their home state. For example, some 45% of the patients in the Hospital del Niño are from Chiapas. There is also a border culture of Indian and peasant groups that move between the two states. However, conditions are much worse in Chiapas. Chiapas is a negligible factor in the Tabasco elections.

Madrazo concluded the interview by pointing out that the major differences between his and the other campaigns is that they have concentrated on defining problems and he has focused on solutions. His platform offers concrete solutions for the development of the state.

Election Day Observations

On election day, the PROFMEX observers constructed an itinerary that would include the maximum number of locations that the three candidates and other sources had indicated would be hotly contested and possibly the scene of conflict and/or irregularities. During the day the travel plan was adjusted as the team received new information from poll observers, party representatives, and from a radio station that was closely monitoring the elections through correspondents all over the country and calls from listeners to report irregularities and incidents. Using this approach, the PROFMEX team was able to visit a dozen locations in four major regions around the state that included regular polling places, special polling places (for people voting out of their districts), party headquarters, and campaign headquarters.

Among the highlights observed by the PROFMEX team were the following:

At Mazateupa, a small town in a heavily populated rural region about 50 km from Villahermosa, local residents had maintained checkpoints on the outskirts of the settlement for three days prior to the elections. This was done, according to those at the checkpoints, to prevent outsiders from entering the town to influence voters with alcohol or affecting the electoral process in

(Please turn to page 6)

Mexican National Lottery Sponsors Eastern European Connection to Mexico's Model for Globalizing Nonprofit Sectors

To assist Russia and Eastern Europe in meeting the shortfall in social funds caused by the contraction of statism, Mexico's Lotería Nacional para la Asistencia Pública granted funds during 1994 to PROFMEX. The grant enabled PROFMEX to extend the Mexican model for facilitating the mutual recognition of Not-for-Private-Profit Sectors in order to encourage the flow of foundation funds from the United States into formerly statist countries.

Capitalizing on the PROFMEX experience in helping to develop Mexico's cooperation with the United States (the world's largest source of foundation funds), Mexico's National Lottery seeks to help developing countries help themselves. In making the grant to PROFMEX, Director General **Manuel Alonso Muñoz** noted that the roots for development of a strong civil society require the establishment of diverse social funds which can help maintain the social safety net threatened by the dramatic decline in government expenditures. Alonso stated that the establishment of tax-deductible community funds outside the control of the government are necessary to solve local problems; and he noted PROFMEX's important contribution in helping formerly Communist countries of Eastern Europe to develop the requisite legal framework for attracting donations from foreign and domestic sources.

Mexico is uniquely positioned in two ways to aid in globalizing flows of foundation funds. First, by achieving mutual recognition of its Not-for-Private-Profit Sector with that of the USA, Mexico has succeeded where other such treaties failed (namely, U.S.-Canada, U.S.-Germany, U.S.-Israel, U.S.-England, U.S.-Russia). Second, during the long years of the Cold War, Mexico maintained close relations with Eastern Europe and Russia.

To carry out the grant from Mexico's lottery, PROFMEX developed its activities in Mexico City, Bucharest, Budapest, and Moscow. With regard to Russia, PROFMEX consulted with **Boris Koval**, Director of the Institute of Latin America, Russian Academy of Sciences, about organizing RUSconAMS, the Russian Consortium for the Americas. This policy analysis group will take into account the Mexican case as it develops plans, programs, and a legal framework to establish Russian Not-for-Private-Profit relations with Latin America as well as the USA.

For Eastern Europe, representatives to the PROFMEX August 1994 International Policy Analysis Symposium in Mexico City consulted about organizing Not-for-Private-Profit Organizations (NPPOs) which to date have lacked leadership in changing national legal

structures for interaction especially with the USA. Thus **Zoltán Kárpáti** (PROFMEX Budapest) will use his base in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to work with Hungarian Treasury officials to make reforms consistent with permitting Hungarian institutions to develop cross-border relations consonant with lessons and comparisons with NAFTA. Kárpáti is organizing MAFIL—Hungarian Council on Philanthropy.

For Romania, **Nicolae Coman** (Vice-Rector, University of Cluj) is establishing ROMFIL, the Romanian Council on Philanthropy, which will work with **Alin Teodorescu**, President of the Soros Foundation for an Open Society, to advocate establishment of the U.S.-Mexican NPPO model as a basis for a Romanian interaction with NAFTA.

Lic. Alonso, who met at the PROFMEX International Symposium with PROFMEX's worldwide representatives has long been involved in carrying Mexico's message to the world. Born in 1929, he studied at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria and Columbia University in New York City. During the 1940s, Alonso was a reporter for UPI International as well as Mexico City's *El Universal* and *La Prensa*. During the 1950s, he was the Mexican correspondent for *Visión de América Latina* and Brazil's *O Cruzeiro*. In the 1960s, he was public relations director for a number of enterprises as well as public relations advisor to the organizing committee for the 1968 Olympic Games held in Mexico City.

Continuing his international involvement, during the 1970s and 1980s, Alonso was a member of the Mexican government team that organized presidential travel to more than 40 countries (1970-1976). After serving during 1975-1976 at PRI's Secretaría de Prensa, he served as Press Secretary for Mexico's Comisión Federal de Electricidad, 1976-1980. During the 1980s, Alonso served as President de la Madrid's Press Secretary. During the early 1990s, Alonso gained further international recognition. As Mexico's Consul General in New York City from October 1990 to December 1992, his work made him one of the City's most effective consular corps leaders. Returning to Mexico in 1993, Alonso brought an international dimension to the social role of Mexico's National Lottery. As of December 1994, he has taken the assignment of Editor-in-Chief of Mexico City's *La Prensa* in order to make it into a major force in the news world.

[On the history of the National Lottery, see *Mexico Policy News* 9 (1993), p. 9.]

(Continued from page 4)

any way. The region is heavily PRD and reflects strong discontent among the residents, particularly the small farmers. The ejidos of the region are small, with less than one hectare per farmer. The farmers complain that the land is so exhausted that corn can no longer be grown and the land is contaminated by pollution from nearby PEMEX operations.

At the town of Jalpa de Méndez, a PRD poll watcher reported that people had been caught the night before delivering building materials to some residents as a way of buying their votes. The individuals were apprehended by a group of citizens and taken to the authorities where a complaint was filed. The same poll watcher pointed out that the PRD poll watchers, those accredited officially for the specific poll, always signed the blank ballots. This was to avoid the old trick of a voter bringing a premarked ballot, depositing that in the urn, and then returning the unmarked ballot to the individual who was buying his or her vote. Jalpa de Méndez was one of the municipalities won by the PRD.

At the town of Cárdenas, with a municipal government controlled by PRD, three vans with some 30 police and uniformed individuals from Villahermosa had been stopped at 2:00 a.m. before the election by a group of citizens and then placed under arrest by the local municipal police. Six of the Villahermosa police escaped and filed complaints with state authorities. Apparently, the accusation was that these police were coming to Cárdenas to stuff ballot boxes and intimidate voters. At noon on election day there was still a hostile crowd gathered around the three vans with deflated tires.

Also in Cárdenas, at Casilla 67, which was a *casilla especial* for people to vote outside their district, there was a fairly long line and quite a bit of discussion as people appeared to vote. Some were from nearby districts and although they claimed that the polls in their own districts were not open, apparently these individuals were not on the voting lists at their home casilla. They were permitted to vote at the casilla especial. Other cases were individuals travelling or who had come to town for the day to conduct business or shop. The casillas especiales each had 500 ballots and enabled individuals to vote only for governor and for deputy, if the voter was from the district of the deputy

candidates. No problems were reported at the casillas especiales, which had been the focus of so much controversy during the August 21 presidential elections in Mexico.

At San Carlos, near Ciudad Pemex and also PRD territory, a group of inebriated citizens had set up a road block and were inspecting all vehicles. Earlier, they had found a car with several journalists and an employee of a polling firm with forms with the symbols of the political parties. Exit polls are conducted with a replica of the ballot that surveyed individuals can mark. That is why the citizens thought the pollsters were "mapaches" (ballot box stuffers). The mob thought these were ballots that would be used to stuff the local ballot boxes and were holding the suspects under guard in the local jail.

The voting generally went smoothly throughout the state. Although the turnout was light, some 52%, the amount of civic participation in the process was notable. The major parties had representatives at most all polls, and members of observing organizations were ubiquitous. Given the citizen participation and the mechanics of the election day, significant fraud was not possible and the elections were open and clean.

The Tabasco election was unique because for the first time in Mexico's history the three contending candidates had been president of the state-level PRI during their political careers. It was also unique because all political actors expected the election to set the framework for a new deal between government and opposition parties.

Being Zedillo's first gubernatorial election in a conflicting state and close to Chiapas, all actors expected to see his political skills put to a difficult test.

Opposition accusations regarding an unfair and "inequitativo" electoral process can play an important role for the future of the Mexican political system, specially regarding campaign finances and the role of the media.

The Tabasco case demonstrated that conflicts during election day tend to diminish and are predictable. The three candidates and the representative from Alianza Cívica predicted where the troublesome spots during election day would be and they were right. These parties also predicted the post-election conflict issues. For the future it is clear, from the Tabasco case, that there is a need to strengthen the electoral process in Mexico.



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