

CONTROL AND COOPTATION IN MEXICAN POLITICS*

Bo Anderson
James D. Cockcroft

*Our research on Mexico and the work on this paper was facilitated by a grant to Bo Anderson from funds given to Stanford University for international studies by the Ford Foundation. We want to thank Professor Carl Spæth, Stanford Law School, for his help and interest in this research. For a critical reading of the manuscript we thank Morris Zelditch, Jr.

CONTROL AND COOPTATION IN MEXICAN POLITICS

I. Introduction.

This paper represents an attempt to describe and account for some basic features of the Mexican political system. The analysis is structural rather than historical. That is, we have not tried to narrate how the Mexican system came into being, but have rather attempted to set forth a somewhat abstract formulation, which we believe can account for certain broad tendencies in Mexican politics in the sense that many concrete policies and changes in policies and political events are more or less direct manifestations of the principles our formulation contains. The formulation consists of (1) a description of what we believe is the basic and enduring goal-structure of the Mexican political system, and (2) a set of structural principles which seem to determine, broadly speaking, how the elements in the goal-structure are implemented, and what the relations between different groups in the system will be like. Hence, we believe that the basic tendencies of the Mexican polity can be made meaningful by our formulation. However, we do not attempt to analyze the question why in Mexico there gradually developed a polity having these properties; nor do we try to answer the somewhat more fundamental and general question about what the conditions are for a political system to develop these properties. (We do believe that these questions are important, however, if we knew the answer we would know more about the problem of how to combine basic democracy with rapid economic growth, starting from a state of rather extreme underdevelopment, than we now know.)

We do not claim to have isolated all the major principles which

determine the structure of Mexican politics. We also regard our present formulation as a first tentative statement, although we believe it to be essentially correct.

Also our formulation is intended to apply only to modern Mexican national politics. Economically and culturally Mexico is a very heterogeneous society. In many local areas grassroots politics is structured by "traditional factors" like kinship (including ritual kinship or the compadrazgo): and sometimes indigenous or Indian political forms of organization have survived in some modified form. (Sieverts, 1960; Friedrich, 1965.) This is more common in some states of the Mexican Union than in others. Politics in some southern states, Guerrero is often mentioned as a prime example, is very much traditional. In some of the economically more developed states, like Sonora and Baja California, politics seem less traditional. There are a host of important general questions that could be raised about the way that such traditional subsystems operate within the context of the national polity and economy. One could ask, for instance, how the power position of local bosses (caciques) is changed by the welfare and development policies that are carried out by the federal government or the regional commissions, modelled on the TVA (for instance, the Papaloapan Commission, Coleman 1964). Such a study of political subsystems will not be undertaken in this paper, however.

We will attempt to illustrate our model with descriptions of concrete cases drawn from contemporary Mexican politics. The information about these comes from accounts in books and newspapers and also from interviews we have conducted in Mexico at various times during the period 1963-64. These cases are only assumed to be illustrative of the mode of analysis used in this paper.

II. The Goal-structure of the Mexican Polity.

An adequate understanding of the structure of a political system presupposes an analysis of its goal-structure. Therefore in this section we shall attempt to characterize the major goals of the Mexican polity and the relations that hold between these goals. The term "goals" refers to aims that are consciously being promoted by those in the polity that make major decisions. There is, in fact, a great deal of consensus in Mexico about what the goals are, and how they relate to one another, although groups and individuals differ a great deal with respect to the weights and priorities to be given to the different goals. The following picture of the goal-structure of Mexican politics has been pieced together from official speeches and statements, newspaper editorials and interviews with politically active persons.

The following major goals are present in the Mexican polity: political stability, economic growth, public welfare and mexicanization. Let us now first characterize what we mean by these terms.

Political stability refers to a state where (1) the basic political institutions are seen as legitimate by the bulk of the population, (2) the incumbent decision-makers are granted the right to make binding decisions, even by those who do not always agree with their decisions, (3) the succession of office-holders proceeds according to rules specified in advance, that are accepted by most people as binding. After the overthrow of the regime of Porfirio Diaz in 1911, Mexico went through more than a decade of frequent insurrections, civil wars and general fragmentation of the political system. Beginning in the twenties, however, the system has

gradually gained a considerable degree of stability. A rather dramatic and much publicized example of change toward stability arose right after the 1964 elections, when Gonzales Torres, the unsuccessful candidate of the main rightist opposition party, (PAN)¹, publicly acknowledged that the candidate of the ruling party, (PRI), had won a clear majority of the popular vote. Prior to this, the PAN typically used to attribute PRI victories in elections to large-scale fraud.

Economic growth, in the sense of industrialization and modernization of agriculture, was promoted by the Diaz regime and was encouraged by the revolutionary regimes in the 1920s, following the economic chaos of the civil wars. A very determined effort to make Mexico a modern industrial country has been underway since the end of the Second World War. (For descriptions of different aspects of the Mexican Economic Modernization program see Vernon, 1963, 1964; and Flores, 1961).

Public Welfare. The revolutionary program stressed heavily the need for raising the material and cultural level of the Mexican masses. In the agrarian sector, a massive land reform program has been carried out in order to help the peasants to obtain ownership to their land, and to enable landless laborers to acquire some land of their own. (Whetten, 1948; Flores, 1961). For the urban workers low-cost housing, subsidized staple foods and a federally determined minimum wage level (it varies from state to state) are among the welfare policies. The middle class, especially that sector which consists of government employees, also has available low-cost housing, cheap vacation plans and other benefits.

Mexicanization refers to the policy of securing control over the major

¹Partido de Acción Nacional.

economic companies and activities in the country for either private Mexican citizens or public agencies. Before the revolution, and for a substantial time after the revolution, foreign companies controlled many aspects of the Mexican economy. Since the 1930s the Mexican government has by expropriation or purchase obtained control over many enterprises that used to be foreign-owned. The most famous case is, of course, the expropriation of the oil companies in 1938, which led to a bitter conflict with the United States. (See Cronin, 1960, Chaps. 7-10.) There are also many other less well-known cases, like the nationalization of the electric power industry (see Vernon, 1964) and land-holdings. (See Cronin, 1960, Chap. 6; Flores, 1961, Chap. 17.) Nationalism is certainly a driving force behind these measures. More important, however, is the belief that if national economic planning for growth is to be successful (and the Mexican government is committed to a policy of rather centralized economic planning), it is necessary that Mexican authorities be able to make all major economic decisions about investments, allocation of resources and so on. Mexico has encouraged foreign capital to invest in Mexico, but demands that the majority of the shares be under Mexican control.

Let us now turn to the question of how these goals are related to one another. For the purpose of this analysis we shall concentrate on short-term relationships. We are going to use the goal-structure to analyze political decision-making, and in Mexico, as in most other systems, political and economic planning seems to be conceived over periods of five to ten years. A president is elected for six years; he cannot constitutionally be reelected, and policies often change somewhat when a new

administration comes in, so it is often not worth it to plan ahead in detail for longer periods than a presidential period.

Our conception of how the major goals of the Mexican polity are related to one another (goal-structure) is depicted in the graph shown below. (The term "investment" here refers to investments made into infrastructure and industrial enterprise, and does not cover investments into "human capital" through welfare policies.)

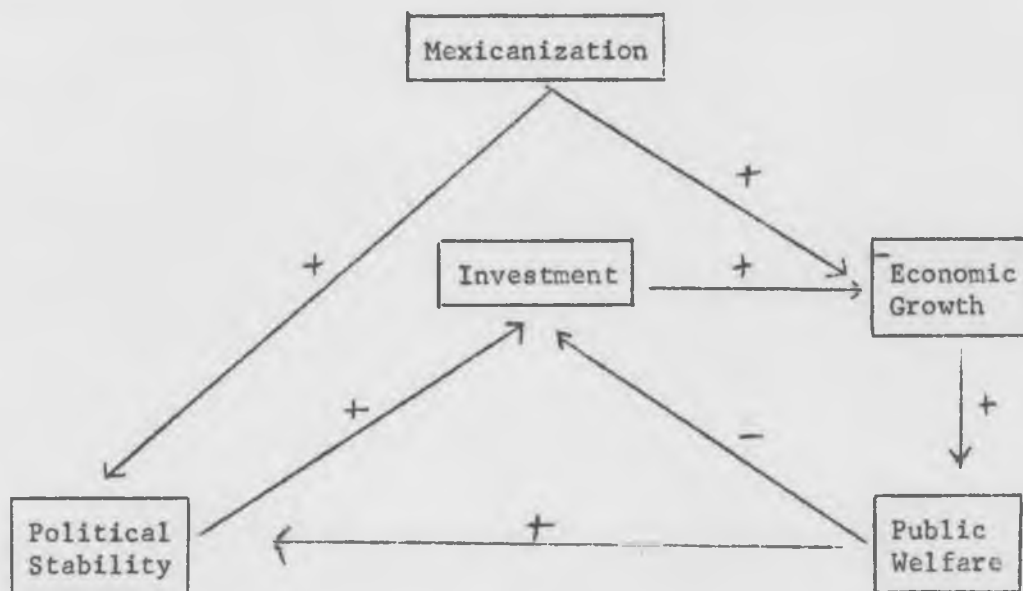


Figure 1. The goal-structure of the Mexican Polity. Arrows represent postulated causal relations.

$x \xrightarrow{+} y$ means the more of x, the more of y.
 $x \xrightarrow{-} y$ means the more of x, the less of y.

(1) Political stability clearly facilitates investments and other means toward economic growth. Stability and order makes economic planning feasible, both for private entrepreneurs and public agencies. An unstable regime would have difficulty attracting foreign and domestic capital. Loss

of work hours due to political strikes, damage done to equipment, buildings and other facilities during disorders would also impede the growth of the economy.

(2) Economic growth is clearly a prerequisite for the maintenance and extension of welfare services and policies. If a country wishes to industrialize and at the same time undertakes to construct a welfare state, then the economic growth rate has to be substantial if both sets of goals are to be met. It has been remarked that serious political problems are created in countries that attempt to build extensive welfare services before they have reached a high enough level of wealth. (Dore, 1964.) Even in countries with a certain amount of wealth and a steady growth rate, welfare policies may slow down industrialization and economic growth. Wage increases and benefits for the workers may mean less capital available for critical investments. Land reform measures might sometimes lead to fragmentation of land-holdings into economically unviable units.

(3) Following a line of thought that goes back to Durkheim (1933), we also assume that industrialization contributes to political stability by creating "organic solidarity," that is, interdependence due to division of labor between the various parts of the country. Localism, the traditional individual's sense that he owes his primary allegiance to "La Patria Chica" rather than to the nation, may be expected to diminish in importance as a result of this. The mobility of the labor force that industrialism tends to create, should work in the same direction.

(4) Welfare policies contribute to political stability. In Mexico no regime would get much popular support that did not try to improve the lot of

the poor masses, maintain a minimum wage level, give land to at least some of the landless, provide cheap housing and subsidized staple foods, and organize public works and other welfare facilities.

(5) Mexicanization has, we believe, contributed a great deal to political stability in Mexico. Apart from satisfying nationalistic sentiments, mexicanization has provided ambitious and competent Mexicans with access to important economic command posts, whether as private owners or public officials. (To a similar end, Mexico requires foreign companies that operate in Mexico to train Mexicans for managerial positions in the companies.) The opportunities thus given to aggressive, competent individuals to acquire power, wealth and prestige within the system, prevents them from joining restless strata that might be a threat to the regime. (Emerson, 1960; Zelditch and Anderson, 1965.)

(6) It also seems clear that the mexicanization program has contributed a great deal to economic development in Mexico. Through control over the petroleum industry, for instance, the Mexican government has gotten a whole industry of synthetic fibers and other chemical products well under way. (Bermúdez, 1963, 21f.)

This analysis has shown, we believe, that the relationships between the goals are rather complicated. All goals cannot be maximized simultaneously. Compromises are made necessary, especially between the goals of industrialization and public welfare. Both these goals affect that of political stability, which in turn is seen as a main responsibility and concern of the power-holding political groups. And in Mexican history political stability has never been something to be taken for granted. In

Mexico, therefore, the political elements will have to take the major share of the responsibility for how compromises between economic growth and public welfare are achieved. The state, represented by the federal government and the top organs of the ruling party, exercises a great deal of influence over business, as well as over labor unions and agrarian organizations, to this end. (The business community has considerable political influence, but how this is exerted, falls outside of the scope of this paper.)

Well organized interest groups exist in Mexico which attempt to promote one or the other of the goals in Γ . Interest groups differ from one another in the priority ordering they want to see given to the goals in Γ . The agrarian organizations demand a rapid completion of the land reform at the expense of those landholders who still own or control more land than the Cadigo Agrarro allows. The middle class, including many governmental officials, seems to regard land reform measures, and especially economic aid to marginal farmers, as welfare measures that should be given low priority in order that capital not be diverted from more profitable enterprises. The labor organizations demand wage increases and other benefits for the urban working classes. Business groups demand freedom from government regulations. (For description of several of these organizations, see Scott, 1964; Brandenburg, 1964; and Kling, 1961.)

- 2.1. The national political leadership in Mexico is strongly committed to the goal-structure Γ and is cognizant of the interrelations between the various goals.

Mexican presidential administrations have differed with respect to the emphasis given to the different goals, but we think it is fair to say that

every regime from around 1920 and on has pursued the goals in [], and been fairly well aware of their interrelations. In fact, certain changes over time in the political climate in Mexico can be interpreted as reflections of changes in priorities given to the elements in []. The Cárdenas administration (1934-40) was very much concerned with agrarian reform (to a large extent a welfare issue) and mexicanization. (The oil industry was nationalized in 1938.) This regime, governing during the world-wide depression, could hardly have stressed economic growth and industrialization. In contrast, the Alemán regime (1946-52) stressed industrialization. The heavy emphasis on industrialization necessitated, or was seen to necessitate, holding back wage increases and other welfare measures. This took the form of repressive measures against militant labor union and agrarian agitation, and accounts for the bad name of Miguel Alemán in left-wing circles in Mexico.

III. The Oligarchic Pattern.

The Mexican national leadership seems, by choice or necessity, to be committed to tolerating a substantial amount of political pluralism. It is taken for granted, and indeed sometimes encouraged, that occupational groups attempt to promote their interests and demands through organizations. Political parties, other than the ruling PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) are also tolerated, although not allowed to challenge the PRI monopoly on power.

- 3.1. The political leadership in Mexico is committed to a substantial amount of pluralism, but is determined to preserve for the foreseeable future the de facto power monopoly of the PRI.

Our next two principles deal with conflict between interest groups.

- 3.2. The top decision-makers in Mexican national politics act so as to minimize the overt conflicts between interest groups giving different priorities to the elements in [].
- 3.3. If conflict arises between interest groups involving priority ordering of goals in [], the top leadership of the PRI and the government reserves for itself the right to make final and binding decisions.

Several writers about Mexican politics have emphasized that interest groups play an important role in the political system. The ruling party, the PRI, consists of three segments: the agrarian (peasant and agricultural laborers) sector (CNC, Confederación Nacional Campesina) the labor sector (CTM, Confederación de ~~los~~ **T**rabadores Mexicanos), and the middle class sector (CNOP, Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares). The only major interest groups that are excluded from the party are certain business groups. (For further organizational details, see Scott, 1964.) In the party policy-making and executive bodies on the local, state and national level, there will always be representatives from each one of the three sectors. The various interest groups therefore have a voice in the nominations for public offices like federal and state deputies, senators, state governors and president of the republic. (He who gets the PRI nomination, then, can be virtually sure of getting elected.) There is no doubt that in the pre-nomination struggle the various interest groups try to promote candidates sympathetic to their causes. It seems to be clear, however, that the top leadership of the party maintains rather tight control over who gets the actual nominations. Nominations are made at party conventions, but before the name of an aspirant is put before the convention, he will have to be approved by the national committee (Comité Ejecutivo

Nacional), the top group of the PRI. Thus, the national committee has effective veto power.

We interviewed a representative of the National Committee of the PRI, who had been sent to a northern state to supervise the selection of candidates for the 1964 elections. He told us that there had been six aspirants for the two Senate posts from the State. The national committee allowed only two names to be placed before the convention which then had the option of accepting or rejecting these two men. During the discussion he maintained that this procedure should not be called imposition of candidates by the national committee; the committee passes on candidates that have been made available on the local scene. He also emphasized that Mexico, because of its turbulent history, needs a party that maintains "La paz social" by seeing to it that equilibrium is maintained between the various special interest groups. He also said that, in his opinion, the middle class sector of the party, the CNOP, can be said to represent the 'national interest' more than the more specialized agrarian and labor sectors. The CNOP represents a 'more varied collection of interests' than the other sectors, according to him.

We interviewed the representative from the national committee in the presence of high PRI officials on the state level (including the president of the state committee). Everybody was very deferential toward the national committee man. The latter did not hesitate to interrupt the others and was addressed by the honorific title 'Don.' (Anderson and Cockroft, Field Notes, Summer 1964).

The national committee consists of 7 members and is one of the most powerful political bodies in Mexico, second only to the office of the president of the republic or the secretary of the Interior (Gobernación).

While we agree with Robert Scott and others that interest groups are very important in Mexican politics, we believe that they play an essentially secondary role, and that the real power lies in an inner circle of the ruling party. (It is hard to say how large this group is or how it is structured.) The interest groups articulate demands and needs, but the decisions how to combine and harmonize these demands on the national level

in the light of long-term goals are made by the ruling circle. The leaders are, however, at the same time, very much concerned with getting to know the points of view of various interest groups. The decisions of the top leadership are carried out by a bureaucracy, staffed by professionals of various kinds. They often seem to have a "middle class" orientation, but they hardly act in their professional roles as representatives of any interest groups. The "technicos," strongly committed to dirigisme, seem concerned with efficiency and economic modernization, often viewed in a long term perspective. That the bureaucrats and politicians consult with representatives of the interest groups is obvious, but consultation is not necessarily acquiescing to pressures and demands, but can be purely for purposes of information and cooptation (see section 4). Leaders of interest groups on the local and national level are very busy trying to influence administrative decisions and seek redress for grievances and local problems, like shortage of water for irrigation, maltreatment of peasants by local officials and so on (compare La Palombara, 1960). Thus, several of the peasant leaders we interviewed make regular trips to Mexico City on behalf of the members of their organizations. This holds both for leaders of the official CNC and those representing dissident groups. It is obvious that some detailed empirical studies of political and bureaucratic practice need to be done before we can say anything beyond these generalities about the role of the interest groups in the formulation of long-term policies on the one hand and administrative implementation on the other.

There have been some very recent developments that suggest that the oligarchic control over nominations may change. The regime has lately been

experimenting (in Baja California) with a nomination procedure based on direct primaries. In these "elecciones internas" the members of the PRI, by direct and secret ballot (see for instance El Dia, April 14, 1965, and Politica, April 15, 1965, 24), selected candidates for various offices. These elections were reported to have proceeded quietly. The leader of the PAN in Baja California declared that the chosen PRI candidate for governor is "an honorable man" and he expected that the coming constitutional elections will "be clean"² (El Dia, April 14, 1965.) This experiment with direct internal election was explicitly set up in order to select candidates with popular support. It was conceded that the old system, still practised in the other states, often led to the selection of candidates with little support among the population. (See for instance Excelsior, April 7, 1965.)

IV. The Coöptation Pattern.

The ruling party in Mexico was built up during the 1920s and 1930s to provide a political instrument for the modernization and nationalization of the polity. It was from the very beginning ideologically and socially very heterogeneous. Apart from an adherence to the principles of the revolution, as set forth in the constitution and various other documents, membership required no specific ideological commitments. Marxists and other socialists became members, as did traditional liberals and people without any coherent political beliefs at all. The party has by and large continued to be pragmatic and ideologically vague. At times strongly ideologically oriented groups have split away from the PRI. In the late

²A PAN leader in Baja California later bitterly alleged that the elections held in the State in August 1965 were fraudulent.

1940s, for instance, the former leader of the labor sector, Vincente Lombardo Toledano, split away to form his own Partido Popular Socialista, (PPS), which claims to be Marxist. (We shall have more to say about this party and its peasant organization later, in section V.1.) In the last 5 years or so, there has been a great deal of unrest in the peasant sector of the ruling party. An independent peasant organization, (CCI, that is Central Campesina Independiente) was formed by people who used to be active in CNC, the PRI peasant sector. This group is especially strong in Baja California and is led by a rather charismatic leader named Alfonzo Garzón. (We discuss this movement in section V.2.) Both the PPS and the CCI are very critical of the PRI and "the ruling oligarchy." The two organizations have organized mass demonstrations in favor of radical agrarian policies in their strongholds (the PPS and its peasant organization in the Yaqui and Mayo valleys in Sonora, and the CCI in Mexicali, Baja California). Several of their leaders have been jailed and the authorities have used rather harsh methods to "restore order." (Hispanic American Report, November, 1962.) However, and here we have to anticipate sections V.1 and V.2, in spite of their bitter criticism of the PRI, both the PPS and the CCI give the PRI a kind of qualified support, especially at election times. The dissidents do not attempt to build political parties that could aspire to become serious rivals of the PRI. (It is true that elements of the CCI supported the uncompromising Frente Electoral del Pueblo in the 1964 elections, but **this was an exception** to the main trend and later **caused the CCI to split.**) The PPS openly supported the PRI presidential candidate, Gustavo Diaz Ordáz, in this election, and Alfonzo Garzón

seems lately also to have found that he has something in common with the PRI. In a report of a meeting between Garzón and the new president of the PRI (head of the Comité Nacional) agreement was said to have been reached about certain issues (... con respecto a los destinos de Baja California; Siempre, March 31, 1965, 57.) The PPS and CCI are not the only dissident groups that have kept or built ties with the PRI. In the 1960s left-wing groups inside and outside the PRI formed an organization called Movimiento de Liberación Nacional, (MLN). This group was very critical of the PRI, but its majority did not break with the party in 1964. Its chief sponsor, ex-president Lázaro Cárdenas, endorsed Diaz Ordáz, the PRI candidate. We were told by a man who had been a local leader of the MLN in a northern state, that the best thing for him and people like him would be to support the PRI and work inside the party for a more radical line. In return, he and others seemed to expect that the left would get some influence; that maybe some cabinet post would be given to a person sympathetic to their point of view. (Anderson and Cockroft, Field Notes, Summer, 1964.)

A change in the electoral system, put into effect for the first time in 1964, guarantees that some officially "approved" opposition groups get representation in the federal Chamber of Deputies. **Twenty-five seats** are divided between the legally registered opposition parties in proportion to their total showing in the elections. Since the total number of deputies is 200, the PRI retains a comfortable majority.

We believe that the leadership of the PRI rather systematically attempts to make dissidents give at least qualified and partial support to the party, and that the PRI is willing to give dissidents a hearing and certain concessions in return for such limited support.

the 1920s had as one of its tasks to overcome this fragmentation, to build an organization which, although ideally sensitive to local needs and demands, could be an instrument in the construction of a modern, rather centralized state and the maintenance of social peace. As we have already said, the party chose to be ideologically pragmatic and vague, in order to accommodate the various different groups. Groups of different persuasions were offered rewards and concessions in return for loyalty to the party and the regime. It was also, however, made very clear that the party would not tolerate any strong centers of power that were outside of the party or not allied with the party. If cooptation failed strongarm methods were used. Many of the local caudillos and caciques were assassinated, on order from the regime. Gradually there emerged the pattern we have seen: the PRI attempts to coopt dissident groups and these know that in order to have any impact at all it is wise for them to maintain friendly relations with the PRI. Repression of uncooptable groups is nowadays most of the time less harsh, but it still exists. While the PRI and its presidential candidate won support from many of the leftists, bitterly critical of the "oligarchy" in the 1964 elections, some leftist groups formed the Frente Electoral del Pueblo, (FEP). This organization was hostile to the PRI and had its own candidate for the presidency. The FEP was not allowed to register as a legal political party. It was also regarded as ineffectual and unrealistic by many people sympathetic to its views on issues. (A strong split developed, for instance, within another dissident group, the MLN, over whether or not to support the FEP.) Thirty members of the FEP, the CCI and the Mexican Communist party were arrested in April 1965 in Mexico City and many

documents were confiscated (Politica, April 15, 1965, 5).

We thus have another principle of politics in Mexico.

4.2. If cooptation of dissident groups fails, then repression is likely to occur.

The measures taken against the FEP and the Communists presumably represent premeditated decisions by the national authorities. There is also another type of repression in Mexico which represents survivals of earlier political forms. Local political and military authorities sometimes resort to violence against dissident groups, especially, it seems, in the countryside.³

In Baja California, for example, an agrarian settlement, not far from Ensenada, is ruled by a cacique, who seems to base his power on his connections with the CNC and the state government. Opponents to him within the settlement have been assassinated by his alleged 'pistoleros.'

As we have already said, politics in the state of Guerrero has the reputation of being controlled by traditional bosses. In the late 1950s there occurred violent and bloody clashes between soldiers and demonstrators in the cities of Iguala and Chilpancingo. The governor responsible for these measures of violence was later removed by the president of the republic. (Anderson and Cockroft, Field Notes, 1964.)

The PRI has been more concerned with coopting left-wing than right-wing dissidence. The reason for this is partly that the PRI regards itself as the only legitimate heir to the Mexican revolution. This revolution was made in order to accomplish large-scale social change. The conservative and clerical groups that were bitterly opposed to the revolution had no place in the revolutionary party. They had to be reckoned with but could not be coopted. Left-wing dissidents, however, could challenge the PRI on

³For accounts of politically inspired violence in different parts of Mexico, see the weekly Politica, the section entitled "La Nación."

its own ground. The regime has tolerated a conservative opposition party, the Partido de Acción Nacional, (PAN). The PAN voters come from different social strata. There are the big businessmen, the members of the small town clerically oriented middle classes and also the religious peasants in some parts of the country. (See for instance Foster 1948 for a description of peasant conservatism). The party also attracts workers and peasants who are discontented with the ruling PRI, which is often seen as corrupt and inefficient. The PAN won some local election, for instance in Mérida, Yucatán in 1964, but has never been able to challenge the power of the PRI in any serious manner. It used to accuse the PRI of large scale fraud in the counting of ballots. Recently the PAN has accepted the legitimacy of the basic gains of the revolution and a /faction of the party is making itself noticed. In talking with PRI officials one sometimes gets the impression that the PAN is regarded as a legitimate opposition party which fulfills an important role in Mexican politics (the revolution was among other things made in the name of democracy), but which is not expected to seriously challenge the role of the PRI, sometimes referred to as "el Partido oficial", as representative of the mainstream of Mexican politics.⁴

⁴We said earlier that in Mexico a rather modern political system on the national level coexists with remnant of a traditional system. This is well illustrated by the contrast between the Baja California direct primaries with the following incident observed by an anthropologist in the state of Oaxaca: On election day in 1964 in a Zapotec community nobody cast a vote. In spite of the some 500 votes were recorded for both the PRI and the PPS. The count was made by the tow officials from the lists of residents. Nobody in the twon seemed to mind. (W.H. Geoghegan, Field Notes, Summer, 1964.)

Vincente Lombardo Toledano was head of the labor sector of the PRI up until 1941. In the late forties, after having been pushed aside by the ruling Alemán group in the PRI, he founded the Marxist Partido Popular Socialista. In collaboration with Lombardo a peasant leader, Jacinto Lopez, who had earlier been active in the CNC, founded the agrarian organization, Union General de Obreros y Campesinos Mexicanos. This organization has branches in more than a dozen states, but has its main strength in Sonora, primarily in the Yaqui and Mayo river valleys. The organization comprises both members of agricultural collectives (ejidos; for the meaning of the word "collective" here see, for instance, Whetten, 1948) and landless laborers who demand land (solicitantes de tierra).

In the Yaqui valley the Union General claims to have some 11,000 members (700 ejidatarios and some 10,000 solicitantes), organized in 117 local groups. The organization has a democratic structure: decisions are made by an assembly of the chairmen of the locals. A secretary coordinates the activities from a small office in Ciudad Obregón, the main city of the region.

The main activity of the organization consists of putting pressure on the political authorities on the municipal state and national levels to obtain full compliance with the agrarian reform laws. The valley has good, irrigated land, suitable for cotton, wheat and some corn. There are many ejidos in the Yaqui valley, but much land is also in the hands of private families. Maps of the land tenure situation show that members of some families of revolutionary fame and families related to these by marriage (Obregón, Tapia, Calles) own large, sometimes continuous holdings. In order to comply with

the letter of the law, the land a kin group owns is divided up between quite a few members. This is regarded by the peasant organization as a violation of the spirit of the land reform laws.

The Union General demands a change in this situation. A substantial part of the privately owned land should, the organization claims, be made into ejido land, so that at least some of the many landless solicitantes can get titles to land of their own. The organization has sponsored mass demonstrations and land invasions in order to put pressure on the authorities.

In spite of its agrarian militancy, the Union General maintains somewhat strained, but not unfriendly relations with the PRI. Our informant characterized the relations between the organization and the state government at that time (1964) as "cordial." It had been worse earlier when the son of Alvaro Obregón, the revolutionary leader and later president of the Republic, (a member of one of the great landholding families) was governor of Sonora. When Diaz Ordáz was nominated as the PRI presidential candidate, the Union General followed the decision of Lombardo Toledano to support him. Diaz Ordáz met with Jacinto Lopez and the Yaqui valley leader of the Union General in Hermosillo, the capital of Sonora. At that time the peasant leaders turned over to him a detailed account of the land tenure situation in the Yaqui and Mayo valleys. (This meeting was given some national publicity, see Siempre, May 6, 1964.) Diaz Ordáz was very concerned with the situation (our notes from interviews with Jacinto Lopez and Yaqui valley informant). He used language to the effect that the situation is a scandal (es un desmadre) and indicated that he would try to do something about the situation. The Union General leaders were evidently rather impressed with Diaz Ordáz, who

used to be regarded as a member of the right-wing of the PRI. "He matured during his campaign, came to understand domestic and agrarian problems," they said. (Our field Notes, 1964.)

Lombardo Toledano seems, in spite of his Marxist ideology and leadership of an opposition party to retain some access to and influence in the inner circle of the government. The PPS got a number of the minority party seats in the national Chamber of Deputies after the 1964 elections, and Jacinto Lopez was seated as a representative of the party. Lopez clearly seemed to regard this as a gain. He and his organization now have a national platform from which they can make their views heard. Lopez and our other informants from the Union General are clearly gradualists. They believe that change can only come slowly in Mexico as a result of pressures and organization work. The organization was, nevertheless, denounced as Communist by some PRI leaders from the middle class sector we interviewed in Hermosilla, Sonora.

V:2. The CCI Experience: Dissent Followed by Coöptation.

The CCI received its initial impetus from Alfonso Garzón of Baja California, after a left-leaning state governor there (1953-59) had named the charismatic peasant leader head of the state branch of the CNC, the PRI's peasant sector. However, when the CNC and PRI failed to meet adequately the demands of Baja California peasants, already aroused by the dumping of saline water from the U.S. Colorado River which killed off their crops (HAR,⁵ XV, 989-90), Garzón broke from the PRI to form his own peasant movement, the nucleus of the national CCI, which was officially founded about a year later (HAR, XVI, 14-16). He took an overwhelming majority of Baja

⁵Hispanic American Report

California's peasants with him (our interviews).

As the salinity problem worsened, as new CCI locals formed in other states, and finally as Communist-oriented members of the CCI (less so Garzón's group) openly backed the "illegal" presidential candidate of the FEP. In 1964, the PRI stepped up its pressures on Garzón and his followers to "re-enter the fold." Garzón had vainly essayed the tactic of political candidacy against the PRI in 1962, when he ran for mayor of Mexicali but was refused recognition as a candidate. The failure of FEP candidate Ramón Danzos Palomino, himself a peasant leader from the north (the impoverished La Laguna area), in the 1964 presidential elections, may have further disillusioned Garzón with the efficacy of political dissent. In any case, repression of CCI demonstrations continued apace, and by 1964 Garzón seemed willing to reconsider his relationship with the PRI.

The CCI people we interviewed emphasized that their organization was working solely for the interests of the campesinos. They seemed determined not to let their organization be used for any broader political purposes, and expressed rather strong resentment against the Communist Party, which they accused of being more interested in broad political questions than in the problems of the peasants. Within the CCI friction between the Communists and their sympathizers and Garzón and his group has occurred from the time the organization was founded.

The CCI, then, is clearly a dissenting group, but it is important to note that its dissent, although very vigorous, has been limited to a sharply limited set of issues. This strategy, of course, makes a reconciliation with the official party, once the issues that brought about dissent have been attended

to, much easier than a line of more diffuse and less delineated dissent. In the interviews, the CCI men often condemned certain groups within the PRI, but indicated that there were others that they respected. For example, speaking about a peasant leader in Mexicali who had chosen to stay in the official CNC where he led a dissident faction, they emphasized that he is "clean and honorable." The PRI on its part kept lines of communication open with the CCI, at least with its branch in Baja California, the Liga Agraria Estatal. Before the 1964 elections, one of the PRI candidates for senator from this state ~~contacted~~ leaders of the Liga, in order to hear their points of view on current issues.

The Diaz Ordáz administration concluded an agreement with the United States which promises to end the dumping of salt water into the Colorado River. It has also been announced that large sums of money will be used by the government to rehabilitate the Mexicali valley land that had been ruined by salt water. (El Dia, March 26, 1965.) At least some of the goals that the CCI had been agitating for have thus been achieved. In September 1964, Garzon declared Communist members of the CCI personae non grata (Politica, Oct. 15, 1964). Danzós, his followers from the Laguna, and all Communist members of the CCI in turn declared Garzón and his group expelled from the CCI. In effect, a second CCI was formed behind Danzós.

Garzón, meanwhile began to cooperate more openly with the PRI. Demonstrations by Garzon's CCI became less common, although various of his

followers continued to be smeared as "Communists" and jailed from time to time. Garzón and his group seemed to have made their peace with the PRI at the time of gubernatorial election in Baja California in August 1965. Garzón was photographed frequently with the PRI candidate, and according to at least the PAN, Garzón openly campaigned for the PRI among the peasantry (El Día, July 30, 1965). Thus, Garzón and the CCI seemed to be following the same road toward coöptation by the PRI as Jacinto López and the Union General did in Sonora a year earlier.

The PRI still had to reckon with the uncoöptable Danzós faction of the CCI, however. As we would expect, repressive measures were used toward them. When small-scale milk producers in Puebla protested a new pasteurization law which threatened to encourage large monopolies in October, 1964, they invited Danzós to address a rally. Danzós and other "Communists" were jailed. The PRI labor movement, and the CTM rallied behind the state governor in a show of unity. This may have been a mistake, for among Puebla's students and workers the occasion of the milk-producers' protest and severe repression of demonstrators was a perfect pretext for expressing their own complaints about the relatively unprogressive and stagnant administration of the governor, an Army General accused of nepotism. When massive demonstrations demanding the governor's resignation mounted, and a few labor unions began to cancel their affiliation with the CTM, (some observers **said** that worker soviets were even formed in some cases), the problem assumed national proportions. The President of Mexico called in high national and local PRI officials and worked out an immediate solution. The demands of the dissidents were swiftly met. The Puebla governor stepped down behind the facade of "a leave

of absence." The people who booed him turned out the next day to cheer the new governor, who was flown in from Quintana Roo where his progressive administration had been described by PPS leader Lombardo Toledano as "an example for all governors to follow." (Politica, Nov. 1, 1964, also, Excelsior & El Dia, Oct. 15 through Nov. 1, 1964.)

The Puebla experience was one of dissent, followed by repression, followed by a kind of coöptation. When repression failed, coöpting the demands of the dissenters by naming a new governor with a more liberal program succeeded.

VI. Mexican Political Patterns as Functions of the Goal-structure.

The two broad tendencies in Mexican politics that we have tried to demonstrate in the previous **three sections, the oligarchical and the coöptation patterns**, should be related to the nature of the goal-structure that we described in section II. In an underdeveloped society with sharp latent and often manifest conflicts between interest groups, regions and to some extent ethnic groups, and a tradition of political violence, a regime that is strongly committed to political stability, substantial economic development and social welfare, faces a task that must often seem insurmountable. If the regime, by choice or necessity, is also committed to a certain amount of political pluralism, then it cannot choose the way of Communist one-party states. Under conditions of economic backwardness increments in welfare policies and wages and other benefits must be controlled carefully, if there are to be resources available for economic growth. The demands and expectations of the population have to be met to some extent to ensure the necessary amount

of political stability required for continuous economic growth. Dissident political groups, based on substantial or important social strata that believe that their demands have not been met adequately, will tend to develop. If the regime is unable to or does not want to suppress these, then it has to develop ways of co-existing with them, but in such a way that they do not threaten the stability of the polity. The regime will very likely tend to develop mechanisms like the control and cooptation pattern described in our analysis.

If our analysis is right, the Mexican polity provides an example of a complicated system of exchanges between interest groups and an oligarchy that provides decisive and sometimes rather ruthless leadership. It is what Shills (1962) calls a tutelary democracy. Political "interest group" theory, which has had a tendency to view politics solely as shaped by contending interest groups, and hence to ignore the role of leadership on the national level, should have much to learn from the study of this system.

In conclusion we shall mention, but not analyze here, one important cost that may be inherent in this type of political system. The absence of a real contest between opposing political parties breeds political apathy and indifference. We know that popular participation in Mexican politics is quite low compared to more advanced democracies (Almond and Verba, 1963, Chaps 3-9). We are referring to real involvement in politics, not the kind of sham participation that occurs when a busload of peasants is brought in to cheer a candidate in return for beer and food. It is quite clear that the top leadership desires active citizen participation in public affairs, but the basic structural features of the polity may make it impossible to reach this goal. The minority party seats in the Chamber of Deputies and the experiment with

direct primaries may be first steps toward making a fuller participation possible. If direct primaries in the future are adopted in all the states of the Mexican union and are used for nominating candidates for all local offices, from mayor to state governor and federal deputy and senator, then it is likely that the two features of the Mexican polity this paper has dealt with will change rather drastically.

REFERENCES

- Almond, Gabriel, et al., The Politics of Developing Areas, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960.
- Almond, Gabriel, and Sidney Verba, Civic Culture, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Bermúdez, Antonio J., The Mexican National Petroleum Industry, Institute for Hispanic-American and Luzo-Brazilian Studies, Stanford University, 1963.
- Brandenburg, Frank, The Making of Modern Mexico, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1964.
- Dore, Ronald, "Latin America and Japan Compared," in John J. Johnson (ed), Continuity and Change in Latin America, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1964.
- Durkheim, Emile, The Division of Labor in Society, New York: Free Press, 1964.
- Emerson, Rupert, From Empire to Nation, Boston: Beacon Press, 1962.
- El Dia, Mexico City Daily
- Excelsior, Mexico City Daily
- Flores, Edmundo, Tratado de Economía Agrícola, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico-Buenos Aires, 1961.
- Foster, George, Empire's Children: The People of Tzintzuntzan. Smithsonian Institution, Institute of Social Anthropology, Publication, No. 6. Mexico, 1948.
- Friedrich, Paul, "A Mexican Cacicazgo," Ethnology, Vol. IV. No. 2 (April 1965), pp. 190-209.
- Kling, Merle, A Mexican Interest Group in Action, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1961.
- LaPalombara, Joseph, "The Utility and Limitations of Interest Group Theory in Non-American Field Situations," Journal of Politics, Vol. 22 (February, 1960), pp. 29-49.
- Politica, Mexico City Weekly.
- Scott, Robert E., Mexican Government in Transition, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964.
- Selznik, Philip, TVA and the Grassroots, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949.

REFERENCES

-2-

Shills, Edward, "The Military in the Political Development of the New States," in John J. Johnson (ed), The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962.

Siempre, Mexico City Weekly.

Siverts, Henning, "Political Organization in a Tzeltal Community in Chiapas, Mexico," Alpha Kappa Deltan, Vol. III, No. 1 (Winter, 1960), pp. 14-28.

Vernon, Raymond, The Dilemma of Mexico's Development, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963.

_____, (ed), Public Policy and Private Enterprise in Mexico, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964.

Whetten, Nathan, Rural Mexico, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.

Zelditch, Morris, Jr., and Bo Anderson, "On the Balance of a Set of Ranks," in Joseph Berger, Morriz Zelditch, Jr., and Bo Anderson, Sociological Theories in Progress, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1965.