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PROFILE

Fair Play at Voting Precincts: A Comparison of Mexican and Chilean Elections

PATRICIO NAVIA

Elections are the single most important symbol of democracy. We often use elections as a proxy for democracy.¹ Countries where elections are held regularly and there is uncertainty about the results are often regarded as democratic.² If all candidates believe they have a chance of winning the election, we generally claim that the elections are free and fair.³ Although we also acknowledge other necessary conditions for democracy to exist, free and fair elections are seen as the most important component of the democratic process.⁴

For countries in the process of democratic consolidation, certain elections are understood as benchmarks in their quest for democracy.⁵ As Shain and Linz put it, 'the announcement by an incumbent administration or by a provisional government of the opposition that they plan to hold free elections is in and of itself an important landmark in the transition to democracy'.⁶ When the opposition wins the election, the evidence is overwhelming to conclude that the country has moved forward in consolidating a democratic government. Yet, when those in power win the election, it becomes more difficult to claim that the country has taken a step toward democratization.⁷

Often incumbents win benchmark elections because of the unfair advantages they hold over the opposition. Access to resources, control of the media, of the electoral process and the ability to mobilize supporters are often regarded as unfair advantages. Yet, even in countries usually regarded as democratic, we observe unfair advantages for the incumbent or for

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parties better linked to sources of financial support, pressure groups, the media and other key players who may influence the election results.⁸ Yet, because we regard the election itself as the most important component of the electoral process, we are often satisfied with observing that the actual votes were not tampered with. If that condition holds, then despite acknowledging problems elsewhere, we regard the election as being fair and the country as being democratic.⁹

Elkit and Svensson warn against validating electoral processes on grounds that elections were free and fair without considering the existing shortcomings of the electoral process.¹⁰ We ought to doubt the validity of a system where the same party always wins because this often happens where the playing field is not level. Przeworski proposes a powerful dictum: 'democracy is a system in which parties lose elections'.¹¹ The condition of fairness may be violated when 'some people (or groups) are given unreasonable advantages'.¹² Yet even under those conditions, the adjective 'free' seem to be more important than 'fair', although 'freedom is a necessary – though not sufficient – condition for an election's acceptability'.¹³ A minimalist condition for fair elections is that 'the main competitors should have had at least some access to campaign resources and the media, even if that access was not fully equal'.¹⁴

Consider a country where the ruling party loses some elections but not the most important one. Does that satisfy Przeworski's dictum? Is the country a democracy?

Mexico is one such case. The ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) has been in power for over 70 years. During that period, elections were often either not contested by the opposition or manipulated in a way that gave opposition candidates no real chances of winning.¹⁵ Molinar suggests that 'the less elections mattered, the more likely they were to occur'.¹⁶ Starting in the 1980s, the opposition did achieve some local and state-level electoral victories, but the PRI continued to win the presidential elections. The 1994 elections marked a significant departure from that tradition. In 1994 there was uncertainty as to who would win the election. Yet, in the end the PRI candidate won again.¹⁷

Although the election was generally regarded as the freest in Mexico's history,¹⁸ accusations of irregularities, vote tampering and fraud were also made.¹⁹ On 5 September 1994, *Proceso*, the most widely read political weekly in the country, published an interview with Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, where he restated the accusations that fraud and electoral tampering had invalidated the presidential elections. In a column published in the same edition of *Proceso*, Jorge G. Castañeda also noted the existence of widespread fraud although he claimed the end results were not altered.²⁰

Although the 1994 elections in Mexico were probably the cleanest in the country's history, the credibility problems of the electoral process in Mexico continued to haunt the consolidation of electoral politics there.²¹ This article addresses that issue by looking at voting precinct results in Mexico and comparing them to Chile. Assuming that the Chilean electoral process is fraud-free and considering the similarities in both elections, the electoral results in Mexico are analysed using Chile as a control case. In general, the Mexican electorate is more heterogeneous than Chilean voters. There are also more marked regional differences in Mexico than in Chile. Although Chile presents more homogeneous electoral preferences nationwide, Mexico's Federal District presents more homogeneous preferences than Chile as a whole. In what follows, the background for both elections, the methodological approach used here, the official election results and the reasons why the two countries are good candidates for comparison, are all spelled out. The analysis then shows similarities and differences between the countries. It concludes that although there are still some problems with the electoral process in Mexico, the lack of credibility in the process might result from regional differences in electoral preferences and from a higher level of polarization in Mexico rather than from actual vote tampering.

BACKGROUND TO THE CHILEAN ELECTIONS

In 1993, for the first time since the democratic breakdown of 1973, a peaceful democratic transference of power took place. A climate of economic growth, an ongoing process of democratic consolidation and full compliance by all political actors with constitutional and electoral laws characterized the 1993 elections, although there is concern with institutional arrangements that protect the military and distort the electoral representation of leftist political parties.²²

General Pinochet's defeat in the 1988 plebiscite opened the way for the 1989 democratic elections that were won by the Christian Democratic-Socialist coalition, known as *Concertación*. In 1993, the *Concertación* ran for re-election facing a conservative opposition (*Unión por el Progreso de Chile*, or UPC) and two small left-wing parties. There were six presidential candidates in 1993. The *Concertación's* candidate was Christian Democrat senator Eduardo Frei and the UPC candidate was Senator Arturo Alessandri. José Piñera ran an independent campaign as an alternative conservative candidate and three leftist candidates also ran for the presidency, Communist Party's Eugenio Pizarro, Humanist Party's Cristian Reitze and ecologist Manfred Max-Neef.

The electoral process was characterized by the strong lead of the Concertación candidate in all polls throughout the campaign. The UPC conservative challenge was weakened by Piñera maverick's candidacy while the three-way split in the left made it almost impossible for anyone from that group to seriously contend for the presidency. On election day, Frei carried the day with 58 per cent of the votes, Alessandri came second with 24.4 per cent, Piñera third with 6.2 per cent. Max-Neef followed with 5.6 per cent, then Pizarro with 4.7 per cent and Reitze with 1.2 per cent. If we aggregate the candidates by political party/ ideological affiliation, we can observe a three-way split with the centrist Concertación coming up ahead, almost doubling the vote of the conservative candidates.

TABLE 1
ELECTION RESULTS IN CHILE 1993 BY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Candidates	Party/ideological platform	% Votes
Eduardo Frei	Center-left Concertación (CDP-SP)	58.0
A. Alessandri, J. Piñera	Conservative	30.6
Pizarro, Max-Neef, Reitze	Left (CP, Greens, Independents)	11.4
Total Votes		6,910,587

Note: CDP = Christian Democratic Party; SP = Socialist Party of Chile; CP = Communist Party.

BACKGROUND TO THE MEXICAN ELECTIONS OF 1994

The Partido Revolucionario Institucional has held power for over 70 years. The PRI has won all presidential elections and, until recently, most municipal and gubernatorial elections. In the 1970s, the opposition gained electoral ground but electoral fraud, unequal access to state resources and lack of media exposure have represented intricate challenges for the opposition to compete with the PRI in elections on a level playing field.²³

Mexico did not escape the process of democratization that swept Latin America in the 1980s. The most significant challenge to the PRI's hegemonic control of power came in 1988 when Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas emerged as serious and popular contender for the presidential elections. The elections were held under extremely unfavourable conditions for the opposition. Amid accusations of irregularities and fraud, the PRI candidate, Carlos Salinas, was declared president-elect. The electoral process, however, was widely characterised as highly irregular with strong evidence of fraud.²⁴ In fact, some observers believed that Salinas lost the elections at the polls and through electoral fraud became the new president.²⁵ Others

'although agreeing with charges of fraud believe that Salinas actually did win – but that his percentage of the total vote was lower'.²⁶ Whatever the case might be, Ilán Semo correctly points out that Salinas 'was unable to convince the public that he had really won the elections – at any rate, not by the margins claimed in the official computation'.²⁷

Salinas took office and launched an economic and political programme aimed at winning 'in office the elections he lost at the polls, at least in the eyes of a majority of the Mexican people'.²⁸ In order to strengthen his position in power, Salinas undertook a significant electoral reform before the 1991 congressional elections. Further reforms were undertaken before the 1994 presidential elections, but there continued to exist a 'scandalous unfairness which permeated the electoral process'.²⁹

The 1994 elections were characterized by the government's effort to give credibility to the electoral process while the opposition continued to point out the many elements that continued to make the electoral process unfair. However, the opposition, according to many accounts, did have expectations of defeating the PRI at the polls and getting the PRI to accept an electoral loss. There were two main political parties in the opposition. The conservative National Action Party (PAN) chose Deputy Diego Fernández de Ceballos as their candidate and the center-left Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) chose Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, who ran for a second time. There were also six other presidential candidates representing smaller parties, who gathered a combined six per cent of the total vote.

At the outset of the campaign, the 1988 runner-up, Cárdenas, was widely perceived as the leading challenger to the PRI candidate. However, after a televised presidential debate, the first ever in Mexican presidential election history, the PAN candidate emerged as the front leading opposition candidate. Accusations of unfairness were present throughout the electoral campaign. Unequal access to the media, campaign financing irregularities and the use of state resources to support the PRI candidate made it impossible to speak of, using Elklit and Svensson's words, a 'leveled playing field'.³⁰ Succinctly put, 'there is no way to separate the PRI from the state until the PRI loses, and it seems the PRI cannot lose until it is separated from the state'.³¹

Nonetheless the parties did compete, and thus validated the electoral process. International and national observers oversaw the elections on 21 August 1994. The PRI candidate won with 50.2 per cent, Fernández obtained 26.7 per cent and Cárdenas 17.1 per cent.

TABLE 2
ELECTION RESULTS IN MEXICO BY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Candidate	Political Party	% Votes
Ernesto Zedillo	PRI	50.2%
Diego Fernández	PAN	26.7%
Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas	PRD	17.1%
Total Votes		34,545,199

Notes: PRI = Institutional Revolutionary Party; PAN = National Action Party; PRD = Democratic Revolutionary Party.

DATA AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The electoral data are taken from the Chilean *Registro Electoral*³² and from the Mexican *Instituto Federal Electoral*.³³ Voting precincts are the smallest units of data aggregation in both countries.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTION OF VOTING PRECINCTS IN MEXICO AND CHILE

Country	No. of voting precincts nationally	Average voters at each precinct	Standard deviation of voters by precinct	Max & Min Nos. of voters per precinct
Chile	26,550	275	37	0-347
Mexico	92,566	356	127	0-999

The Mexican electorate is five times larger than Chile's. Mexico is also a country with a lower level of urbanization than Chile. There are also fewer voting precincts in Chile than in Mexico.³⁴ Voting precincts in Chile are comprised of fewer voters than in Mexico. Most Chilean voting precincts were comprised of roughly 275 voters, with a low standard deviation. In Mexico the maximum number of voter per precinct is 750. The average number of voters per precinct in Mexico was almost half of the maximum allowed, with a standard deviation of 127. This is largely due to the number of voting precincts in small rural areas. Our unit of analysis, the voting precinct, then represents a fairly accurate estimate of electoral behaviour by the population of both countries.

WHY COMPARE CHILE AND MEXICO?

Although Chile and Mexico have experienced different political developments, both countries were moving towards democratic consolidation in the

late 1980s. Chile held democratic elections in 1989. Mexico's 1988 elections were the most contested ever in the country. In Chile, the governing *Concertación* occupies the political centre, just as the PRI does in Mexico. Conservatives are the second largest political group in both countries. The left, historically strong in both countries, had gone through some turmoil before the elections in both countries. In Chile in 1993, the Out-of-Concertación left was divided between the Communist and Humanist parties, and in Mexico the left was grouped around the centre-left PRD. The electoral results in 1993 in Chile and 1994 in Mexico were similar in that:

- (1) The incumbent Concertación and PRI candidates won the elections.
- (2) The winners doubled the votes of the first runner up.
- (3) The first runner up was the conservative candidate in Mexico and Chile.
- (4) The left came third in both countries.

ELECTION RESULTS IN CHILE AND MEXICO

The electoral returns in Chile did not vary significantly across voting precincts. For Frei, most precincts tended to cluster around the overall 58 per cent of his national vote. In fact, the distribution of the 26,550 voting precincts in Chile gives Frei a mean of 54.7 per cent, with a standard deviation of 8 per cent. Frei's overall support varied from a minimum of 49 per cent in the 1st senatorial district to a high of 60 per cent in the 11th senatorial district. Despite having doubled the votes of the runner-up, Frei did not achieve more than 82 per cent in any voting precinct. Frei's vote was skewed to the left by -0.943 as a result of his 58 per cent vote. A perfect distribution with a candidate obtaining 50 per cent of the vote would not be skewed. However, if the candidate obtains more than 50 per cent it is highly likely that the distribution of votes will be skewed to the left.³⁵

In the case of Mexico, Zedillo obtained a voting precinct mean of 52 per cent, slightly higher than his 50.2 per cent national vote. Zedillo had a higher standard deviation than Frei, 15.4 per cent. Surprisingly, his distribution was skewed to the right. Because he gathered 50 per cent of the vote, we would have expected his distribution to be less skewed than Frei's. Also, the kurtosis index for Frei's vote was 1.66, much more clustered around the mean than in Zedillo's case. The overall distribution of votes per voting precincts points to a much more homogeneous electorate in Chile than in Mexico.

TABLE 4
BASIC STATISTICS FOR ELECTION WINNERS IN MEXICO AND CHILE

Candidate	Mean vote & (std. deviation)	Degree to which skewed	Kurtosis
Frei	54.7% (8.3)	-0.943 (to the left)	1.66 (clustered around mean)
Zedillo	52.0% (15.4)	0.662 (to the right)	0.59 (less clustered around mean)

Despite Frei's impressive victory, he never obtained more than 82 per cent in any voting precinct. In fact, he only obtained more than 70 per cent in 266 voting precincts (one per cent of the total). Frei surpassed 60 per cent in 7,002 precincts (26 per cent). On the other hand, Frei only obtained less than 20 per cent of the vote in 1.4 per cent of voting precincts nationwide. His level of support was highly homogeneous across voting precincts.

In Mexico, Zedillo obtained more than 60 per cent in 21,602 precincts (24.9 per cent) and more than 70 per cent in a striking 13.3 per cent of all precincts. He also obtained less than 20 per cent in 3.2 per cent, higher than Frei. So, while we observe that in Chile the results from voting precincts clustered around Frei's national average, in Mexico they varied more. That might have some implications on the constant imputations of electoral fraud in that country. A voter might ask how can the national results differ so sharply from what this writer observed locally? The well-recognized tradition of electoral tampering in Mexico before 1994 makes that concern more valid there than in other electoral heterogeneous countries which have historically experienced fraud-free elections.

TABLE 5
ELECTION PRECINCTS WITH HIGH LEVELS OF SUPPORT FOR
ZEDILLO AND FREI

Candidate	% with over 60%	% with over 70%	% with less than 20%
Frei	26%	1%	1.4%
Zedillo	24.9%	13.3%	3.2%

Because it has been the practice of the PRI to stuff ballot boxes with votes for the official candidate, voting precincts with unreasonably high levels of support for the PRI candidate might indicate evidence of ballot box

stuffing. To test that claim, I eliminated all the voting precincts where the PRI obtained more than 70 per cent of the vote and recalculated the electoral results. The overall results do not change significantly. Even if we discard the 7.7 million votes cast in 'irregular precincts' (defined as those precincts where the PRI candidate obtained more than 70 per cent of the vote), the structure of preferences does not change.

TABLE 6

PRESIDENTIAL VOTE IN MEXICO ELIMINATING SOME VOTING PRECINCTS

Candidate	Official Vote Result	Vote Not Counting Where PRI > 70%	Net Difference
Ernesto Zedillo	17,336,352 (48.8%)	13,010,079 (47.1%)	- 1.7%
Diego Fernández	9,222,899 (25.9%)	7,728,876 (29.8%)	+3.9%
C. Cárdenas	5,901,557 (16.6%)	4,995,551 (18.0%)	+1.4%
Total	35,550,283 (100%)	27,802,952 (100%)	7,747,331

Source: Official vote results from Carter Center, 1995.

DISTRIBUTION OF VOTES

The distribution of votes for Frei in Chile was closer to a normal distribution than that for Zedillo in Mexico. The vote distribution for the other candidates in Chile is also more normally distributed than in Mexico. Zedillo's distribution shows an unusual skewedness to the right (higher number of votes). Fernández's distribution is bimodal, with a natural peak around his national average and a second peak closer to 0 per cent. This indicates that Fernández candidacy did not have national presence, there were regions in the country where he obtained very little support. Cárdenas distribution was unimodal, with a peak around 0 per cent, rather than at his national average of 17 per cent. Cárdenas distribution is also highly skewed to the right, indicating that he was able to gather a large number of votes in certain areas, much higher than his national average.

The distribution of votes does not need to resemble a normal curve. We would expect it to resemble a normal curve only when provided that candidates enjoy homogeneous levels of support across the country. In the case of Chile, the level of support for Frei, Alessandri-Piñera and Pizarro-Reitze-Max-Neef was highly similar across all voting precincts. In Mexico, however, the levels of support of the three main candidates varied significantly from region to region. For that reason, Fernández presents a

bimodal distribution and Cárdenas' distribution peaks close to 0, indicating that he had little or no support in a large number of precincts across the country. Zedillo's distribution, on the other hand, presents a robust right tail, indicating that he had high levels of support in many regions. That might also evidence electoral tampering.

When the voting precincts where Zedillo obtained a suspiciously high level of support (all precincts where he gathered more than 70 per cent of the votes) are eliminated, histograms for Zedillo, Fernández and Cárdenas look more like normal distributions. For the 73,803 precincts where Zedillo obtained less than 70 per cent, Zedillo's distribution and Fernández's look much more like a normal distribution. However, Cárdenas' distribution continues to be uni-modal, with the mode being lower than the mean or median. So even when we discount 'irregular precincts' (those where Zedillo obtained more than 70 per cent of the vote), we can still observe heterogeneous levels of support for Fernández and Cárdenas in México, contrary to the rather homogenous vote distribution of all the candidates in Chile.

DIFFERENCES AMONG WINNERS AND LOSERS ACROSS PRECINCTS

In Chile, Frei won the elections in 25,483 voting precincts, (96 per cent). In Mexico, Zedillo won in 80.3 per cent of the precincts. If we assume that people extrapolate what happens at their precincts to the national level, then for 96 per cent of Chile's population, Frei won the elections. He won in their voting precincts and, according to the logic, he must have won in the aggregate national results.

In Chile, 90.2 per cent of all voting precincts placed Frei ahead of the combined votes for the conservative candidates while the combined votes of the leftist candidates came third. The homogeneity of the results throughout the country is striking. Although Frei and Alessandri were the only candidates that clinched voting precincts, Alessandri only won in 1,067 precincts (4 per cent). When we combine the votes of the two conservative candidates, they won in 2,000 precincts (7.8 per cent of the total). Yet, 52 per cent of those precincts were located in districts 21, 22 and 23, the wealthiest districts in Santiago. The combined votes of the three leftist candidates defeated Frei in three precincts only.

In Mexico, Zedillo failed to win in 19.3 per cent of all precincts. Fernández defeated Zedillo in 10,990 precincts (12.7 per cent), and Cárdenas won in 6.7 per cent of all precincts. Only in 56.3 per cent of all precincts did the voters place Zedillo first, Fernández second and Cárdenas

third. This obviously has some implications if we assume that people compare their local results with the national official results and question the validity of the latter, if there are significant discrepancies with what they observe locally. In addition, the history of electoral tampering that marred Mexico's elections in the past makes heterogeneity of preferences a highly suspicious observation.

Cárdenas and the PRD challenged the results and accused the government of electoral fraud.³⁶ Their claim might have found some echo in areas where Cárdenas won (6.7 per cent of all precincts) or where he came second (24.5 per cent of all precincts). Approximately one third of all precincts in the country placed Cárdenas either first or second.

TABLE 7
FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD PLACE FINISHERS IN CHILE AND MEXICO

Combination	Chile	Mexico
Center-Right-Left	23,897 (90.2%)	48,691 (56.3%)
Center-Left-Right	698 (2.6%)	21,054 (24.4%)
Right-Left-Center	11 (0%)	89 (0.1%)
Right-Center-Left	1,952 (7.3%)	10,901 (12.6%)
Left-Center-Right	0	5,592 (6.5%)
Left-Right-Center	0	131 (0.2%)
Total	26,550 (100%)	86,457 (100%)

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

In part, the heterogeneity of results in Mexico can be explained by regional differences in the support for the PRI and opposition parties. According to some, Mexico is a two-party system except in Federal District (DF) where the PAN, PRD and PRI are strong. Elsewhere, the PRI competes with the PAN in the north and some central areas and the PRI competes with the PRD in the south.³⁷

Ernesto Zedillo obtained his lowest average voting precinct support in the Federal District and the states of Sonora, Jalisco and Michoacán. Fernández obtained his highest average support in Jalisco, Querétaro and Yucatán. Cárdenas did best in Chiapas, Tabasco, Michoacán and Guerrero. In DF, Zedillo obtained 43 per cent, Fernández 28 per cent and Cárdenas 20 per cent. Zedillo's average support did not fluctuate significantly across regions. Although he obtained more than 65 per cent in Zacatecas, his showing across states clustered around his national average of 52 per cent.

Standard deviations across states varied notoriously for the three candidates in Mexico. Cárdenas' national voting precinct standard deviation

was 14.5 per cent, Fernández's was 14.8 per cent, Zedillo's 15.4 per cent. However, state-level voting precinct standard deviations varied for the three candidates. Cárdenas had low standard deviations in states where he did poorly, indicating that he did poorly across the state. In states where he performed well, his standard deviation was high – that is the case in Chiapas, Michoacán and Guerrero. Thus, although he had large support in some areas within those states, his support in other parts of those states was much lower.

Fernández de Ceballos presented more homogeneous standard deviations across states, including those where he performed well. For example, in Baja California, he obtained a voting precinct average of 37 per cent and a standard deviation of 9.2 per cent and in the southern state of Yucatán he obtained a voting precinct average of 40 per cent and a standard deviation of 16.5 per cent. Zedillo presents higher variation in standard deviations across states. While in Oaxaca and Chiapas his standard deviation was over 20 per cent, in the Federal District it was only 5.9 per cent. The effect of rural areas, where the PRI does exceptionally well explain Zedillo's high standard deviations in areas other than Mexico City.

When comparing both countries, we see that standard deviations in Chile are lower across the board. The highest standard deviation for Frei occurs in Santiago. That is exactly the opposite of what was observed in Mexico for Zedillo. Regional variations of voting precinct average vote and of standard deviations indicate regional differences in electoral preferences. Higher standard deviations within regions, however, indicate that levels of support for different candidates vary within regions as well. In Chile, the highest intra-regional variation occurs in Santiago, whereas in Mexico, Mexico City results are more homogeneous than anywhere else. Regional differences in Mexico did make a difference. Fernández was stronger in Northern Mexico and Cárdenas in southern Mexico, but they lacked national presence. That explains Cárdenas and Fernández's higher standard deviations nationwide and their bimodal distribution of votes. Zedillo was more homogeneous but he still presented higher levels of support in some states.

SUSPICIOUSLY HIGH LEVELS OF SUPPORT

As noted earlier, Frei was unable to obtain more than 82 per cent in any of the 26,550 precincts in Chile. He obtained more than 70 per cent in one per cent of the voting precincts nationally. Zedillo, on the other hand, obtained more than 70 per cent in 13.3 per cent of the 86,457 precincts for which data

TABLE 8
VOTING PRECINCT AVERAGE BY STATE IN MEXICO, 1994

State	Cauhtemoc Cárdenas		Diego Fernández		Ernesto Zedillo		No. of Precincts
	Average %	Standard Deviation	Average %	Standard Deviation	Average %	Standard Deviation	
1 DF	20	05.7	28	05.4	43	05.9	8,411
2 Puebla	15	10.3	23	14.6	56	16.8	3,209
3 Tlaxcala	16	09.9	23	10.4	56	13.9	881
4 Aguascalientes	09	04.8	37	11.8	48	11.9	760
5 Coahuila	13	11.3	30	13.3	51	13.3	2,090
6 Chihuahua	06	05.3	26	12.3	63	13.5	3,108
7 Durango	09	10.8	24	15.1	56	18.3	1,623
8 Guanajuato	09	09.9	30	14.5	56	13.8	3,882
9 Hidalgo	16	13.0	15	11.3	63	16.5	2,156
10 Queretaro	06	03.9	32	14.4	58	16.6	1,062
11 S. L. Potosí	10	09.4	24	14.3	62	16.8	2,105
12 Zacatecas	09	09.2	20	13.0	51	7.0	1,861
13 Campeche	21	11.3	18	12.9	57	15.4	623
14 Chiapas	34	21.8	12	13.4	48	20.3	2,565
15 Nuevo León	03	03.1	40	14.1	50	13.6	3,198
16 Quintana Roo	13	09.6	29	14.5	54	13.6	587
17 Tabasco	33	14.7	08	07.2	57	13.5	1,589
18 Tamaulipas	19	09.6	27	09.9	49	14.9	2,635
19 Veracruz	24	15.3	16	10.6	54	15.2	6,751
20 Yucatán	03	02.7	40	16.5	55	17.5	1,394
21 Baja Calif. N.	09	05.0	37	09.2	50	07.9	1,946
22 Baja Calif. S.	06	04.5	32	09.0	57	10.8	440
23 Colima	12	08.6	29	11.2	53	10.8	523
24 Jalisco	07	06.6	42	13.7	46	13.0	5,171
25 Michoacán	37	19.2	15	12.4	45	14.9	3,507
26 Nayarit	16	10.3	18	10.7	61	13.7	1,004
27 Sinaloa	13	10.6	29	13.8	54	16.4	3,507
28 Sonora	13	12.6	38	15.9	44	13.0	1,987
29 Guerrero	34	19.0	08	09.1	53	18.8	2,609
30 Edo. México	19	08.0	25	09.3	49	10.7	9,956
31 Morelos	20	08.5	23	08.8	52	10.6	1,383
32 Oaxaca	29	19.7	12	11.4	52	20.1	2,907
Total	17	14.5	25	14.8	52	15.4	85,430

TABLE 9
VOTING PRECINCT AVERAGE BY SENATORIAL DISTRICT IN CHILE

Region	Max Neef / Pizarro / Reitze		Alessandri / Piñera		Eduardo Frei		Total
	Average %	Standard Deviation	Average %	Standard Deviation	Average %	Standard Deviation	
I	11	3.1	34	8.0	49	6.6	715
II	14	3.8	27	5.7	52	5.7	833
III	14	5.7	25	5.7	55	5.0	464
IV	11	3.5	25	6.6	58	6.1	950
V Costa	9	2.9	29	7.2	56	7.2	1,345
V Andes	12	3.8	33	9.5	49	8.2	1,524
RM I	12	4.0	32	13.1	52	11.4	5,264
RM II	11	3.6	27	6.8	57	6.1	4,865
VI	10	4.3	26	5.3	59	6.5	1,406
VII N	9	2.6	25	5.6	60	5.3	1,041
VII S	8	2.4	33	6.0	53	6.4	628
VIII N	13	4.3	25	6.9	56	7.1	2,019
VIII S	10	4.1	27	7.2	57	6.3	1,484
IX N	9	2.9	31	8.1	53	8.7	504
IX S	8	2.6	33	7.8	54	7.3	1,008
X N	9	3.9	30	7.0	55	6.3	1,006
X S	9	2.9	33	7.5	51	7.4	934
XI	9	3.1	34	7.6	52	6.6	193
XII	10	3.4	27	11.0	57	8.9	367
Tota	111	4.0	29	9.2	55	8.32	6,550

was analysed. I decided to make cuts at 70 per cent and 85 per cent as alternative thresholds of normality. All the precincts where Zedillo obtained more than 70 and more 85 per cent of the vote were identified. The states of Zacatecas, Hidalgo and San Luis Potosí concentrated a large number of precincts with suspiciously high levels of support for the PRI. More than 60 per cent of all cases are located in 13 states. Notably absent are the largest states and those with the highest levels of urbanization like the Federal District, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nuevo Leon, Guanajuato and Veracruz. As discussed previously, by striking out those 'irregular precincts', the national results do not vary significantly. Yet, as shown in Table 10, 'irregular precincts' do constitute a significant percentage of the voting population in several states. In Zacatecas they account for approximately 40 per cent of the total. Zacatecas offers the least normal distribution of votes of all states in Mexico. The PRI candidate obtained 60 per cent of the vote there, Fernández gathered 21 per cent and Cárdenas only nine per cent. When all the precincts where Zedillo obtained more than 70 per cent of the votes are

TABLE 10
'IRREGULAR PRECINCTS' BY STATES

State	Number of Precincts with Zedillo > .70	Number of Precincts (Zedillo > 85%)	Total Number of Precincts
Zacatecas	745 (39.6%)	309 (16.4%)	1,883 (100%)
Hidalgo	709 (32.6%)	268 (12.3%)	2,175 (100%)
San Luis Potosí	712 (33.5%)	242 (11.4%)	2,125 (100%)
Durango	845 (27.0%)	159 (9.6%)	1,654 (100%)
Querétaro	268 (25.2%)	99 (9.3%)	1,065 (100%)
Nayarit	205 (20.1%)	84 (8.2%)	1,022 (100%)
Guerrero	481 (18.0%)	194 (7.3%)	2,665 (100%)
Chihuahua	845 (27.0%)	219 (7.0%)	3,129 (100%)
Sinaloa	647 (18.3%)	239 (6.8%)	3,536 (100%)
Puebla	733 (22.7%)	218 (6.7%)	3,231 (100%)
Yucatán	314 (22.2%)	94 (6.6%)	1,415 (100%)
Oaxaca	546 (18.5%)	191 (6.5%)	2,945 (100%)
Chiapas	393 (14.9%)	145 (5.5%)	2,635 (100%)
Other states	4,070 (7.1%)	1,007 (1.8%)	57,120 (100%)
Total	11,513 (13.3%)	3,468 (4.0%)	86,573 (100%)

eliminated, the distribution for the PRI candidate is obviously truncated, but the Fernández distribution resembles more a normal curve.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Comparison of the results in Chile 1993 with those of Mexico 1994 found that the distribution of the votes in Mexico is more heterogeneous than in Chile. A tradition of electoral tampering before 1994 in Mexico, combined with the heterogeneity of the results there might help explain the persistence of fraud charges against the PRI. In addition, because as Przeworski suggests, democracies are systems where parties lose elections, the fact that PRI continued to win the presidential elections might also fuel the accusations against the electoral process in Mexico.

When comparing the results of Mexico and Chile, we find that Chile is much more homogeneous than Mexico, but the DF in Mexico is more homogenous than the rest of the country and than Chile as a whole. Logically, the more presence all candidates have the more likely we are to observe a homogeneous normal distribution in the candidates' votes by voting precincts. Although we should expect high levels of heterogeneity in the Mexican electorate in the future, as the hegemonic control the PRI exercised on Mexican politics decreases, the preferences for the PAN and PRD candidates should become more homogeneous.

NOTES

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 32. The author is grateful to Eduardo Mercader, Eduardo Rodríguez and Sergio Miranda of the University of Chile for helping him obtain the data for the 1993 Chilean elections.
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 34. The election results for District 40 in DF were not available. 443,843 voters cast ballots in 1,000 precincts in that district. Results there were 43.5 per cent for Zedillo, 24.2 per cent for Fernández and 24 per cent for Cárdenas.
 35. All the histograms are available from the author upon request. Please e-mail him at pdn200@is7.nyu.edu
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