



Reflections on the 15 State Elections of 2010

It appears that the elections of May 16 and July 4, 2010 continue to be difficult to summarize. After two or three days of intense simplifications, the media have grown tired of seconding a PRI advance or of asserting a PAN/PRD Alliance surprise. The results, nonetheless, are as stubborn as the voters and the abstainers and do not reveal an easy synthesis. We begin our effort with a review of the final results.¹

State	Incumbants	Type of Elections	Winner	Observations	Observations
PRI held State					
Chihuahua	PRI	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PRI+PT+PVEM+PANAL	The tradition of alternation in power in electoral democracies is that when things are going badly, the scoundrels get thrown out. In Chihuahua things are going badly for the party in power at the federal level and the party in power at the State level. The PRI held on locally with a solid margin, but an unclear mandate.	In 1992 the PAN won the governorship 51% to 47% -- an historic election in the very early electoral transition in Mexico. Since that time, the PRI has come back to win on three subsequent occasions: 1998 -- 49% to 41%; again in 2004 -- 56.5% to 41.4%, and by nearly the same percentage this year 2010 -- 57.43% to 40.5%.
Tamaulipas	PRI	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PRI+PVEM+PANAL	Following the assassinations of the PRI gubernatorial candidate on the eve of the elections, the Tamaulipas vote was monitored for evidence of social responses to organized crime. The results do not vary from the historic pattern, except for a slight drop in voter participation.	At the level of the local State Congress, the PRI is better positioned than ever before with 24 of 36 deputies. The PRI has never had more than 19 in this period. At this local level voters in a number of districts did not have to vote PRI alone, as the PRI used specific local alliances with PVEM or PANAL..

¹ For the complete set of election summary bulletins in English and Spanish, see the MUND website (www.mundgroup.com) and click on the section marked "Elections".



Quintana Roo	PRI	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PRI+PVEM+PANAL	The PRI secured a majority of votes for Governor (52.6%) for the first time since 1993. In subsequent elections from 1993, the PRI has won with a bare plurality – 1999 with 44.4% and 2004 with 40.6%.	The PRD PAN alliance was not helped by its pre-election confusion and wrangling over nominees. Further, the Sanchez candidacy did not show up strongly in the pre-electoral polls generally.
Veracruz	PRI	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PRI+PVEM+PRV	Participation has increased more than 10% in the last two elections. For Veracruz the last definitive PRI victory (49%, not quite a majority) was in 1998. With competition in 2004 and 2010 participation has increased to more than the national average for State elections to. over 60%.	The 49% PRI vote for Governor in 1998 was a big drop from the 67.9% of 1992. The decline in the PRI vote has continued and in 2004 the current Governor won a plurality of 34.6% in a triangulated race with the PAN and a PRD alliance. This summer's election had the PRI increase its vote 8% to 42.41%; the PAN increased some 6% to 39.73%.
Hidalgo	PRI	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PRI+PVEM+PANAL	In principle, the candidate of the PRD+PAN+CONV alliance, Xóchitl Gálvez, should have been the “poster girl” of the whole alliance strategy. Gálvez from a local Otomí family, educated locally and earning a degree in computer engineering from the UNAM, she was recognized as the one progressive in the Fox cabinet as head of Indian Affairs.	Unlike the dynamic in Sinaloa and Puebla, this Alliance candidate was not a Priista. Unlike Puebla, the Alliance did not have PANAL support. And, unlike Oaxaca, this candidate did not have a clear long-term grassroots strategy.



Durango	PRI	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PRI+PVEM+PANAL	The historic vote tendency seemed to justify the Alliance strategy. But, even if the opposition voted together in 2004 they would achieve 41.4%, less than 10 points below the PRI at 52.6%. The remarkable fluidity of party affiliations and coalitions gave additional weight to the argument.	In fact, the Alliance did better than the historic sum of its parts (44.5% instead of 41.4% from 2004), and the PRI did worse (46.5% instead of 52.6% from 2004). Nonetheless, the final result not as close as postulated on the evening and days following the election. More than 11,000 votes and 2 percentage points gave the PRI its edge.
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The PRI gained in three states over the PAN or PRD where governorships, state congress and municipal governments were at play.

			PRI gained		
Aguascalientes	PAN	Governor, State Congress Municipalities	PRI+PVEM+PANAL	Aguascalientes is an early reference point in Mexico for alternation in power. The PRI won the State Governorship in 1992 with 74%; the PAN won in 1998 with 53% and again in 2004 with 55%. The PRI has come back in 2010 with 48% to win. Voter participation fell from 74% in 1998 to 48% this year	It is at the State Congress level that we can see the depth of the PRI return. The PRI and PAN shared a divided local legislature in 2001 with the PRI and allies holding a one vote margin. The PAN held 18 of 27 seats in 2004, but was down to 9 seats in 2007, the PRI 14. The PRI now holds 25 seats and its overall vote was nearly 20% above the PAN.
Tlaxcala	PAN	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PRI+PVEM	Some 18 years ago the PRI won the governorship with 86% of the vote. In 1998 the PRI lost the governor's race to the PRD by 3 points, to the PAN in 2004 by one point, but won in 2010 by 7 points (45% to 38%).	The most pressing question for analysts and researcher is how can we understand this dynamic of alternation: is there real competition between rival options, or is there a kind of musical chairs among similar and inter-related political groups?



Zacatecas	PRD	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PRI+PVEM+PANAL	The PRI benefitted by being open to a candidacy from outside the party, viz. that of Miguel Alonso Reyes, a poll-popular political figure who came out of the PRD and PT of the Monreal group. The PRD group of the current Governor) bypassed Reyes and several other well known PRD figures for a relative unknown in their circle. This split in the PRD and PT was determinative of the election.	The last time the PRI won the governorship was in 1992 with a healthy 70.2%. Under the candidacy of Monreal (rejected by the PRI as candidate), the PRD won in 1998 with 44%. The PRD won again in 2004 with 46.4%. The PRI/PVEM/PANAL won this year with 44.4% (viz. the winning plurality level for the past 3 elections). Together the PRD (with 23.88%) and the PT (with 14.29%) came in at 43.17%.
Baja California	PAN	State Congress Municipalities	PRI + PVEM	The PRI consolidated the majority in the local Congress it won in 2007. The PAN had controlled the Congress all through the 1990s and up through 2007.	The PAN held a 4-1 majority of the municipalities in the 2001-4 period. The PAN and PRI divided the municipalities in 2004-7. The PAN won back its 4-1 majority in 2007-2010. Now, the PRI has all 5 municipalities.
Yucatan	PAN	State Congress, Municipalities	PRI	The PRI has regained control of the local Congress with the majority it last enjoyed in 1998.	The PRI now has a majority of municipalities, for the first time since 1987.





State	Party Currently in Power	Type of Elections	Winner, 2010	Observations	Observations
PRI lost State					
Sinaloa	PRI	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PAN+PRD+CONV	The percentage of vote support for the PRI at the Governor level has not changed from 1998 through 2010. What did change was the percentage of voter turnout, up 13% since 2004. The candidate of the Alliance was a disappointed pre-candidate for the PRI nomination who still has a broad network of support within the PRI.	The 60,948 vote margin for the Alliance in the Governor's race dropped to a 18,769 difference in the municipal totals, and 2,291 in the local Congress totals. The PRI continues as a strong local presence, though stronger at the municipal level than the State level.
Puebla	PRI	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PAN+PRD+CONV+PANAL	Participation in voting did not change much in Gubernatorial voting from 2004 to 2010 (up 0.8%) to 56%, or in local congress elections, 54%. However, the vote turnout for Municipal Presidents was the highest ever, 64.5%, up over 8% from 2004. It is at the municipal level that the most dramatic alternations in political power are registered.	The vote for the PRI plus its PVEM ally dropped 11.23% from 2004 to 2010: PRI down to 40% against 50% for Alliance. It is here that the poor reputation of the current PRI governor, the PRI's general vulnerability to an oppositional candidate recruited from within the PRI, and the desertion of the PANAL voter-turnout operation become important in the analysis.
Chiapas	PRI	State Congress, Municipalities	PRD+PAN+CONV+PANAL+PSD	The Alliance as a formal coalition now holds 20 of the 40 legislative seats, with the PT maintaining 2, and the PRI 18.	The Alliance as a formal coalition now holds nearly half (58) of the 188 municipalities. This is an historic shift since the days of complete PRI domination through the 1990s.



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Oaxaca	PRI	Governor, State Congress, Municipalities	PAN+PRD+CONV+PT	<p>The Oaxaca results are difficult to compare with other states since the process of forging an anti-PRI coalition have deeper roots than the formal alliance. At the end of the day, it appears that the PRI party structures ran out of steam in the face of a skillful grassroots campaign that began years ago. In this sense the Cué campaign was “beyond the media”, therefore more difficult to observe.</p> <p>Given the fact that 412 of the 570 municipalities in Oaxaca function under the system of a collective (not an individual) vote it is also much more difficult to poll.</p> <p>Further, the Cué campaign recognized that in many parts of Oaxaca both the PRD and the PAN are “damaged brands” and the campaign centered on a charismatic candidate with the kind of support that comes from a campaign that is “beyond the parties:” including, strategic on-the-ground support from López Obrador; and, a “blessing” from Calderón, without whose federal budget cooperation no Southeastern Governor can hope to govern.</p>	<p>The 1998 gubernatorial campaign coordinated by AMLO showed that the PRD and the PAN could potentially combine to win. The coalition of PRD and PAN began under Cué with AMLO support in 2004 and came close, losing by only 2.6%. The campaign for 2010 began immediately, continuing the established PRD/PAN/PT/CONV coalition, preceding by years the 2010 formal establishment of the PRD/PAN alliance.</p> <p>By 2008-9 the intense municipality-by-municipality campaign was underway with the full participation of AMLO. López Obrador’s public position on the alliances was negative, emphasizing his strategic formula of “no votes for the PRI, no votes for the PAN.” Oaxaca was less a contradiction to his formulation of strategic principles and more a pragmatic continuation of the special effort coming off the lessons of 1998 on what is necessary to win in this key bastion of the PRI Southeast.</p> <p>In a sense, the 8.2% victory of Cué on July 4, 2010 is an example of an electoral process taking place within the advances of the democratic transition as crystallized by the IFE, but also to one side of the IFE and its local counterpart with their elaborate “regulations” of how and when to campaign. Oaxaca suggests that the development of a robust political culture in Mexico now requires more strategic effort and fewer “instructions” from formal authority.</p>



On balance, the PAN-PRD formal alliance appears to be a tactical response to local weaknesses – tactical in the sense of “joining disparate forces” and promoting the “innovation” with major media but not necessarily working on the voter base with direct efforts. Because it was a limited tactical effort, it appears to have been just not enough in Hidalgo, Veracruz or even Durango.

In Sinaloa, where the “alliance” dynamic has a two decade-old history, there was an increase in voter turnout at the gubernatorial level that in part explains the PAN-PRD victory. In Puebla, there was no increase in voter turnout, rather a significant “adjustment” of voters of one preference to another. In Oaxaca, there was an increase in voter turnout, but that appears to be the product of a special effort separated from the formal alliance.

Oaxaca is a case apart since the alliance dynamic was specifically forged nearly a decade ago, and had a strategic character under the leadership of Gabino Cué in comfortable alliance with Andrés Manuel López Obrador – strategic in the sense of working the voter base with direct efforts.

Whatever might be said of the PRI in the states they held and gained, there is evidence of a blend of tactical and traditional strategic efforts in direct mobilization.

In the coming six state elections of 2011 and in the major national contests of 2012, the winners are more likely to be strategic operators with direct voter efforts, especially as the economic and security conditions in the country continue to turn sour. Reliance on mixing and matching traditional parties along with overly-simplified media campaigns may become mere “tactical devices” when the problems faced by the electorate are profound.

In this context, “tactical” can best be understood as depending on national media to tweak preferences and obtain party alternation in power, with a minimum of accountability after the elections; “strategic” on the other hand can be understood as direct contact, along with blending local and new media -- the goal being a changing of orientations to reform, and a maximum of accountability after the elections.

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