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Robert R. Kaufman; Leo Zuckermann

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Attitudes toward Economic Reform in Mexico: The Role of Political Orientations

ROBERT R. KAUFMAN *Rutgers University*

LEO ZUCKERMANN *Columbia University*

Since the debt crisis of 1982, Mexico has experienced more than a decade of market-oriented economic reform, but research on public opinion toward reform is limited. Drawing on general findings from opinion research in the United States, this study examines how policy preferences of Mexicans are shaped by social background, judgments about the economy, and political loyalties. The effect of these variables is examined across three national surveys, conducted in 1992, 1994, and 1995. We found that favorable orientations toward the president and the ruling party were consistently the strongest predictors of preferences about reform. Furthermore, as in the United States, sociotropic evaluations of the economy outweigh "pocketbook" concerns; despite many years of reform, both expectations and retrospective judgments are important in shaping preferences, particularly since the 1994 crisis; and social background variables have limited direct influence.

Since the debt crisis of 1982, Mexico has experienced a series of stabilization efforts, trade liberalization, privatization, and other market-oriented reforms, but economic performance has fluctuated markedly.¹ In the early 1990s, after a long recession, the reforms appeared to be leading toward a significant recovery. In 1995, however, the economy again turned sharply downward as a consequence of the peso crisis and the uncertainties stemming from the 1994 presidential transition. This study examines public opinion about economic reform within this changing macroeconomic and political context, drawing on data from national opinion surveys conducted in 1992, 1994, and 1995.

The analysis focuses primarily on the extent to which opinions about reform are influenced by orientations toward the president and the ruling party, which for almost seven decades have been the core institutions of the Mexican political regime. How important were these orientations, as distinguished from judgments about the effect of the reforms on personal well-being or on overall performance of the economy? To what extent did political loyalties continue to shape opinion during the severe crisis of 1995, a period in which virtually all Mexican households experienced a sharp decline in their economic situation?

Two other issues discussed in the survey research literature also receive attention. One is the extent to which policy preferences are influenced by "sociotropic" judgments about their effect on collective well-

being. This question has been discussed extensively in studies of public opinion in the United States (Kiewiet 1983; Kiewiet and Rivers 1984; Kinder 1981; Kinder and Kiewiet 1979, 1981; Kinder and Mebane 1983; Lau and Sears 1981; Rosentone, Hansen, and Kinder 1986). It is also relevant to countries in which market-oriented adjustments improve economic performance but have limited or negative effects on the distribution of income. The second issue highly relevant to the politics of reform is the extent to which the public may be willing to accept short-term sacrifices in the expectation of future benefits. The acceptance of such tradeoffs has been recently explored in works on Peru (Stokes 1996), Poland (Przeworski 1996), and Mexico (Buendia 1996).

Our main concern, however, is how such judgments are mediated by orientations toward the president and the ruling party. The weight of political mediations in the formation of policy preferences is a function of both the salience of the issue to the individual and the costs of acquiring information about it. Stabilization and structural adjustment initiatives are highly salient to most Mexicans, and we expect that they will be inclined to evaluate directly the way such measures are likely to affect their economic well-being. But it is costly to acquire information about distributive consequences, sustainable alternatives, and future prospects. Political cues and loyalties can be important for reducing those costs (Popkin 1994).

In Mexico, both the president and the ruling party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or PRI) have been major focal points of political loyalties throughout most of the twentieth century. Presidents traditionally have towered over the political landscape, exercising extensive powers during their six-year term. As heads of state and of the ruling party, they controlled access to all major bureaucratic and elective offices, dominated the policymaking process, and named their successor. They have also exercised significant influence over public opinion, both through the quasimonopolistic and proregime television networks and through private newspapers that depend on the government for advertising and newsprint. In response to

Robert R. Kaufman is Professor of Political Science, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, and Leo Zuckermann is a doctoral candidate, Department of Political Science, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027.

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¹ For discussions of the economics of this period, see Lustig (1992) and Bazdresch (1993).

the 1982 debt crisis, presidents De la Madrid, Salinas, and Zedillo deployed their powers to push through wide-ranging stabilization and adjustment initiatives, and Salinas in particular used his extensive influence over the mass media to cultivate public support (Beltrán and Moreno 1996; Centeno 1994).

The PRI has been a much more reluctant partner in this process. Its main support historically has come from social sectors with a major stake in government patronage and protection, and important factions have resisted change in the policy status quo. Nevertheless, until at least the mid-1990s, the PRI remained a pivotal instrument through which reform-oriented presidents controlled opposition and gained electoral legitimation. Although the party's electoral hegemony declined markedly during the 1980s and the 1990s, a large percentage of voters continued to support PRI candidates. Their support arguably stemmed from a mixture of motives—habit, clientelistic ties, or perhaps aversion to the risks of political change. Nevertheless, many PRI loyalists may be expected to accept reform simply because it is associated with the ruling party.

A number of surveys in Mexico provide useful insights into the bases of support for the president and ruling party. These studies found that one factor is generalized judgments about the stability of the dominant-party regime and the viability of the political alternatives, rather than specific policy preferences or ideological orientations (see Davis and Coleman 1994, 358; Dominguez and McCann 1995, 1996). Davis and Langley (1995) suggest that as Mexico grows more competitive electorally, party identification may become increasingly important in evaluations of presidential performance. These findings are generally consistent with our arguments regarding political mediations.

We are concerned, however, with explaining issue preferences rather than political choice. We want to understand the sources of individual attitudes toward market reform, in particular, how they are formed, and how they relate to other characteristics and beliefs of individuals. In raising these questions, we address assumptions common in influential works on the politics of economic reform (e.g., Frieden 1991; Haggard and Webb 1994; Przeworski 1991). These attach considerable importance to socioeconomic background, distributive interests, and judgments about economic conditions, but they generally pay less attention to the role of political mediations.

Orientations toward the president and the PRI, of course, can be expected to affect policy preferences in combination with these other influences. As we shall discuss below, the interaction among such factors is likely to be quite complex. The underlying principle of our analysis, however, is relatively simple: The direction of causality goes from sociodemographic background, to judgments about the economy and political loyalties, to preferences about reform.

The article is organized into six sections. The first provides a description of the data. The second discusses the measurement of opinions about reform—the dependent variable. The third shows the bivariate

associations with variables related to social background, economic judgments, and political loyalties. The fourth and fifth provide a multivariate analysis and a more complex causal model of opinion formation based on these findings. Finally, there is a brief conclusion.

THE SURVEYS

The three national surveys on which this study is based were organized by the Mexican Office of the Presidency. Questionnaires were designed within the office; the survey was conducted by Opinion Profesional S.A. de C.V., a private company specializing in policy polling and focus groups. Field workers were not informed of the client's identity; they identified themselves to respondents only as employees of Opinion Profesional. Because it was expected that many respondents would be reluctant to express their voting intentions and political preferences, a simulated secret ballot procedure was employed for these questions. Respondents were asked to mark their preference on a sheet of paper, seal it, and place it in a box.

The surveys in September 1992 and November 1994 contained 4,960 and 4,998 household interviews, respectively; in March 1995, there were 2,816 household interviews.² Households were located for interviews through a multistage, stratified probability sampling procedure. At each household, an interview of about 45–60 minutes was conducted with one respondent, selected at random, with about an equal proportion of men and women. The response rate is estimated at 75%; interviews were obtained in three of every four households contacted. For each survey, the margin of error attributable to sampling error was estimated at $\pm 2\%$. Further details on sampling and questions are provided in appendices A and B.

Government-sponsored surveys can sometimes be criticized for loading questions in ways that elicit responses favorable to the political objectives of the president. In these surveys, however, respondents were offered explicit “pro and con” choices on most issues, including the performance of the president, electoral preferences, general support for the government's economic program, and opinions on seven of the ten policy items used in our analysis (see the appendices for precise wording of each item). Exceptions were the items on NAFTA and bank privatization in the 1992 survey and the question on the stabilization pact in 1994, which asked respondents only if they “approved.” The potential affirmative biases contained in such wordings, however, are more likely to constitute a problem for estimates of aggregate distributions of opinion than for analyses of the association among variables. The risks, moreover, are reduced still further by the use of multiple measures of the dependent variable, which produce similar results.

² Since 1995, the data from these surveys have been available to scholars at the Roper Center in Connecticut and at the Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economica in Mexico.

TABLE 1. Association between General Support and Policy Index and Specific Policies

	1992	1994	1995
1. Correlation analysis (Pearson's <i>r</i>)			
General Support with			
Policy index	0.34	0.41	0.59
Agreement with NAFTA	0.37	0.33	—
Bank privatization	0.31	0.33	—
Approval of wage-price pacts	—	0.42	—
Agreement with foreign investment	—	0.27	—
Agreement with inflation control	—	—	0.43
Approval of wage-price inflation control	—	—	0.31
Agreement with stabilization program	—	—	0.58
2. Reliability analysis of policy index			
Cronbach's Alpha	0.54	0.62	0.54
Number of items in the index	2	4	3

Note: Coefficients are significant at the $p < .001$ level. Values not available are marked with a dash (—).

MEASURING OPINIONS ABOUT ECONOMIC REFORM

Two different measures of opinions about reform were used, each with some distinct advantages and disadvantages. One was *General Support*, based on a question that asked respondents to evaluate the "economic measures" taken by the government. Respondents who viewed those measures as "adequate for resolving the economic situation" were regarded as strong supporters of reform; those who thought only "some" measures were adequate were considered moderate supporters; those who answered "inadequate" were labelled opponents. The same general support item was included in all three surveys and is thus especially useful for gauging changes in opinion over time.

The other measure was an additive *Policy Index*, based on responses to questions about more specific stabilization and structural adjustment policies that were major components of the government's market-oriented strategy: NAFTA, privatization, foreign investment, and wage-price agreements (see Appendix A for precise questions and coding process). The policy items used for the index differed across the surveys, making the indexes less useful than the general support measure for comparisons over time. Yet, the specific policy content of the indexes provides confidence that responses do not simply reflect more general political predispositions.

Table 1 shows that opinions about specific policies were consistently associated with support/opposition for the general policy measures taken by the government. This provides a good indication that both sets of measures are valid—that they tap actual opinions about salient issues of economic reform. The 1992 respondents who agreed with the general economic policies of the government also tended to support NAFTA and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the privatization of banks. In 1994, general support was closely

associated with foreign investment and the antiinflation program. In 1995, those who favored the government's overall economic management were also inclined to support the stabilization program announced by President Zedillo, to express faith in pacted wage-price agreements, and to express confidence that the program would contain inflation.³

Before analyzing these preferences at the individual level, it is important to consider briefly the broader political and economic context in which the surveys were conducted and how aggregate opinion toward reform changed over time. The 1992 survey was conducted during the third consecutive year of recovery from almost a decade of economic stagnation and price instability (Banco de Mexico 1993), and general support was predictably high: 57% wholly approved of government policies, 33% approved in part, and only 10% opposed.

During the next two years, the situation was less promising. In 1993 the growth rate flattened, and in 1994, the year of the next national survey, the turbulent process of presidential succession entered into full swing. Strong and moderate supporters fell to 44% and 38%, respectively, while opponents rose to 18%. By the March 1995 survey, the peso crisis had occurred, and the Mexican economy was entering its third month of resurgent inflation, recession, and growing political uncertainty. Almost half the population (47%) expressed disagreement with the reforms, while strong and moderate support dropped to 31% and 22%, respectively.

This sharp decline in support is consistent with Jorge Buendia's (1996) finding that evaluations of reform in Mexico are based on retrospective judgments about economic performance rather than on expectations of improvement. Surveys conducted in Peru (Stokes 1996) and Poland (Przeworski 1991, 1996) indicate that people in those countries are willing to accept "temporary" hardships during the early phases of reform in the expectation of long-term benefits. After so many years of adjustment in Mexico, it is not surprising that people have begun to respond to economic fluctuations in a manner more typical of "normal" market economies.

A somewhat different puzzle is posed by the fact that, despite deteriorating economic conditions and growing public dissatisfaction, a large sector of the population (53%) continues to express complete or partial agreement with government policies. This raises the question of how opinion is distributed among different population sectors. Are some groups more likely than others to support or oppose reform, and

³ An additional check on the coherence of the policy index was provided by a principal-component factor analyses of the individual items. In each year, this yielded only a single factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0. Factor loadings for all but one of the individual items ranged from more than 0.6 to more than 0.8. The lowest loading was .58, for approval of the wage-price pact in 1994. Principal-component analyses which included both general support and policy items produced similar results. For each year, the analysis produced a single factor, with individual loadings ranging from .65 to .78 in 1992, .58 to .75 in 1994, and .54 to .82 in 1995. For reasons discussed in the text, however, we analyze the policy index and general support measures separately.

what factors influence their opinions? In the following sections, we address this question with individual-level data from the three surveys.

SUPPORT FOR REFORM: BIVARIATE RELATIONSHIPS

We begin by examining the bivariate associations between attitudes toward reform and the three sets of independent variables mentioned in the introduction: sociodemographic background, judgments about current and future economic performance, and political attachments to leaders and parties. From what we know generally about the effects of economic reform across socioeconomic groups and geographic regions (Lustig 1994; Morely 1994), we can hypothesize that several demographic variables may reflect respondents' "objective" interests with respect to reform. Public sector employees may be more inclined to opposition than those in the private sector, since the former are more threatened by privatization and the downsizing of the state. Support for reform may also be relatively low among residents of greater Mexico City. The urbanized and relatively cosmopolitan capital and its surrounding territories have long been an important center of opposition to the ruling PRI and the established authority of the regime (Beltrán and Moreno 1996). In addition, this region contains a high concentration of import-substituting firms and government workers.

The possible influence of income, education, and gender is much more ambiguous, but we can suggest a number of ways in which they may affect opinion about reform. Wealthier groups would be in the best position to tolerate the risks associated with large-scale transformation.⁴ Education would increase access to information about actual and potential policy effects. In Eastern Europe, there is some evidence that people with more schooling expect to benefit from reforms and therefore are more inclined to support them (Evans 1995). In Mexico, however, prolonged efforts at economic adjustment have yielded mediocre or poor results, so people with more education may be skeptical about the government claims. Finally, reforms have opened up new employment opportunities for women, especially in the *maquiladora* (export-processing) sector of the economy. Despite their low wages and poor working conditions, they may be more inclined than men to favor reforms.

The surveys also asked for judgments about economic conditions. Respondents were asked to evaluate both their personal economic situation and that of the country—indicators of "pocketbook" and more "collective" concerns. Another set of questions measured intertemporal judgments—whether they expected their personal situation to improve in the future.⁵ The 1995

survey included an item on fear of unemployment. We examined these responses, because such fears have been shown to be a very important source of opposition to reform in Eastern Europe (Przeworski 1993, 1996) and Peru (Stokes 1996) as well as Mexico (Buendia 1996).

For reasons discussed above, support for reform also can be expected to be associated with favorable orientations toward the president and the PRI. The direction of causality, to be sure, can be questioned; policy preferences can determine as well as reflect political attachments, and it is beyond the scope of this article to model the potential two-way effects. In this instance, however, government policies on stabilization and market-oriented reforms challenged principles of state-led development long supported by virtually all sectors of Mexican society. Thus, it is plausible to assume that Mexican presidents and their allies within the ruling party have led rather than followed public opinion on policy (Aguilar Camín 1989).

These impressions are supported by findings in other studies of Mexican public opinion. In surveys conducted in 1988 and 1991, Dominguez and McCann (1995, 1996, 9) found that in initial decisions to support the PRI or the opposition, views on policy issues were "only marginally related to voter intentions." Davis and Coleman (1994, 358) argue similarly that voters' "overall impression of the performance of the Salinas administration drives their views about performance in more specific policy areas." The widespread popularity enjoyed by President Salinas during his term thus seems far more plausibly attributable to his mastery of public relations, or perhaps to the prestige of the presidency itself, rather than to his privatization and trade policies.

As indicators of orientation toward the president and the PRI, we relied on responses to two items. The first asked whether respondents agreed or disagreed with the way the incumbent president (Salinas or Zedillo) was "handling his job." The second asked respondents to indicate their preferences among the major contenders in the most recent presidential election, each of whom was explicitly identified as a candidate of the PRI, the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), or the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD). Unfortunately, more direct questions about party identification were not included in any of the three surveys, and we do not claim that the item we use is a fully valid proxy. Nevertheless, the question introduces party into the respondent's frame of reference, and the answers can be presumed to provide a reasonable indication of partisan orientation.⁶

Bivariate relationships are shown in tables 2 and 3. Table 2 reveals how general support for the economic program is distributed among subgroups of the sample.

⁴ It is also possible, however, that the very poor would be less inclined to oppose reform than the lower middle class, which historically has been highly dependent on public employment and services (Nelson 1992).

⁵ In 1994 and 1995, this question did not make explicit reference to economic well-being, but it is reasonably safe to assume that the item measured *economic* expectations. Evidence from focus groups

showed that economic well-being was the dominant issue in discussions of personal concerns.

⁶ Preelection polls show strong correlations (between .7 and .8) between responses to the standard question on party identification and the items used in this study. There is a strong association between party identification and presidential vote (Mercado Gasca 1997, 316).

TABLE 2. General Support for Economic Reform, by Economic Judgment, Political Orientation, and Social Background

Grouping Total Sample	1992				1994				1995			
	Agree	in Part	Disagree	N	Agree	in Part	Disagree	N	Agree	in Part	Disagree	N
General Support	57.4%	33.2	9.4	4,472	43.8%	37.9	18.3	4,694	30.7%	22.2	47.1	2,491
N				4,960				4,998				2,816
Perception of country's economic situation												
Very good and good	69.5%	28.2	2.4	1,574	57.7%	38.1	4.2	1,604	67.2%	20.2	12.7	55
Fair	58.4%	35.1	6.5	2,116	43.3%	37.1	19.6	2,102	45.0%	30.6	24.5	186
Bad and very bad	29.5%	37.4	33.1	730	19.1%	40.6	40.3	903	28.5%	21.5	50.1	2,233
N		***		4,420		***		4,609		***		2,474
Perception of personal economic situation												
Very good and good	66.8%	29.8	3.4	1,556	54.1%	37.8	8.1	1,673	54.2%	21.2	24.7	93
Fair	57.6%	34.5	8.0	2,190	42.3%	38.3	19.4	2,169	42.0%	25.0	33.0	441
Bad and very bad	36.3%	36.9	26.8	694	24.9%	37.3	37.8	782	26.6%	21.7	51.7	1,929
N		***		4,440		***		4,624		***		2,463
Personal expectations for the next year												
Will be better off	70.6%	25.7	3.7	2,264	52.3%	35.3	12.4	2,087	47.4%	17.6	35.0	498
Will be the same	45.3%	45.5	9.2	1,065	32.8%	49.4	17.8	863	35.7%	29.5	34.8	320
Will be worse off	30.3%	32.5	37.2	445	23.4%	31.1	45.4	563	21.7%	20.0	58.3	1,216
N		***		3,774		***		3,513		***		2,034
Agreement with the president												
Agree	67.0%	29.7	3.3	3,675	53.7%	36.7	9.7	3,627	46.6%	25.4	27.9	1,113
Disagree	11.1%	43.5	45.5	597	8.8%	37.4	53.7	859	14.5%	20.2	65.3	1,205
N		***		4,272		***		4,486		***		2,318
Electoral preference for presidential election												
Salinas/Zedillo (PRI)	69.1%	27.7	3.2	2,867	59.6%	33.1	7.3	2,632	50.8%	22.8	26.4	978
Clouthier/Fernandez (PAN)	47.8%	37.4	14.8	591	27.4%	40.6	32.0	871	17.9%	23.7	58.4	729
Cardenas (PRD)	29.5%	44.9	25.5	456	19.9%	39.7	40.4	517	13.6%	18.0	68.4	329
N		***		3,914		***		4,020		***		2,036
Fear of unemployment												
Yes fear	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	27.3%	22.1	50.6	1,813
No fear	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	40.5%	21.7	37.8	629
N										***		2,442
Sector												
Public	54.0%	34.8	11.2	653	35.3%	43.6	21.0	511	33.9%	22.5	43.5	225
Private	59.8%	31.6	8.6	2,063	45.5%	35.7	18.8	2,141	28.4%	22.3	49.2	1,136
N		*		2,716		***		2,652		ns		1,361
Region												
Mexico City	38.0%	49.5	12.5	858	27.0%	47.9	25.1	1,150	22.2%	26.5	51.3	527
Other	62.0%	29.3	8.7	3,619	49.2%	34.7	16.1	3,544	33.0%	21.1	46.0	1,964
N		***		4,477		***		4,694				2,491
Income												
Poor	55.4%	33.4	11.2	2,662	47.2%	34.8	18.0	2,440	30.5%	21.4	48.1	1,408
Lower middle class	58.9%	34.0	7.1	1,044	37.5%	42.4	20.1	1,141	31.7%	27.4	40.9	420
Middle class	61.1%	33.2	5.8	645	41.9%	41.5	16.6	906	28.1%	22.2	49.7	426
Upper middle class & rich	69.1%	22.3	8.7	127	46.6%	33.8	19.5	206	34.1%	18.0	47.8	237
N		***		4,478		***		4,693				2,491
Education												
None	60.2%	28.1	11.7	177	50.3%	30.9	18.9	179	30.0%	11.6	58.3	126
Elementary	58.2%	31.6	10.2	1,377	52.2%	32.3	15.5	1,463	33.4%	17.2	49.3	753
Junior high school	57.0%	34.0	9.0	1,113	42.4%	39.8	17.8	1,096	29.4%	24.1	46.5	570
Senior high school	57.7%	35.3	7.1	984	38.9%	41.9	19.2	1,097	30.6%	30.1	39.2	562
University or more	55.8%	33.5	10.6	826	36.1%	41.4	22.5	859	28.1%	21.3	50.6	481
N		ns		4,477		***		4,694		ns		2,492
Gender												
Male	57.4%	32.9	9.7	2,280	42.6%	39.6	17.9	2,443	27.8%	23.8	48.3	1,259
Female	57.4%	33.6	9.1	2,198	45.2%	36.1	18.8	2,251	33.6%	20.6	45.9	1,232
N		ns		4,478		ns		4,694		ns		2,491

na = not available.

ns = not significant.

Note: *p < .05, ***p < .001. Significance levels are based on χ^2 estimates.

TABLE 3. Bivariate Associations between General Support/Policy Index and Economic Judgment, Political Orientation, and Social Background

Variable	1992		1994		1995	
	General Support	Policy Index	General Support	Policy Index	General Support	Policy Index
Perception of country's economic situation	0.33*** (4,420)	0.36*** (3,300)	0.35*** (4,610)	0.34*** (3,734)	0.18*** (2,474)	0.17*** (2,062)
Perception of personal economic situation	0.25*** (4,440)	0.26*** (3,319)	0.27*** (4,625)	0.34*** (3,733)	0.18*** (2,463)	0.18*** (2,049)
Personal expectations for the next year	0.37*** (3,774)	0.32*** (2,880)	0.30*** (3,512)	0.36*** (2,951)	0.25*** (2,034)	0.24*** (1,737)
Fear of unemployment	—	—	—	—	-0.13*** (2,442)	-0.20*** (2,034)
Agreement with the president	0.52*** (4,271)	0.36*** (3,212)	0.47*** (4,482)	0.41*** (3,631)	0.40*** (2,318)	0.36*** (1,963)
Voting intention for presidential election	0.34*** (3,952)	0.21*** (2,992)	0.41*** (4,694)	0.36*** (3,762)	0.39*** (2,405)	0.44*** (2,010)
Employed in public sector	0.05* (2,715)	0.03 (2,124)	0.07** (2,652)	-0.00 (2,163)	-0.05 (1,361)	0.02 (1,151)
Reside in Mexico City	-0.17*** (4,478)	-0.02 (3,344)	-0.18*** (4,694)	-0.14*** (3,762)	-0.08** (2,491)	-0.06* (2,069)
Income	0.07*** (4,478)	0.10*** (3,344)	-0.03 (4,694)	0.14*** (3,762)	0.00 (2,491)	0.03 (2,069)
Education	-0.01 (4,477)	0.07** (3,344)	-0.11*** (4,694)	0.08*** (3,762)	0.00 (2,491)	-0.05* (2,069)
Gender ($M = 0; F = 1$)	0.00 (4,478)	-0.01 (3,344)	0.01 (4,694)	-0.03 (3,762)	0.05* (2,491)	0.01 (2,069)
Sample total		4,960		4,998		2,816

Note: Values are Pearson R s, significant at the * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ levels. The number in parentheses refers to valid cases in each bivariate association. The unemployment question was not asked in 1992 and 1994.

Table 3 shows the strength of the associations between the independent variables and the two measures of attitudes toward reform. Both general support and the policy indexes are strongly and consistently linked to economic perceptions and political orientation, but the associations with the demographic variables are far weaker.

Among the demographic variables, region is most strongly associated with preferences about reform. In both tables 2 and 3, residents of Mexico City are generally less likely to express favorable opinions than those in other regions of the country. As already suggested, this may reflect the effect of economic liberalization on the import-substituting economy of central Mexico or relatively more skepticism toward the government.

The relationship between opinions about reform and the other demographic variables is weak or inconsistent. Table 3, for example, shows that respondents with higher incomes and those who worked in the private sector were more likely to express favorable opinions in 1992 and 1994, but in 1995 these associations disappeared or went in the opposite direction. The association with education is positive in some cases and negative in others, and gender differences are insignificant across the three surveys.

One possible explanation for these findings may lie in the weakness of Mexico's civil society; interest associations were generally dependent on the government or ruling party and were not strongly inclined to articulate and contest the distributive implications of

reform. It is also possible that sociodemographic background influences preferences indirectly, through effects on economic perceptions and political loyalties. This point is addressed in the causal models presented below.

In contrast to the sociodemographic variables, perceptions of economic well-being are closely linked to support for reform. The only surprise—and it is a very mild one—concerns fear of unemployment. This variable correlates significantly with both general support and the policy index; but a somewhat stronger association could have been expected, given the importance attached to fear of unemployment in the comparative literature. A possible explanation is that the substantial layoffs following Zedillo's stabilization initiative did not begin until after the March 1995 survey, and earlier Mexican reforms were not accompanied by very high rates of unemployment, unlike the situation in either Poland or Peru.

On the whole, however, preferences about reform are strongly associated with evaluations of the economy. People who judge the economy favorably are very likely to back both the overall government program and the specific policies. This holds for both retrospective and prospective judgments, for "sociotropic" and "pocketbook" concerns, and for fear of unemployment.

The multivariate analysis will provide a fuller discussion of the relative importance of these different types of judgment. It should be noted, however, that during the 1995 crisis, people expressing hope for the future made a much larger contribution to overall support for

reform than did the tiny minority of Mexicans who judged the current situation favorably. "Optimists" in 1995 constituted 17.6% of the total sample but more than 30% of those who supported the government's economic program.

Finally, there is a strong and consistent association between political orientation and support for reform, a pattern which persists through the 1995 crisis. Despite the severe economic deterioration, a large group of respondents expressed support for the president (47%) and the party (40%). Furthermore, the reform program of the government received approval from about half of these political loyalists (47% in the presidential group and 50.8% in the PRI group), compared to only 31% for the total sample.

Of course, the relatively strong support for the government's program among presidential and PRI backers could stem from their inclination to affirm their political loyalties rather than from their policy preferences. If that were true, then the distributions shown in Table 2 would simply reflect an autological relation between independent and dependent variables. For reasons discussed above, however, the policy indexes are less vulnerable to this criticism, and Table 3 shows a strong association between these indexes and political orientation. In most cases, in fact, it equals or exceeds the strength of association between the policy indexes and judgments about the economy.

SUPPORT FOR REFORM: MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The central question raised by the bivariate associations is the extent to which political orientation plays an independent role in shaping opinion and the extent to which it simply reflects economic well-being. The collapse of the economy clearly undermined support for the president and the PRI candidates in 1995. Does this mean that loyalist respondents are backing the reform because of their positive views of the economy, or does political orientation have an effect that is not simply a reflection of economic perceptions?

These questions were examined through regressions of the measures of support against the independent variables discussed in the preceding section. The generic model is as follows:

$$\text{SUPPORT or POLICY INDEX} = \text{Constant} + b_1 \text{ Economy} + b_2 \text{ Personal} + b_3 \text{ Expectations} + b_4 \text{ President} + b_5 \text{ Party} + b_6 \text{ Income} + b_7 \text{ Education} + b_8 \text{ Mexcity} + b_9 \text{ Gender} + b_{10} \text{ Sector} + \text{Error},$$

where:

SUPPORT = general support for reform;
 POLICY INDEX = policy index;
 Economy = perception of country's economic situation;
 Personal = perception of personal economic situation;
 Expectations = personal expectations;
 President = approval of president;
 Party = political-electoral sympathies;
 Income = income;
 Education = education;

MexCity = Mexico City;
 Gender = gender; and
 Sector = public or private employment.

Tables 4 and 5 show the ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates of these models.⁷ Taken together, the demographic, perceptual, and political orientation variables explain a substantial percentage of the variation in both the policy index and general support for reform. Adjusted R^2 in the two sets of regressions ranges between .34 and .27 for general support and between .21 and .26 for the policy index.

The weights of the individual variables within each equation—as indicated by the standardized betas—are also quite consistent across the surveys and correspond closely with what we found in the bivariate statistics. Both models are thus robust across time. Although residence in Mexico City had some effect on general support in 1992 and 1994, the demographic variables are generally among the weakest predictors of reform preferences. Gender crosses significance thresholds in the estimates of the 1994 and 1995 political index, but its contribution is limited, and contrary to our hypotheses, women are somewhat less likely than men to have favorable opinions about reform. As in the bivariate statistics, the strongest contributions come from judgments about economic conditions and political orientation.

Looking more closely at the way perceptions of well-being affect support for reform, two points can be noted. First, as in the United States, views of general economic conditions are consistently stronger predictors of support for reform than are perceptions of personal well-being. Standardized betas for the former are significant and relatively high in all six regressions, whereas personal well-being is significant only for the 1994 estimate of the policy index.

The second point of interest is the strength and consistency of expectations as a predictor of support for reform. In 1992 and 1994, this variable made substantial contributions to both general support and the policy index. During the crisis year 1995, as judgments about the economy turned uniformly negative, the standardized betas for expectations were surpassed only by the variables measuring political orientation. The importance of expectations indicates the need to modify somewhat the conclusions drawn at the aggregate level about retrospective judgments (Buendia 1996). These did contribute to a broad decline in backing for reform, but respondents continued to differ in their judgments about future prospects. As just noted, this helped to account for the persistence of support for government policy during 1995.

Finally, the multivariate models show quite strong support for our hypothesis about political mediations.

⁷ In the case of SUPPORT, an ordinal measure, we used ordered probit regressions as well as OLS statistics. The ordered probit estimates are more suitable for the analysis of ordinal data. The results are very consistent with those obtained through OLS regressions. We present the OLS findings in order to facilitate comparisons with the policy index.

TABLE 4. OLS Regression of Economic Judgment, Political Orientation, and Social Background on General Support for Economic Reforms: 1992, 1994, 1995 (Dependent Variable: SUPPORT)

Independent Variables	B Coefficient			Standardized Beta		
	1992	1994	1995	1992	1994	1995
Economic situation	0.08*** (0.02)	0.19*** (0.03)	0.19** (0.07)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.18*** (0.03)	0.08** (0.03)
Personal situation	-0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)	0.03 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Personal expectations	0.17*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.11*** (0.03)	0.18*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.11*** (0.03)
Fear of unemployment	—	—	-0.06 (0.06)	—	—	-0.03 (0.03)
Approval of president	0.74*** (0.04)	0.59*** (0.04)	0.45*** (0.05)	0.37*** (0.02)	0.31*** (0.02)	0.26*** (0.03)
Intend to vote PRI	0.15*** (0.03)	0.23*** (0.04)	0.52*** (0.06)	0.11*** (0.02)	0.15*** (0.02)	0.29*** (0.03)
Income	0.02 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.04)
Education	-0.03* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.03 (0.03)	-0.06* (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.04 (0.03)
Mexico City	-0.22*** (0.03)	-0.18*** (0.03)	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.14*** (0.02)	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)
Public sector	0.03 (0.03)	0.08* (0.04)	-0.02 (0.07)	0.01 (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)
Gender	0.03 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.05)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.03)
(Constant)	0.50*** (0.05)	0.27*** (0.07)	0.31** (0.11)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)
Adjusted R^2	0.343	0.333	0.279	0.34	0.333	0.279
N	2,005	1,861	1,012	2,005	1,861	1,012
F	105.57***	93.71***	36.65***	105.57***	93.71***	36.65***
Sample total	4,960	4,998	2,816	—	—	—

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. The fear of unemployment question was only asked in 1995.

Even after controlling for perceptions of economic well-being and sociodemographic variables, positive assessments of the president and of PRI electoral candidates were consistently among the strongest predictors of support for reform. In both 1992 and 1994, a respondent's orientation toward the president was the best single predictor of general support and preferences on the policy index, and partisan preferences also made a substantial contribution relative to other variables in the model.

Political orientation continued to make the strongest contribution in the 1995 regressions. Unlike 1992 and 1994, however, the preference for PRI candidates tended to be a somewhat stronger predictor than was approval of the president. In all the estimates, moreover, there was an increase over time in the b coefficients of the partisanship variable. This pattern may reflect in part the contrast between the flamboyant Salinas and the more tentative style of Zedillo. Or, as Davis and Langley (1995) suggest, it may reflect the growing importance of partisan cues for making economic judgments, as Mexican party politics becomes more competitive. In either event, despite deep internal divisions among PRI activists, the party remained an important mechanism for building public consent (or at least acquiescence) to reform policies.

CAUSAL MODELS

The estimates in our multivariate analyses show the extent to which political orientation, economic perceptions, and demographic variables affect support for reform but not how they combine to do so. In this section, we model possible paths through which these variables influence opinion, building on the results shown above. The hypothesized causal relations and the path coefficients for 1994 are displayed in Figure 1. To simplify the presentation, we do not show the coefficients for 1992 and 1995, but these parallel closely the findings for 1994, and we indicate in the text the points at which they diverge.⁸

The sociodemographic variables in the model are region and income, both of which had at least a modest effect on support in our earlier analysis. Numerous studies have suggested that opposition to the regime is strongest in metropolitan areas (Mercado Gasca and Zuckermann 1994), and on the basis of this literature, we posit that region influences preferences about reform through its effects on political orientation. In-

⁸ To illustrate our broader findings, path coefficients from 1994 were selected because that year was closest to "normal" in terms of the economic recovery and support for the president. In contrast, 1992 marked a high point, and 1995 was a year of profound crisis.

TABLE 5. OLS Regression of Economic Judgment, Political Orientation, and Social Background on Policy Index: 1992, 1994, 1995 (Dependent Variable: POLICY INDEX)

Independent Variables	B Coefficient			Standardized Beta		
	1992	1994	1995	1992	1994	1995
Economic situation	0.19*** (0.03)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.14* (0.06)	0.19*** (0.03)	0.11*** (0.03)	0.07* (0.03)
Personal situation	0.01 (0.03)	0.04* (0.02)	0.07 (0.04)	0.01 (0.03)	0.05* (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)
Personal expectations	0.15*** (0.03)	0.14*** (0.02)	0.06* (0.03)	0.14*** (0.03)	0.17*** (0.02)	0.08* (0.03)
Fear of unemployment	— (—)	— (—)	-0.12* (0.05)	— (—)	— (—)	0.08* (0.03)
Approval of president	0.44*** (0.06)	0.36*** (0.04)	0.24*** (0.05)	0.20*** (0.03)	0.24*** (0.03)	0.17*** (0.03)
Intend to vote PRI	0.13*** (0.04)	0.19*** (0.03)	0.51*** (0.05)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.16*** (0.02)	0.35*** (0.03)
Income	-0.01 (0.02)	0.07*** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.10*** (0.03)	0.04 (0.04)
Education	0.03 (0.02)	0.06*** (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.05 (0.03)	0.12*** (0.03)	-0.05 (0.04)
Mexico City	0.01 (0.04)	0.08** (0.03)	0.06 (0.05)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.06** (0.02)	0.03 (0.03)
Public sector	0.05 (0.04)	0.05 (0.03)	0.06 (0.06)	0.03 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)	0.04 (0.03)
Gender	0.04 (0.03)	-0.10*** (0.03)	-0.09* (0.05)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.06 (0.03)
(Constant)	0.48*** (0.07)	0.30*** (0.06)	0.53*** (0.09)	—	—	—
Adjusted R ²	0.202	0.33	0.27	0.202	0.33	0.27
N	1,616	1,588	896	1,616	1,588	896
F	41.84***	77.86***	31.58***	41.84***	77.86***	31.58***
Sample total	4,960	4,998	2,816	—	—	—

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001. The fear of unemployment question was only asked in 1995.

come, we suggest, affects policy preferences through a different path: Wealthier individuals may be expected to have more positive views of the economy and more positive expectations about the future, which in turn would encourage positive views of reform.

Specification of the sociodemographic antecedents of policy preferences are of less concern in this paper than are economic perceptions and political orientation. Nevertheless, the two factors that we highlight are not implausible points of departure for the analysis. Income and region consistently and significantly affect economic judgments, political orientation, and expectations in the directions hypothesized. The direct effects of both income and Mexico City on attitudes toward reform in 1994 are stronger than we expected, but they are still weak relative to the other factors presumed to have the most direct influence, and they disappear entirely in the specifications of the model for 1992 and 1995.

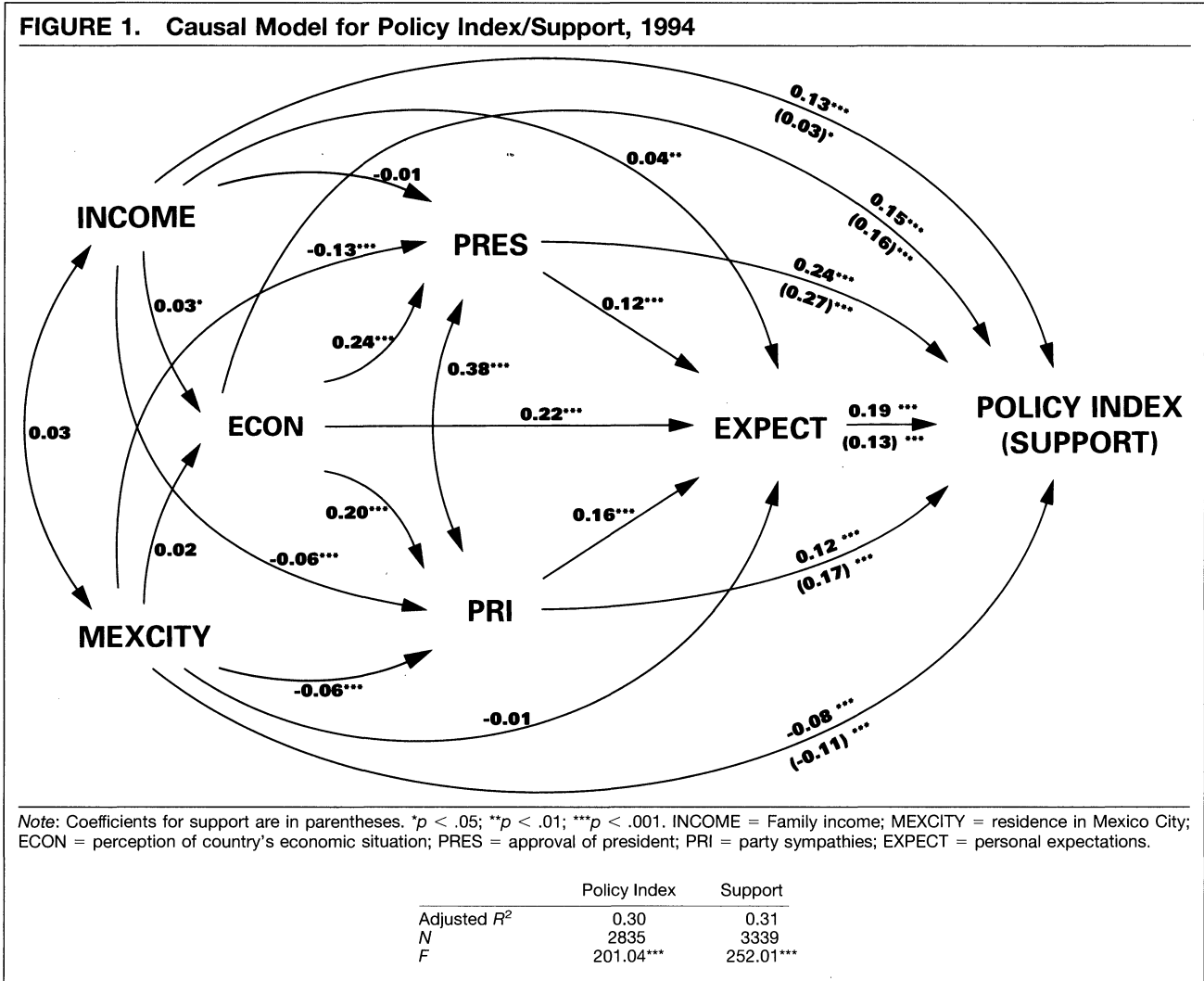
The most proximate influences on policy preferences come from three sets of variables: judgments about the economy, orientation toward the president and the PRI candidates, and expectations about future improvement. Yet, these perceptions affect one another, and support for reform, in several different ways.

Judgments about economic performance can have both a direct and an indirect (or mediated) effect on popular assessment of economic reforms. Given Mex-

ico's long experience with adjustment, people can be expected to judge reforms in terms of how they think the economy is doing, regardless of their political orientation. Yet, judgments about economic performance also have an important effect on support for the president and the ruling party. People who feel positively about them are more likely to have faith in their policies, even if they are not sure how such policies have affected economic outcomes.

Our models allow us to disaggregate the total non-spurious effects of economic judgment on policy preferences and to compare the relative contributions made by the direct path and by paths passing through support for the president and the PRI. As expected, the direct path from economic judgment does indeed make a strong contribution to the policy index and general support—about 50% of the total nonspurious effects in 1994. But the paths leading through support for the president and the PRI also make important contributions to the nonspurious effects of economic judgments—about 33% of the effect on the policy index and about 36% on general support. In the other two years as well, about one-third of the effects of economic judgments on policy preferences passed through political orientation.

Expectations play a somewhat different role in our model. We suggest that they will affect policy preferences relatively directly but will be shaped by a number



of different influences. One path to expectations goes through judgment about economic performance; people who think things are going well are more likely to feel their own situation will improve over time. Expectations also may be shaped by political orientation. People who support the president or party in power are also inclined to trust them to bring a brighter future. These positive expectations, in turn, would lead to support for policy reforms. The path coefficients in Figure 1 show that judgment about the economy has the strongest single influence on expectations (.22) but is outweighed by the combined effect of support for the president (.12) and the PRI (.16). Expectations, finally, are consistently and fairly strongly related to support for reform in all years and all specifications of the model.

Finally, our model posits a number of different mechanisms through which positive views about the president and the ruling party can lead to support for reform. One, just discussed, is through shaping expectations about improvement in economic well-being. Other and more direct paths may reflect the way respondents evaluate the competence of the incumbents

relative to opponents. People who support the economic policies of the regime do so because they believe it can produce better results than its challengers.

Our path analysis shows that the direct effect of presidential support outweighs both judgments about the economy and expectations, a finding that is generally true for 1992 and 1995 as well.⁹ The effect of political orientation on policy preferences, it may be noted, is strongest relative to perceptions about the economy in 1995; in that year, the path coefficient leading from support for the president to the policy index reached .36, the highest in any of the estimates. At a time of economic crisis, people may support the policies of the regime not because of retrospective judgments or hopes for the future but because they perceive a lack of political alternatives.

⁹ The single exception is for the 1992 policy index, in which the coefficient for economic judgment is .21 and that for the president is .19.

CONCLUSION

In all countries undergoing economic adjustment, public support is potentially an important factor in sustaining reforms. Survey research on the sources of support is still at a relatively early phase, and there is much to be learned. One conclusion is suggested rather clearly, however, both by existing theory and our own findings: Immediate "pocketbook" concerns are neither the only nor the most important basis on which people evaluate policy. Both socioeconomic interests and "subjective" perceptions of well-being may influence the formation of policy preferences, but this influence depends on how people link their personal situation to broader patterns of economic performance, prospects for the future, and the government in power. In these respects, Popkin's (1994, 31) characterization of American voters appears to apply to Mexicans as well: They "are not self-centered and reflexive in evaluating their leaders and making voting choices. Their evaluations and voting decisions depend on whether their reasoning connects their situations to the national situation and to the actions of their leaders."

When people give precedence to "national conditions" over "pocketbook concerns," they are not necessarily motivated by altruism; they may believe that reform will have a stronger effect on overall economic performance than on their own personal condition. Individual economic interests, to be sure, may influence the way people view the economy—a point we have suggested in our causal model. As in the United States, however, judgments about the economy as a whole are likely to have the most direct effect on the way people evaluate reform (Fiorina 1981, 90; Kinder, Adams, and Gronke 1989, 511; Lau and Sears 1981).

Although preferences for reform are influenced by judgments about how it will affect the future, we must qualify our findings about the role of expectations in several ways. Expectations may be less important in Mexico than in countries where adjustment initiatives are more recent. The sharp rise in the percentage of Mexicans opposing reform since the crisis of 1995 indicates increasing disillusionment with promises of the future prosperity; they are understandably inclined to judge reform in terms of the existing economic record. Yet, given the extraordinary hardships most Mexicans have endured since 1995, it is somewhat surprising that support for reform has remained so strong. While this may partially reflect a belief that there are no better alternatives, our data suggest that hopes for improvement continue to play an important part.

The most striking finding to emerge from our analysis concerns the role of political orientation in shaping policy preferences. Its importance is well documented in the American setting; in situations of high uncertainty and limited information, political cues and group loyalties can provide crucial short-cuts in the evaluation of both candidates and policies (Popkin 1994). In most countries undergoing economic adjustment, the quantitative effect of these mechanisms has not been analyzed, but impressionistic evidence suggests that

they are important. Spanish workers were more inclined to accept painful market reforms in the 1980s, for example, because they were undertaken by the Socialist Party (Bermeo and Garcia-Duran 1994, 112–6; Haggard and Webb 1994, 16–8). In countries such as Peru and Argentina, policies pursued under Fujimori and Menem gained broad acceptance in part because they were backed by presidents who appeared to be "in charge" (Haggard and Kaufman 1995, 198–202). Our data from Mexico show a comparable effect, notwithstanding the long-term erosion of the regime's legitimacy. During his term, Salinas successfully used his authority and control of the PRI to build personal prestige and sell his reform program. People who were positively inclined toward the president and the PRI tended to support reform regardless of their views of the economy.

After Salinas, the "imperial" presidency declined, due to economic crisis and Zedillo's different style of political leadership. In his effort to respond to the crisis, however, Zedillo can still draw on considerable political capital. Acceptance of his program is still substantial, and a large segment of the population continues to approve of the president and to support the PRI.

In few societies are political loyalties unconditional; they are continuously subject to reevaluation as circumstances change and new information becomes available. Our path analysis indicates that while approval of the president and the ruling party provides a guide for determining policy preferences in Mexico, it is strongly influenced by evaluations of economic well-being. The president is, in effect, a salesman who must persuade the public that he can bring a brighter future, and his success depends to a significant extent on what has been delivered in the past.

During the mid-1990s, the evident failure to deliver on promises has had two important implications for the capacity of the president and the PRI to mediate preferences about reform. First and most directly, support for the regime has weakened, and belief in the capacity of its leadership to resolve the problems facing Mexican society has diminished. Put somewhat differently, the "new information" coming from the collapse of the economy is undermining the political predispositions that underlay beliefs about reform (Zaller 1992).

Second, the crisis has accelerated the trend toward a more competitive electoral system, which fundamentally alters the political context in which Mexican public opinion is formed. On the center-left, the PRD has appealed to voters dissatisfied with the government's market-oriented reforms. On the right, although PAN leaders tend to share the policy views of the president, support for reform is lower among their followers than among the backers of the PRI (refer to Table 2).

Over time, increasing multiparty competition in Mexico is likely to expose that society to a wider debate about alternative solutions to current economic dilemmas, and opposition parties will have a stronger role in shaping perceptions (Davis and Langley 1995). It remains to be seen whether the result will be an unus-

tainable backlash against the reforms or more constructive forms of political learning. Either way, Mexicans are likely to be presented with new ways to interpret the experiences derived from the economic crisis, and as never before, they will have opportunities to act on their opinions within the electoral arena.

APPENDIX A: DEPENDENT VARIABLES

GENERAL SUPPORT: Agreement with Economic Reform

[1992:Q24; 1994:Q31; 1995:Q28]

¿Cree usted que las medidas económicas tomadas por el gobierno son adecuadas o inadecuadas para resolver la situación económica del país? (1) Adecuadas (2) Algunas adecuadas (3) Inadecuadas

Do you think that the economic measures taken by the government are adequate or inadequate for resolving the country's economic problems? (1) Adequate (2) Some adequate (3) Inadequate

Support for Economic Reform	1992	1994	1995
Adequate	57.4%	43.8%	30.7%
Some adequate	33.2	37.9	22.2
Inadequate	9.4	18.3	47.1
Total valid responses	4,477	4,694	2,492
Don't know/No response	483	304	324
N	4,960	4,998	2,816

POLICY INDEX: Policy Index Composed of Several Components

1992 Components

Agreement with NAFTA [1992:Q4C]

¿Está usted de acuerdo con que se haya terminado la negociación de un tratado de libre comercio con los Estados Unidos y Canadá? (1) Si (2) No

Do you agree with what has been concluded in the free trade treaty with the United States and Canada? (1) Yes (2) No

Agreement with Privatization of Banks [1992:Q4A]

¿Está usted de acuerdo con que se hayan privatizado casi la totalidad de los bancos? (1) Si (2) No

Are you in favor with the privatization of almost all of the banks? (1) Yes (2) No

1992 Responses Components	NAFTA	Bank Privatization
Yes, agree	76.1	74.5%
No, disagree	23.9	25.5
Total valid responses	4,021	3,644
Don't know/No response	939	1,316
N	4,960	4,960

1994 Components

Agreement with NAFTA [1994:Q20]

Como usted sabe, desde enero de este año empezó a funcionar el Tratado de Libre Comercio con Estados Unidos y Canadá. ¿Está usted a favor o en contra de este tratado? (1) A favor (2) Da igual (3) En contra

As you know, the free trade treaty with the United States and Canada began to function in January of this year. Are you in favor or against this treaty? (1) In favor (2) Neutral (3) Against

Agreement with Privatization of Banks [1994:Q28A]

Dígame si usted está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las siguientes medidas realizadas por el gobierno este sexenio: Venta de bancos y de Teléfonos de México a empresarios privados. (1) Acuerdo (2) Acuerdo en parte (3) Desacuerdo

Tell me if you agree or disagree with the following steps taken by the government this presidential term: Sale of the banks and Teléfonos de México to private entrepreneurs. (1) Agree (2) Agree in part (3) Disagree

Perception that PECE (wage-price pact) is Controlling Inflation [1994:Q33]

¿Cree usted que el Pacto está ayudando a controlar la inflación? (1) Si (2) No

Do you believe that the Pact is helping to control inflation? (1) Yes (2) No

Agreement with Foreign Investment [1994:Q28C]

Dígame si usted está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las siguientes medidas realizadas por el gobierno este sexenio: Mayor entrada de empresas extranjeras. (1) Acuerdo (2) Acuerdo en parte (3) Desacuerdo

Tell me if you agree or disagree with the following measures taken by the government this presidential term: More access for foreign enterprises. (1) Agree (2) Agree in part (3) Disagree

1994 Responses Components	NAFTA	Privatization	Inflation Pacts	Foreign Invest.
Yes, agree	54.5%	39.3%	70.7%	42.4%
Neutral/agree in part	21.9%	18.5%	—	25.6%
No, disagree	23.6%	42.2%	29.3%	31.9%
Total valid responses	4,498	4,481	4,384	4,656
Don't know/No response	500	517	614	342
N	4,998	4,998	4,998	4,998

1995 Components

Agreement with Inflation Control [1995:Q21]

El gobierno afirma que con las medidas para enfrentar la emergencia económica se logrará evitar que la inflación se desboque, es decir, que se salga de control. ¿Usted cree que esto es cierto o falso? (1) Cierto (2) Cierto en parte (3) Falso

The government says that the measures taken to confront the economic emergency will succeed in preventing inflation from surging out of control. Do you believe this is true or false? (1) True (2) Partly true (3) False

Agreement that the PECE (wage-price pact) Controls Inflation [1995:Q32]

En el pasado gobierno, obreros, campesinos y empresarios firmaron acuerdos para controlar que no subieran mucho los precios. ¿Usted cree que estos pactos sirven para algo o no sirven para nada? (1) Si sirven (2) No sirven

In the past, the government, workers, peasants, and businessmen signed agreements to limit the rise of prices. Do you agree that those pacts were useful or useless? (1) Yes, they were useful (2) No, they were not useful

Agreement with Stabilization Program [1995:Q24]

En general, ¿está usted de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las medidas anunciadas por el gobierno para enfrentar la crisis económica? (1) Acuerdo (2) Desacuerdo

In general, do you agree or disagree with the measures announced by the government to confront the economic crisis? (1) Agree (2) Disagree

1995 Responses	Gov. Control Infl.	Components PECE Control Infl.	Stabilization Prog.
True, yes, agree	33.2%	51.7%	39.6%
Partly true	15.9	—	—
False, no, disagree	50.8	48.3	60.4
Total valid responses	2,395	2,518	2,470
Don't know/No response	421	298	346
N	2,816	2,816	2,816

The Policy Index was computed as the average of all components for that year wherein each Yes/No response was coded Yes = 2 and No = 0 and each Yes/Somewhat/No response was coded Yes = 2, Somewhat = 1, No = 0. Thus, the policy index ends up as a variable ranging between 0 and 2 (the same range as the support variable), but able to take on noninteger intermediate values depending on the set of responses. Descriptive statistics for each year follow:

Policy Index	Frequency Distribution		
	1992	1994	1995
Respondents with:			
Low scores*	424	766	634
Medium scores*	774	1,191	999
High scores*	2,145	1,805	437
Mean	1.52	1.22	0.88
Standard deviation	0.71	0.60	0.71
Total valid responses	3,344	3,762	2,069
Missing	1,616	1,236	747
N	4,960	4,998	2,816

*“Low” scores are all those which fall in the bottom third of the index in a given year. “Medium” scores are those in the middle third. “High” scores are those in the upper third.

Missing Data and Biases in the Policy Indexes

The high percentage of missing data in the policy indexes is attributable in part to the fact that the indexes are composites which eliminate any respondent who answers “don't know” on any of the individual policy items. A comparison of valid responses and “don't knows” for the

indexes showed that persons with limited education and low incomes were underrepresented in the valid responses. In 1994, for example, respondents with no more than an elementary school education comprised 37% of the total sample, 30.2% of the valid responses, and 59.0% of the nonresponses. People classified as “poor” constituted 53.4% of the sample, 48.9% of the valid responses, and 67.0% of the nonresponses. Women and private-sector workers were also underrepresented, but to a lesser extent. Biases were also either more limited or non-existent on questions concerning judgments about the economy and in our measures of political orientation. People making negative judgments about the economy or expressing opposition to the PRI or president were slightly less inclined to answer, but the differences between valid responses and nonresponses were generally between 1 and 3 percentage points.

To assess the impact of these biases, we regressed the individual policy items used to construct the indexes against the independent variables in the general model. With much lower percentages of missing data, the results of these regressions paralleled those for the policy indexes: limited impact for the demographic variables, a larger impact for economic judgments, and political orientations with the greatest effect. It should be emphasized as well that estimates in the policy index models were very similar to those for general support, which had much lower percentages of missing data.

APPENDIX B: INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Sociodemographic

Sector: [1992, 1994, 1995: QC]

¿En cuál tipo de institución, organismo o empresa trabaja usted? (1) Gobierno federal, estatal o municipal (2) Empresa paraestatal u organismo descentralizado (3) Empresa privada (4) Negocio propio (5) Ejercicio o práctica independiente

In what kind of institution, agency, or enterprise do you work? (1) Federal, state, or municipal government (2) Public enterprise or decentralized agency (3) Private firm (4) Own business (5) Independent profession

[Replies are recoded: 1 + 2 = Public; 3, 4, 5 = Private]

Occupational Sector	1992	1994	1995
1. Federal, state, municipal government	19.1%	16.0%	13.4%
2. Public enterprise/ decentralized agency	4.1	2.7	2.3%
3. Private firm	38.0	37.4	32.3
4. Own business	16.8	18.2	25.6
5. Independent profession	22.0	25.6	26.4
Recoded public [1 + 2]	23.2%	18.7%	15.7%
Recoded private [3 + 4 + 5]	76.8	81.3	84.3
Total valid responses	2,931	2,808	1,490
Don't know/No response	2,029	2,190	1,326
N	4,960	4,998	2,816

Missing data. The very high percentages of respondents who could not be classified as either public or private sector employees accounts for much of the missing data in the OLS regressions in tables 4 and 5. Models estimated without inclusion of "sector" showed similar results for both general support and the policy index, however. As a further check, we ran the regressions with the nonresponses as a dummy variable (DK = 1, Response = 0). The dummy was not significant and had no impact on the other results.

Region: Region of the Country

Mexcity: Living in Mexico City?

The interviewers filled this section with the following categories: *Northeast* (Baja California, Baja California Sur, Sinaloa, Sonora); *West* (Aguascalientes, Colima, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit); *North* (San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas, Nuevo León, Durango, Coahuila, Chihuahua); *Gulf* (Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Veracruz); *Central* (Guanajuato, Hidalgo, México, Puebla, Querétaro, Tlaxcala); *Mexico City* (Federal District and metropolitan suburbs); *South* (Chiapas, Guerrero, Morelos, and Oaxaca); *Southeast* (Campeche, Quintana Roo, Yucatán).

Regions were in turn divided into urban, semi-urban, and rural zones, weighted according to the proportion of such zones in the region, and were divided again into neighborhoods weighted in terms of socioeconomic conditions. Blocks within neighborhoods were chosen for sampling with an equal probability of selection, and households visited were selected with systematic sampling and a random start. Urban strata were those with more than 15,000 inhabitants; semi-urban contained between 2,500 and 15,000; rural were less than 2,500. The coverage of rural and semi-rural areas distinguishes these national surveys from many partial ones that sample only urban populations.

[Categories are recoded: Mexico City—Other]

Region	1992	1994	1995
Other	81.1%	76.3%	80.0%
Mexico City	18.9	23.7	20.0
Don't know/No response	0.0	0.0	0.0
N	4,960	4,998	2,816

1990 Census (percentage of population: Mexico City, 22.2%; Other, 77.8%).

Income: [1992, 1994, 1995: QH]

¿Cual es su rango de ingreso familiar? (1) 0 a 1 Salarios Mínimos (SM) (2) 1 a 3 SM (3) 3 a 5 SM (4) 5 a 7 SM (5) 7 a 10 SM (6) 10 o más SM

What is the range of your family income? (1) 0 to 1 Minimum Salaries (MS) (2) 1 to 3 MS (3) 3 to 5 MS (4) 5 to 7 MS (5) 7 to 10 MS (6) 10+ SM

[Responses are recoded: 1-2 Poor: 3-4 Lower middle class: 5 Middle class: 6 Upper middle class and rich]

Salary Range	1992	1994	1995
Minimum salaries (MS)			
0 to 1	16.8%	15.7%	22.0%
1 to 3	44.9	37.7	37.2
3 to 5	22.2	23.8	16.0
5 to 7	9.8	13.4	9.2
7 to 10	3.6	5.2	6.8
10 or more	2.7	4.2	8.9
Recoded:			
Poor (0-3 MS)	61.7%	53.4%	59.2%
Lower middle class (3-5 MS)	22.2	23.8	16.0
Middle class (5-10 MS)	13.5	18.6	16.0%
Upper middle class/Rich (10+ MS)	2.7	4.2	8.9
Don't know/No response	0.0	0.0	0.0
N	4,960	4,998	2,816

Incomes in Mexico are typically calculated as multiples of "minimum salaries" which are adjusted on an annual basis. Comparable percentages from the 1990 Census are: (1) Poor, 56.3%; (2) Lower middle class, 12.8%; (3) Middle class, 12.8%; (4) Upper middle class/rich, 6.3%.

Education [1992, 1994, 1995: QG]

¿Hasta qué año escolar estudió usted? (1) Ninguno (2) Primaria incompleta (3) Primaria completa (4) Secundaria incompleta (5) Secundaria completa (6) Preparatoria incompleta (7) Preparatoria completa (8) Universidad incompleta (9) Universidad completa y más

What year of school did you reach? (1) None (2) Primary incomplete (3) Completed primary (4) Secondary incomplete (5) Completed secondary (6) Preparatory incomplete (7) Preparatory complete (8) Incomplete university (9) Complete university

[Recoded as: 1 None; 2 + 3 Primary; 4 + 5 Secondary; 6 + 7 Preparatory; 8 + 9 University or More]

Education	1992	1994	1995
1. None	5.1%	4.8%	6.2%
2. Primary incomplete	14.7	15.5	16.8
3. Completed primary	17.4	17.0	16.1
4. Secondary incomplete	8.2	7.8	5.8
5. Completed secondary	16.3	14.9	16.4
6. Preparatory incomplete	9.4	10.1	9.6
7. Completed preparatory	11.7	12.3	11.5
8. Incomplete university	9.5	10.0	9.0
9. Complete university	7.6	7.6	8.5

Education	1992	1994	1995
Recoded:			
None (1)	5.1%	4.8%	6.2%
Primary (2 + 3)	32.1	32.5	32.9
Secondary (4 + 5)	24.5	22.7	22.2
Preparatory (6 + 7)	21.1	22.4	21.1
University or more (8 + 9)	17.1	17.6	17.6
Don't know/No response	0	0	0
N	4,960	4,998	2,816

Distribution in 1990 Census: None: 14.3%; Elementary: 51.1%; Junior high school: 17.8%; Senior high school: 10.6%; University or more: 6.1%.

Gender

The interviewers supplied information in this category.
(1) Male (2) Female

Gender	1992	1994	1995
Male (0)	50.0%	51.4	48.9
Female (1)	50.0	48.6	51.1
Don't know/No response	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>N</i>	4,960	4,998	2,816

Distribution in 1990 Census: Male: 49.1%; Female: 50.9%

Economic Opinion

Perception of Country's Economic Situation

[1992:Q7; 1994:Q15]

¿Como describiría la situación económica del país hoy en día? (1) Muy buena (2) Buena (3) Regular (4) Mala (5) Muy mala

How would you describe the economic situation today in the country? (1) Very good (2) Good (3) So-so (4) Bad (5) Very bad

[Recoded as: 1 + 2 Good and very good; 3 So-so; 4 + 5 Bad and very bad]

Description of Economic Situation	1992	1994
Very good	5.3%	5.4%
Good	29.6	28.8
So-so	47.7	46.0
Bad	14.8	16.6
Very bad	2.5	3.3
Recoded:		
Good/very good	34.9%	34.2%
So-so	47.7	46.0
Bad/very bad	17.4	19.8
Total valid responses	4,827	4,856
Don't know/No response	133	142
<i>N</i>	4,960	4,998

[1995:Q4]

Comparada con el año anterior (marzo de 1994) ¿cómo cree usted que está la situación económica del país actualmente, mejor o peor? (1) Mejor (2) Igual (3) Peor

Compared with last year (March of 1994), do you think that the current economic situation of the country is better or worse? (1) Better (2) Same (3) Worse

In the following table, the recoded 1992 and 1993 results are presented for comparison with 1995.

Evaluation of Economic Situation	1992	1994	1995
Better (1995)/recoded good/very good	34.9%	34.2%	2.7%
Same (1995)/recoded so-so	47.7	46.0	7.8
Worse (1995)/recoded bad/very bad	17.4	19.8	89.6
Total valid responses	4,827	4,856	2,781
Don't know/No response	133	142	35
<i>N</i>	4,960	4,998	2,816

Perception of Personal Economic Situation

[1992:Q8; 1994:Q16]

¿Cómo describiría su situación económica [o la de su familia] hoy en día? (1) Muy buena (2) Buena (3) Regular (4) Mala (5) Muy mala

How would you describe your economic situation [or your family's] these days? (1) Very good (2) Good (3) So-so (4) Bad (5) Very bad

[Recoded as: 1 + 2 Very good and good; 3 So-so; 4 + 5 Bad and very bad]

Description of Personal Economic Situation	1992	1994
Very good	4.7%	5.7%
Good	29.1	30.0
So-so	49.3	46.5
Bad	14.9	15.4
Very bad	2.0	2.3
Recoded:		
Good/very good	33.7%	35.8%
So-so	49.3	46.5
Bad/very bad	16.9	17.7
Total valid responses	4,894	4,901
Don't know/No response	66	97
<i>N</i>	4,960	4,998

[1995:Q5]

¿Cree usted que su situación económica personal (o de su familia) es mejor o peor que hace un año (marzo 94-95)? (1) Mejor (2) Igual (3) Peor

Do you think your personal economic situation (or your family's) is better or worse than a year ago (March 94-95)? (1) Better (2) Same (3) Worse

In the following table, the recoded 1992 and 1993 results are presented for comparison with 1995.

Evaluation of Personal Situation in 1995	(1992)	(1994)	1995
Better (1995)/recoded good/very good	(33.7%)	(35.8%)	4.1%
Same (1995)/recoded so-so	(49.3)	(46.5)	17.7
Worse (1995)/recoded bad/very bad	(16.9)	(17.7)	78.2
Total valid responses	4,894	4,901	2,779
Don't know/No response	66	97	37
<i>N</i>	4,960	4,998	2,816

Personal Expectations for the Next Year [1992:Q16; 1994:Q10; 1995:Q6]

¿Cómo cree usted que será su situación personal el año que entra? (1) Mejor (2) Igual (3) Peor (4) No sabe (5) No contestó

What do you think your personal situation will be in the coming year? (1) Better (2) The same (3) Worse (4) Don't know (5) No answer

[Recoded as 1 = Better; 2 = The same; 3 = Worse; 4 + 5 = Don't know or didn't answer]

Personal Expectations for Next Year	1992	1994	1995
Better	58.2%	59.0%	24.2%
The same	29.4	24.8	15.0
Worse	12.4	16.2	60.8
Total valid responses	4,454	3,637	2,233
Don't know/No response	876	1,361	583
N	4,960	4,998	2,816

Fear of Unemployment [1995:Q26]

¿Tomando en consideración la situación económica actual del país, teme o no que usted o alguien de su familia pierda su empleo o trabajo este año? (1) Si (2) No

Taking the current economic situation of the country into account, are you afraid or not that you or someone in your family might be out of work this year? (1) Yes (2) No

Fear Unemployment?	1992	1994	1995
Yes, fear	—	—	73.6%
No, don't fear	—	—	26.4
Total valid responses			2,722
Don't know/No response	—	—	94
N			2,816

Political Opinion

Agreement with the President [1992:Q29; 1994:Q41; 1995: PACU]

En general, ¿está usted de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con la manera como está gobernando el presidente Salinas? (1) Acuerdo (2) Desacuerdo

On the whole do you agree or disagree with the way President Salinas is handling his job? (1) Agree (2) Disagree

Approval of President	1992	1994	1995
Approve	85.5%	80.9%	48.8
Disapprove	14.5	19.1	51.2
Total valid responses	4,657	4,738	2,558
Don't know/No response	303	260	258
N	4,960	4,998	2,816

Party: Electoral Preference for Presidential Election

[1992:Q3]

De los candidatos a la presidencia en las pasadas elecciones de 1988, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas del PRD, Manuel J. Clouthier del PAN y Carlos Salinas del PRI, ¿con cuál simpatiza usted más? (1) Manuel J. Clouthier-PAN (2) Carlos Salinas-PRI (3) Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas-PRD

Of the presidential candidates in the past 1988 election. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the PRD, Manuel Clouthier of the PAN, and Carlos Salinas of the PRI, whom do you identify with the most? (1) Manuel J. Clouthier-PAN (2) Carlos Salinas-PRI (3) Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas-PRD

[Although not offered as a possible response, interviewers noted when respondent answered with (4) another name or specifically stated "none of these candidates."]

[Recorded as: 2 = PRI; 1 + 3 + 4 = Opposition]

[1994:Q36]

Si hoy se repitieran las elecciones para Presidente de la República y los únicos candidatos fueran el candidato del PRI, Ernesto Zedillo, el candidato del PRD, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas y el candidato del PAN, Diego Fernández de Cevallos, por cual candidato votaría usted?

(1) Zedillo-PRI (2) Cárdenas-PRD (3) Fernández de Cevallos-PAN

If the election for president were repeated today, and the only candidates were the candidate of the PRI, Ernesto Zedillo, the candidate of the PRD, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, and the candidate of the PAN, Diego Fernández de Cevallos, which candidate would you vote for?

(1) Zedillo-PRI (2) Cárdenas-PRD (3) Fernández de Cevallos-PAN

[Although not offered as a possible response, interviewers noted when respondent answered with (4) another name or specifically stated "none of these candidates."]

[Recorded as: 1 = PRI; 2 + 3 + 4 = Opposition]

[1995:Q38]

De los candidatos a la presidencia en las pasadas elecciones del 21 de agosto. Diego Fernández de Cevallos del PAN, Ernesto Zedillo del PRI y Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas del PRD. ¿con cuál simpatiza usted más?

(1) Fernández-PAN (2) Zedillo-PRI (3) Cárdenas-PRD

Of the candidates for the presidency in the past elections of August 21, Diego Fernández de Cevallos of the PAN, Ernesto Zedillo of the PRI, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the PRD, with whom do you identify the most?

(1) Fernández - PAN (2) Zedillo - PRI (3) Cárdenas - PRD

[Although not offered as a possible response, interviewers noted when respondent answered with (4) another name or specifically stated "none of these candidates"]

[Recorded as: 2 = PRI; 1 + 3 + 4 = Opposition]

Favored Party/Candidate	1992	1994	1995
PAN	11.2%	19.2%	28.9%
PRI	72.5	55.9	41.8
PRD	15.2	11.7	13.5
Other or "No candidate"	1.0	13.3	15.8
Recorded: Vote PRI	72.5%	55.9%	41.8%
Recorded: Vote opposition (not PRI)	27.5	44.1	58.2
Total valid responses	4,294	4,766	2,699
Don't know/No response	666	232	117
N	4,960	4,998	2,816

Results of the August 1994 presidential elections: Zedillo (PRI): 48.8%; Fernández (PAN) 25.9%; Cárdenas (PRD) 16.6% and Cecilia Soto (PT) 2.7%.

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