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The Emergence of Multiparty Competition in Mexican Politics

Patricia Huesca-Dorantes



THE EMERGENCE OF MULTIPARTY COMPETITION IN MEXICAN POLITICS

To Armando, Carmen,
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Brian and Itxel

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PATRICIA HUESCA-DORANTES

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Mexico's most recent presidential election marks the end of 71 years of one-party rule, after a slow process of emergence of democratic institutions and viable second-party candidates. Yet the process of democratization has been uneven, proceeding much more rapidly in some regions than in others.

The purpose of this study is to see whether diffusion processes have been at work, and if so to try to isolate the points of origin, to trace the lines and channels of movement, clarifying causes and the nature of the diffusion process.

The alternative hypothesis is that broad national processes of change have unfolded across an uneven socioeconomic map, and that Mexican politics remain marked by regionalism of other kinds.

There is an abundance of literature on diffusion processes, focusing on the "locational distribution of innovations, culture traits and other economic, social, political or physical issues" (Brown 1968). Studies of the diffusion of democracy have been undertaken at both global and regional levels, but no study has been located that explores how multiparty politics have emerged in a single country. Mexico offers a significant opportunity to undertake a country case study. Having such contrasting borders, the United States to the north and Guatemala and Belize to the south, different kinds of geography, levels of industrialization and development, I believe that such a study can involve all these variables, plus the socio-economic aspects of the population that display sharp regional differentiation.

The study not only deals with the spatial diffusion process; it also necessarily deals with the process of political development in Mexico, and the links between the two. In what follows, I begin by reviewing the literature on spatial diffusion and political development, outline my strategy for analyzing the Mexican case, proceed to an analysis of changing vote share by party and by level of political representation, and then offer an interpretation of the process of political change in Mexico.

This study contains seven chapters, including the present introduction. Chapter two discusses the diffusion process,

introducing both spatial diffusion theories and political development theories and discussing how these two fields have been conjugated in research over the last couple of decades. An extension of this analysis is proposed for the Mexican context in chapter three. Chapter four is devoted to an analysis of the vote shares of three different party categories in Mexico at initial and ending conditions of a 36-year time span, isolating factors that might have contributed to spatial variations in the shares. Chapter five explores the factors contributing to variations in the rate of change in vote shares over the time span, and chapter six uses dissimilarity indices to reveal the processes contributing to the emergence of competitive multiparty politics. Finally, chapter seven draws together the analyses and offers a broad interpretation of the patterns and process that characterize Mexican political dynamics.

Chapter 2

Diffusion Processes

Spatial Diffusion Theories

The concept of spatial diffusion has been used in the geographical literature since the beginning of the last century. To have a better understanding of the use of the concept in this study it is necessary to know the meaning of the terms that are used. The use of the term 'spatial' puts space or territorial area in a position of importance. As Hägerstrand (1967:6) explained, "the term 'spatial' emphasizes the fact that a quantitative analysis of locational relationships is constantly pursued." This statement is in order to contrast the use of the term 'geographical,' related only to the use of a "given part of the earth's surface" so commonly pursued by more traditional geographers.

The term diffuse is defined as "to disperse or to be dispersed from a center; widely spread or scattered; to disseminate; to pour or spread out and disperse." Studies of spatial diffusion have been a major component of geographical research. Brown (1968) defines spatial diffusion as "the spread or dispersion of a phenomenon within a given area through time." Some authors refer to the process as expansion diffusion (Cliff et al. 1981).

The model of diffusion most commonly used is the innovation diffusion model. Three empirical regularities are embodied in this model (Haggett 1977:235). These are the neighborhood effect, the logistic curve (to explain the temporal built-up in the number of adopters) and the urban-centered hierarchical diffusion process. Each of these is described briefly below.

Neighborhood Effect

Hägerstrand developed a Monte Carlo model to simulate the recorded number of acceptors of some stimulus in agriculture (Haggett et al. 1977:234-5; Cliff et al. 1981:17). He assumed that the model was stochastic, and that the decision to accept the stimulus was based on the information transmitted orally face to

face, between the people with the propensity to adopt and the 'carriers' of this stimulus. This way of transmitting information is known as the neighborhood effect, in which contagious spread depends on direct contact (Cliff et al. 1981:21), in "face to face meetings between the potential adopter and carriers" (Haggett et al. 1977:235; Cliff et al. 1981:21).

This process is influenced by distance. Individuals who are closer will learn about the innovation more rapidly than individuals in remote areas. It is assumed in the model that the probability that a carrier meets and spreads the 'item' to a potential adopter is inversely proportional to the distance between them (Haggett et al. 1977:235).

Contagious diffusion is another name given to the neighborhood effect, which tends to occur from the source outwards in a 'centrifugal' fashion (Cliff et al. 1981:7). Relocation diffusion is a variant of this process. The difference, Cliff et al. explain, is that the items being diffused leave the areas where they originated as they move to new areas. Migratory movements are a good example of this diffusion process.

The Logistic Curve

Hägerstrand described the logistic curve as the temporal pattern of acceptance of diffusion and it is subsequent to the neighborhood effect. Adding the dimension 'time' into the diffusion process equation, it is possible to see that the number of adopters will grow following an S-shaped curve that accounts for the cumulative proportion at a given time. In the beginning, the adoption of the innovation is slow, followed by a rapid build-up, known as the take-off of the process, until it reaches a threshold in which saturation of the susceptible population is approached (Haggett, 1977:238; O' Loughlin et al. 1998:553).

A logistic model is normally able to capture the proportion of adopters at any given time. The equation for the logistic model is given by $p_t = \left(1 + e^{a-bt}\right)^{-1}$ where p_t is the proportion of adopters from the total population at time t ; or by $y_t = k\left(1 + e^{a-bt}\right)^{-1}$ where y_t denotes the cumulative number of adopters in the total population at risk; a , b and k are parameters; and k is interpreted as the saturation level, the maximum number of adopters in the population.