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- (H4) Andrés Manuel López Obrador's *caudillismo* cultural attribute prevailed over Felipe Calderón's *caudillismo* cultural attribute in political advertising and television news.
- (H5) Television news coverage of a presidential candidate's platform and personal attributes is similar to coverage those presented in presidential candidates' television advertising.
- (H6) Television news influenced television political advertising during the 2006 presidential election.

These hypotheses were organized to follow McCombs's response to the question: who sets the media agenda? His answer is known as the metaphorical onion of media agenda-setting. McCombs' used an onion as a symbolic comparison between the dynamic of media agenda setting and the onion's layers. There are three fundamental layers of the onion starting from the center. The first layer is news norms; second layer, other news media; and finally the third layer, news sources. In this dissertation each one of those layers are measured. That is, Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 of this study address the "news norms" perspective. Hypothesis 4 discusses "news sources." Hypotheses 5 and 6 focus on "other news media," that is, intermedia agenda-setting across media.

The primary methodology for this study was content analysis that was conducted by American and Mexican researchers who combined their investigative skills in the Mexico 2006 Panel Study led by political science professor Chappell Lawson of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The present research has its groundwork in two sets of content analysis, one for the television newscasts and another for the candidates' television political advertisements. The television newscasts content analysis data set came from a systematic random sample of Televisa's *El Noticiero con Joaquín López Dóriga* that aired from 10:30 to 11:15PM (Central







The final contribution of this research to the agenda setting theory is the innovation of comparing the agenda-setting effect of election news with the agenda-setting effect of nonelection news. In other words, this study looks at the traditional approach to the media agenda setting effect of examining news stories and presents an innovation by measuring the same effect in terms of indirect support to presidential candidates by a comparison between nonelection news and each of the presidential candidate's political platforms. This innovative indirect agenda setting effect is imperative to scrutinize in a society like Mexico where journalism generally suffers censorship and autocensorship. In addition, IFE launched a campaign to monitor the election news reports of Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts. Nevertheless, the indirect support of nonelection news was not monitored by IFE. As a result, television networks had the possibility to intentionally or involuntarily support their favorite candidate via nonelection reporting. The next section explains another critical factor of the presidential election, negative television advertisements, and how this media product affected the electoral process.

### Negative Television Spots

The electoral process is one of the benchmarks by which a democratic society is measured. An evaluation of the 2006 Mexican presidential election helps to describe how Mexico functions as a young democratic society. Voters, scholars, and journalists have called the 2006 presidential election one of the most controversial elections in modern times in Mexico. Negative political campaign advertising by several presidential candidates was often cited as a major problem with the election. The tone of the election was set by political advertisements that disseminated messages of fanatic confrontation between presidential candidates and political spots that were filled with negative attacks against political opponents regardless of whether the accusations

were true or false. The spots rarely focused on the presidential candidates' public issue agenda, but frequently highlighted their personal attributes.

This type of political communication generated a context of confusion and uncertainty for citizens. Never before had the citizens seen a political campaign waged to this extent in the Mexican media. As a consequence, the country became divided, disintegrating into political chaos before and after election day (July 2, 2006). This political polarization was the origin of a very serious postelectoral conflict that did not end with the inauguration of Felipe Calderón as the president of Mexico. On the contrary, the political division continued into Calderón's presidency. The introduction of the negative campaign during the 2006 electoral process came at a high social and political cost for Mexicans and the democratic election process. This research examines the 2006 presidential election intermedia agenda-setting effects among television news and television political advertisement during the campaign period (January 19, 2006 to June 28, 2006).

The fact that in this election the three main presidential candidates devoted enormous amount of their budget to political advertising, especially television spots, raised a number of questions to investigate. This research examines how effective the political advertisements were in setting the media's agenda. In addition, the present research explores the sociology of news in Mexican television networks by examining their news norms and the concept of *caudillismo*. *Caudillo*, the single form for strongmen, should be understood in this research as the public opinion leader. That is, the research analyzed who the strongest political leader in the media was. Typically in Mexico, candidate leadership charisma is more important than loyalty to a particular political party. Voters favor the candidate who possesses a strongman or *caudillo* persona. From

this perspective, this study also sought to discover who received the most coverage among all five presidential candidates.

#### Election Results: The Starting Point of the Post-electoral Controversy

All five candidates campaigned for 161 consecutive days. The official IFE campaign period ran from January 19, 2006 to June 28, 2006. Presidential candidates traveled around the country seeking voters and listening to their concerns. According to IFE, the general voting figures for the 2006 election were that over 71 million were registered voters, and 58.55% (over 41 million) of them cast their ballots. From that number of registered voters, 52% were women and 48% men (IFE, 2006h). The difference between registered voters and voter turnout was 41.44% (over 29 million) (IFE, 2006e). The highest vote came from the voters abroad; the registered voters were 40,876,000, and 81% (33,131) of them went out and voted (IFE, 2006f).

On July 7, 2006, IFE declared Felipe Calderón as the winner with 35.89% (15,000,284 votes) over AMLO who obtained 35.31% (14,756,350 votes). The difference between the PAN and PRD candidates was very small 0.58% (Milenio, 2006). This is the second consecutive time that PAN won the presidential race. Nevertheless, its candidate faced a very serious political crisis, about 15 million voters supported Felipe Calderón, but another 15 million voted against him. This presented a political challenge.

#### PAN's Political Marketing Techniques

Applications of political advertising and political marketing techniques first emerged in election campaigns in Mexico in 2000. Former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari incorporated a political advertising campaign after he was elected, not during the election campaign. Therefore, the first politician to fully incorporate a clear political marketing communication strategy in his campaign was Vicente Fox -PAN. In 2006, fellow party member Felipe Calderón-PAN followed



usually traveled as part of the president committee to events in the interior of Mexico as well as international travels. This action implied that the government paid for all the travel costs of journalists. Fox changed this tradition during his presidency; each media outlet that wished to cover the president's activities in and out of the country had to cover its journalist expenses.

Another interesting illustration was the management of Fox's image as president. During the PRI regimen, the press office of the president was the only authorized agency to provide journalists with video and photograph material of the president. Fox also changed this fact. During his presidency, if a media outlet wished to obtain photos or video of the presidential activities, each one of them should provide its journalists with the equipment necessary to obtain graphics. Fox completely changed the relationship between the media and the political power, as journalist Alejandro Ángeles (2002) wrote in the report *Diarios: La Vida después del PRI* (Newspapers: The Life after PRI). Ángeles noted: "There are no official numbers, but the calculations indicate that PRI governments devoted 500 million of U.S. dollars to buy advertisements in the media" (p. 1). In contrast under Fox, with the transparency law being current, the media was forced to make public its print, sale, circulation, and publicity information, although some media outlets don't have the records. According to Ángeles, the total newspaper circulation is below 1 million copies, but some papers were struggling for survival because of the change of journalist approach. In the new millennium, "The democratic transition [of the 2000 election] left [several media outlets] defenseless in a market where what is important is the reader's credibility as an element to attract advertisers (Pérez Espino, 2002, p. 1).

In contrast, it seems that Calderón did follow Morris's advice regarding news coverage. Overall, the relationship that Calderón had with the media was cool, distant, and sometimes difficult. Journalist Salvador Gacía Soto (2006) wrote in his *El Universal's* column,

During the campaign period several journalists who were covering the PAN candidate complained about feeling pressure and acts of censorship from Max Cortázar [Calderón's press officer] to whom journalists also accused of 'asking their heads' [asking their boss to resign the reporter] of critical reporters or those who did not talk good things about the candidate. (p. 149)

Even on the everyday reporting, Calderón's press officer Max Cortázar's relationship with journalists reflected the ones PRI presidents had with practices such as censorship, threats, and lack of freedom of speech.

Calderón has a shy personality with the press. He follows PRI traditional speaking style that the media does not like and no longer is used to PRI press style. Calderón's attitude toward the press is more similar to the PRI tradition than to the PAN style imposed by Fox. However, Calderón press style according to Mexican scholars Elías Aguilar García and Javier Sánchez Galicia (2003) is not recommended, "Governments do not function as hierarchies. They need legitimacy and agreements. The government who applies a successful communication strategy achieves popular support and accomplishes much more than a government that maintains their society misinformed" (p. 9). Hernández argues that journalism can be defined as the profession of confronting relevant public information that wants to transform reality. Therefore, journalism cannot exist in a society that is determined to be reinforcing the status quo by denying its very nature, because journalism practice is not to manipulate, harm, impost, etc. The aim of journalism is to serve the truth to benefit citizens (Hérendez, 2005). Plurality in the media is a





Table 1: Responders to the question: “If today were the elections, who would you vote for?”

	November	January	February	March	April	May
Madrazo	21%	26%	25%	24%	25%	21%
AMLO	40%	40%	39%	42%	38%	35%
Calderón	33%	35%	34%	32%	34%	39%

Source: *El Universal* responders from November 2005 to May 2006.

month of March, Calderón launched his negative campaign via a television advertisement known as “AMLO is dangerous for Mexico.” In April, *El Universal* reported that AMLO (38%) was still the leader of the presidential race, although his popularity went down by 4% in relation to the previous month; Calderón (34%), and Madrazo (25%) increased their popularity (El Universal, 2006j). Calderón negative campaigning worked out for him almost 2 months after it was launched when *El Universal* polls indicated during the month of May that he was the popular leader of the presidential race. *El Universal* conducted a survey on May 5 to 8, 2006; the results indicated that Calderón increased his popularity obtaining 39%, followed by AMLO 35%, and Madrazo 21% (El Universal, 2006i). Nevertheless, Calderón’s negative campaign was working by mid-May. However, by the end of June, Calderón’s popularity went down, preventing him from obtaining a conformable winning margin percentage on election day. The Calderón vote difference with AMLO was less than 1%. Overall, Roberto Madrazo’s highest popularity was registered in January 2006 (26%) very early in the campaign process. His lowest point was registered before the presidential general election even started in November 2005 (21%) and in May 2006 (21%). AMLO’s highest popularity was reached in March (42%), the same month that PAN’s negative campaigning began. He reached his lowest popularity 2 months

after May (35%). Felipe Calderón registered his highest popularity during the month of May (39%) before the second presidential debate and his lower point in March (32%).

#### Negative Campaigning Effect: What Went Wrong?

It seems that in modern Mexican politics all that matters was media exposure without taking into consideration politicians' leadership and social cost. The effects of the negative campaigning phenomenon in Mexico was unpredictable by many international and national political marketers specialists, especially by Dick Morris whose practices of negative campaigns in other Latin American countries also generated division in society. The consequences of that social behavior, however, had taken more time to build up and show up in society: for example, the case in Argentina of former president Fernando De La Rúa who ruled the country for 2 years (December 10, 1999 to December 21, 2001) instead of 4 years. He contracted Morris to participate in his presidential campaign; Morris recommended a negative campaign, which facilitated De la Rúa victory in 1999. However, the political communication strategy left the country socially divided, which became more evident on his second year of presidency. According to journalist Fernando González (2001) of *El Clarín* (main Argentinean newspaper), De la Rúa's popularity lasted 6 months after a massive victory as candidate for the *Alianza* party; the main characteristic of his presidential period was, according to González, his lack of political leadership: "De la Rúa's resignation did not surprise anybody. On the contrary, the anticipated resignation of the president brought comfort to society" (p. 1). At the time, Argentineans were worried about their severe economic crisis and the confrontation between the national police and a political group of the *Peronismo* political party that caused the death of 25 people and 400 wounded.

In the case of Mexico, the PAN television political advertisement negative campaigning effect was immediately felt by society, even before election day arrived. Why was the negative

campaign effect in Mexico so quick to show up? There are three possible scenarios: (1) the second presidential debate aftermath, (2) IFE slow reaction to stop the presidential candidates' negative campaign in the media as well as the voter-counting software scandal, and (3) President Vicente Fox's public unconditional support to Felipe Calderón. All of those circumstances together created a context of distrust for Mexican voters. An uncertain political context almost automatically leads to a weak democracy situation.

The second presidential debate could be considered as the starting point of Calderón's weakness image. The second presidential debate was scheduled for June 6, 2006. During the national televised debate, AMLO accused Calderón of nepotism in granting governmental contracts when he was Secretary of Energy (2003-2004). AMLO pointed out the case of Calderón's brother-in-law Diego Hildebrando Zavala Gómez del Campo and his business *Hildebrando S.A. de C.V.* that generated an income of 2,500 million of pesos, but did not pay taxes (Hérmendez, 2006a). Calderón denied the accusation, arguing that one of his campaign mottos was *Manos Limpias* (clean hands)—that means that he had not participated in any kind of corruption.

The next day, Diego Zavala told the press that his company was up-to-date in terms of taxes, and that the governmental contracts represented only 16% of his company's income in the case of *Petróleos Mexicanos* (PEMEX) (State oil company). Zavala commented that his company received an income of 20 million of pesos in 2004 (Hérmendez, 2006a), and that 2005 was his company's more lucrative year, making 683 million of pesos of which only 10% were governmental sales (Ramos, 2006a). Nevertheless, the political magazine *Proceso* published that between 2004 and 2005, Zavala's company had a profit of 100% after receiving 10 contracts with PEMEX for the total amount of 130 thousand U.S. dollars (Proceso, 2006d). In less than 48

hours, the war between PRD and PAN presidential candidates over Diego Zavala escalated to the television arena via paid political spots. PRD aired television commercials that revealed the evidence that they possessed against Margarita Zavala's (Calderón's wife) brother, and PAN aired advertising spots to dispute the allegations of corruption, Calderón declared that he had nothing to hide, and that he had never favored his relatives with governmental contracts (Saúl, 2006b).

The most controversial of PRD accusations against Calderón corruption behavior stated that one of Diego Zavala's companies *Metadata* was contracted by IFE to design and implement a voter-counter computer software, which was a violation of the electoral law. Once again, Calderón and his brother-in-law, David Zavala, denied PRD's claim. As a matter of fact, IFE organized a press conference to make the matter clear to voters: IFE council member Marco Antonio Gómez Alcanzar (2006) commented that his institution has not contracted with Diego Zavala or any of his companies (Flores, 2006b). A few days later, a contradictory version became known via a nationally distributed newspaper *La Jornada* that reported that Zavala celebrated 1,700 contracts with the government; one of them was with IFE. The electoral agency requested software that could be capable of locating double registrations, identity fraud in the national voters' registration list. The business deal with IFE was made with Zavala's company Indetix Incorporated and Sagem Défense Sécurité for the amount of 11 million U.S. dollars (La Jornada, 2006b).

Moreover, less than 48 hours before election day, journalist Carmen Aristigui (2006) who hosts one of the highest ratings in morning newscast radio shows at the national level announced on the air that she received a tip from an anonymous source about an intranet webpage. Immediately, she visited the intranet web address <http://200.77.234.173/intranet>. Aristigui found

herself using the *Redes por México* (<http://www.redesporMexico.org.mx>) network that was created on March 24, 2006, by Six Sigma Networks México S.A. de C.V., a technology business that received the *Premio Nacional de Tecnología* (national technology award) in 2004 (La Jornada, 2006b). Once on the *Redes por México* webpage, she entered the username “Hildebrando117” and the password “captura” (Artigues, 2006). Aristegui found that the intranet webpage confirmed PRD’s claims against Calderón. Among other things, the journalist found out that the site had a complete replica of IFE’s registered voters list that any person could be located within seconds, providing the website user with all kinds of voter’s personal information, such as photo, address, age, gender, vote region, and voting location. The journalist made the case that this information was for IFE’s use exclusively and that PAN was violating the electoral law by inappropriately using IFE’s confidential information. Suspiciously, it was just a few minutes after Aristegui’s breaking news went on the air via XEW (a radio station property of Televisa), the intranet website was shutdown.

Immediately after the suspicious interruption, Aristegui began discussing the topic of *Manos Limpias* (Clean Hands) that had been Calderón’s campaign motto. The journalist started the discussion with a direct question to PAN candidate: “Are these the clean hands that cynically Calderón made reference to? Now, we can note the democratic advance of Mexico! No wonder a few days ago Calderón assured that he would win the election by 1.5 million of votes” (Aristegui, 2006, p. 1). At the same time, the Aristegui finding very much hurt Calderón’s image by portraying him and his brother-in-law David Zavala as dishonest. According to a statement made to Univisión by political analyst Alberto Barranco (2006), overall the Hildebrando case harmed PAN candidate “at the very least it has cost Calderón a loss in popularity on polls; a

diminution of this magnitude 2 weeks before election day could be definitive, hard to overcome” (Ramos, 2006a, 8:55).

Furthermore, the Hildebrando case also damaged IFE’s reputation as well. The agency in charge of overseeing the election was strongly questioned. IFE president Luis Carlos Ugalde declared to Univision that its computer system was “bullet proofed”: “The provability of any kind of irregularity on July 2 was zero; there was not a legal reason for any candidate to believe that votes were altered” (Ramos, 2006c, 12:35). Regardless of the second debate aftermath, Calderón had invested a high amount of money on electronic media political spots. It was just like political communication experts advised him under the understanding that a greater number of political advertising leads to victory. How does a political communication campaign so carefully designed end up in the middle of a fraud accusation? If Calderón followed each step of the political marketing recipe to victory, it just does not make sense to commit vote fraud. Nevertheless, why was the PRD vote fraud accusation so strong in society? After many years of being exposed to the idea of negative electoral practices done by PRI to ensure its electoral victory, the thought of vote fraud has always been present in Mexican voters’ minds. As a consequence, it’s very easy for voters to believe that a vote fraud could take place in an electoral process. Furthermore, regardless of popular beliefs on vote fraud, historically the 2006 election was the second occasion that a left-wing presidential candidate openly stated that he was cheated. The first time was in the 1988 election when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas declared that he won the election, but the PRI presidential candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari cheated.

#### The Accusation of Fraud

It is important to remark that the Mexican election is based on the final value of the vote count—that is the candidate who obtains more votes wins the election. In the night of July 2, 2006, IFE

president Luis Carlos Ugalde announced via national television that the preliminary counts indicated no winner, because the voting counts were very close. He encouraged presidential candidates to wait for the final count. Nevertheless, the two major presidential candidates overlooked Ugalde's recommendation. Shortly after IFE's announcement, two presidential candidates declared victory within a time difference of 13 minutes. At the heart of Mexico City's Zócalo Plaza, AMLO announced that he was the election winner, and at PAN's campaign headquarters, Calderón announced that he was the winner.

After a few days, IFE president Luis Carlos Ugalde announced that the full count of votes was ready and that the results indicated that Calderón won the election. Immediately, Andrés Manuel López Obrador rejected IFE's result, claiming that he was robbed of the presidency by fraud. Then, AMLO declared that IFE robbed 3 million votes. Researcher Segio Aguayo (2006) told Univision that AMLO's accusation regarding the voters was because "IFE made a mistake on the night of July 2 [2006] because Ugalde [IFE's president] forgot to declare that at that moment about 8% (about 3 million) votes were left to be counted" (Ramos, 2006c, 25:15). Therefore, the entire controversy regarding those votes was a miscommunication mistake from IFE that cost them a high credibility price under the eyes of Mexican voters, political parties, and presidential candidates. As a consequence of the IFE's confusion, the Electoral Law dictates that the *Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación* (TEPJF) (Electoral Tribunal High Chamber) had to rule on the matter.

Within the next few days, PRD presented 375 legal cases against IFE's overseeing proceedings to TEPJF (Electoral Tribunal High Chamber). AMLO solicitation to TEPJF was a vote recount with the motto *voto por voto* (vote by vote). AMLO and the PRD party argued that they have evidence to prove the electoral vote fraud, such as videos of an unidentified man

stuffing votes into a ballot box (presumably to favor PAN) and evidence of several polling points that had more votes than registered voters. In addition, PRD argued that IFE's computer software skewed the count of voters to favor PAN's candidate. Since early August 2006, tens of thousands of AMLO supporters had been camping out in the center of Mexico City to demand a full vote recount. Protesters camped out on *Reforma*—Mexico's main street—and on Zócalo Plaza for 7 consecutive weeks.

In the middle of a postelectoral fraud scandal, during an academic meeting of 60 Mexican scientists<sup>1</sup> and 1 American, the majority of the scientists argued that in the 2006 election, IFE's statistical results were virtually impossible to generate in such a clean statistical graphic like the one IFE generated. Among them was UNAM researcher with a doctorate in physics Luis Mochán (2006), who declared to the media that IFE preliminary electoral statistics results were full of inconsistencies. He tested the IFE preliminary electoral program known in Spanish by PREP results with the Law of Benford, a statistical distribution that describes the probability of appearance of digits. This law had been previously used to evaluate several electoral processes in other countries, such as Venezuela and the United States. Mochán found that IFE numbers did not follow the Law of Benford distribution, and that the difference between the observed results and the expected results was not the product of chance alone (Mochán, 2006). "The night of the election, the candidate from the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, PAN) argued that he had been above his opponent during the whole process as if this information irrefutably

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<sup>1</sup> Some of them are: Dr. Javier Aguillón Martínez-Instituto de Ingeniería UNAM, Lic. Emiliano Calderón-Facultad de Ciencias UNAM, Dr. Silvia Gómez-El Colegio de México, Dr. Manuel Fernández Guasti-Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Dr. Luis Horacio Gutiérrez-UAM Iztapalapa, Matemático Martín Hardy-Consultor en Sistemas, Ing. Gerardo Horvilleur-Consultor en Sistemas, Dr. Wolf Luis Mochán-Centro de Ciencias Físicas UNAM, Dr. Víctor Romero Rochín, Instituto de Física UNAM, Dr. Gerardo Ruíz-Centro de Ciencias de la Atmósfera UNAM, Dr. Jaime Ruiz García-Instituto de Física-Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, Dr. Víctor Manuel Velasco-



proved his triumph. This argument has been repeated subsequently in the media. The implication is, obviously, false” (Mochán, 2006, p. 1). A separate study using the Law of Benford was conducted at Cornell University by American scholar Walter R. Mebane; his conclusion was similar with Mochán’s. Therefore, Mebane (2006) stated that the vote-by-vote recount was necessary to answer any questions about IFE’s statistical results.

Other scientists implemented other statistical theories to test IFE’s results, UNAM researcher and Doctorate in Physics Víctor Romero Rochín (2006) conducted a separate study using a different statistical test and reached the same conclusion as the previous two scholars. According to Romero Rochín findings, IFE’s PREP statistics had many anomalies, such as the lack of the stabilization of PRD and PAN accumulative percentages along with the unusual sampling system of PREP consisting of 300,000 votes. Romero Rochín affirmed that there was a statistical possibility of data manipulation in IFE’s computer system, because “the evolution of the counted votes has a statistical behavior that is not normal and improbable” (Romero Rochín, 2006, p. 2).

UNAM researcher Miguel de Icaza (2006), who is a doctor in physics, conducted a separate study with the method of basic arithmetic and probability; he concluded that there was a considerable amount of inconsistency in IFE’s data. His results showed a comparison between IFE total amount of registered voters (71 million) against *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geográfica e Informática* (INEGI) registration of population over 18 years old, (63 million), a difference of 8 million people. As a consequence, his question was: Where are the 8 million registered voters without a physical body? He concludes that this fact completely changes the

election results, because those registered voters correspond to persons who do not physically exist. Therefore, the participation level of each *castilla* (voting site) should be lower under the logic that those citizens who do not exist cannot vote. In addition, de Icaza argues that in the event that names had been added to the IFE registration list, the result would be the creation of two citizens' participation indexes: one with the real life citizens and another with the add-on persons without body and face (de Icaza, 2006). The main data difference between IFE and INEGI is their sample of population used to collect their information. In the case of IFE, each citizen voluntarily has to register when he or she reaches 18 years of age. In contrast, INEGI uses a census sampling, a door-by-door population count.

UNAM Mathematics professor Bolívar Huerta (2006) conducted a separate study using the computer software analysis method. He concluded that the vote difference between Calderón and AMLO was what Huerta called the “Hildebrando virus.” The difference between the presidential candidates was about 2 votes per *castilla*; therefore, in order to modify the result, it was necessary to put 21 votes favoring a particular candidate in 10% of the *casillas*. “We are talking about a very small amount of votes that could be easily manipulated from within IFE’s computer system” (Flores, 2006, p. 1). Huerta stated that all computer systems are not 100% secure, they are vulnerable: “The problem is that computer virus cannot be audited, because they are born, grown, and die according with their utility and function [in the software without leaving a trace]” (2006, p. 1). The scientist stated that the vote-by-vote recount would show the same results because the “Hildebrando virus” would become active again.

In contrast, very well known Mexican intellectual writer Carlos Fuentes (2006) commented to Univision that “fraud cannot take place, the institutions can’t allow it” (Ramos, 2006c, 8:56). In addition, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) professor

Javier Aparicio (2006) stated that there was not a cyber fraud in the election, because it is useless to modify the flow of the data, what matters was the total sum of the data (Sarmiento, 2006a, 27:42).

*Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación Ruling*

September 5, 2006, was the deadline for the TEPJF—IFE’s federal electoral tribunal—to rule. Mexico’s highest electoral court backed IFE’s original election result by ruling in favor of Felipe Calderón. In addition, the electoral tribunal ruled that the 2006 elections were legitimate and rejected the challenges presented by the PRD party. Among other things, PRD presented evidence (video) to prove how voters had been illegally introduced or removed from ballot boxes and tallies had been falsified. Moreover, PRD demanded the electoral tribunal to order a vote-by-vote full recount. The left-wing party stated that Vicente Fox’s open support to Calderón broke the electoral law. Fox was considered to be the president of change, a president who had the responsibility to stay neutral during the electoral process. PRD senator Carlos Navarrete (2006) commented in a television interview, “They [PAN] cannot ask us to respect the president [Fox] if he did not behave like such” (Sarmiento, 2006b, 18:43).

PRD condemned PAN’s “AMLO Dangerous for Mexico” negative media campaign against his presidential candidate financially paid by several business firms. The cause of the dirtiness to escalate lays in the long time that legal procedures take as PRI representative at IFE Felipe Solís Acero (2006) told Sergio Sarmiento at his television program *La Entrevista* that:

IFE had the legal faculties to stop the dirty war [negative television advertisements], the problem was the timing. The legal procedures take time, these are not immediately done. In this case the Electoral Tribunal provided IFE with an express course of action to stop the television spots. (26:27).

As a consequence, in many instances the legal procedures became obsolete to prevent society from dividing because by the time a political party received IFE's notification, the political spot was already taken off of the airwaves.

Another of those PRD challenges was the intervention of foreign citizens in the PAN campaign that violates the Mexican constitution. Calderón denied the accusation. However, on November 7, 2005, before the election year, reporter Raúl Tortolero interviewed Dick Morris. During their conversation, Morris described the PAN negative campaign strategy against AMLO from his viewpoint: "The PRD would be a disaster for Mexico, the country would go in the same direction as [Hugo] Chávez and [Fidel] Castro" (p. 1). In short, AMLO is a danger to Mexico. Furthermore, on March 9, 2007, after the election had passed, American political marketer Dick Morris went public about his direct intervention in Calderón's campaign during an international forum held in Miami, Florida. The forum was attended by Mexican legislators, among them former IFE council member Jaime Cárdenas (2007), who told the Mexican press that he considered Morris' confession an unambiguous reason to penalize PAN party for breaking the law (Gil Olmos, 2007a). Article 33 of the constitution prohibits the interference of any foreigner in internal political matters. PRD representative to IFE Horacio Durate (2007) commented to reporters that the Morris revelation is a proof of the violations committed by Calderón during the election campaign of 2006, and Morris' participation showed that the Mexican state was subordinated to foreign interests (Gil Olmos, 2007a).

TEPJF failed to produce an outcome that all presidential candidates, political parties, and voters considered socially reasonable. The highest electoral tribunal, which was founded 10 years ago, had to face the history of fraud and uncertainty that Mexican citizens had been exposed to for many years. According to several law experts, the TEPJF ruling was well

executed. Director of the Law college of the *Universidad Anáhuac del Sur*, Salvador Nava (2006), told the press that the ruling was outstanding, that the tribunal acted according to the evidence that was presented to them in legal writing (Sarmiento, 2006c, 5:00). UNAM juridical researcher Pedro Salazar (2006) explained that tribunals gain people's trust with the logic of explanations that they include in the ruling's fine legal writing. The TEPJF ruling created a final point for the legal procedures. However, the problem was that it did not finalize the postelectoral conflict at the social level.

Why did a segment of the population feel a sort of dissatisfaction with the TEPJF ruling? The answer is that it is a matter of points of views and social belief systems. For scholars who focus on political science, the ruling was acceptable. In contrast, for scholars who focus on social science, the ruling failed to calm down emotions and bring order to the postelectoral chaos. Lawyer Julio Scherer Ibarra (2007) argued that the very nature of the rule was puzzling.

TEPJF's stated a ruling report, not a jurisdictional sentence, meaning in judiciary terms the electoral process was not finalized properly. That is, the type of ruling did not fulfill the requirements that the constitution demands; therefore, Felipe Calderón has no legitimacy to function as president of Mexico. (p. 93)

Journalist Jorge Alcocer (2006) believes that the TEPJF ruling was in accord with the constitution: that the court worked with the evidence presented to them, that if PRD presented its evidence wrong, it's a different matter (Sarmiento, 2006d). Also, political science professor Benito Nacif (2006) argued that the problem arose from how PRD evidence was presented to the tribunal, because the electoral court cannot open the *casillas* (voting sites boxes) that are not part of the legal written evidence presented by PRD; therefore, the vote-by-vote request on the streets was not possible because it was not presented in writing to the tribunal (Sarmiento, 2006e).

As a sign of protest against IFE's electoral tribunal ruling and president-elect Calderón, on November 20, 2006, a mass rally of AMLO supporters congregated at Mexico City's *Zócalo* to elect PRD presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador as Mexico's "legitimate president." The country's alternative president is head of a parallel government. The event was symbolic; it had no constitutional value. He has no executive power. However, for AMLO's supporters who believe he was cheated, the event provided them a psychological hold-up. The López Obrador presidency has its own political agenda that includes the continuation of his peaceful civil resistance movement in opposition to Calderón's government.

During the event, AMLO introduced the collaborators of the legitimate government. Some of them are well-known politicians and intellectuals. A few days after the "legitimate president" came to power, PRD members went public, stating that they intended to disrupt the inauguration ceremony of Felipe Calderón. PRD representatives knew that the December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006, congressional session was crucial for Calderón's rising to power. If the chamber failed to assemble the minimum attendance required by law, the Calderón inauguration had to be canceled and congress had to name an interim president. This is the second time in Mexican history that the Aztec nation has two presidents. Between 1914 and 1915, Mexico had two presidents: Eulalio Gutiérrez Ortiz elected during the Aguascalientes convention and Venustriano Carranza who did not recognize the Aguascalientes agreement and declared himself President of Mexico.

#### PRD vs. PAN: The Failure to Achieve Legislative Agreement

On November 28, 2006, just a few days before Calderón's inauguration ceremony scheduled for December 1, 2006, PRD and PAN deputies were the protagonists of a battle to take control over their chamber's main podium. The war started in the middle of a regular session, in front of several journalists who were present to cover the legislative session. All the conflict was

taped by journalists and later broadcasted nationwide via electronic newscasts and newspapers websites.

That PAN/PRD physical battle begin at about 1:00PM during a regular congressional session when a group of PAN deputies—Nicolás Morales, Francisco Domínguez, and Gregorio Contreras—walked to the front of the chamber blocking the right stairway to the main chamber podium. Those stairs are located in front of the PRD deputy's chamber chairs. At the same time, another group of PAN members located themselves in front of the PRD chamber chairs. PAN legislators were slowly taking over the right side access to the podium. Immediately, PRD deputy Susana Monreal, who was sitting in the main podium at the left-hand side of the speaker, requested him to order PAN legislators to go back to their chairs and clear the area near the podium. The Speaker of the House Jorge Zermeño-PAN did not pay attention to her request and continued the session. Jorge Zermeño's lack of action provoked the battle.

Approximately 15 minutes after Monreal's request, PRD deputy Cuauthémoc Sandoval walked to the front podium to deliver a message to Monreal. He was intercepted by PAN Nicolás Morales who grabbed him by the tie and threw punches all over his body. Both representatives fell down the stairs, and Sandoval was received with kicks by PAN legislators who were standing at the end of the stairs converting the Chamber of Deputies into a wrestling arena. Almost instantly, members of the PAN and PRD deputies jumped out of their chairs and ran to help their fellow members.

At that time, approximately 40 elements of the *Estado Mayor Presidencial* (EMP) (presidential military guard) appeared in the Chamber and began punching PRD deputies violating the constitution. As a result, several deputies were injured during the confrontation. Deputies were angry at Speaker of the House Jorge Zermeño-PAN, because it took him 30

minutes to declare a recess until 9:00PM. According to press, Zermeño's delay to react seemed to be on purpose to give time to EMP to knock down PRD deputies. Zermeño reacted when he received a petition from PRD head of deputies Javier González Garza and PAN head of deputies Héctor Larios to end the session. Representatives of both parties took over the front podium of the Chamber with no intention of not moving until December 2, 2006.

PAN deputy Xavier Maawad (2006) in an interview with the press declared that he was only following orders because at noon, he received the order to take control of the right access to the chamber's podium, since it was a rumor that PRD deputies were planning to take control of the chamber that same day and we had to stop them (Cervantes, 2006b). In the chamber, PAN representatives had signs displaying the message, "No one above the constitution." In response, PRD deputies and senators were holding signs with messages about "electoral fraud," "vote by vote," "no one knows who are they working for," we are preventing Calderón from being sworn into office. Does PAN know that?" (Cervantes, 2006c). PRD legislators as well as their political party wanted the EMP out of the chamber. In a press conference held the same day, PRD general secretary Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo (2006) protested against EMP, "What was the reason that EMP had to be present in Congress when neither the president nor the elected president was present? They had no one to protect" (Díaz, 2006a) According to PRD, the presidential military guard had no business in the Deputies chamber, and they were clearly violating the constitution. In contrast, PAN deputies were celebrating EMP intervention. PRI party president Mariano Palacios stated that both PAN and PRD with their behavior were hurting the dignity of political institutions. PRI would keep its distance because PRI would not contribute to extreme political division (Proal, 2006).



After approximately 8 hours of negotiation, the eight heads of the political parties have agreed on one item only: that was to take the press out of the chamber in an effort to minimize press coverage. The decision was rejected by members of the press who argued that they had nothing to do with the conflict that was provoked by the legislators, not journalists. By 9:44PM, no negotiation was reached between political party heads. PRD vice coordinator Juan N. Guerra (2006) explained that the only possible agreement that could take place is if PAN agrees to change the location of Calderón's inauguration ceremony (Cervantes, 2006c). On the other hand, PAN deputy Manuel Minjarez (2006) affirmed that the change of location is not a solution to the conflict. He explained that in the event of agreeing more than likely, PRD would give notice of appeal to the National Supreme Court demanding Calderón illegitimacy for not being sworn in the legislative palace of San Lázaro where the deputies' Chamber is located (Cervantes, 2006c). PAN senator Santiago Creel went further with his comments to the press by ensuring that no matter what happens, what political price they must pay, Calderón would be sworn in the Chamber (Proceso, 2006b). Deputies and journalists spent the night in the Deputies chamber. Legislators discussed the matter for 3 nights and 4 days. During that period of time, PAN and PRD representatives never left the chamber. A point of agreement between all political party heads regarding the Calderón inauguration ceremony was never reached. Simply, legislators ran out of time.

### The Regression to an Authoritarian Media Regime

On December 1, 2006, about 2 months after Felipe Calderón was declared winner of the 2006 election, his inauguration ceremony was scheduled. Nevertheless, elected president Calderón was the protagonist of an embarrassing inauguration ceremony. During the early hours of the morning of December 1, 2006, most of the PAN and PRD representatives and senators were

situated in the front of the chamber. The two principal doors, located in the back of the chamber, which lead into the chamber, were locked from the inside with a barricade of chairs constructed by PRD representatives. In addition, in the front, the left door, which is located close to the central podium, was also in the possession of the PRD representatives. In contrast, PAN representatives were guarding the right back door located behind the flags very close to the chamber's upper-level podium; but on the other side of that door in the outside of the Chamber, PRD senators constructed a barricade to prevent Felipe Calderón and President Vicente Fox from entering the Chamber. Commanding this front was PRD senator Carlos Navarrete (2006), who spoke over the phone with Calos Loret de Mola, main anchor of Televisa's morning newscast *Primero Noticias*, "Our strategy is [was] to prevent legislators from entering the Chamber to provoke enough assistance at the time when the secretary of the Chamber is [was] taking attendance that will result in the cancellation of the session" (Loret de Mola, 2006a, 8:32). PRD legislators believed that their strategy had possibilities to be successful "because there is [was] an agreement in congress between political parties that the EMP would not interfere in this matter, only the 628 legislators" (Loret de Mola, 2006a, 8:35). Navarrete hoped that the legislative agreement would be honored.

What no one in Mexico could imagine that morning was that the EMP was going to take a role in the PAN/PRD conflict. EMP using military practices took over by force the Chamber of Deputies, violating the Mexican constitution. This action represented an act of oppression; basically, the executive branch captured by force the legislative branch of government. EMP military has permission to carry and use weapons. In minutes, EMP destroyed the barricade that PRD senators had in place, initiating a confrontation with them, overlooking the senators' constitutional juridical protection investiture. PRI senators, Fox, and Calderón used this back

door to access the chamber. The fact that they chose to enter the assembly room from the back, instead of entering in the front with pride and legitimacy like Fox did during his inauguration ceremony, minimized the glamour of the ceremony and clearly showed Calderón's lack of ability to communicate with congress.

EMP members dressed in black suits and red ties, not in their usual military uniform, formed a human wall around Calderón and Fox. In the middle of a complete disorder and lack of respect to both governmental branches, in an express ceremony—about 2:00 minutes long—Calderón swore as President of Mexico. However, such a fast track ceremony had to skip some protocols, such as traditionally the elected president wears the presidential band around his chest at the moment when he swears to serve the country. Nevertheless, Calderón swore without wearing the band. He placed the band on his body afterwards. Also, protocol dictates that the speaker of the chamber is the person in charge of putting the band on the elected president, not the president himself. Fox was ready to place the band on Calderón, clearly breaking the tradition, when someone had to remind him of the protocol; and he passed the band to Zermeño. The event turned out to be a complete political chaos that created an even stronger political polarization.

PAN senator Santiago Creel (2006) declared to *Primero Noticias* in a television interview that the disagreement was a matter of a simple fight: “The confrontation in the Chamber of the Deputies could be understood as the force of reason [PAN] vs. the physical force [PRD]” (Loret de Mola, 2006a, 8:32). On top of the severe questions raised during the postelectoral conflict about the whole electoral process as well as Calderón's victory, the way in which the inauguration ceremony was handled by Fox and Calderón increased the perception of Calderón's lack of political leadership among Mexicans. Far from adopting a conciliatory attitude by

beginning his presidential period by negotiating with opposition parties and bringing calm to the country, Calderón chose to send a verbal and nonverbal treating message to the opposition parties during his inauguration speech. Calderón approached the podium with a body language showing a cynical attitude. President Calderón's first words were: "*Si se puede!, Sí se pudo!*" (We did it!).

For some members of the audience, farther from being a victory phrase, it sounded like Calderón was making fun of PRD representatives and senators on their defeat in the Chamber of Deputies. Once again on the same day, instead of uniting political forces to work for Mexico's advantage, Calderón was causing political polarization. In the past, the inauguration speech was traditionally held at the Chamber of Deputies, but the location of the event had to be changed because of the political turmoil in the Chamber. Calderón delivered his speech in front of an audience that consisted of mainly PAN members, international visitors, and his family. In this setting, Calderón showed a body language that portrayed him a bit more relaxed and happy than in the Chamber. Nevertheless, Felipe Calderón repeated a previous speech at 0:10 AM of December 1, 2006, from *Los Pinos*, broadcasted nationwide in his first message to the nation, Calderón told Mexicans that "December 1 should mark the end of a political conflict and start a new phase of political relationship with the aim of putting national interest before political parties differences" (Calderón, 2006, 0:10). Calderón's inauguration ceremony was witnessed first hand by members of the national and international media as well as several presidents from other countries and international personalities who experienced first hand the Congress' chaotic situation.

The press office of the presidency told the Mexican media to broadcast at 9:40 AM their official program for the event. The *Centro de Producciones de Radio y Televisión de la*

*Presidencia de la República*, a branch of the president's press office, was in charge of the production. A male (Sergio) and female (Diane Pérez) host were constantly telling their audience about congress' peaceful political context, Calderón's "clean hands" anticorruption politician, showing images of Fox's and Calderón cars approaching Congress. At one point, the transmission was interrupted; and without previous announcement, cameras showed a medium shot of Calderón and Fox inside the chamber at the upper main podium. The press office also controlled the sound; only the main microphone was open in an effort to avoid the chamber natural sound of the moment. The other cameras located inside the congress concentrated their shots on PAN legislators clapping for Calderón. Obviously, the office of the president program was a public relations demonstration with the purpose of favoring Calderón's images. However, their information did not correspond to the facts that the media was reporting on moments before their program started.

In terms of the relationship between the media and presidential candidates, each electoral process represents the opportunity for the continuation or change of the current relationship between the current president and the media. One of the strongest questions after Calderón's victory was his plan to relate to the media. The relationship became evident to Mexicans when the office of the press of the president produced the special program to report on Calderón's inauguration ceremony. That is, the relationship between the media and the Calderón presidency followed the same pattern as they did during the PRI presidencies. This means that Calderón did not continue Fox's relationship with the media. Under Calderón's presidency, his press office controls: photo, video image, sound, and website (<http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/en/>). However, the next six years will make evident the level of censorship imposed by the Calderón presidency to the media. One of the most evident differences between the media and PAN

presidents is in terms of their way to explain Mexican reality to the media. Fox's imaginative community *Foxilandía* was created by him in his mind with the marketing technique of constantly repeating the same information over and over about Mexico's situation. In contrast, *Calderolandía* is created by the press office of the president—which operates as a public relations agency—not by the president Calderón himself, imitating PRI presidencies relationship with the media.

Furthermore, on that same date, December 1, 2006, a congregation of 100,000 persons at Zócalo went to the streets to walk with Andrés Manuel López Obrador to Congress in protest of Calderón's inauguration. Very few national media outlets reported on the event, following the president press office's suggestion. However, the international media, such as Univision's journalist Jorge Ramos (2006), presented in his report an interview about how Mexican citizens feel about their national media. For example, Pedro Gómez (2006) a peasant who participated in AMLO protest, commented, "Television does not inform Mexicans; on the contrary they misinform. They [television] do not cover all the events like this one" (Ramos, 2006b, 4:44). Ramos reported that Mexico was a divided country with a new president who was capable of being sworn by force by taking over the congress. But he fulfilled a constitutional obligation. Sadly, Mexican media reputation among its consumers diminished going back six years to the old belief that media only informs what the president and the attorney general office let them report—that is, a censorship of media that was a standard procedure under the PRI presidencies. Nevertheless, some of the very few national media outlets that reported on AMLO's protest march were Proceso, La Jornada, and Televisa.

Once again, the media served as a common ground for politicians to discuss their different points of view. Late at night on December 1, 2006, after 68 hours of political conflict,

Televisa's main news anchor Joaquín López Dóriga hosted and produced a special one-time discussion program *Mesa Cambio de Poderes* with the major political party leaders of both chambers of Congress. As the journalist mentioned in the opening of the show, his purpose was to provide a space for legislators to dialogue for the first time after the confrontation early on that same date. Televisa made history by providing the space for political parties to discuss important national matters. In the past, Televisa operated under a close policy where only the PRI had access to their newscast and their news programming. Each one of the legislators had the opportunity to express his or her viewpoint of recent events.

PAN head in the chamber of deputies Héctor Larios (2006) shared his comments about Calderón's inauguration ceremony; for him, the positive aspect was that Calderón was able to fulfill a constitutional requirement, and the negative for him was the high degree of violence and excess use of force. "The PRD violated the constitution with their behavior in the chamber and the PRI proposal to change location of the event was not useful because the PRD threat persisted wherever the event was going to take place" (López Dóriga, 2006b, 24:18). However, PRD head of the deputies Javier González Garza (2006) replied to Larios that his political party did not break the constitution, that the insulted was his party; all they wanted was a vote recount.

What happened in the chamber was a military occupation by the *Estado Mayor Presidencial* from the executive to the legislative; it was a political failure, because there were legislative agreements on the table to work out a peaceful inauguration ceremony, but PAN rejected it. (López Dóriga, 2006b. 12:32)

González Garza explained that what he and his follower PRD legislators did in the chamber was a pacific protest of an offense situation. PRI head of the deputies Emilio Gamboa Patrón (2006) also believed that the legislative political chaos was the indication of political failure: the

negotiation efforts failed. “It was a violent inauguration that harmed Mexico’s institutions and I hope not to see something like this again. Vicente Fox damaged Mexico, they [PAN] do not understand the political conditions under which Fox is ending his presidency that lead to violence in congress and in the streets ” (López Dóriga, 2006b, 4:45).

The representative of the PAN party in the senate Santiago Creel commented that December 1 is to him the most difficult day of the political calendar of 2006. “The cause of this political dispute is [was] that we [PAN] feel when they [PRD] told the president that he is not legitimate. We cannot longer keep to an offence of the past [post electoral conflict]; we must look forward” (López Dóriga, 2006b, 15:13). The head of the PRD senators Carlos Navarrete (2006) also believed that December 1 represents the highest point of the political crises since July 2 of the same year.

The institutions that maintained Mexico political stability for a long time were destroyed, I see a weak president [Calderón], a president of the minorities, a president questioned by a great number of society members [about his legitimacy] who decided to confuse congress and make his entry act to congress a sort of test which I cannot understand. (López Dóriga, 2006b, 5:52)

PRI head in the Senate Manlio Fablio Beltrones commented that his party participated in the inauguration ceremony to support the electoral tribunal ruling. Nevertheless, to him the ceremony was an act of violence and an unpleasant experience, “It [the ceremony] represented the highest point of the political crisis after July 2, and I believe that we entered a new phase of political crisis” (López Dóriga, 2006b, 9:16). Fablio Beltrones expressed that there were other options to proceed to observe the constitution. He insisted, “Violence was present for a series of dissatisfactions that existed [in relation to the 2006 election process]” (López Dóriga, 2006b,



20:19). On a separate interview, PRI senator Jesús Murillo (2006) declared to the press that all this confrontation could be avoided. This unresolved discord “presented evidence of lack of reasoning, lack of intelligence, lack of political negotiation which indicated that the PRI senators proposal [change of location] was the correct way to avoid this conflict, because it was observing the law” (Loret de Mola, 2006a, 9:00). A violent inauguration ceremony, an unfortunate event, marked the initiation of the Calderón presidency: a president who had experienced difficulties to establish his political leadership in Mexico.

As a result of the inauguration ceremony political chaos, a political advertising campaign in the media was initiated by the federal government. Calderón launched a political advertisement campaign in electronic media to expose himself as the new Mexican president. According to journalist Daniel Lizárraga (2007), Calderón required 39 days and 4 million pesos to make Mexicans believe that he was the new president. He contracted several businesses that specialize in public image, and public opinion surveys to design and produce his political marketing campaign that included several television spots that aired 75 times a day every day on national television networks. The invoice of those communication companies was paid with tax money. The Brazilian company who specializes in audience measurement, IBOPE, reported that from December 1, 2006 to June 24, 2007, the government aired 19,591 political spots in the electronic media (Etcétera, 2007b, p. 1). PRI deputy Emilio Gamboa Patrón (2006) commented in a television interview that Calderón should stop spending money on the mass media to pay for his political spots; he should use those monetary resources for education, health care, and housing that are in social programs to combat poverty (López Doriga 2006a). In addition, from the senate chamber podium, PRD deputy Andrés Lozano (2007) argued that Congress should put requirements and limits to government political advertising, it must stop the punishment and

prize system that operates for the media's coverage of events. Calderón projected for the year 2007 a political advertising expense of 3.7 million pesos (Etcétera, 2007b). Calderón paid no attention to Gamboa Patrón or Lozano's comments by continuing his political advertising campaign until the polls showed a favorable result.

### Purpose of the Study

The political crisis obliges us to take a hard look into the presidential campaign period to find out the political communication dynamic of each presidential candidate that led to a postelectoral day confrontation. This dissertation proposes to measure the intermedia agenda-setting effect between Mexico's main national television networks—Televisa and TV Azteca—and political television advertising that was produced by the three major presidential candidates and their political party. Intermedia agenda-setting effects are understood as the dynamic process in which elite media strongly influence the agenda of other media outlets by suggesting which topics are important to cover (McCombs, 2004). News organizations have a practice of reading, listening, and viewing other media outlets to compare news coverage of events, topics, and breaking news covered by other news organizations. They also gain a sense of validation for their news judgment. There is also the question of the relationship between the news agenda and the political advertising agenda. Who influences whom? Consequently, intermedia agenda-setting seeks to determine which medium garners an elite position among all media.

The research focused on a constructed week sample of two Mexican television newscasts: Televisa's *El Noticiero con Joaquín López Dóriga* that aired from 10:30 to 11:15PM (Central Mexican Time) on Channel 2, and TV Azteca's *Hechos de la Noche* that aired at the same time on Channel 7. Both newscasts were broadcast nationwide from Monday to Friday. In addition, there was a census of all the political spots that the three main presidential candidates aired on

Televisa and TV Azteca during the official IFE campaign period. This data set consisted of a total of 97 television political spots, including Felipe Calderón-PAN (55 political ads), Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO)-PRD (27 political ads), and Roberto Madrazo-PRI (16 political ads).

The research is presented in eight chapters: Chapter 2 presents the literature review of media, democracy, and agenda-setting theory with the purpose of explaining the role of television media and political advertising during the 2006 election. Chapter 3 presents the 2007 electoral reform, which addressed a new role for the media during electoral periods. The problems that arose from the 2006 presidential elections in Mexico led to conflict between political parties, voters, media owners, and political analysts, and illuminated the need for immediate review of the electoral law. Chapter 4 presents an overview of the political communication strategy of several presidential candidates and other key political figures. Chapter 5 features the political communication innovations of the 2006 election, such as the political entertainment of the telenovela *El Privilegio de Mandar*, *Lety*, *la Fea más Bella*, and the comic show *¡Que Madre, tan Padre!*. Chapter 6 presents a brief historical overview of the Electoral Law from 1824 to 2000. In Chapter 7, the content analysis methodology, research questions, and methodology of the data analysis for each of the research questions is presented. Chapter 8 presents the results of the intermedia agenda-setting effects between television news and political advertising; this chapter answered the key question: “Who set the agenda during the 2006 election: news or political advertising?” Chapter 9 presents the discussion and recommendations about the impact of election news, general news, and political advertising during the 2006 election as a case study and in the democratic process.

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

This chapter presents the theoretical connections among the four perspectives that inform this study of the intermedia agenda-setting effect between national television news and television political advertisements during the 2006 Mexican presidential election. The chapter begins with a review of the relationship between political marketing and the globalization phenomenon

stating that the principal tool of the global economic system is advertising. As a consequence, political marketing is the most popular political communication element in the current Mexican political context. The second section discusses media democracy theory of how current media practices shift from being the fourth power in society to the number one power. The third section explores how agenda-setting theory is ideal to measure the political marketing effect because this theory takes into consideration the major characteristics of political marketing, which are public opinion polls, campaign messages, news content, political advertisements, and entertainment politics, among others. The final section presents a brief history of the contemporary television era and its electoral coverage.

### Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-setting theory is ideal to measure political marketing effects because this theory takes into consideration the major characteristics of political marketing, which are public opinion polls, campaign messages, news content, political advertisements, and entertainment politics, among others. Agenda-setting theory is a cognitive theory that considers that the main aim of the media is to inform the public of events that are usually out of their touch. There is little doubt that people rely on these media agendas for information about their social and political environment. McCombs (2004) elaborated, "For nearly all of the concerns on the public agenda, citizens deal with a second-hand reality, a reality that is structured by journalists' reports about these events and situations" (p. 1). Nonetheless, "The media [do] not reflect reality [fully], but select certain aspects for coverage. They cover some stories and ignore others, giving greater attention to some issues rather than to others, and decide how to interpret and frame the issues that they cover" (Perloff, 1998, p. 210). Likewise, Weaver (1982) argued that the press filters and shapes reality the same way that a kaleidoscope filters and shapes light (p. 528).

Every society has numerous public issues and problems to address at any point in time. However, it is impossible for members of a society to act upon or even to acknowledge all of its concerns at once. This raises the question of how particular public issues come to be known and to capture society's attention. Agenda-setting theory serves as a framework to discuss the attention that the media give to public issues at a particular time. The value of this theory is that it addresses how various social sectors, and the media in particular, make known and prioritize public issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

According to McCombs (2004), "Agenda-setting theory evolved from a description and explanation of the influence that mass communication has on public opinion about the issues of the day" (p. xii). As Severin and Tankard (2001) indicated, the media shape what is news on a particular time and date, and thus establish a public issue's priority by the presentation of what is deemed the most important problem that a city, state, or nation is facing. Concomitantly, the absence of coverage is also significant by building a particular silent agenda. Overall, agenda-setting theory works around the idea that the media don't tell people what to think, but instead they do tell the public what to think about (Cohen, 1963). The core of agenda-setting theory establishes that "the media agenda influences the public agenda with the competing causal hypothesis that the public agenda influences the media agenda" (McCombs, 2004, p. 10).

Agenda-setting theory encourages the careful examination of the process whereby public issues are discussed by the media in a specific order of relevance, according to their perceived significance, albeit the order of significance will change over time. McCombs (2004) explains that "for all news media, the repetition of a topic day after day is the most powerful message of all about its importance" (p. 2). It thus becomes useful for this line of research to identify who sets the media's agenda during a particular period of time, such as a presidential campaign.

Intermedia agenda-setting effects are understood as the dynamic process in which elite media strongly influence the agenda of other media outlets by suggesting which topics are important to cover (McCombs, 2004). News organizations have a practice of reading, listening, and viewing other media outlets to compare news coverage of events, topics, and breaking news covered by other news organizations. By comparing news coverage, news organizations ensure comprehensive coverage of important as well as mundane news events. They gain also a sense of validation for their news judgment. Opinion leader media are those outlets that journalists consider of high prestige and use as a source of information. Those opinion leaders' newspapers set a chain reaction in the media system (Noelle-Newman & Mathes, 1987). Consequently, intermedia agenda-setting seeks to determine which media garners an elite position among all media. Breed (1955) investigated why the daily newspapers' content was so similar. His results indicated that small newspapers seek guidance from larger dailies and wire services. Likewise, Dimmick and Coit (1982) pointed out that the leaders of the media industry influence other media outlets news agenda decisions. A key question in the intermedia agenda-setting assessment is, "Who sets the media's agenda?" McCombs (2004) stated that there are three possible answers to this question: first, journalistic news norms; second, other news media outlets; and third, external news sources.

Previous research presents strong evidence of a high degree of homogeneity in the national media agenda. This pattern holds worldwide both in an election and nonelection setting, as indicated in several studies, such as the original Chapel Hill study which presented a mix of nine local and national news media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972); across the Atlantic in Spain where local newspapers and television during a municipal election presented a very similar agenda (López-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, & Lennon, 1998); and in Japan, during an

nonelection setting where two major national newspapers presented a parallel agenda to their readers (Takeshita, 2002). These similarities of agenda do cause a greater effect as Lasorsa (1999) explained: “The more unified the media products are in creating the agenda across the community, the greater we should expect agenda-setting effects to be across the community” (p. 164). Following this logic of agenda-setting effects, as a consequence, the audience should perceive the same list of issues to be their nation’s top priorities.

This selection process of deciding which public issues are most important is how the media agenda develops. Fundamentally, the media act as gatekeepers, presenting a list of topics that they believe are the top priority for citizens. It is those topics that usually receive more coverage over a certain period of time. As Perloff (1998) suggested, "The news [does] not inject viewers with perspectives; [they suggest] that certain issues are more important than others, and people (some more than others) come to accept these interpretations and adjust their political priorities accordingly" (p. 219). This characteristic of the mass media helps shape public impressions and opinions regarding a specific public issue. Lasorsa (1997) defined media agenda-setting as a sociological process (how the media operates) that incorporates a psychological subprocess (how media producers and consumers process information), and this “psychological subprocess needs to be taken into account when trying to explain how the media agenda and the public agenda are created in a society, and how one influences the other” (p. 156).

The dependent variable in intermedia agenda-setting studies is the mass media news agenda (Rogers & Dearing, 1988). First, some research suggested that journalists’ individual political attitudes, values, and opinions play a role in determining the content of their report (Fiegel & Chaffee, 1971; Noelle-Neumann & Mathes, 1987; Snider, 1967; Warner, 1970; White,



1950; Whitlow, 1977). However, Weaver (1982) suggested that the journalists' personal preferences are far from the sole determinants in this process. Other crucial factors that journalists take into account are the degree of conflict; the importance of the event; and the cultural, physical, or psychological proximity with their audience (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Schulz, 1976).

Second, Breed (1955) and Brown (1979) argued that social controls influence the news selection process of the media. Their assumption was particularly accurate for the Mexican television news situation at its beginnings, especially during the 1968 *Tlatelolco* massacre event. During this time, the government censored *Telesistema Mexicano* news content. At the news organization level, there are executive and technical pressures on news editors that could determine the selection of events to cover (Robinson, 1973). Third, other research suggests that those companies and corporations that finance media organizations do affect media news content (Carroll, 1989; Donohew, 1967; Shoemaker, 1987; Warner 1971). Fourth, other studies propose that the media's agenda is set by policy makers and the public (Berkowitz, 1987; Harmon, 1989; Lasorsa & Reese, 1990; Smith, 1979; Soloski, 1987).

The aim of this research is to investigate the interplay between Televisa, TV Azteca, and the presidential candidates' television political advertising throughout the 2006 election. This investigation examines which television outlet or candidate political spot campaign set the media's agenda.

There is evidence of the important role of intermedia agenda-setting in the communication dynamic among newspapers outlets. Gilbert, Eyal, McCombs, and Nicholas (1980) found that a single newspaper in the United States —*The New York Times*— frequently sets the media agenda for other dailies across the nation. This intermedia agenda-setting effect

can also be observed in research on a single issue. Breen (1997) investigated the media treatment of a socially deviant act—child sexual abuse— by members of the Catholic clergy between 1991 and 1995. His research looked at the newspapers’ handling of the clergy in stories not directly connected to the child sexual abuse accusations against former Priest James Porter and Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. His findings indicated a strong intermedia agenda-setting effect of the negative events: “It appears that the media also create a significant slant on news according to their own schema” (Breen, p. 354).

Du (2007) studied international intermedia influence by comparing the media agendas of newspapers across 11 countries. He found evidence of global intermedia influence; his hypothesis was supported in 20 of the 55 sets of comparisons. The highest significant correlation was between Canada and Argentina as well as Argentina and Australia. Nevertheless, Mexico’s media agenda was not associated with any other nation. Furthermore, there also is some evidence of the applicability of this theory in an intercultural context. Flores and McCombs (2007), who explored the intermedia agenda-setting effect between ethnic media outlets—Univision and Telemundo—during the 2004 U.S. presidential election, stated, “Ethnic voters and ethnic media have a particular set of public issues that creates a specific agenda, which is based on their system of beliefs” (p. 363). Their results indicated a strong correlation between the agendas of both television networks. This finding exemplifies Miller and Wanta (1996) proposal that ethnic media could create their own media agenda.

Intermedia agenda-setting effect also can occur in a horizontal connection between different types of media outlets such as print and television. Protess and McCombs (1991) found that the directional influence of elite newspapers’ influence over local newspapers was present. Furthermore, the intermedia agenda-setting effect of elite newspapers affected local television as

well. Reese and Danielian (1989) observed the intermedia agenda-setting effect between *The New York Times* and television newscasts on a single issue, drugs, and found that newspaper influence on television coverage.

During the 1976 U.S. election, a group of communication researchers—Weaver, Graber, McCombs, and Eyal—measured the media (newspapers—*The Valley News*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The News*, and *The Star*—and TV—NBC, CBS, and ABC) agenda-setting effect for a full electoral year in cities in New Hampshire, Indiana, and Illinois. Their findings indicated that “media agenda-setting varies according to the time of the campaign, the kind of news medium being considered, the nature of the issues, and the orientation and characteristics of the voters” (Weaver, 1982, p. 540). In addition, these researchers found that the media agenda was strongly influenced by newspapers and followed by television networks, which in turn significantly influenced the voter’s agenda. This “two-step flow” of communication went from newspapers, to television, to voters.

Noelle-Neumann & Mathes (1987) reported some important additional findings from the Halloran, Elliott, and Murdock (1970) study on how different media outlets covered a protest march against the Vietnam War in London, England. The authors’ results show that two prestige daily British papers—*The Times* and *The Guardian*—set the agenda for the other newspapers. In addition, those newspapers set the attribute agenda (particular aspects of the issue or event) emphasized in subsequent coverage. Furthermore, newspapers also set the newscasts’ (BBC and ITN) agenda: “When television began its coverage of the demonstration, it adapted the ‘image of the event which the press had established beforehand.” (Noelle-Newmann & Mathes, 1987, p. 401).

For many years, researchers have attempted to comprehend the social aspects that shape the media's agenda. Golan (2006) assessed the interplay between *The New York Times* and three national television evening newscasts—ABC, NBC, and CBS—focusing on their international news agenda. His research period was from 1995 to 2000. Although international coverage of all three media outlets came from a limited number (15) of nations, his results indicated that television shaped their international news agenda after the newspaper. The author indicated that perhaps production time could play a role in the intermedia agenda-setting effect by the fact that the newspaper is published in the morning, and the newscasts aired in the evening.

Directional influence of intermedia agenda-setting effects also can be found between the media and political advertisements. Bowers (1977) explored the relationship between political advertisements and election news in the 1976 U.S. election. He compared President Richard Nixon's and Senator George McGovern's political advertisement issue agenda with the newspaper and national TV news agendas. Bowers reported a low correlation for political ads and television news. Bowers stated, "a critical political communication characteristic for ads is that the political candidate has direct control over the content of his/her advertising messages, contrary to news media, where candidates have at best indirect control, hoping that their campaign activities will be reported in the news" (1977, p. 54).

Roberts and McCombs (1994) examined the intermedia agenda-setting effect during the 1990 Texas gubernatorial campaign between a local newspaper—*Austin American Statesman*—and local television news—Austin, Texas affiliates: CBS-KTBC, ABC-KVUE, and NBC-KXAN—and candidates—Republican Clayton Williams and Democrat Ann Richards—political advertisements. Their findings indicated that the impact of televised political advertisements on the television news agenda and newspaper agenda was significant, but stronger on the

newspaper. In this particular case, the claim that political advertisements can set the news agenda made by political marketing consultants was supported by the cross-lagged correlation analysis.

A similar pattern was found during the 1995 Spanish election by López-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, & Lennon (1998), who investigated the correspondence between the news media and political advertisements. This study found that political advertising strongly influenced the agenda of newspapers and television networks in regards to the candidates' attributes. In contrast, McCombs & Min (2006) explored the attribute agenda represented in Democratic candidates' ads (Dan Morales and Tony Sanchez) and media election coverage (one newspaper and four local television newscasts) during the 2002 primary gubernatorial election in Texas. The results indicated that the intermedia agenda-setting effect flows from the newspaper to television newscasts and from the media to political ads. Boyle (2001) examined the intermedia agenda-setting effect between newspapers, television newscasts, and political advertisements during the 1996 U.S. presidential election. His findings suggested that political advertisements influenced the newspaper and television news agendas.

Chang (2007) compared the intermedia agenda-setting effect in two Taiwan presidential elections. His cross-lagged examination of the 1996 and 2004 Taiwan elections point out that the candidate-initiated agenda (press releases, press briefings, speeches, ads, campaign rallies) had a strong influence on the journalist-initiated agenda (*China Times*, *United Daily News*, *Liberty Times*): "The influence of the ad agenda might operate in two ways . . . first, without much awareness, reporters are sensitized to issues discussed in campaign ads. Second, reporters try to present campaign information to readers by covering issues discussed in campaign ads" (Chang, p. 5).

Intermedia agenda-setting effects can also occur between traditional and new media outlets. Lee (2004) studied the intermedia agenda-setting effect between traditional and online newspapers. His results pointed out that traditional newspapers influence online newspapers. Lee, Lancendorfer, and Lee (2005) investigated the flow of communication in the 2000 South Korean election between newspapers and internet bulletin boards. The authors found a reciprocal intermedia agenda-setting effect in issues and candidates' attributes. Lim (2006) examined the causal relationship between the issue agenda of two online newspapers—*Chosun Ilbo* and *JoongAng Ilbo*—and one online wire news service—*Yonhap News Agency*. In print, the *Chosun Ilbo* is the largest newspaper of the country. His results indicated that online newspapers strongly influence the issue agenda for the online wire news service.

In a more recent study on how news media content influences other media products, Sweetser, Golan, and Wanta (2008) examined the 2004 U.S. presidential election (John F. Kerry-D and George W. Bush-R) focusing on the direction of influence between political advertisements, candidates' blogs, and major television news networks. The innovation of this election was that political campaigns introduced blogs into their candidate's Web site: "Campaigns positioned blogs as a direct link to campaign headquarters where supporters or interested parties could find out the most up-to-date information about what was going on with the campaign" (Sweetser et al., p. 200). The authors' cross-lag analyses denote that the television news media strongly influence the candidates' agenda.

Moreover, during this same election Tedesco (2005) studied the influence between newspapers and a presidential candidate's agenda, finding a "two step flow" that started with the Republican presidential candidate's agenda moving over to the newspapers' agenda and then to the Democratic candidate's agenda. In short, the intermedia agenda-setting effect was from

Bush's agenda to dailies to Kerry's agenda. This study confirmed once again the assertion that the U.S. president, government officials, and powerful businesses are strong agenda setters (Gilbert, Eyal, McCombs, & Nicholas, 1980; Wanta, 1991; Wanta & Foote, 1994; Beinhoff, 1995).

The classic intermedia agenda-setting question—Who sets the media agenda?—will be answered in this dissertation research from three different perspectives: News Norms, Other news media, and News-sources. The Other news media section will include the advertising analysis. These perspectives will allow the researcher to analyze in depth the intermedia agenda-setting effects during the 2006 Mexican election. The research project will focus on the two main television networks, Televisa and TV Azteca. The research project has two main goals: first, to contribute to the internationalization of the agenda-setting theory. That is, to expand the observation and measurement of agenda-setting effects beyond the U.S. context. The internationalization of agenda-setting theory will allow us to encounter new political, social, and cultural dynamics that will offer specific and unique situations to study and extend the theory. In this case, this study will analyze the communication dynamics of the 2006 Mexican presidential election. Second, the contribution of the project to the agenda-setting body of research is the opportunity to conduct research on the intermedia relationship among news and advertising. Traditional intermedia studies have focused mainly on news.

In addition, this paper analyzed which one of the presidential candidates was the media's leader, the type of opinion leader called *caudillo*. In Mexican modern politics, a presidential candidate's personal leadership attributes are a fundamental fact to voters because a candidate's charisma is more significant than loyalty to a particular political party. Voters have the tendency

to favor candidates who possess the personal characteristic of strongman/public opinion leader/caudillo.

### Political Marketing as a Global Phenomenon

Globalization is an expansion of capitalism—not only industrial, but mainly financial—that involves consumers, the economy, advertising, and concentration of media ownership (Herman & McChesney, 1996). Obviously, the business/economic component is about establishing economic blocks and standardizing business procedures and criteria to conduct business among countries in order to make commercial exchange easier and faster. Capitalism is a homogenizing practice that encourages a consumer-focused society (Tomlinson, 1991). All of these changes in business dealings are ultimately creating a new type of consumer around the world: the neo-consumer, people who can consume the same things anywhere on the globe. Globalization can be understood as a series of modifications in international economic practice that tend to create a single world market (Berger, 2000). Today's world is experiencing a sort of commercial evangelization through the electronic media. Television is the main instrument of the new “neo-consumer” mentality. The new world citizen is a person who can consume any product produced by the global supermarket (Esteinou Madrid, 2002).

The neoliberal economy has transformed the identity of the Aztec nation. The social focus has shifted from collective to individualistic goals; money is the base for social reward as well as recognition and efficiency as the main human characteristic. The globalization dynamic involves drastic changes in economy, culture, symbolic products, and lifestyle. In terms of politics, the globalization era has demonstrated a tendency to shift political ideology to the right, also known as neoliberalism. According to communication scholar Enrique Sánchez Ruiz (2000), we are living in a time when the neoliberal ideology has transformed everything, all our



social world—economy, culture, politics—into merchandise. For Mexico, the neoliberal economic model marked the end of a paternalist government. The economic practices rapidly change from a national protectionist policy to an open international competition. This change implied less government participation in the economic transitions and the implementation of high technology during the economic transactions. Neoliberal Mexico pretends to homogenize all cultural manifestations, such as food, traditions, music, dance, fashion, and values, among other things (Esteinou Madrid, 2002).

The other key component of globalization is the rise of global media culture. A member of the Frankfurt school, Theodore Adorno (1957), came up with the expression “cultural industry.” He argued that the industrialization of culture is harmful, because the mass production of art lowers its value and destroys elite culture. Adorno believed that a piece of art should be an original in order to retain its magnificence, value, and uniqueness. The term *culture industry* represents a critical position against the massive manufacturing of culture typical of the capitalist system. Like Adorno, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has expressed concern over the cultural industries’ concentration of ownership. For Adorno and UNESCO, cultural merchandise should not subordinate the artist to consumer demands (Sinclair, 2001). UNESCO’s conceptualization of cultural industries is commonly used for policy purposes. Nicolas Garnham (1990) described the term *cultural industries* as referring to “those institutions in our society which employ the characteristic models of production and organization of industrial corporations to produce and disseminate symbols in the form of cultural goods and services, generally, although not exclusively, as commodities” (pp. 155-156). The principal component in cultural industries is cultural distribution, not production (Garnham, 1990). Naturally, if a media corporation is capable of doing both things, the profitability is

maximized (Sinclair, 2001). During the 1980s, two other classifications came into the picture: One defined cultural industries as strong business that tells people what to think (Guback & Varis, 1986); the other emphasizes that cultural industries are one component of society that creates meaning (Sinclair, 1995).

John Sinclair (2001) argues that there needs to be some explanation about what exactly cultural industries are: “If the ‘cultural industries’ are to be clarified, there must be some boundaries drawn between which industries are distinctively ‘cultural’ and which are not, and which cultural forms are distinctively industrialized, and which are not. Perhaps one of the limits could be that the private-owned media product could be classified as ‘mass culture’ and the programming created by state-owned media could be ‘high culture’ (p. 6). From this perspective, Televisa and TV Azteca are profit communication organizations that produce mass culture and mass newscasts. The product of global media culture is considered to be “culture” because it reinforces the formation of collective identities. However, for global media corporations, a cultural symbolic product is nothing more than merchandise, entertainment, and informational commodities that are frequently used to sell the audience to advertisers. Cultural industries have their own marketing systems, such as the star system and the film genres (Breton, 1982).

In the globalized world, the key characteristic of the economic model is to sell a standardized product to all possible consumers around the globe. As a result, advertising is the central instrument of globalization, because it exposes products to potential consumers. Ratings are the principal regulator of media content by mirroring consumers/audience preferences. The key starting point to sell merchandise is through repetitively consumer exposure to the attributes of the product. This practice works well in products such as toothpaste, clothing, toys, cars, perfumes, food, beverages, and other consumable goods.

Under this line of reasoning, a candidate is not looking for voters, but for a place of preference in a market that is interested in buying his or her attributes. As a consequence, a candidate's top priority is to gain advantage over "other political products," not necessarily to expose their political platform. If a candidate presents his/her issue position, it could work in his/her favor, but also to his/her disadvantage; however, if a political candidate presents his/her personal attributes, the candidate puts himself/herself on safer ground. Therefore, political image specialists work to ensure the presidential candidate's hair, clothing, teeth, glasses, even makeup are perfect in order for it to have just the "right look for selling."

With the appropriate political image and a strong political marketing strategy, a candidate is ready to be in demand, to become a "hot commodity" for consumers; in other words, to be very much a candidate in demand by voters. Perhaps, consumers were willing to buy presidential political campaign promises that may or may not materialize in the near future. Sadly, some presidential candidates were "political fictitious products" created by political campaigns' marketing strategies, political advertising, and public opinion polls. Perhaps, a candidate was a chameleon that changed to fit market needs; and in some cases a candidate could also create an individual market depending on his or her media budget. Italian scholar Michelangelo Bovero (2006) stated that the globalization model has shifted politics to the right, to the neoliberal orientation; slowly pushing populism and nationalism out of the picture. He believes that after the turn of the century, the world has been infected by a virus that he calls *Macrocefalia institucional*; an executive head takes over the representative heads that are weak and with less political power. The diffusion of this political pathology is favored by the dissemination of a well-noticed negative phenomenon, the personalization of politics. To him, the electoral process has converted itself into a personal wrestling fight to obtain the ultimate executive position,

which marks a vertical linear model of action. Under this virus, political parties' ideologies and political platforms are not central any more. That is, there is a simplification of two political process that for Bovero means an impoverishment of democratic life.

The shift from a pluralistic tendency into a dual tendency does increase the distance between a political system and civil society and increases voter abstention due to the reduction of options to vote for. Bovero stated that abstention is a central point for any electoral campaign; as if the election result was not in voters' hands, but was in undecided voters. Therefore, election campaigns are oriented to conquer the undecided voters: "If I [candidate] cannot convince voters to vote for me, at the very least I [candidate] will try to persuade voters to avoid voting for my opponent by presenting him as a major threat" (Bovero, 2006, p. 1). The Italian scholar commented that the voters who react to this type of political game are usually uneducated voters, those who possess less of a democratic culture. Bovero identified the 2000 election in the United States as the starting point of a new type of electoral process whose key characteristics are: very close results among major candidates, controversy, and a strongly questioned electoral process. In the case of Latin America, Bovero suggested that it should shift from presidential government to a parliamentary type of government.

The effect of globalization in Latin America would be unlike any around the world (Appadurai, 1996). The colonial world incorporated social change with the purpose of establishing a new system of beliefs with the rationale of erasing the old system. Abu-Lugohd (1989) suggested that there was a significant social system already in place prior to 1495. In the case of Mexico, his observation is correct. Aztecs, Olmecs, Mayans, Zapotec, and all other indigenous people already had a social, economic, religious, and labor system in place previous to Christopher Columbus' "discovery" of the New Indias and Hernán Cortes' conquest. When

the conquest happened and the colonial period began, a new territory was added to the Spanish Empire. For a few years, Mexican Indians openly resisted the new rules; but slowly by a matter of force, protection, or survival, both cultures blended together. The Spaniards were not able to completely erase the old system of beliefs. Instead, the resistance became invisible to European eyes, but was still very much alive. As Joseph Straubhaar (2002) explained, “Although colonial conquest provided a dramatic cataclysmic rupture of cultural patterns, it also becomes apparent that in most places much continuity was also maintained” (p. 9). In Mexico, most of the cultural continuity of the Indians’ cultural life was usually kept underground.

Perhaps the moment that marked the shift from public to underground was when the Indian people first saw the Virgin of Guadalupe. There are many legends circulating about how she came to be Mexico’s and Latin America’s patron. One of them points out that an Indian named Juan Diego spoke with her several times. The Virgin asked him to go see the Bishop Fray Juan de Zumárraga to let him know that she wanted a church built on the *Tepeyac* hill. The bishop did not believe the Indian and asked for proof. The Virgin told Diego to pick up all the roses that he could accommodate in his *guipil* (clothes) and release them in front of the Bishop. On December 12, 1531, 10 years after the conquest, Diego followed her instructions; and when he released the roses, the Virgin’s image appeared painted on his clothes. *Basilica de Guadalupe* church was built in Mexico City. Inside the church, her image on the piece of fabric is still on display.

The other legend speculates that the Virgin of Guadalupe came from Cáceres, Spain. The Spanish virgin has been venerated since the year 580. In this piece of art made from wood, she wears a very typical Spanish triangular dress and a gold crown; and is holding a little boy with her left arm and a gold rod on her right hand. The virgin was donated to the city by Pope

Gregory the Great to Bishop Leander of Sevilla. This virgin was very popular during Columbus' time; apparently, Columbus had a replica with him, like other conquistadores did. The legend established that the virgin was found by a group of Indian craftsman, but it was damaged. This group of Indians repaired the virgin and changed a few things along the way. The Virgen de Guadalupe who appeared in Mexico was not black, but brown. Her facial features are Indian-like. Her veil has a constellation that appears only on December 12. Her dress is full of *náhuatl* writing symbols, and a purple ribbon rounds her stomach that the Mexican Indian women used as a sign of pregnancy. She is surrounded by sunshine (the sun being a major Indian god), and she is standing over the moon. When one of the craftsmen presented the virgin, he called it "*coatlallope*," which means "the one who steps on a snake"; but the Europeans overheard Guadalupe—a name that was already familiar to them. This virgin signified the unity of both worlds, the central common point for both cultures.

Some Indian spiritual leaders explained that the Indian religious belief system is full of animal and flower representations. The roses that serve as an offering are the ones that mark the Indian goddess that is being honored. This is a perfect Mexican example of religious hybridization (García Canclini, 1995). As a result of two opposite cultural forces facing each other, a new cultural hybrid was created. Therefore, Mexico is in many aspects a hybrid nation. Religion arrangements [such as the Virgin of Guadalupe] are the basis for a precise and quick cultural change (Straubhaar, 2002b). After the Virgin of Guadalupe was integrated into colonial life, the conflicts between the Spanish and Indians diminished. "Most influential in many cases were new forms of religion, key aspects of cultural hybridization in many places, often specially referred to as religious synchronization between imported religions, like Christianly and local beliefs" (Straubhaar 2002b, p. 8). In other words, colonization reconstructed or constructed

indigenous identities beginning to circulate “global” patterns, glocalization (Robertson, 1995), such as the Virgin of Guadalupe. For example, this virgin was very important in Emilio Azcárraga’s life. As a matter of fact, his ashes were deposited in the Basilica’s mausoleum. Therefore, all the movies, television, and radio programs produced by Televisa or Churubusco film studios only represented Catholic religious traditions with special concentration on the Virgin of Guadalupe. In addition, whenever a television or radio character asked the Virgin for help, no matter what the request, most came true. Furthermore, every year on December 12, at 5:00 am, a group of artists and celebrities sing the Happy Birthday song to the Virgin. This event is still being televised nationwide by Televisa every year. This constant presence of the virgin in the media reinforced the virgin’s global pattern status that was established in the colonial period among Latin American countries.

In addition, the concentration of economic power in the United States is mostly in the hands of large organizations or corporations; while in Mexico and other Latin American countries, such a concentration is usually controlled by individuals (either by themselves or organized in closely knit groups, generally comprising members of a reduced elite only) (Rota & Galvan, 1987, p. 235). Conceptual dependency is even worse than the material one, even though such a form of dependency is probably a distinctive characteristic of the global state of dependency and of the Latin American condition as satellites or peripheral countries in relation to the structure of world power and domination (Rota & Galvan, p. 236). Mexican sociologist Pablo González Casanova (1963) has called this “internal colonialism.” This form of colonialism (conceived as the domination by a *cacique*—a local political boss or tyrant—over the rest of the population, helps to explain the gradual cultural impoverishment of the rural dwellers. This, in turn, makes their potential participation in modern technological activities an even more difficult

and alien enterprise compared to their participation if internal colonialism and other forms of oppression were absent. The political power is shifting from the elected governments to the global capital leadership (FIP, 2002). The globalization tendency is to change everything into merchandise, perhaps including presidential candidates: Can a candidate's campaign be more centered in political marketing than in political communication strategy? In any case, the consequences are the same: a high dependency on political advertisements. Mexico has slowly adopted the American electoral model, reaching its peak in the 2000 election. The elements of the American electoral model adopted by the Aztec nation are: (1) the debates; (2) the interpretation of politicians as celebrities—an individualist/personal attributes approach instead of public issue-oriented; (3) the political advertisement, in electronic media with the spot as the primary element of the political campaign; (4) political marketers—who are foreign to the political science field—are the persons designing political campaign strategies.

#### Political Advertising and Voter Turnout

Currently in Mexico, there is a national tendency to believe that the higher the financial investment candidates devote to their media campaign strategy, the easier it is for them to achieve election victory and voters' legitimacy. However, larger quantities of political spots in the media do not necessarily result in a higher turnout, according to communication scholar Raúl Trejo Delabre (2001) in his book *Mediocracia Sin Mediaciones*. He affirmed that political actors have found it easier to contract media spots than to devote themselves to develop proselytism activities. "In the Mexican electoral campaigns more media exposure does not necessarily signify higher voter turnout" (Trejo Delabre, p. 7).

In the book, Trejo Delabre presents data regarding politicians and media exposure of the past five presidential elections. During the 1988 election—Carlos Salinas de Gortari-PRI,



Manuel Clouthier-PAN, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas-*Frente Democrático Nacional*— Trejo Delabre conducted research on how Mexico's national newspapers covered the election. His results indicated that PRI received almost 55%, *Frente Democrático* 17.4%, and PAN 12.3% of the coverage; nevertheless, on election day each party obtained the following voter turnout: PRI 51%, *Frente Democrático* 27.6%, and PAN 16.8% (Trejo Delabre). That is, in the case of PRI, the party received 4% fewer voters' turnout than the amount of coverage received by newspapers. In contrast, *Frente Democrático* and PAN, who used less media exposure than PRI, obtained a higher voter turnout. The *Frente Democrático* obtained a 10.2% higher voter turnout than their newspaper coverage percentage, and PAN received 4.5% higher voter turnout than its newspaper coverage. Therefore, in the 1988 election, a higher amount of media exposure did not necessarily produce higher amounts of voter turnout. Nevertheless, television election coverage directly favored the PRI candidate with 92%, and left the other candidates almost invisible, with *Frente Democrático* 4% and PAN 3.5% (Trejo Delabre).

In the 1994 election—Ernesto Zedillo-PRI, Diego Fernández de Cevallos-PAN, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas-PRD—the television national media followed the same pattern as they did in the previous election. As tradition dictated, PRI gained the higher coverage in the Mexican media: national television 32%, radio 34%, and press 42%. The PRI voter turnout was 50.18% (Trejo Delabre, 2001). Even though PRI television and press coverage decreased from the previous election, the voter turnout stayed almost the same. In contrast, PAN increased its presence in television, but decreased in press coverage from the previous election. PAN gained national television coverage 17%, radio 19%, and press 12.3% (Trejo Delabre). PAN voter turnout was 26.7%, a 9.9% increase in relation to the previous election. PRD received 19% of the television news coverage, 23% in radio, and 21.3% in press (Trejo Delabre). In comparison with

the previous election, PRD increased in television news coverage by 15% and in press by 3.9%. In terms of voter turnout, PRD obtained 17% of voters, which represents a 10.6% decrease in relation to the 1988 election (IFE, 1994).

In the 2000 election—Francisco Labastida-PRI, Vicente Fox-PAN, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas-PRD—almost the same media/voter turnout pattern was observed as in the previous election. That is, more media coverage does not necessarily translate into a higher voter turnout. PRI gained 40% of radio and television news coverage, PAN gained 27.4%, and PRD 20.1%. However, on television alone, the PAN candidate had a bit (2.6%) more coverage (30.7%) than the PRI candidate (28.1%) and PRD (23%). (Trejo Delabre, 2001). In comparison with the voter turnout, Fox had 42.5%, Labastida 36.1%, and Cárdenas 17% (IFE, 2000). This means that Fox who won the election got a voter turnout percentage higher than the news television coverage. This result reinforces the statement that more exposure in the media does not necessarily result in higher voter turnout.

In a separate study, sociologist Luis Emilio Giménez Cacho (2005) presented the analysis of the budget increase that political parties have designated to the purchase of political advertising in television alone. The analysis focused on the three major political parties: PRI, PAN, and PRD. PRI devoted 14.6% in 1994, 59.4% in 1996, and 63.5% in 2000; the highest increase was 44.8% in 1997. That year was also the peak (29.2%) of political advertising expenses in television for PAN: 30.2% in 1994, 59.4% in 1997, and 63.5% in 2000. PRD presented the same tendency that PRI and PAN did in 1997 by elevating their television expenses by 42%, in 1994, 43.2% in 1997, and 41.7% in 2000. The 1997 election was not a presidential election, but included several state, municipal, and state congress elections.

Nevertheless, this election changed the election dynamic drastically, because major political parties significantly increased their television political spot purchases.

In addition, Manuel Alejandro Guerrero (2000) stated that according to IFE, during the 1988 election the television and radio news coverage devoted 83.1% of their time to PRI, 3.1% to PAN, and 1.6% to PRD, although the opposition parties registered 50% of the votes cast. In the 1994 election, those numbers changed dramatically— 41% to PRI, 18.7% to PRD, and 17.8% to PAN. PRI news coverage decreased by 42%. In contrast, PAN and PRD coverage increased up to a point that PRD became the second most covered political party during the election, rising up from the third spot in the previous election.

This pattern continued during the 2006 election according to economist Luis Pazos (2007), who explained that in order to achieve electoral victory, a candidate perhaps should have a large media advertisement budget, but the candidate's personality and the content of his or her propaganda material are factors that determine a victory or defeat. "Calderón was the candidate who spent the smallest amount of money and won the election" (Pazos, p. 1).

Nevertheless, in order for elections to be resolved in the media, the media itself needs to be the number one source of information for voters, but it is not. Director of the *Reforma* survey division Alejandro Moreno (2003) found that family and friends are the number one source of information among Mexican voters. Moreover, the media lacks credibility among voters. According to his polling results, "One-fifth of the electorate gets their political information from television, but they do not believe what they see or hear" (Moreno, p. 196). The lack of credibility that a media outlet could have does weaken its social leadership in the country and its influence over voters. Nevertheless, political marketers use the media for its fast turnaround results in the public opinion polls. Perhaps the question is not so much about how much Mexican

voters trust national television newscasts, or if their use of television newscasts is their primary source of information. At this point, if political advertising works, it is because the commercial media have accomplished their purpose for persuasion and understanding. As a consequence, voters do accept television spots as true advertisements.

Journalism books characterize media outlets as telling stories about society and what is important to society members. However, media became protagonists during the electoral process. During the presidential campaign periods, it was clear for scholars Laura Islas Reyes and Luis Miguel Carriedo (2006) how television networks indirectly and directly favor a particular presidential candidate, because the networks play a protagonist role in the electoral process. From their point of view, Televisa supported PAN candidate Calderón, and TV Azteca supported AMLO.

Raúl Trejo Delabre (2007) argued that politicians have stopped making politics by assuming that the mass media is their only possible space to expose their campaigns to voters. In his view, the quest for voters has shifted into the quest for ratings, replacing citizens with viewers. The marketing domination over politics alone, with the replacement of ideas for images, is the main characteristic of today's politics dynamics. Politicians should be careful about media overexposure because sometimes citizens do not like it (Trejo Delabre, 2007b, p. 1). He has a point: Voters could eventually become tired of the political advertisements and vote for another candidate who did not bother them as much during their favorite shows.

Political analyst Oscar Casillas (2006) argued that the media are not the only ones responsible to construct democracy in a society. The media is an important component, but only an element. Moreover, a nation cannot construct a strong democracy without the media and journalists who have the civic responsibility of keeping voters informed. Media and journalists

must establish the relevance of the electoral process, provide information to voters, and provide additional information for those voters who have already made their minds up about candidates in order to support the construction of a strong democracy. Nevertheless, the media election content must incorporate diverse voices on political ideology as well as political preference, diverse viewpoints, and news topic perspectives. Casillas suggested an additional ingredient to the journalistic mix that should be present in any electoral coverage: plurality. “Plurality constructs a counterweight process of information . . . oblige journalists to elevate their quality of news gathering, news writing, and transition [dissemination] of newsworthy events” (Casillas, p. 54).

Communication scholar Jorge Calles Santillana (2003) stated that candidates’ political campaigns are doing a poor job in presenting proposals to resolve social problems. The arrival of political marketing in Mexican politics had made political parties and candidates pay more attention to communication strategies than to politics itself. For Calles, politics as a social practice has lost its aim because the two factors that rule elections in Mexico are electoral preferences and political marketing. Political campaigns during the 2003 election “were conducted over the idea that what is important is to obtain the [political] power, not what is possible to construct through the power positions” (p. 173).

If negative campaigns continue showing no civic attitude to voters, Mexico could not achieve democracy, because without civility there is no democracy, wrote journalist Alejandro Pérez Utera (2006). The lack of credibility would eventually generate uncertainty in voters’ minds. The 2006 election could be summed up in one question: Could AMLO win or not win the presidency? The function of political marketing is not understood fully, stated Alvaro de Gasperín Sampieri and Armando Torres Rodríguez (1999), because it is creating in public

opinion a false image regarding social problems, opening a window of empty ideology and political proposals to answer those public issues that required an urgent response. Instead of bringing citizens close to the country's political-electoral reality, political marketing constructs the idea of a reality that has nothing to do with a citizen/voter (De Gasperín Sampieri & Torres Rodríguez).

Xavier Ávila Guzmán (2002) agreed with the idea that political marketing is only one component of political communication; the current erroneous notion of political marketing is pushing political communication's core value "strategy" to second place. According to Ávila Guzmán, political marketing is often confused with the aim of political communication. Political communication serves to create agreements that aid a country in its political advancement. Politics has lost its center, said Carlos Ossa (2001), who accepted as true the idea that politics dies in the media, because it allows the media to interrupt their constructive labor of argumentation.

Political marketing does not work in third-world countries because of its limitations, commented *Universidad de las Américas at Puebla* (UDLA) professor José Cisneros Espinoza (2003). He explained that the first limitation is its distance from social obligations. When political marketing management is legitimate, it generates at the starting point *violence* and at the ending point *misery*. "Political marketing deals with a client without questioning its social objectives; it is just like any company dedicated to profit. Simply, the immediate profit is change with voters' turnout or the political image agreement of the sponsor [candidate]" (Cisneros Espinoza, 2003, p. 80). In other words, the public issues agenda and political ideology of the candidate are not significant for political marketers. The second limitation is the inhibition of civic participation, because for political marketers audiences are receptors of a persuasive

message that directs them to have favorable opinions about the candidate/sponsor and favorable voter turnout. The audience/voters are not viewed as a component of an interactive relationship. Cisneros Espinoza believes that this type of political communication model works in a linear line from the emission/sponsor/candidate down to the receptor/audience/voter. This is just like a hegemonic process (Gramsci, 1985) where the information and system of belief flow from the elite members of society to the disadvantaged citizens who are used to this type of linear communication flow. Nevertheless, political stability requires a constant interaction between politicians and citizens, continuing communication to achieve agreements and maintain a democratic country.

In addition, negative political campaigning does not work in Mexico. According to communication scholar Juan Francisco Escobedo (2006a),

Governmental communication cannot be reduced to a run against time and political adversaries to win public opinion acceptance; governmental communication is not a matter of money or press control. Political communication is a symbolic cultural battle, an act of persuasion, establishment of a series of identity references, generation of legitimacy and generation of social capital. (p. 3)

Political communication is about creating a context of acceptance, trust, respect, legality, freedom of speech, and democracy.

Political marketing is only one aspect of political communication, but in Mexico some politicians believe that political marketing poses the same meaning as political communication. Scholar Javier Sánchez Galicia (2003) argued that to achieve success in electoral campaigns, it is fundamental to think, decide, act, and communicate because political and communication

strategies are fundamental to win an election; but not everybody perceived political communication relevance in the same way because political marketing is currently dominating the spectrum in Mexico. For Sánchez Galicia, the frequent electoral campaign errors are the following: (1) Lack of organization—usually the candidate decides on the people who would collaborate based on reasons other than their personal capacity for the position. Usually, there is not a detailed task list for each staff member. (2) Lack of campaign strategy—on some occasions, the campaign strategy does exist, but only a few staff members are familiar with the information; some other times, it does not exist at all. As a result, staff members (and sometimes candidates) do not have a clear objective to follow, and this gap in knowledge is also reflected in voters' minds when at the end of the campaign period the voters are not able to recall what the election was about, or what were the five main public issues discussed. (3) Lack of effective political communication—usually the campaign exposes the public issues that the candidate wants to talk about, but not the public issues that the voter wants to be resolved. Many political candidates believe that their first objective is advertising, not a political communication strategy. Candidates pay more attention to opponents' comments than promoting their own issues' agenda to voters.

Sánchez Galicia (2003) believed that each country should develop a political communication model according to its own political culture characteristics. Therefore, for Mexico, he proposes the “Public Communication Model” that consists of several key concepts, such as political marketing is a tool, a political image should incorporate elements of emotion and reasoning, the central theme of the campaign which constitutes the reason to vote for a particular candidate should be repeated in every message that the candidate sends to voters everywhere in meetings, interviews, political advertisements, and webpages, among others.



Furthermore, Gabino Vázquez Robles (1998) proposed the pluralistic model—another political communication model for Mexico—that consisted of changing the role of the voter by suggesting that voters could convert themselves in the emergence of a political message and directly collaborate in the discussion (cited by Sánchez Galicia, p. 23, 2003). It is important to identify the reasons why political marketing and negative campaigning do not work in Mexico in order to create a new political communication model that works well in the Aztec nation.

Former IFE general director, Arturo Núñez, commented that the mass media is the top priority for any electoral campaign in Mexico (Loera, 2005, p. 6). “There is not another way!,” said political researcher Leo Zuckermann in a country with such an expansive territory and 70 million potential voters; the election’s victory is gained in the media (Avizu, 2006a, p. 1). José Cisneros Espinoza (2003) observed that all political candidates must have the service of a political marketer adviser because today’s election campaigns around the world have the tendency to follow the American electoral format. David Shirk (2005) argued that in Mexico, “mass media—and the money that buys airtime and short attention spans—is clearly one of the most important driving forces in modern democracy” (p. 236).

Alberto Pérez Obeso and Gladys Martínez Fombona (2003) believed that it is important to understand the function of public opinion polls as statistical measurement tools to provide information, but they are not by any means a prediction instrument, especially when people are basing their decisions on just one poll. Aimée Vega (2003) stated results of surveys and public opinion polls elaborate the candidates’ and mass media owners’ interests. Mexico has also relegated classic political responsibilities from political institutions to the television media and the elaboration of surveys and public opinion polls are put down to a candidate’s interest. Journalist Carlos Tello Díaz (2006) stated that public opinion polls do mark the character of the

election, but at the same time they do not guarantee anything; they could be wrong (p. 1). In Mexico, public opinion polls have experienced some problems because people are not used to this type of instrument. Some of the difficulties are: (1) people are not used to speak their minds; instead, interviewers would answer survey questions according to who is asking the questions. In 1999, Gallup pollsters were instructed to wear an identification label and were required not to wear any combination of colors that might suggest support or affiliation to a certain political party (Domínguez & McCann, 1996, p. 227). For example, if the person who is conducting the survey identifies her/himself as a PRI representative, then all the answers will favor PRI. That is, people are afraid of talking. (2) Mexicans do not like to be interviewed at home, only on the streets. (3) “One difficulty is a basic distrust of the political system. In the past, some people were reluctant to answer questions, lest there be official reprisal against those who criticized the government” (Grayson, 2000, p. 65). Furthermore, scholar Cuauhtémoc Arista (2006) observed that surveys are a necessary instrument to find out to what extent the televised monologue has modified people’s options; that is, to convert campaign audiences into an element compatible with the electoral campaign strategies. Politics as an object to be consumed (“Consumers of Democracy”) is how Ramón Guillermo Aveledo (1999) labeled the current political marketing phenomenon. He affirmed that politics is no longer a citizen’s product. Because voters/audiences receive/are exposed to politics, they make choices among politicians who are presented in the media; voters no longer create politics. From his viewpoint, society is shifting from a democracy based on words and ideas to a democracy based on images.

It seems as if political marketers are under the impression that the audience will be persuaded to vote for a particular candidate by exposing the nominee as many times as they can in the media via political advertisements. However, the reality is that voters understand the

content of political advertisement according to their own personal filters—experience, system of beliefs, political ideology, family. Political advertisements do not function as a great persuasive power or fulfil the assumption that voters are tremendously susceptible to political spots. Those theories—the bullet theory (Schramm, 1971; and the hypodermic needle theory (Berlo, 1960)—that describe the great power of the media on audiences are part of the past. Other theories—social constructivist (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989)—suggest that audiences are selective in their interpretation/readings of media messages; a communication message does not produce the same effect on all members of an audience.

### *Videocracia and Mediocracia*

Currently, in Mexico, political life is centered in the media and not in society as it used to be in the past during the PRI era. The frequent use of political marketing along with the new relationship between the government and the media has captured the attention of Mexican intellectuals. Writer Carlos Fuentes (2006) wrote, “In other times [71 years of PRI ruling], commercial television was a soldier of the government, but this time, the government is the soldier of the networks” (p. 1). That is, during the PRI era, the government dictated media programming and content; now the media function the other way around, with the media dictating politics. Communication scholar Javier Esteinou Madrid named Fox’s political communication strategy *telecracia* (tele=television, cracia=democracy) and *videocracia* (video=video, and cracia=democracy) to describe the relationship between images and democracy. Raúl Trejo Delabre named the phenomenon *mediocracia* (*medio=media, cracia=democracy*) Other intellectuals around the world have called this political occurrence media democracy (Sarcinelli, 1998), media society (Saxer, 1998), and mediocracy (De Virieu, 1990; Schechter & Schatz, 2001). Even so, the meaning of each of those terms is the same; it is a

new political regime with its own set of rules. This new regime can be understood as “the colonization of politics by the rules of the media system” (Meyer, 2002, p. 98). In other words, the political dynamics shifted to be part of popular culture as Thomas Meyer (2002) stated: “In the course of the colonization of the political system by the rules of media discourses, a substantial part of politics tends to follow the same trend. To that degree politics itself becomes politainment, a form of popular culture” (p. 99). That is, the logic of media absorbed political logic. The media does legitimize politicians by making their image familiar to their audiences. As a consequence, political participation, political reflection, and political parties are no longer significant; Mexico is shifting from a party democracy to a media democracy. Political actors are aware of the importance of media exposure, up to the point that if politicians consider that they have not exposed themselves frequently in the media, their careers are over. Moreover, the Aztec nation has its unique television media ownership characteristic. Mexico is considered to be ruled by a duopoly of two television networks, Televisa (that controls 80% of the market) and TV Azteca (that controls the remaining 20%), automatically eliminating plurality of voices. Overall, at the end of the day, we all know that monopolies do interfere in democracy.

Nonetheless, the responsibility of the press in Mexico lies in the constitution, basically on Articles 6 and 7. Article 6 establishes freedom of speech by stating that the expression of ideas would not be reason for judicial persecution unless it directly attacks the moral values, personal rights, and interruption of public order (Constitution, 1917). There are many forms of interpretation of the law; it is not very specific. Article 7 presents that same ambiguous characteristic. Article 7 talks about the freedom of the press—the print press—stating that there is freedom to write and publish any kind of material, with the limitation of respecting private

lives, morality, and the public peace. No authority has the right to censor the press, establish a fine for journalists or publishers, or kidnap their printing machinery (Constitution, 1917).

Mexico has a *Ley de Imprenta* (print law) that became active on April 15, 1917. Scholar Miguel Carbonell (2003) commented that the law needs to be updated to incorporate major journalistic rights, such as the right to reply, regulations for governmental advertisement, adherence to international human rights treaties, among others. Recently, there was a modification in the electoral law COFIPE to incorporate the right to reply and governmental advertisement regulation, but the constitution or the print law was not modified. In addition, Miguel Carbonell pointed out that no one should confuse the meaning of freedom of speech, “Freedom of speech is not a freedom to tell lies and defame people” (p. 3). Nevertheless, there are some other aspects of the journalistic practices that need to be regulated by the constitution, such as protection of sources, protection of the journalist’s right to protect sources, electronic web-based print media, among others.

In practice, however, the law has not been the regulator of political power and the media. The mass media exercise a strong influence in politics and democracy. According to Raul Trejo Delabre (2004), Mexico has a media system that contradicts McLuhan’s assumption that the media are an extension of people. In the Aztec nation, it works the other way around: People are an extension of the media, specifically television. Trejo Delabre argued that in this globalized world, there is a new form of government taking place in contemporary society. This new government formula is known as *mediocracia*; that is:

A new government structure fully dominated by the mass media. During the past thirty years [the media industry] emerged in nations full of information [with more money for production of content] that now disseminated globally through

national frontiers under the light of entertainment content. Television networks, computer corporations, and telecommunications companies make up fewer than a dozen big global corporate conglomerates that have captured citizens' targets marked around the world. (p. 21)

President Fox's governing style, where media was at its center, along with a new media government regime where the media legitimized politicians' leadership by appearing as news sources, news topics, and political advertising. The conception is that the media have the power to fabricate candidates, govern a political debate, and reconvert politics in a sort of media matter. Former senator Manuel Barlett Díaz (2007) considered that the media in Mexico has several abilities, such as: (1) the construction and deconstruction of public images, politicians, and political candidates; (2) transform mediocre people into great thinkers; (3) and magically make uncomfortable social and political personalities vanish.

The mass media are fundamental in democracy, because an informed citizen can develop a strong opinion about which candidate to vote for. In Mexico, television is one of the communication outlets that is most important for the development and socialization of democratic values (Ortega Ramírez, 2006). Democracy requires informed citizens. Where freedom of speech and the right to be informed are not tolerated, democracy cannot exist. The mass media could be the democracy's worst enemies (Aveledo, 1999). Independent critical media is necessary to preserve democracy.

Argentinean political science scholar Alberto Fohrig (2006) commented that the mass media are not the fifth power in Latin America; they are the first power. In the case of Mexico, he commented that, generally, newscasts concentrate their reporting on candidates' personal qualities and negative campaigning, creating the phenomenon of the personalization of politics.

That is, it is more important to cover the fights between political candidates than their political platform. As a consequence, political campaigns are turning into a type of entertainment show. The politics reporting has shifted hard news to soft news, although it is the same topic—politics. Nowadays, in Mexico, the press is no longer the fourth power; it is one of the main social structures of the first power (Hernández, 2005). In the current globalization era, the mass media owners are not interested in being the fourth power that is in charge of observing and correcting democracy's malfunctions and creating a better political system. According to Ignacio Ramonet (2006), in the name of freedom of speech, the global media are the ones who battle against those programs that defend the interest of a collective group of citizens.

It is important to understand how the relationship between political power and the media have changed over the Fox presidency in order to understand the news shift of journalistic practices. In the past, the written press in Mexico did not depend on subscribers on direct sales, but did depend on government advertisements; the electronic press works with the licenses that the government authorizes (Trejo Delabre, 2000). It is common that the government buys publicity in newspaper outlets with low or no professional quality. As Trejo Delabre explains, the majority of the governmental ads appeared mixed with the regular news, because the press makes no indication of the governmental information.

Mexican television was used to operate under an authoritarian political regimen. However, under Fox, networks have had no will to accept their social responsibility in the democratic process. In some cases, networks don't know how to participate, according to Ortega Ramírez (2006). He pointed out that television has the liberty to inform and express opinion to influence society or to criticize governmental actions, but not always do networks exercise their freedom with responsibility and professionalism. Ortega Ramírez has a point: Some of the

reports do not present a balanced tone. Sensationalism is their priority, not investigative reporting. Some journalists used a very restricted number of sources in their reports. Nowadays, politicians are aware that the most scandalous declaration will make its way to the newscast.

#### Brief History of the Television Era and Its Electoral Coverage

In order to understand how the Mexican television works, it is important to know the history of the medium. In the 1950s during the recently introduced television era, Telesistema Mexicano (TSM)—now Televisa—started to produce newscasts. The first were *Noticiero General Motors* and *Su Diario Nescafé* that were produced by a national daily and broadcasted by TSM. Basically at this time, the newscast was named after its most important advertiser sponsor, General Motors and the coffee company *Nescafé*. That is, TMS did not have full editorial control. The relationship between Televisa and the government was cordial until 1968, the year of the *Tlatelolco* Massacre. On October 2, for the first time the PRI government recognized that in order to regain social control, support from the mass media, particularly Televisa, was required (Fernández & Paxman, 2000). For the first time during the Gustavo Díaz Ordaz presidency (1964-1970), the government began to closely observe the information that Telesistema distributed in its national newscasts. Up to this point, the newscast was the responsibility of third parties—mostly newspapers. But after the Tlatelolco Massacre, Emilio Azcárraga Milmo decided to produce its own newscasts, called *24 Horas*. As a consequence, national tragedies or political emergency situations that the government wanted to keep invisible were low priority news on the *24 Horas* newscast as well. Therefore, the agenda was built up on what items remained silent and which not? The silence public issues were the important national matters.



The newscast was broadcast in the afternoon and at night; *24 Horas* was the newscast that remained on air for the longest time—28 years—in television history. Jacobo Zabludovsky was its news director and main anchor. His news style was to incorporate more foreign news than domestic reports on *24 Horas*. Zabludovsky's newscast outline consisted of starting with stories about the president, then international news, and everything else. Everything else encapsulated segments like horoscopes, poetry, sports, bull fights, among others. In terms of his editorial line, his company's internal policies were favorable coverage of the president as a priority. As a result, Mexicans were better informed about what was going on elsewhere, but not in their own country. At the same time without doubt, the president was the number one agenda-setter in Televisa's *24 Horas* newscast.

Several years later, the television media industry faced possible expropriation for the third time during the 71 years of the PRI governments. The first warning sign that the Mexican television industry received was in 1972. Early in the Luis Echeverría Álvarez (1970-1976) presidency, many Latin American and Mexican intellectuals called private television the *caja idiota* (the idiot box), making the statement that private television content was promoting an overstated consumerism habit among viewers. The principal promoters of this—attracted to Emilio Azcarraga's company, then known as Telesistema Mexicano-TSM—were the newspapers *Excelsior* and *Ovaciones*. Echeverría operated under a populist political ideology. The president and some of his secretaries believed that the private television owners did not care about the adverse effects that their programming was causing on the youth. In addition, the government alleged that their programming offered no educational value. The television licensees argued that the government, by law, already had the right to use 12.5% of its airtime. Nevertheless, the

government hardly used it; the maximum amount of utilization was 2.9% (Fernández & Paxman, 2000).

On June 18, 1972, the president and some of the secretaries asked several media owners to show up at *Los Pinos* for a meeting regarding the *caja idiota* controversy. During the discussion, there was a point that it seemed impossible to reach an understanding. The president called upon playwright Miguel Sabido to propose an alternative. He then presented a mixed model of television. In the combined educational and commercial television model, the government television networks will seek social/educational content, and the privately owned media will do the same within their profitable boundaries. In other words, as Sabido (2002) explained, “television programming that will offer social/educational content without sacrificing ratings. President Echeverría wanted educational and social content as well as the presentment and state activities” (M. Flores, personal interview, Mexico, D. F. December 2002).

Sabido’s mixed television model proposal captured the president’s attention and approval. Other television licensees were not so fortunate, because President Luis Echeverría took over their television licenses to create *Imevisión*, a government-owned and operated television network. Sabido assisted Emilio Azcárraga Milmo (alias The Tiger) in preventing expropriation, and produced a series of educational telenovelas to prove that the “idiot box” could educate audiences. Sabido’s first entertainment educational telenovela broadcast in Televisa was *Acompañame*, a drama serial to promote family planning. The drama formula was successful. Mexico decreased its population growth rate from 3.1% to 2.7% in a year. As scholar David O. Poindexter (2004) remembers, “Here, for the first time, is something that makes total sense to me and it has the earmarks of being a valid way to proceed within the realities of a high population growth developing country” (p. 27). Sabido produced other entertainment education

telenovelas for Televisa, such as to promote adult literacy, *Ven Conmigo* (Come with Me); to promote adolescent sexual education *Vamos Juntos* (We go together) as well as *Caminemos* (Let's walk); and to promote women's rights *Nosotras las Mujeres* (We the Women) as well as *Por Amor* (For Love). Sabido's entertainment education television genre had a connection with Albert Bandura's social learning theory, Eric Bentley's dramatic theory, and Sabido's tone theory. After Emilio Azcárraga Milmo died, he left Sabido a beautiful house in Mexico City in gratitude for saving his company.

The second attempted exploitation of the Mexican television industry took place during the days following José López Portillo's last annual state of the union address when he expropriated the bank industry, and the rumors about television being the next in the list began to spread. In 1982, the *Instituto Nacional del Consumidor* (National Consumer Institute)—an agency in charge of protecting consumers against abuse—disapproved Televisa's content, arguing that foreign series such as *Dinastía* (Dynasty) portrayed a lifestyle that was distant from the majority of the population. In addition, this agency criticized the way the actors dressed, representing a foreign style and diminishing Mexico's national identity (Fernández & Paxman, 2000). Furthermore, leftist politicians and leftist intellectuals were asking for Televisa's expropriation. They wanted to create a unique television model that would follow the British model. It was very unlikely that President López Portillo would expropriate Televisa, because at the time the government did not have the capability to manage such a corporation. Fifteen years later, López Portillo declared that he had the motivation to do it, but never did it because he realized that it was going to turn into a failure (Fernández & Paxman, 2000). Nevertheless, Azcárraga Milmo was worried about the future of his company. In 1982, he then created a new

news policy. From that moment on, the news stories would support the PRI and the president at all times. The television network went from a censorship phase to a self censorship stage.

Nevertheless, during the López Portillo presidency, two main independent media outlets consolidated their position in society and with the government: Those were the newspaper *Uno más Uno* and the magazine *Proceso* (Guerrero, 2000). Always, the print press, because of its characteristics of possession and control, had more opportunities to state a criticism against the government, since print journalists always found ways to denounce the power abuse; television and radio were censored more strictly due to their high impact on audiences (De Gasperín Sampieri, 2002). One key characteristic of dictatorial and authoritarian systems is the control of the press; the more control of information flows, more possibilities exist to remain in power (Carbonell, 2001).

The close connection between Emilio Azcárraga Milmo and the PRI government gave Televisa newscasts nicknames, such as *prensa vendida* (bought press) and *El Nacional* (the National) meaning that the newscast contained mostly official information previously approved by the government, like a spokesperson. During election time, it was very common to observe the direct support that Televisa gave to PRI candidates. Their CEO Emilio Azcárraga Milmo, in an interview in August 1988, stated, “We are PRI supporters, we always have been; we don’t believe in any other formula and as members of the political party we will do everything possible to help our candidate win” (Fernández & Paxman, 2000, p. 320). 1988 was an election year, and Televisa mainly provided space to PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari. However, this time, Azcarrága’s declarations caused anger and indignation among the other presidential candidates, especially PAN’s Manuel “Maquío” Clouthier. He organized a boycott against *24 Horas*, accusing the program of not informing the public about opposition candidates. Azcarrága argued

that Televisa could give airtime to anybody who can afford it. At this time, Televisa commercial advertisements spot price was \$25,000 per minute during prime time on Channel 2. None of the opposition parties had that kind of budget for advertisements. This type of journalism practice diminished the democratic process in Mexico simply by not keeping its citizens informed about all political candidates, “Rather than promoting regime change, the media are simply dragged along by larger political developments over which they have little influence” (Lawson, 2002, p. 4).

However, Emilio Azcárraga Milmo’s unconditional support of the PRI government was overlooked by the third and last government attempt for television expropriation that came during the Miguel de la Madrid presidency (1982-1988). If Televisa’s news coverage became too liberated and open, the government stepped in to inform the network that its content was “not appropriate.” Manuel Barlett—then Secretary of the Interior—came up with the threat of a possible expropriation attempt to keep Televisa in line with its progovernment policy. During the 1988 election, Televisa’s election news coverage was biased in favor of PRI presidential candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari. The *24 Horas*’ election coverage issue arose when PAN presidential candidate, Manuel Clouthier, pointed out Televisa’s bias coverage into an electoral issue. He started a boycott against Televisa’s main newscast *24 Horas*, organized protests outside of Televisa’s headquarters, and passed out bumper stickers with messages against Televisa and Jacobo Zabludovsky. Clouthier appeared in campaign meetings and events with his mouth covered as a sign of protest against Televisa. The PRI candidate achieved electoral victory under a postelectoral fraud controversy regarding vote count computers due to an electric power outage.

Under such a controversial context, political communication began to appear in Mexico 20 years ago when for the first time *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) faced a strong opposition candidate. According to communication scholar Andrés Valdez (2001), before the 1988 election when the electoral processes were just a protocol ritual to access presidential political power, authoritarian politics were the predominant practice over plurality, liberty, and democracy. The 1988 election marked the initiation of real electoral opposition. Aimée Vega (2003) suggested that political communication in Mexico began during the 1988 election, because simply, it was the first time that presidential candidates ever needed it. For the first time, PRI faced a strong opposition in Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and the *Frente Democrático Nacional* (PRD predecessor) political party. The competitive political context required the use of political communication strategies in order for political parties and presidential candidates to be in contact with voters.

In addition, communication scholar Jorge Calles Santillana (2003) considered that the 1988 election was the starting point in Mexico of the introduction of political marketing by former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari under the very possible political context that Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas actually won the 1988 election, a situation that would never be possible to know for real. Salinas de Gortari implemented during his presidential period a constant political advertising campaign in the media, highlighting government achievements and his personal attributes. According to Calles Santillana, Salinas de Gortari's media campaign was successful:

By the midterm of his presidency, the discussion over Salinas' legitimacy was limited to opposition political parties (mainly left wing) and intellectual circles. The great majority of the population had not forgotten the possibility that Salinas won the election via fraud, but they subestimated the fact because the political

propaganda made them [voters] believe that the results of the government were successful. (p. 178).

Slowly, voters were persuaded to believe that the media at the time were capable of portraying reality fully. However, the reality presented by media outlets did not necessarily directly correspond to the social reality that many citizens faced daily. Public opinion polls were introduced in political life as a measuring tool of voters' preferences. It was also the 1988 election, that was the first time in Mexico's history that PRI did not win the majority of the legislative seats in congress. PRI had to learn to negotiate in congress with representatives of the opposition parties, primarily PAN, the second political force in Mexico.

The political communication practice of combining political advertising, public opinion polls, and money was quickly adopted by politicians after Mexico entered the globalized world. The open economy policy of Mexico generated by the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) back in 1993 affected not only the business sectors with a restructured dynamic process of Mexico's economic elite class, but the cultural, lifestyle, technology, communication, and politics also were transformed. The technological advancements of communication and interconnectivity offered Mexicans the opportunity to easily access worldwide news contents and easily created news content as well. Neoliberal economic practice promotes the diminution of the state and the expansion of the market.

Later on in the Carlos Salinas de Gortari presidency (1988-1993), the national television network *Imevisión* went up for sale as part of Mexico's neoliberal economic plan. In 1993, *Imevisión* was sold to Ricardo Salinas Pliego for 641 million of pesos, who reorganized the company and renamed it Televisión Azteca. This was the first time in history that Televisa faced competition. Nevertheless, in terms of political ideology and political affiliation, both networks

shared the same view. Salinas Pliego also considered himself to be PRI and government allied. Furthermore, both Azcárraga and Salinas Pliego shared the same position regarding the role of television in Mexican society: television's programming should amuse and entertain. According to his viewpoint, for a democratic system to function, more education along with economic progress should be present; and television has nothing to do with it (Proceso, 1993, p. 6). For Azcárraga Milmo, the function of television is to entertain and amuse members of the working class. Television Azteca emerged not as a new voice, just as the perpetuation of the same practice previously established by Televisa, a commercial business that supported PRI. Some communication scholars called TV Azteca "Televisa Lite" for its lack of critical, unbiased news coverage.

In addition, NAFTA changed the way politics was conducted in Mexico. From the very beginning in January 1994, the first year that NAFTA became active in the national economy, the *Zapatistas* (EZLN) began an opposition movement against NAFTA. They conducted much of their proselytism on the internet. The rebel group, located in the Chiapas state in *La Candonia* jungle, had somehow a cutting-age technology at their fingertips. The battlefield of the social movement and the Mexican government was the Internet and the international media—not a physical location as tradition dictates. From this moment on, the political communication dynamics in Mexico radically changed. According to Tanius Karam (2000), "their media strategy of interviews and press releases smashed the traditional rules of a war discourse" (p. 1).

The media became the battleground for politics. The military conflict lasted about 12 days. It was the paramilitary group who had taken the less amount of time before negotiation efforts began. Nevertheless, the relationship between the political power (PRI) and the media did not change at all. As a matter of fact, one of the leaders of the Zapatista Group, the



*Subcomandante* Marcos, declined national media requests for interviews, arguing that the Mexican media were censored by the government. The only interview with the Mexican press that *Subcomandante* agreed on was with journalist Ricardo Rocha.

After the 1994 election, the major complaint between political parties and their candidates was the media exposure, especially from PAN presidential candidate, Diego Fernández de Cevallos, who made it clear that he would not recognize the election results if media coverage did not change from favoring PRI to a more balanced approach. Televisa's news reporting was perceived as an obstacle to democracy. As a consequence, the COFIPE was modified to address the number one complaint of political parties regarding their access to the media, television in particular. As a result of the previous events, political parties enjoyed a direct access to the media for the next (2000) election; the access consisted of public funding and an openness policy to the media.

On April 16, 1997, media magnate Emilio Azcárraga Milmo died of cancer at 67 years. Azcárraga Milmo's 29-year-old son Emilio Azcárraga Jean became president of Televisa Corporation on March 3, 1997, a few days before his father's death. Under a new presidency, Televisa changed its political support from PRI to support an open statement of "Televisa supports Mexico," a nonpolitical perspective that was focused on ratings. As a consequence, Televisa changed its electoral news practices for the first time in Televisa's history during the 1998 Mexico City mayoral election. PRI's opposition candidates were covered by the network newscasts. This action could have been the result of a combination of three factors, the indication of a more unbiased journalistic coverage and the sympathy that Televisa vice president of news Miguel Alonso felt for one of the opposition candidates. Second, it was important to change Televisa's news perception among viewers who associated the network directly with PRI. Third,

the 1988 election changed Mexican politics dynamics, and as a consequence indirectly encouraged media opening. However, “Political liberalization does not guarantee independence or diversity in the media” (Lawson, 2002, p. 3). Televisa was forced to change its news content to obtain ratings in order to survive in a competitive and global market. At this point, in order to maintain high ratings, the news media content changed into frivolous, sensationalistic, and yellowish content.

In 1998, Televisa’s main news anchor Jacobo Zabloudovsky stepped down from the TV screen in order to change Televisa’s image in the minds of the audience. His newscast, *24 Horas*, went off the air as well. Zabloudovsky was going to remain a participant in the news department behind the cameras and became the anchor of a newscast broadcasted in the cable system. Zabloudovsky was substituted by Guillermo Ortega Ruíz, who was the main anchor of the nightly newscast edition in Televisa. Two years later, on March 31, 2000, Ortega Ruíz resigned, arguing a lack of journalist open practices. As he explained in a radio interview with José Gutiérrez Vivó, “I did not feel comfortable in the company any more, I was subject of a rigid editorial policy designed by the top administrators” (Mejía Barquera, 2000, p. 1).

Televisa appointed Joaquín López Dóriga to substitute for Ortiz Ruíz. On March 29, 1998, Abraham Zabloudovsky, the son of Jacobo Zabloudovsky, main anchor and responsible for the afternoon newscast on Televisa’s main national channel, resigned when he heard about López Dóriga’s promotion. He wanted to be chosen, but the top administrators did not favor him. The next day, his dad resigned as well, in solidarity with his son’s decision after 28 years of a journalistic career. Even the president of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo, tried to persuade Jacobo from leaving Televisa, but he remained firm on his decision.

As a consequence, the news content also changed; the purpose was to gain ratings with yellow journalism and celebrity news. During Televisa's national newscast *24 Horas* era, the most important news of the day was the president's activities. However, for *El Noticiero de López Dóriga* (Televisa) and *Hechos de la Noche* (TV Azteca), the top news stories were crime and natural disasters. The president's daily activities are included in the newscast, but are usually not the first story told in the newscast like it used to be in the past. Also, politicians began to be covered as celebrities, focusing the report on their particular personal attributes. Many of them began appearing in celebrity magazines along with movie stars. News shifted its focus from serious political journalism to coverage on personalities. The media began to distance themselves from their primary social electoral function—that is to keep voters informed about quality electoral facts.

#### 2006 Election: Candidates and Their Political Platforms

*Instituto Federal Electoral* (IFE) registered five candidates for the 2006 presidential election: Felipe Calderón, Roberto Madrazo, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), Patricia Mercado, and Roberto Campa. Each candidate is briefly described in alphabetical order (biography, political alliances, and political platform).

The conservative right-wing *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN) (National Action Party) was founded in 1926 by Manuel Gómez Morin. For a very long time PAN was *Partido Revolucionario Institucional's* (PRI) (Institutional Revolutionary Party) main political competitor until PAN finally prevailed over PRI in 2000. Felipe Calderón Hinojosa represented the PAN in the 2006 election. Calderón was born August 18, 1962, in the southern state of Michoacán. He is the son of Luis Calderón Vega, who was a PAN founding member and political candidate at the state level for the PAN party on several occasions. Calderón received a

law degree from the *Escuela Libre de Derecho*, a master's degree in economics from *Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México* (ITAM), and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University. His public service included: PAN party representative registered with IFE from 1994 to 1995, gubernatorial candidate in 1995, PAN president from 1996 to 1999, federal deputy from 1991 to 1994, federal deputy and PAN deputy head from 2000 to 2003, General Director of *Banco Nacional de Obras y Servicios Públicos* (BANOBRAS), and Secretary of Energy from 2003 to 2005.

The political agenda Calderón presented to IFE was a 60-page document titled *Plataforma Política del Partido Acción Nacional*. His agenda consisted of 15 public issues (see Table 1). The economy was top priority on Calderón's agenda. Calderón proposed increasing employment, equality of opportunities in a competitive economy, support for tourism, and aid to agricultural and fishing industries. He believed that the Mexican treasury policy should be able to respond to the country's economic needs; in addition, Calderón felt that states and municipalities should be the catalyst for regional economic development. Education was the second item on Calderón's agenda. He proposed improving the quality of education, creating special needs programs, and supporting science/technology research. The third public issue for the PAN candidate was human rights; Calderón recommended protecting and defending rights of Mexican children, immigration human rights, and support of nonprofit civil organizations.

Roberto Campa Cifrián was the presidential candidate for *Partido Nueva Alianza* (New Alliance Party). He was born on January 1, 1957, in Mexico City. Campa has a law degree from Universidad Anáhuac. He was Mexico City's deputy, PRI president in Mexico City, federal deputy in 2003, and member and spokesperson of the *Grupo de la Unidad Democrática* (TUCOM) in 2005. TUCOM was an internal PRI political group formed to prevent Madrazo

from becoming, the PRI presidential candidate. In Congress, Campa voted against AMLO's *desafuero* process, because to him, the *desafuero* process was a mechanism to prevent AMLO from participating in the 2006 election.

Roberto Campa's 33-page document *Plataforma Electoral Partido Nueva Alianza Elección Federal 2006* had politics as the main issue on his platform (Table 1). Campa suggested a new relationship should be formed between candidates and voters. Campa advocated for a permanent relationship between elected officials and citizens. In addition, the New Alliance candidate considered that a regulated agreement between the United States and Mexico should be created in order to administer the flow of immigrants and avoid friction between both countries. In his viewpoint, Mexican authorities were responsible for creating an efficient policy to reduce the amount of frictions between countries and to defend the dignity of those Mexicans living abroad. Campa proposed that the government require banks to create programs with widespread office locations for money delivery, and it should reduce the transfer commission.

AMLO was the candidate for the *Alianza por el Bien de Todos* (Well Being Alliance), a fusion between the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD), *Partido del Trabajo* (PT), and *Partido Convergencia*. AMLO was born on November 13, 1953, in the state of Tabasco. He holds bachelor degrees in political science and public administration from the *Universidad*

Table 2: Presidential Candidates Political Platform—IFE Registration Document

Issues	AMLO		Calderón		Madrazo		Mercado		Campa	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Economy	20	40	18	27	10	21	11	19	4	25
Education	7	14	8	12	3	6	9	17	2	13
Health	2	4	2	3	1	3	4	7	*	0
Culture	3	6	3	5	2	4	4	7	*	0
Religion	1	2	*	0	*	0	*	0	*	0

Foreign Relations	2	4	4	6	3	6	4	7	1	6
Military	1	2	1	2	2	4	*	0	*	0
Poverty	2	4	1	2	*	0	1	2	*	0
Political System	5	10	5	7	5	11	3	6	6	38
Crime	2	4	*	0	1	3	2	4	*	0
Environment	2	4	2	3	5	11	3	6	1	6
Infrastructure	3	6	1	2	2	4	1	2	*	0
Human Rights	*	0	7	10	3	6	4	7	*	0
Gender Equity	*	0	1	2	1	3	2	4	1	6
Media	*	0	*	0	*	0	2	4	*	0
Judicial System	*	0	5	7	3	6	3	6	*	0
Housing	*	0	*	0	3	6	*	0	*	0
Family	*	0	4	6	3	6	1	2	*	0
Immigration	*	0	4	6	*	0	*	0	1	6
Total	N=50		N=66		N=47		N=54		N=16	

\* Public issue does not exist on candidate's agenda.

*Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). AMLO was director of the Instituto Indigenista de Tabasco (Indigenous Institute of Tabasco) in 1977, general coordinator of Plan Nacional de Zonas Deprimidas y Grupos Marginados de la Presidencia de la República (COPLAMAR) in 1978, state director of the PRI party in 1983, director of social promotion of the Instituto Nacional del Consumidor in 1984, PRD member since 1989, PRD gubernatorial candidate for Tabasco state in 1988, PRD party national leader from 1996 to 1999, and Mexico City head of state from 2000 to 2005. AMLO has published several books, among them are *Los Primeros Pasos; Tabasco 1810-1867, Del Esplendor a la Sombra: La Republica Restaurada Tabasco 1867-1876, Tabasco: Víctima de un Fraude, Entre la Historia y la Esperanza*, and *FOBAPROA Expediente Abierto*.*

Andrés Manuel López Obrador presented his political agenda in *50 Compromisos para Recuperar El Orgullo Nacional*. AMLO's key platform issues were the economy (create more jobs, support agriculture, fish industry, update *Petróleos Mexicanos* (PEMEX) without vending, reinforce the business sector, and reinforce tax collection); followed by education (elevate the quality of basic education, continue the scholar breakfast program, create 200 new high schools and 30 universities, institute a national distribution of a free school supplies package, and support scientific research); political system (create a new federal system, devise a system for presidential impeachment); culture (establish book fairs, create more libraries, and support cultural stations); and infrastructure (create a new airport for Mexico City, purchase a fast national commuter train to travel the country, and construct a canal that will unite the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans) (Table 1).

Roberto Madrazo Pintado of the *Alianza por México* (Alliance for Mexico), a fusion between the PRI and the *Partido Verde Ecológico de México* (PVEM) (Green Party), was born on July 30, 1952, in the central state of Tabasco. He holds a law degree from UNAM. In 1979, Madrazo Pintado joined the *Barra Nacional de Abogados* (National Bar of Attorneys). In 1987, he published *Donde Empieza el Pavimento*, an essay about urban societies' problems and their solutions. Madrazo had several positions in the public service, such as federal deputy in 1976, senator from 1988 to 1991, federal deputy from 1991 to 1993, governor of Tabasco from 1995 to 2000, and PRI party national president from 2002 to 2005.

Roberto Madrazo's agenda was constructed from the *Coalición Alianza por México Plataforma Electoral*, a document submitted when he registered with IFE as PRI's presidential candidate. The *Alianza por México* proposal was divided into three major sections—the country that we want, the society we desire, and the government we require. His agenda consisted of 15

public issues (Table 1). Economy ranked at the top of his list: increased employment, modifying the tax collection process, as well as providing incentives to medium and small business in areas such as agriculture, fishing, and tourism industries. The two public issues that ranked second place in Madrazo's agenda were the political system and environment. In terms of the political system, Madrazo proposed that Mexico needs a state political system and federal system in order to assemble a more efficient public administration. In regard to the environment, the PRI candidate suggested legislation to protect Mexico's natural resources in order to save ecosystems, species, and water.

Dora Patricia Mercado Castro was the candidate for the *Partido Alternativa Socialdemócrata y Campesina*. She was born in 1957 in the northern state of Sonora. Mercado has a bachelor's degree in Economics from UNAM. Mercado is a feminist politician. She founded and directed several nonprofit organizations that focus on women rights, women leadership, and gender equality. In 1980, she was founding member of the *Grupo Autónomo de Mujeres Universitarias*; a group devoted to promote gender equality, counsel member of the *Instituto Mexicano de Investigación de Familia y Población* in 1992, director of *Grupo de Información y Reproducción Elegida* (GIRE) in 1996, executive director of *Equidad de Género, Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia* from 1997 to 2001, and national leader of the *México Posible* Party during 2002 (but the political party lost its registration with IFE in 2003). Mercado has published several essays, such as "Mujeres y Políticas Públicas" with the Fundación Friedrich Ebert, "Lucha Sindical y Antidemocracia Feminista," "Los Grupos Que Buscan La Sensibilización de la Población: Las Dificultades para Elaborar una Propuesta para la Legalización o despenalización del Aborto," and "Prevención del Aborto Riesgoso y sus Consecuencias Adversas," among others.



Mercado stated her political agenda in her 113-page document, *Plataforma Electoral 2006*. Mercado presented a 14-category agenda (Table 1); economy and education were her key priority public issues. In terms of economy, Mercado proposed more employment opportunities, the revision of current rural economic support assistance as well as policy that would ensure the ideal conditions of sustainable development, revision of the country business sector, and support of the globalization economic model. For education, Mercado supported the idea of a knowledge cities model; support of technological advancement of scientific research was on top of her agenda. In addition, she wanted to minimize the digital divide in education by redesigning the current instructional models for elementary and secondary education, decentralizing education, and devoting more economic resources to education. Mercado proposed eliminating discrimination against women, indigenous people, children, homosexuals, lesbians, and transgender persons. Mercado was the only candidate who included the mass media on her agenda. She acknowledges that the media have a fundamental role in the consolidation of democracy, because an informed citizen is an informed voter. Mercado proposed several changes in the media landscape. The key points were regulation of political parties' advertisements by IFE, and the broadcast licensing process should be open and transparent; currently, the process is at the discretion of the president. Lastly, she would like to revise the role and responsibilities of the Radio Television and Cinematography agency. The agency should not operate as a censorship agent. On the contrary, in her view, the federal agency should regulate the media. Finally, media legislation should be modified to incorporate the right to refute.

## Chapter 3

### The 2007 Electoral Reform: The New Role of the Media

The problems that arise from the 2006 presidential elections in Mexico led to conflict between political parties, voters, media owners, and political analysts; and illuminated the need for immediate review of COFIPE. Mexico's electoral law needed to adopt an adequate legal framework to regulate political communication in an extremely competitive electoral

environment. Almost a month after Election Day, in the middle of the 2006 postelection turmoil, PAN candidate Felipe Calderón declared that an electoral reform was urgent and necessary in Mexico because the existing electoral system showed signs of deterioration and collapse. Therefore, several PAN members worked to reduce campaign financial expenditures, campaign period, and advertising time in the media; and broaden IFE and TEPJF faculties (Jiménez, Gómez, & Merlos, 2007). On November 14, 2006, Senate Chamber Head Manlio Fabio Beltrones Rivera-PRI presented a legal state reform initiative to Congress. PAN Senate Head Santiago Creel and PRD Senate Head Carlos Navarrete were confident that the initiative was going to be accepted by Congress before the end of February. Legislators and political parties created the State Reform agenda, which consisted of five topics:

- (1) Federation—to update the federal pact with all the federal entities that demand more federation and less centralism; the political policy of concentrating power in a central organization.
- (2) State Regime and Government to renovate the political regimen in order to generate a new balance of power among the executive branch and Congress.
- (3) Democracy and Electoral System to create a system to regulate equal access to the media, excessive campaign funding, and precampaigns.
- (4) Judicial Power Reform to promote equality in the transparency of judicial proceedings, and
- (5) Social Guarantees to assure human rights and liberties for all minority groups, such as women, the disabled, ethnic groups, old people, and infants (Notimex, 2007g, p. 1).

In late February 2007, Congress only used the state reform procedure to conduct negotiations, legal writing, and final presentation in each chamber. In practical terms, the state reform officially began in late April with the installation of the *Comisión Ejecutiva de Negociación y Construcción de Acuerdos del Congreso de la Unión* (State Reform Committee). Congress designated a group of well-known politicians and intellectuals, such as Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, Jorge Alcocer, Diego Valadés, and María Amparo Casar, as members of the committee in charge of establishing mechanisms for analysis, negotiation, and construction of agreements to specify the state reform process in a time period of 1 year. (Zárate, 2007h). The Head of the Committee position would be rotated every 4 months between the Senate Head, State Committee Head, and Chamber of Deputies Head. PRD Senate Head Carlos Navarrete (2007) commented to the press,

The committee members should not interfere in any way, such as politics, like in the past. We [legislators] have no intention to convert the State Reform Committee into a sort of political weapon to make pressure against several social sectors in order to resolve other conflicts. (Torres, 2007, p. 1)

The negotiation and agreement process between the Chamber of Deputies, Senate, Chamber, the Negotiation Committee, political parties, and general population would have several phases:

- (1) Political parties had until May 24, 2007, to submit their proposals to the Negotiation committee.
- (2) Public search forums celebrated in Mexico City were scheduled on June 7th

and 8th, four other forums were scheduled for the interior; a total of 1,157 papers were presented in the public forums by the general public; about 25% (290) of those were about democracy and the electoral system.

- (3) Negotiation and construction of agreements between all political organizations were affected by the process,
- (4) Project writing,
- (5) Negotiation committee approval,
- (6) Signing and presentation of initiatives,
- (7) Chambers voting.

The proposals presented by the political parties regarding democracy and the electoral reform were the following: Three political parties—PRD, Convergencia, and PT—united efforts to form a common front, the *Frente Amplio Progresista* (FAP), to present the *Propuesta para la Transformación de México* (Mexico's Transformation Proposal). Regarding the democracy and electoral system topic, FAP's proposition suggested (1) total prohibition of radio and television commercials used for political and electoral purposes; (2) equitable distribution of the state official time (name of the broadcast time that private electronic media stations must provide to the Mexican government to air government programming) among political parties and candidates; (3) reduction of campaign funds; (4) a constitutional reform to democratize the media in order to guarantee the right to be informed; (5) prohibition of private financing to political parties and candidates; (6) regulation of early campaigning, social programs, and governmental advertising during electoral periods; (7) instill the universal vote and the direct vote of Mexicans overseas and their representation in Congress, (8) reduction of campaign expenditure limits; (9) the adoption of electronic ballot boxes; and (10) the creation of the

*Instituto Nacional de Elecciones de Participación Ciudadana* (National Institute of Elections and Citizens' Participation) (Garduño, 2007a). PRD General Secretary Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo (2007) confirmed that his party agreed with PRI regarding the refusal of the second electoral round as well as legislators and municipal presidents' reelection. Acosta also announced that his party would like to concentrate efforts on the electoral reform at first, before moving on to the other topics that conformed to the state reform (Ochoa, 2007).

The PRI proposed the following: (1) the creation of an autonomous institution that would be in charge of creating a new mode of identification in place of the current photo ID voting credential. The PRI proposed an ID document that could be used for other purposes in addition to voting. This new institution would be in charge of periodically revising the voting list and providing the official voter list to the IFE. Later in the discussions, PRI and PRD proposed that *Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática* (INEGI) should be the institution in charge of the new ID because it had total autonomy. However, PAN wanted the *Consejo Nacional de Población* (Population National Council), which depends on the Attorney General's office to be in charge. (2) PRI proposed to establish a second round in the presidential election in the event that the winner did not obtain 45% of voters, or that the difference between the first two candidates was less than five points. (3) Governmental propaganda would be prohibited 40 days before Election Day. (4) Negative political advertising should be prohibited. (5) The length of the campaign period would be decreased. (6) Primary campaigns would be regulated as in the normal campaign periods. (7) A very specific set of rules regarding private and public financing to candidates would be created. (8) Creation of a regulation regarding the posting of political propaganda in the streets would be established. Nuevo León's PRI Head Héctor Morales Rivera (2007) mentioned to the press that there were many citizens who complained about propaganda

placement around the cities, excessive amount, and cost of political advertising in the cities (Moreno González, 2007). (9) PRI proposed to discharge all IFE council members. According to PRI Senate Head Manlio Fabio Beltrones, the main objective of PRI's proposition was to prevent a scenario like the one on July 2, 2006, when a good number of citizens questioned IFE's ability to arbitrate the election; that resulted in Mexico's immersion in a postelectoral conflict that divided Mexicans and put political stability and the ability to govern at risk (Becerril, 2007).

The PAN proposed the following: (1) install the referendum and plebiscite legal procedures, (2) establish basic principles to regulate the internal practices of political parties, (3) institute political party financial liquidation in the event that it lost the registration, (4) revise the requirements for the formation of new political parties, (5) establish a better statistical accountability to identify the percentage of votes for each political party, (6) improve the formula for public financing allocation to political parties, (7) reduce the public financing budget for midterm elections (2009) and presidential elections (2012), (8) regulate bank confidentiality; that is, bank policies that prohibited the release of financial transaction information to any kind of institution or person with the exception of the Supreme Court, (9) elevate the rank into judicial command every time that IFE inquired about business information regarding political party mercantile deals, (10) prohibit governmental advertising during campaign periods, (11) create a guideline of political communication regulations in the three levels of government: municipal, state, and federal, (12) create regulations for the intervention of public servants in electoral campaigns, (13) assure equal access of political parties and candidates to all mass media outlets, and (14) reduce campaign periods (Reforma Electoral, 2007).

The major problem in the 2006 election process and the later disagreement was the lack of a set of laws to regulate the political advertising and the role of the media during electoral

periods. Furthermore, former PAN Senator Javier Corral (2006) believed that it would be difficult to overcome the postelectoral political discord without a solid agreement to reform the set of laws that regulated the electoral process. Left-wing politician Manuel Camacho Solís (2007) stated that the electoral reforms were necessary because those reforms would set the electoral regulations to conduct the 2009 election. For Camacho Solís, the approval of the reform was the only guarantee for political stability that existed at the time, the only way to ensure that the country could move forward politically. In 2007, leftist politician Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, member of the Executive Negotiation Commission, considered that the two central points of the electoral reform were: (1) prohibition of purchasing advertising in the electronic media and (2) the discharge of IFE's general council president and members. From his viewpoint, if these two matters did not pass in Congress, the whole reform process would be a fiasco! (Villamil, 2007e). In addition, Muñoz Ledo thought that Congress took on an enormous responsibility by putting into operation a state reform: "Calderón would not be able to govern, for the reason that from the beginning he does not have legitimacy. Also, Calderón has no control of his political party. At present, the best thing for Mexico is the reform" (Gómez, 2007, p. 1). Therefore, the state reform was the only alternative to recover citizens' trust. Mexico City's PRD Deputy Agustín Guerrero (2007) pointed out that during the past electoral process, IFE's council was not able to perform in the standard required. Therefore, all the IFE's general council members, including their president, Ugalde, should be discharged from office before the 2009 election (Vergara, 2007b). The Head of PRI in the Senate, Manilio Fablio Beltrones (2007), supported this view. For him, the current IFE's general council could not supervise the next federal election schedule for 2009 (Zárate, 2007a).



The state reform negotiations in Congress among legislative representatives were centered on two pieces of legislation—the electoral reform and the fiscal reform. Muñoz Ledo (2007) described the political context of the moment to the press, “PAN’s legislators had their own strategy in Congress, which was to push for the approval of the majority of the fiscal initiatives in exchange for fully agreeing with the electoral reform initiatives.” In his viewpoint, the political game was like this “If the fiscal agreement were modest, in consequence the electoral would be too” (Villamil, 2007e, p. 1). IFE’s president was furious when he figured out the PAN political strategy; Ugalde went even further intimidating Calderón by declaring to the media “If Congress approved the removal of IFE general council, in political terms, this action meant that Congress accepted fraud in the 2006 election” (Villamil, 2007e, p.1). Ugalde believed that in the event that Congress could approve the electoral reform, IFE’s autonomy would be vulnerable because its control would shift from the executive power to political parties. IFE’s Council President stated that if the electoral council violated a law or the Constitution, the procedure should be to file a court case against it. For Ugalde, the discharge of council members without a legal or objective cause set a bad precedent for IFE’s autonomy (Delgado, 2007a).

Some media outlets labeled the IFE’s shift of power *partidocracia* (political-party ruling democracy)—that is, a democracy centered on political parties. This term was also used to discredit political parties in the media. Their argument was that political parties wanted to rule over IFE; and in time, political parties would rule over the whole country. However, Political Science Professor Jorge Chabat (2007) made it clear that those political parties that were represented in Congress were not taking over IFE’s control: They owned IFE. Congress was in charge of naming council members in 2003; they were the same members that Congress wanted to discharge. In other words, Congress had always been in charge of IFE. It was simply the mass

media's attempt to mislead their audiences by providing inaccurate information. The power of political parties came directly from the Constitution. In Congress, representatives of political parties took an active role in the approval of a law or the elimination of it. In contrast, *partidocracia* was not considered a Mexican reality. Chabat (2007) explained that *partidocracia* occurred when political parties and Congress did not represent the citizens' interests. In a *partidocracia* context, political parties serve to divide society to eventually incorporate a totalitarian power that would eliminate political parties. This was not the case of the Mexican political postelectoral context.

A few days later, Congress announced an agreement between its members to replace IFE's general council members in a three-time scale. Once the reform became active (in late November 2007), the Chamber of Deputies had a 30-day period to decide which citizen would become the next general council president for IFE and two other council members whose period would end on October 30, 2016. Three of the other six council members would be suspended on August 15, 2008, and the rest on October 30, 2010 (Zárate, 2007b). For now, Luis Carlos Ugalde is the only name that legislators have released from their layoff list (Villamil, 2007f).

The same date that the agreement was approved, both networks provided IFE Council President Luis Carlos Ugalde an opportunity to defend himself. He argued that IFE's autonomy was at risk, and his congressional dismissal represented political revenge regarding the 2006 electoral process. There was a group of intellectuals who supported CIRT's position; it published an open letter about its opinion on the electoral reform. According to researcher Alberto Aziz Nassif (2007), both of them were instruments of the networks' strategy to misinform the public (2007a). The media protected Ugalde from potential removal from IFE. Ugalde, who supported the media, said, "The reform is an advancement for Mexico's democracy" (Reséndiz, 2007a, p.

1). Later on, Ugalde contradicted himself by affirming that the electoral reform had made significant progress; he then declared that the electoral reform would damage IFE's independence and autonomy, because IFE was in control of the political parties. Ugalde was annoyed by the fact that Congress ordered an internal audit procedure that for him was an instrument that subjugated general council members.

*The New York Times* on September 13, 2007, published a story defending IFE's president, arguing that in the event of Ugalde's congressional dismissal, the executive and legislative branches would place IFE's autonomy in jeopardy. According to the *Times*, to discharge general council members before their term was due to expire in 2010 would ridicule the autonomy created to protect the IFE and the electoral system. *The New York Times* accused PRI and PRD legislators of being the primary promoters of IFE's general council discharge. The newspaper also observed that during the past election, IFE demonstrated its importance because the institution had the ability to manage a very competitive and difficult election (Esquivel, 2007). In response, PRD's General Secretary Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo (2007) remarked during a press conference that it did not seem as if Ugalde was fighting for IFE, but for his job! (Proceso, 2007a). In addition, Head of the PRD faction in the Senate, Carlos Navarrete, accused Ugalde in the same press conference, saying, "He [Ugalde] knows that he is lying about IFE's independence and he knows which political group he is defending, and that is not IFE's autonomy!" (Proceso, 2007a, p. 1). It was evident that Ugalde was defending the people who placed him with IFE (Zárate, 2007c).

Meanwhile, Televisa, TV Azteca, and other major national media outlets started a battle against the Senate. It was a media campaign against the electoral reform based on the acknowledgement that the reform was in opposition to freedom of speech, the right to

information, political democracy, and the allegation that the reform empowered political parties, not citizens. The media only offered a voice to those politicians who supported their point of view. The media ignored all other legislators who were in favor of the electoral reform: None of them appeared as news sources or were mentioned in a report. Televisa and TV Azteca news anchors threatened political parties, arguing that the parties were being unfair to them because the election passed, but that the parties should remember that another election was coming in 2009 and they were going to need the media to campaign. All the information was one-sided; perhaps their arrogance worked to their disadvantage by reinforcing, unifying, and consolidating the agreement between political parties and the reform.

In response to the media's attack, Senate Chamber Speaker Santiago Creel-PAN and PRI Senator Manlio Fabio Beltrones held separate meetings with *Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa* (SIP) President Ricardo E. Trotti to explain in detail how the reform affected freedom of speech. After hearing the senators, Trotti endorsed the electoral reform during a press conference:

My organization has always supported laws that protect freedom of speech, and guarantees the citizen's right to be informed. I consider it to be historic, what is happening in Mexico in this matter. This [electoral reform] is an example for other countries. (Zárate, 2007c, p. 1)

SIP society was founded in 1943 in Havana, Cuba. One of its main objectives was to defend freedom of speech, defend journalistic dignity and responsibility, and promote technical and professional interchange between its members. Trotti's approval sent the message to the Mexican media that their freedom of speech was not harmed or lost.

Former PRI Senator, Manuel Barlett (2007), believes that the Televisa and TV Azteca attitude proved that networks had no limits. They used a public good such as the nation's

airwaves to attack Congress. For Barlett, the media networks were violating several laws with their behavior; he keeps asking the Calderón administration to get to work and control the situation with phrases such as: Who was going to call order? Where was the Attorney General? How much would the networks be fined? (Morales, 2007a). The television and radio licensees went further by denouncing that Congress was attacking their business interests. The media owners overlook the fact that the government provides them permission to use the national airwaves to make a profit. In Barlett's opinion, the conflict had to do with the electoral money. The media's behavior toward the Senate was only another example of the *telecracia* supremacy against the political power to assure Barlett during a newspaper interview.

Television in Mexico is no longer the fourth power; it's the first in which the state and other public institutions are prosecuted to impose the media corporations' will upon them. It is important that the media adjust itself to the new context marked by the reform. It was obvious that during the 2006 election, politicians were the media's hostages. (Morales, 2007a, p. 1)

Furthermore, journalist Jenaro Villamil (2007g) observed that the discussion went beyond media profits. For him, media owners converted their signal into an electronic supermarket where all kinds of goods could be sold, such as the political ad customized into "news" and "special interviews" (2007g).

Currently, licensees sell 18 minutes per hour of customized advertising. Televisa's president Emilio Azcárraga Jean (2007) stated that political advertising represented 4% of his corporation's total revenue (Villamil, 2007g). For Villamil, the media used Ugalde as an excuse to stop the electoral reform; they did not care about IFE's autonomy. The fundamental concern

of media owners was the possibility of losing the political power they obtained during the 2000 election when presidential campaigns switched to political marketing campaigns.

As a result, political advertisements turned into a very expensive commodity for politicians. In summary, Mexican democracy was kidnapped by the ratings. Obviously, the loss of political power was the major issue for licensees, those who never fairly informed their viewers. As journalist Armando Delgado (2007) explained in his editorial column,

Mexicans have never been informed about the most important public issues by the audiovisual media (radio and television) outlets. In exchange for their misleading information or ignoring certain issues, licensees obtained rewards such as privileged amounts of governmental publicity, pardon of taxes, among others things. (2007b, p. 1)

Former Senator and *Asociación Mexicana de Derecho a la Información* (AMEDI) (Mexican Association of the Right to Information) President Javier Corral (2007) considered that the media overturned its very core because the media was in charge of exercising the right to information, and it failed to expose the exact content of the electoral reform. Instead, journalists launched a series of misleading information campaigns, such as spreading negative opinions about the reform, arguing its job was on the line and the Senate was trying to take it away from them. In addition, reporters and media owners made the case that senators did nothing and earned high salaries, as Corral recalls. “Now, the media is trying to prohibit Senators from criticizing them, which is a huge step backward!” (2007a, p. 1) Apparently, there was an unwritten rule in the electronic media industries, which consisted of attack the senators or lose your job. PAN Senator Alejandro González Alcocer (2007) pointed out that the Senate and Chamber of Deputies in general showed a firm will to serve their country beyond any kind of pressure from economic or

political groups, and he believed that this was one of the facts that gave pride to legislators (Villamil, 2007j).

#### Talk Show

Nevertheless, the *Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Radio y la Televisión* (CIRT) (National Broadcasters Association) participated in a discussion session with legislators about the electoral reform. CIRT broadcast nationwide, live via radio and television for 3 hours, their meeting with 45 senators to request a referendum on the electoral reform. During the meeting, CIRT had the support of several of the most well-known television and radio personalities such as Joaquín López Dóriga, Carlos Loret de Mola, Denisse Maerker, Ciro Gómez Leyva, Javier Alatorre, Pedro Ferriz de Con, Paty Chapoy, Ricardo Rocha, and Nino Canún, as well as television executives such as Televisa Vice-President Javier Tejo Dondé; Grupo Radio Centro owners Francisco Aguirre and Francisco Ibarra; TV Azteca executive Ricardo Monreal; and Radio Fórmula owner Rogelio Azcárraga, who all argued that the reform was going to bring down their ratings. In addition, some business associations, such as the *Consejo Coordinador Empresarial* (CCE) and the *Confederación de Cámaras Industriales* (Concamin), were also present to support CIRT's position.

The petition was labeled as the "Referendum for Freedom," CIRT insisted that the electoral reform affected Mexicans' basic rights to be informed. In their viewpoint, it was an authoritarian, regressive, and aggression toward the electronic media. TV Azteca's news director Sergio Sarmiento (2007) demanded a popular consult (a legal procedure for citizens to express their opinion on a particular matter) for Mexicans to express their opinion, without the participation of political parties. "We could not allow society to be kidnapped by political party heads" (Mejia, 2007, p. 1). In addition, Sarmiento declared that the media were a byproduct of

the reform. Therefore, the reform should cease until the referendum took place. He suggested that the referendum should be organized by IFE. Sarmiento told senators that licensees were willing to open their programming to those politicians who would like to participate in the referendum. He asked politicians: “Do you believe that we, the media, generate the negative advertising campaign during the 2006 election? Do you truly believe that everything changes because now candidates can only use 3 minutes?” (Villamil, 2007i, p. 1). CIRT President Enrique Pereda (2007) insisted that the Senate Chamber tried to approve the reform via fast track. As a result, none of their concerns were incorporated into the overall discussion (Villamil, 2007i). TV Azteca spokesperson Luis Niño de Rivera (2007) read a press release that illustrated five major points that summarized CIRT’s protest. Those were (1) IFE independency; (2) defense of the actual IFE council members; (3) the creation of an ethics code for political parties, media, and candidates, instead of a constitutional lock; (4) the electoral reform should not encourage prohibitions that damage freedom of speech; and (5) rejection of political pressures to discharge IFE’s council members (Villamil, 2007i).

Concamin president Ismael Placencia Núñez (2007) declared that legislators took the country hostage by conditioning the approval of the fiscal reform to the electoral reform without taking citizens into account (Mejia, 2007). *Consejo Coordinador Empresarial (CCE)* President Armando Paredes (2007) believed that the reform was a deterioration of all the advancements, such as freedom of speech, and that the reform created a vulnerability of IFE’s autonomy by forcing it to be at the mercy of political parties (Mejia, 2007). The electronic media licensees requested that the current IFE would be in charge of supervising the referendum. Senators turned down their petition and rescheduled the voting session 1 week earlier. CIRT also announced that the electoral reform could destroy small radio and television stations around the country. Former



PAN Senator Corral (2007) argued that this claim was not exact; in order to survive, small radio businesses had to rely on official governmental publicity or the electoral campaigns, but what kind of political coverage could this type of governmental dependency develop? (Corral, 2007b). But what kind of press coverage would stations provide when they depend on the government to survive? In the majority of occasions, stations will read governmental press releases exactly as they are without any other further reporting on the matter.

PAN Senator Ricardo García Cervantes (2007) attempted to respond to CIRT, but the nationwide transmission was interrupted. Again, the mass media owners as well as CIRT were only interested in broadcasting their opinions and complaints about the electoral reform. But when an opposite viewpoint was expressed, the transmission terminated. Senator Corral viewed CIRT's action as an act of censorship (Villamil, 2007j). García Cervantes' discourse clarified that the freedom of speech was not damaged in any way by the reform, and that the discussion regarding this matter began on April 13th. Therefore, there was sufficient time (about 5 months), to discuss the electoral reform with the media. The major point in the reform was to void the illegitimate inference of the money in an electoral process (Villamil, 2007h). That is, the candidate with larger financial resources had additional opportunities to purchase political advertising. This economic power was considered being unfair by several legislators. The CIRT president argued that his association did not wish to be the paladin to freedom of speech. On the contrary, his association tried to avoid the country's regression caused by Congress, which harmed the right to freedom of speech (Proceso, 2007c). CIRT member Pereda (2007) explained that his association was not motivated by the monetary factor. In the association's view, this reform signified a *Ley Mordaza*, a gag order that prevented communication flow. He commented that for now, this reform only affected the electronic media; but in the future, it could affect the

print and magazine media outlets. PRD Senator Pablo Gómez (2007) declared that the people slowing down Mexico were the mass media, not politicians. He made it clear that in Mexico an antidemocratic television structure existed because Mexico had a television duopoly context where two companies held the majority of the money as well as licenses (2007c). He had the same opinion as Colima Governor Silverio Cavazos (2007): The reform would generate an equitable competition among political parties because all candidates would have the same opportunity to present their political platform in the electronic media (Zamora, 2007). Regarding the referendum, Cavazos commented that he had never heard of such a thing when the new Federal Radio and Television Law (*Ley Televisa*) was approved. Because this law benefited the electronic media licensees, their actions should reflect consistency and compromise with Mexico. The governor suggested that the federal money, which would be saved with the reform, should be invested in supporting agriculture, health, and education (Zamora, 2007).

Professor Gabriel Sosa Plata (2007) observed the media's referendum was only a political strategy to gain time and delay the discussion (Morales, 2007a). Corral (2007) stated that Televisa was fighting legislators with constant biased news stories and advertising campaigns used as weapons against senators, because the corporation was trying to stop the reform. The core disagreement was who owned the airwaves. Televisa and CIRT felt that the airwaves belonged to the media while the senators claimed that it was a national patrimony (Morales, 2007b). The bottom line of the media/Senate conflict was the risk of losing more than 500 million pesos in political advertising revenue that the politicians—candidates, political parties, and public servants—generated each year (Proceso, 2007b). *Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social* (CIESAS) researcher Alberto Aziz Nassif (2007) stated that the media made the public believe that the media defended IFE's autonomy, but in

reality, they were defending their economic interests. Senator Corral affirmed that the government purchased 99.4% of its total budget for paid television from Televisa and TV Azteca. That was 53% of the yearly resources, approximately 26 billions pesos in comparison with radio, which represented 8%. Therefore, each year 15 media businesses controlled 66% of the annual advertising government financial budget. On top of that, during elections, the picture remained the same; those 15 media outlets managed 66% of the electoral budget (2007b). According to Corral, the electoral reform allowed politics to increase the freedom of expression privilege and politicians independence from the *mediocracia* (media democracy) system in which the media becomes the first power of the nation.

#### The Senate Chamber

On September 12, 2007, just before midnight, the Senate Chamber approved the electoral reform with 111 votes in favor and 11 against. All political parties approved a total prohibition against purchasing political advertising in electronic media. Each political message would be free, because IFE would have a total of 51 minutes daily on radio and television broadcast time per station during election periods; that is, three minutes per hour from 6:30 AM to 11:30 PM. This reform established a new electoral communication context: Political parties could not purchase advertising in radio and television; they must use official times to disseminate their political messages. The reform also prohibited third parties—individuals, associations, and corporations—from pursuing advertising pay for advertisement in the electronic media. A legal definition of political electoral advertisement was written in the reform, incorporating limitations for commercial spot inclusion in telenovelas and comic shows.

The reform redefined the role of the governmental communication. The new concept determined that the three levels of government—municipal, state, and national—advertisement

should only be informative with the purpose of orienting citizens about the government programs, but could not contain images, sounds, or graphics of politicians. IFE had new avenues to fine any political party, political groups, foreign businesses, and citizens who violated the law by purchasing political advertising. On top of that, IFE had the legal authority to request information about financial transactions. IFE's authority was beyond the bank and fiscal private information act in order to keep track of the money that would pay for ads. In addition, the reform permitted independent candidacies to legally exist by recognizing the political figure, a long-time complaint of small political parties. The political power that electronic media owners gained during the Fox administration made them believe the media was the 2006 election protagonist, as communication journal *Etcétera* described. "These changes transport the political discussion to another forum; that is, political dialogue would not be centered on the electronic media. As a result, the quality of the political debate would not be limited to their party's financial potential" (2007a, p. 1). Also, the media gained power through agreements with Felipe Calderón since he was a presidential candidate. During his first 9 months in office, Calderón spent three times more money on political advertising than Fox did. The federal government paid out 3.7 billion pesos, about 13,700 thousand pesos more than Fox for promotion of government accomplishments and the broadcast of official messages (Gil Olmos, 2007b,).

In terms of news, the reform established that nonpaid news information was not considered propaganda (Zárate, 2007e). In addition, the reform would reduce the cost of electoral campaigns by 50% (approximately 3 billion pesos) and established that IFE would have 12% of the official time during nonelectoral years to promote voter participation (Zárate, 2007d). The new reform saved the state 3 billion pesos normally designated for the purchase of radio and television advertisement, explained to the press by former IFE's President José Woldenberg

(Morales, 2007b). The reform classified the electoral process as public state affairs that should not be part of private media corporations, and established a series of penalties. Perhaps, for media owners, one of the most uncomfortable aspects of the reform was that IFE gained the legal power to cancel their license or permit as a penalty for violating the reform. This type of penalty was never part of an electoral law. This new law dictates that the radio airwaves used by electronic media to transmit their signal was the property of the state, and introduced a shorter period for election campaigns. The three main political parties— PRI, PAN, and PRD—agreed that this reform did not harm freedom of speech in any way. Its main purpose was to minimize the influence of campaign money on future elections.

#### The Right of Reply

Senate Chamber Head Santiago Creel–PAN (2007) commented that the electoral reform expanded freedom of speech to ensure the right of reply—that the right that any politician had to answer any blame in the same medium and time when those accusations were made (Zárate, 2007f). Basically, the right to media access would benefit citizens. The right to reply was the right that any citizens had to defend themselves against criticism and accusations; in other words, to present their side of the story. Creel stated very clearly in a press conference,

The source of disapproval for licensees is the money that destroyed the relation with politicians; the one who votes, rules, not the one who pays. This is only the beginning of a more profound series of changes; there are many interest groups that need to be reorganized. The purpose of the reform was to think more about the constitution and less about television. (Arvizu, 2007, p. 1)

The senator considered that the reform would modify the relationship between licensees and politicians. The reform prohibited buying custom political ads such as favorable information, news coverage, and infomercials like those presented during the 2006 election (Villamil, 2007).

In Mexico, it was a major accomplishment just to appear on the major television newscasts. During past elections, it was often observed that only the PRI candidate appeared in national newscasts. All the other candidates were nearly invisible. Opposition candidate access to the media was almost nonexistent. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, Vicente Fox, Manuel “Maquio” Clouthier, Luis H. Álvarez, among other politicians, constantly complained about their limited access to the television media. The 1958 PAN presidential candidate, Luis H. Álvarez (2003), shared his memories about media and the political process:

It was a completely closed regimen and very antidemocratic. Obviously, the mass media were completely subdued, I never had access to radio, much less television. As a matter of fact, one month after I launched my presidential campaign, I was detained in jail for several hours accused of being a member of the opposition that was my crime. (Álvarez, 2003, 51:53)

In the 1988 election, Manuel “Maquio” Clouthier, then PAN presidential candidate, frequently appeared wearing a mask over his mouth representing his lack of opportunity to “speak” on television. He also organized a boycott against Televisa’s main newscast *24 Horas* for its lack of reporting on his campaign activities. In the past, candidates criticized lack of campaign coverage. The controversy directly questions the most fundamental journalistic ethics and principles juxtaposed to media profits. Jacobo Zabludovsky (2007), former *24 Horas* news director and anchor, commented that in the past, media censorship during the PRI regimen was caused by the lack of political plurality, but current restriction is a bit sinister, because it comes

from within the media and it is used to defend its own interests. Zabludovsky commented in a magazine article, “Newscasts are employed to combat critics and competitors” (Berruga Filloy, 2007, p. 50). That is, television newscasts attack and construct reality to benefit its owner’s ideas and economic interests. This new dynamic in television journalism questions the daily reporting routines and the construction of the news agenda.

Santiago Creel moved the conversation forward by incorporating another basic journalistic concept: the right to reply or rebut media coverage. For several years, Creel supported Televisa’s interests. For example, during the Fox presidency when he acted as Mexico’s Attorney General, Creel authorized 450 gambling permits for Televisa to operate via an open television signal—a sort of bingo via television. Those permits were known as *Telejuegos* (Garduño & Mendez, 2005). The public/players who were residents of the 29 authorized states could participate in the gambling activity via phone calls for 25 years. Creel made his decision just days before his resignation in order to participate in PAN’s presidential primaries. Immediately, PAN Senator Javier Corral (2005) demanded the newly appointed Attorney General Carlos Abascal revoke Televisa’s gambling permits. He threatened that if the permits were not revoked, Creel’s political image could be affected and his candidacy could be damaged because these events could be understood as a political electoral alliance between Televisa and Creel (Delgado, 2005).

Furthermore, PRI legislator Heliodoro Díaz Escárraga (2005) inquired about Creel’s financial support to pay for his constant television spots broadcast during prime time by Televisa (Delgado, 2005). As a matter of fact, it was the second time that Creel was questioned about his PAN primary campaign budget. The first time was in 2000, when he was PAN’s contender for the Head of Mexico City position. Journalist Sergio Aguayo (2006) affirmed that Creel received

privileged treatment in Televisa for about 30 million pesos as a “favor” for the gambling permits that he authorized. According to his numbers, Felipe Calderón paid Televisa 7,462 pesos for each spot at the same time Creel paid 2,359 pesos for each political ad aired on television. On Televisa, Calderón aired 2,168 spots and Creel broadcast 6,206 ads in the same period (Aguayo Quezada, 2006).

Three candidates ran during the PAN primaries: Santiago Creel, Alberto Cárdenas, and Felipe Calderón. Calderón obtained 51.8% of the party vote, Creel 24%, and Cárdenas 18% (Torres & Jiménez, 2005, p. 1). Calderón became PAN’s presidential candidate; however, it is interesting to note that Creel broadcast 4,038 more political ads than Calderón did on Televisa—over three times as many. What happened? Why did not Creel win the primaries, if he had a higher number of ads? Contrary to what many political marketers believed, a high number of ads did not guarantee political victory. There were several reasons that could have affected Creel’s success, such as overexposure turned detrimental for him in that voters could have become tired of seeing his image all the time. Another reason could have been that he used only advertising messages and not propaganda communication. Perhaps, the results of this study could help determine whether advertising can set the agenda or not. In a simple conceptual form, political propaganda are messages focused on the dissemination of a particular political ideology, and political advertisement is used to highlight a particular candidate’s public issue positions as well as personal attributes and negative attack to other containers.

In any event, the “political favor” was more beneficial for Televisa than for Creel. Within the first year of operation, *Telejuegos* generated approximately 680 million pesos for Televisa, at 23 times the discount that Televisa provided Creel during the primaries (Torres & Jiménez, 2005). However, the period of good negotiations between Creel and Televisa would not last



long: Four days after Calderón's inauguration ceremony, he announced the confiscation of 19.4 tons of ephedrine, a substance used for the production of synthetic drugs. The government announced that the substance was imported from China by the *Unimed Pharm Chern*—a company owned by Zhenli Ye Gon, a Chinese naturalized Mexican. A few months later on March 15, 2007, the *Procuraduría General de la República* (Attorney General's Office) announced the confiscation of 205 million U.S. dollars cash in the interior of a luxurious house located on the Mexico City property of Zhenli Ye Gon. On July 2, 2007, in an interview with the Associated Press, Ye Gon said the money confiscated at his home belonged to PAN. He stated that the wealth was part of the financial resources used on the 2006 campaign; and his PAN contact for delivering those funds was Calderón's Secretary of Labor, Javier Lozano Alarcón (Associated Press, 2007).

Immediately after, the television media begin to broadcast images of the naturalization ceremony organized by the Exterior Relations Secretary, which was headed by Santiago Creel at the time. In the video, Ye Gon was seen receiving his Mexican citizenship from Vicente Fox who was seated at the podium next to Creel. Televisa went further, suggesting that Creel authorized Ye Gon's legal residency in Mexico. Senator Creel solicited space to López Dóriga in his national newscast to reply to the media accounts early that day that accused Creel for authorizing Gon's naturalization citizenship. The news anchor declined Creel's petition, arguing that his newscast content was already complete and there was no time for additional information. Nevertheless, Creel decided to wait on hold on the phone for an opportunity to "speak" with *El Noticiero* viewers. While Creel was waiting on the phone, López Dóriga stated on air that he tried to locate Creel to obtain his reaction, to hear his part of the story, but it was impossible for the news anchor to find him. Televisa's major news anchor and journalist lied on the air. The

next day, the senator had a press conference to let people know the content of a letter that he wrote to Televisa's president Emilio Azcárraga Jean. Creel's letter expressed his anger for López Dóriga's handling of the story during *El Noticiero* the previous night. However, Televisa ignored Creel's complaint. The subsequent evening newscast misquoted the senator's statements and made fun of Creel's protest during the editorial segment.

As a consequence, Santiago Creel modified his position in relation to the *Ley Televisa*. The Senator (2007) declared to a national magazine that the law was approved under Televisa's blackmail; "More than anything it was an imposition, not a negotiation" (Villamil, 2007, p. 1). The law highlighted one vision only and failed to embody a plurality of interests. The senator's declarations confirmed the argument that *Ley Televisa's* legislative opponents always brought up the major role that Televisa played in the creation and legislative negotiation of the new Federal Radio and Television Law. Creel then began working and supporting legislative initiatives that concentrated on correcting those mistakes that were highlighted by Mexico's Supreme Court of Justice.

In contrast, Televisa started an intensive campaign against Senator Creel. After that, every news story broadcast by Televisa about Creel was negative. Creel, a principal supporter of incorporating the right to reply in the 2006 electoral reform, had a different attitude toward television and the mass media during electoral periods after he was denied the right to reply. However, the core of the reform was based on the management of political advertisement.

PRI Senate Head Manlio Fabio Beltrones (2007) acknowledged in the Senate chamber that "The media could persuade several politicians to act in their favor, but never the whole state" (Zárate, 2007f, p. 1). In the same location, PRD Senate Head, Carlos Navarrete (2007) observed that the electoral reform prevented the use of money to harm candidates as in the 2006

election (Zárate, 2007f). He continued, “[The licensees] pretend to influence the Senate with public and private threats, but they never imagined the Senate’s solidarity, strength of character and firmness” (Arvizu, 2007, p. 1). The Head of the Radio and Television Commission in the Senate, Carlos Sotelo-PRD (2007), stated that its intention was to limit the mechanisms that made electoral campaigns function similar to a promotional strategy of any commercial product, instead of disseminating political platforms, projects, proposals, and ideas that integrated the government. This reform was significant because it stopped the noxious practice of using tax money for personal promotion of many governors, city mayors, legislators, and other politicians (Proceso, 2007a). PAN politician José Manuel Guajardo (2007) mentioned that with the 3 billion pesos saved with the reform could be used to build schools, hospitals, and support scientific research (Campos Garza & Mandujano, 2007). PRD Guillermo Gómez Pérez (2007) believed that the reform provided new juridical tools to our electoral authorities to reduce the risk of the power of money taking over political parties (Campos Garza & Mandujano, 2007).

The news on the approval of the electoral reform immediately spread in the international media that published numerous articles supporting the position of Mexican media owners. The key media outlets in Mexico had economic transactions with international media corporations that operate around the world. In an era when electoral communication has a tendency to cover candidates as celebrities, the media seems to focus on personal attributes instead of public issues. That is, there is a big chance that newscasts would set their media agenda reporting based on the content of a candidate’s political advertisement instead of covering public issues. In global terms, the electoral reform empowered the state and awakened the money and power. Mexico is not the only country that enacted drastic media changes during elections; Spain—Mexico’s

mother country—has a similar regulation in place. Candidates could not purchase advertising in their electronic media, and their campaign period lasted 2 weeks.

Some of the opposition to the reform came from the senators of the “small parties,” such as Convergencia policymaker Dante Delgado (2007), who requested that the speaker of the Senate Chamber devote more time to closely evaluate the reform (Barradas, 2007). For Green Party Senator Francisco Agundis (2007), the electoral reform negotiation has not ended. For him, it was obvious that the dialogue between policymakers and licensees had not reached a consensus favorable to both parties (Barradas, 2007). In fact, those negotiations never reached an agreement.

#### Chamber of Deputies

After the Senate approved the electoral reform, the legislative proposal was sent to the Chamber of Deputies for its authorization. CIRT President Pereda requested a meeting with the head of the political coordination assembly of the Chamber of Deputies to explain its concerns. Televisa’s vice-president as well as CIRT’s president delivered CIRT’s petition document to the Chamber of Deputies. PAN Deputies Head Héctor Larios as well as PRI Deputies Head Emilio Gamboa received the petition. Unfortunately, CIRT’s petition was late because the Chamber of Deputies’ agenda for the day already included the electoral reform discussion.

Speaker of the Deputies Ruth Zavaleta-PRD confirmed that the Deputies would support the reform without modification, and the Chamber would approve the reform immediately. She explained that this reform was fully discussed in the Chamber on previous occasions. As a result, legislators were ready to rule (Merlos & Gómez, 2007a). Moreover, PRD Deputies Head Javier González Garza (2007) mentioned that there was an agreement with senators to uphold the electoral reform ruling that was approved by the Senate. Unfortunately, one major concern of

Senator Garza's was left out: the gender equity on election positions (Merlos & Gómez, 2007a). Apparently, the political game was that the Senate was in charge of the electoral reform, and the Chamber of Deputies was in charge of the fiscal reform. The unwritten arrangement was that both reforms should be approved without any variation.

The Chamber of Deputies approved the electoral reform on its first reading without changes on September 13, 2007. The second reading was scheduled for the next day, and the Chamber of Deputies proceeded to a vote. On September 14, after a 6-hour debate, without any changes the Chamber of Deputies approved the electoral reform with 408 votes in favor, 33 against, and 9 abstentions (Proceso, 2007d). PRD Policymaker Raymundo Cárdenas (2007) acknowledged that millions of Mexicans who did not have personal money to pay for political ads in the electronic mass media outlets could now be candidates (Garduño & Méndez, 2007). In Cárdenas' view, what was pending in legislation was the media's openness to political plurality. PAN Deputy Diódoro Carrasco Altamirano (2007) mentioned that the major obstacle that Mexican democracy faced was the power of the business elite in its most negative expression, the radio and television advertisements (Garduño & Méndez, 2007). In Altamirano's viewpoint, this reform fulfilled society's main inducement: less money, more politics, and transparency. PRI Head of Deputies Mario Fabio Beltrones (2007) commented that overall, this reform represented a significant change in the electoral model; indeed, there were strong reactions from several licensees and politicians who believed their careers could be damaged with the reform. He did not think that the reform harmed freedom of speech (Villamil, 2007I).

PRD, PRI, and PAN supported the reform; however, the small parties such as Green Party, Convergencia, and New Alliance were against it. The Green Party had eight specific concerns on article 41 that addressed the public financing of political parties. In addition, its

national president, Jorge Emilio González Martínez, requested that the Chamber suspend the session in order to permit a meeting with CIRT leadership, but the majority of policymakers voted against his demand. Green Party Deputy Verónica Velasco (2007) complained about how the Chamber's leadership overlooked her opinion on the electoral reform as Head of the Radio, Television, and Film Commission. Velasco stated that the speaker of the house's office failed to turn in a draft of the electoral reform to her commission for consideration, study, and revision. As a consequence, her ability to make suggestions or to delay the discussion on the electoral reform was limited (Gómez & Merlos, 2007b).

IFE's former president Woldenberg (2007) endorsed the electoral reform because to him it was a victory that allowed better campaigns and less spending. Overall, it helped create better elections (Gómez & Merlos, 2007c). Professor Rafael de la Madrid (2007) also supported the electoral reform, although the reform introduced broad order to the chaotic relationship between the mass media and political parties. To him, senators made a step forward by making the case to the media that the state acts autonomously in front of particular interests (Morales & Ochoa, 2007).

At this time, it was up to the 31 state congresses and the *Asamblea Legislativa del Distrito Federal-ALDF* (Mexico City's Legislative Assembly) to ratify the reform in order to send it to the executive branch for its publication in the *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, Mexico's state newspaper. In order to become active, it needed approval by 51% of the 31 states. A meeting was held to come to an agreement on the electoral reform approval in each of the state congresses in a 2-week period. The meeting participants were PAN leaders, Mexico's Attorney General, several state secretaries, and state representatives. During the gathering, local legislators from Yucatán and Nuevo León mentioned that businessmen were pressuring the State Congress

of Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Tabasco, and Sonora. At the meeting, Attorney General Francisco Ramírez Acuña indicated President Calderón's support for the electoral reform.

PAN's General Secretary José Espina (2007) declared that the meeting was not to provide a line of action among PAN legislators. The purpose of the gathering was to answer any questions that state and local legislators had regarding the reform. According to the PAN party, there was an agreement to approve the reform in the states of Nuevo León, Guanajuato, Querétaro, and San Luis Potosí where PAN had the majority. Nevertheless, the state of Aguascalientes Governor Luis Armando Reynosa Femat, a PAN member, was the protagonist of a controversy by announcing his opposition to the electoral reform (Saúl, 2007a). On that same day, PAN Senate Spokesperson Hermenegildo Castro (2007) announced that PAN uploaded several 45-second videos on Youtube.com that explained the electoral reform. He commented that this strategy was used because there was no time available on television. Castro found the youtube.com alternative was better than television, because viewers could comment about the issue on the Web site (Morales, 2007c).

#### Electoral Reform Was Ratified in Mexico

Despite the bitter struggle to bring electoral reform to Mexico, it was approved by 51% of the states on September 28, 2007. Therefore, the reform is now a reality in Mexican electoral law. The reform was approved by the State Congress of Nuevo León, Chihuahua, Nayarit, Michoacán, Guerrero, Baja California Sur, Baja California Norte, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, Oaxaca, Estado de México, Colima, Jalisco, Morelos, Durango, and Zacatecas (Campos Garza & Mandujano, 2007). The electoral reform will be active for the federal elections of 2009 and 2012. Senate Speaker Santiago Creel (2007) sent a congratulatory message to state legislators during his speech at the Senate chamber, "My public recognition to State Congress who voted in favor

of the electoral reform for their vision of democracy” (Corral, 2007c, p. 1). Speaker of the Deputies Ruth Zavaleta (2007) commented that once the reform was approved by 16 state congresses, the Federal Congress would proceed to notify President Calderón (Notimex, 2007a).

On November 13, President Calderón announced that the electoral reform publication in Mexico’s state newspaper, *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, of the results of this first phase would take place the next day (Associated Press, 2007). However, Calderón failed to publish the electoral reform decree during the period established by the Constitution. Therefore, several PRD legislators began to complain about it. Moreover, PRD Deputy Juan Guerra stated that the president’s attitude could be understood as a form of veto (Franco, 2008). The federal executive was responsible for publishing the new decree about the electoral reform in Mexico’s official, *Diario Oficial de la Federación*. Once this decree was printed, the electoral reform would become active. On January 14, 2008, the electoral reform decree was published in Mexico’s state newspaper. As a result, the new electoral set of rules became active the next day (January 15, 2008). President Calderón acknowledged that congressional approval of the electoral reforms was a difficult step for Mexico, but essential for its political transformation (Jiménez, 2007).

The next step was congressional deliberation of the secondary electoral reform laws. Therefore, Congress should move on to phase two of the electoral reform. The electoral reform has a direct impact on other laws as well as legal regulations that will need to be revised and modified accordingly—such as the COFIPE law and the Congress Organic Law. Also, one of those cases is IFE’s regulation, as temporary IFE president Andrés Albo Márquez (2008) explained: “The publication of COFIPE signifies a higher challenge in legal matters” (Notimex, 2008a); the changes to COFIPE impacts approximately 34 IFE’s regulations that must be immediately revised. PRD Deputies Head Javier González Garza (2007) said that there are about



17 regulations that would potentially convert into secondary laws. According to Garza, the reform is not a triumph or defeat, but a necessity in order to permit a new approach to politics in Mexico (Notimex, 2007a). Nevertheless, PAN Deputy Dióodoro Carrasco (2007) declared that from his point of view, 20 laws should be modified to fit the new electoral reform. He explained that the electoral reform influenced laws in several areas, such as criminal, fiscal, communication, and others. Therefore, the Chamber is carefully reviewing all the COFIPE books. Carrasco mentioned that out of the six legal books that encapsulate the COFIPE, five must be adjusted (Notimex, 2007a). During the night of December 11, 2007, the Chamber of Deputies approved COFIPE secondary laws written in draft documents that the Senate had sent them. This act completed the electoral reform process.

In addition, the publication of the new decree marks the starting point of the 30 days that the Chamber of Deputies has to designate three new IFE council members—a president and two councils. The Chamber of Deputies has plans to accept, for a period no longer than 1 week, proposals from academic institutions, political associations, social organizations, and any society member proposing nominations for IFE's new council members. All candidates for council seats should meet the requirements for neutrality, capacity, experience, and prestige. There are no limits on how many proposals the Chamber is willing to accept. Ruth Zavaleta would be in charge of keeping the nominations secret to make sure all of them meet the minimum requirements. The Chamber is in charge of designating who will be members of the new council.

This is the first time in history that the Chamber has been open to accepting proposals from general society members. In the past, only the Chamber's internal parliamentarian groups had the authority to nominate a council member (Zárate, 2007g). Ugalde, as his last international activity, traveled to Washington and New York to speak at Columbia University about Mexico's

future democracy, and celebrated a meeting with the United Nations electoral assistance division (Urrutia, 2007a). After 4 years of service, IFE President Luis Carlos Ugalde presented his resignation on December 14, 2007. He declared to the press that his discharge “set a bad precedent for Mexican institutions” (Proceso, 2007e, p. 1) Ugalde expressed that the electoral reform limits IFE’s autonomy and harms the citizen’s right to be informed.

On February 7, 2008, the Chamber of Deputies’ Heads of the three major parties—PRI, PAN, and PRD—proposed Leonardo Antonio Valdés Zurita as the new IFE president, but this action needed ratification by two-thirds of the legislators. Later on that day, Speaker of the House Ruth Zavaleta announced that with 398 votes in favor and 43 against, Valdés Zurita was endorsed by the Chamber of Deputies, and he would be the president of the council until October 30, 2013 (Guerrero, 2008a). The new IFE’s president, Valdés Zurita, stated that he is not an amateur, because he has been studying the electoral field for many years. He holds a doctorate degree in sociology from *El Colegio de México*. Valdés Zurita has been a professor, researcher, and Mexico City Council member from 1999 to 2005. While serving as council member, he was in charge of the Electoral Organization Commission. He has published several articles in scientific journals about past elections. His latest book is *Sistemas Electorales y de Partidos* (Electoral and Political Parties system) published by IFE. In addition, Valdés Zurita is the president of the *Sociedad Mexicana de Estudios Electorales* (Mexican Society of Election Studies). His next challenge is to prepare the 2009 election without any postelectoral conflict.

In the same session, the Chamber of Deputies discharged two council members—Alejandra Latapí and Rodrigo Morales—as well as ratified council members Virgilio Andrade Martínez, Marco Antonio Gómez Alcantar, and Arturo Sánchez Gutiérrez who would remain in office until October 30, 2010. The Chamber appointed Benito Nacif and Marco Antonio Baños

as new council members in substitution of Latapí and Morales. The Chamber reported that it obtained 387 votes in favor and 54 against (Guerrero, 2008a). Nacif holds a doctoral degree in political science from Oxford University, and he is a researcher for the *Centro de Investigación y Docencias Económicas* (CIDE). Baños has been IFE's member since its beginnings and has served on several positions. He has a law degree from the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM). Both of them began office the next day (Friday, February 9, 2008).

The 2007 electoral reform is a direct response to the 2006 postelectoral conflict that highlighted the urgent necessity to regulate key aspects of an electoral process such as the media, content of political advertising, election campaign duration, tax money devoted to political parties during campaigns, and other matters. In the 2006 election, the political communication strategy of presidential candidates exceeded every experience that voters have observed before. The overwhelming change of political communication operation led to the creation of very restrictive policies that prohibit candidates from using their personal image in their political advertisement; the media democracy environment that is currently present in Mexican politics could be understood from a theoretical perspective. Intellectuals around the world and in Mexico had focused their attention on the relationship between globalization, media, and politics. They have used labels to describe the new landscape, such as media democracy, *telecracia*, *videocracia*, and *mediocracia*. All those terms intend to explain how the media is the new political arena for discussion. The next chapter presents the literature review that describes political marketing as a global phenomenon, larger quantities of political advertisement in the media resulting in a higher voter turnout, videocracia and mediocracia, the agenda-setting theory, and a brief history of the television era and its electoral coverage.

## Chapter 4

### Spots: The Candidates' Major Political Communication Strategy

Every election has unique characteristics that establish the tone of the campaign and election. In the case of the 2006 election, several major conditions developed during the progression of the political campaigns. First, was the unprecedented power of the media corporations over politicians, especially after the approval of the “Televisa’s law,” and the influence of President Vicente Fox’s marketing and advertising as a vehicle for politics. Second, was the high level of dependency that the presidential candidates had on the media, especially television. Former *Instituto Federal Electoral* IFE (Electoral Federal Institute) General Director, Arturo Núñez (2005) commented that mass media are the top priority for any electoral campaign in Mexico (Loera, 2005). Several political marketers believe that the best way to ensure a political victory is to invest a large budget in political promotion. Political researcher Leo Zuckermann (2006) said, “There is no other way! In a country with such expansive territory and 70 million potential

voters, the election's victory is gained in the media" (Avizu, 2006, p. 1). In contrast, communication professor Raúl Trejo Delabre (2007) argued that politicians have limited their activity because they assume that the mass media are the only outlet where politicians can be exposed to voters. In his view, the quest for voters has shifted into the quest for ratings, which has replaced citizens with viewers. The domination of marketing over politics is the main characteristic of today's political dynamic in Mexico.

Since early in the election, presidential candidates had a clear tendency to depend on the media, particularly television. For example, during the primaries, as of October 6, 2005, political parties had expended 16% of their budget, approximately 803 million pesos, in radio and television advertisements (González Ménendez, 2005). In particular, data from *Verificación y Monitoreo* indicated that PRI primary candidates Roberto Madrazo and Everardo Moreno spent 403 million pesos [50% of their budget]; followed by PAN candidates Felipe Calderón, Santiago Creel, and Alberto Cárdenas with 219 million pesos [27% of their budget]; Green Party candidate Bernardo de la Garza 162 million pesos [20% of his budget]; Victor Gonzalez Torres 13 million pesos [2% of his budget]; PRD candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador 5.5 million pesos [68% of his budget], and Jorge Castañeda 844 thousand pesos [32% of his budget] (González Ménendez, 2005). IFE has not released any specific amount of expenses by political parties and political candidates during the primaries. IFE conducted a media watch, but only during the campaign period, not the primaries. Although Madrazo was the leader in the primary's spending on advertising, on October 29, 2005, just two weeks before the national PRI primaries, Madrazo's spokesman Sergio Martínez Chavarría, announced that Roberto Madrazo had decided to suspend his spots on radio and television due to the possibility of exceeding IFE's official

media budget of 49 million pesos (4 million U.S. dollars) for the primaries. Up to this point, Madrazo's campaign had expended 48.5 million pesos (Dávalos, 2005).

Presidential candidates assumed that advertising was the most important element of their strategic plan to ensure a victory. As a consequence, the majority of their campaign budget was invested in television advertising (IFE, 2006). The idea that high volumes of commercial spots would generate the maximum quantity of votes was the rule of thumb for the three major presidential candidates during this election. However, there was a negative effect—the boomerang—that is essential to review. Voters could eventually become overexposed to a particular candidate's constant advertising and react against it by voting for another candidate, or worse, not voting at all.

The electoral process also had an unusual mix of presidential candidates. Out of the seven candidates who were campaigning in the country from north to south and from east to west promoting their political platform, only five were registered with IFE and two were not. In Mexico, the independent candidate does not legally exist. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this research, those candidates who were not officially registered with IFE, but presented a political communication campaign strategy in the media like a candidate, were labeled as “parallel candidates.” IFE's candidates were: Calderón, Madrazo, López Obrador, Campa, and Mercado; the parallel candidates were President Fox and *Subcomandante* Marcos. They were not registered with IFE as presidential candidates; but in terms of the media's attention, both had a political communication strategy in place to actively participate. Marcos traveled the country attending public meetings and speaking to crowds. He was able to hold the spotlight for several months; however, not all mainstream media reported on his campaign activities. But he had his own community radio reporters following him everywhere as well as reporters from the newspaper *La*

*Jornada* and in several circumstances, even from national television. All the candidates—IFE's and the parallels—received media attention, and their activities were reported on national television.

Mexican elections are considered to be the most expensive in the world. In 2004, Professor Andrés Valdez Zepeda conducted a comparative study, "*Elecciones y Mercadotecnia*," among several countries. Based on each nation's electoral institution official data for the 2003 election period, Mexico assigned 461 million dollars; that is, 66% over France's (158 million), 93% over Brazil's (30 million), and 96% over Argentina's (18 million). On August 19, 2005, IFE approved 12.9 million pesos (about U.S. \$1 million)<sup>2</sup> for the 2005-2006 electoral process. From this amount, 4.926 million pesos (38%) were designated for political parties; 6.932 million (54%) for IFE's election operation; and 1,062 million (8%) for voters overseas. IFE's budget for the 1999-2000 electoral process was 11.462 million pesos (U.S. \$974 million dollars) (González Méndez, 2005). This was an increase of 1.458 million pesos (13%) from the previous election. Presently, politicians are a very expensive commodity for Mexican citizens, who in the name of democracy end up paying an elevated sum of capital each election.

From the funds allocated to political parties (4,926 million pesos), the three main political forces received a total of 64% of those funds distributed as follows: PRI obtained the highest amount, with 1.265 million pesos (26%); followed by PAN with 1.1468 million pesos (23%) and PRD 744.2 million pesos (15%) for the 2005-2006 electoral process. According to IFE's president, Luis Carlos Ugalde, anywhere from 65% to 75% of each political party's funds were assigned to media promotion, "Seven of every 10 pesos were devoted to purchase advertising in electronic media" (Herrera, 2007b, p. 1). The amount of money devoted to the media represented

a 20% increase in comparison with the 2000 election. At that time, the three main political parties invested in mass media as follows: PRI (Francisco Labastida) devoted 71% of its budget, followed by the *Alianza por el Cambio* (Vicente Fox) 69%, and *Alianza por México* (Cuaúthemoc Cárdenas) 50% (Loera, 2005).

Obviously, the central point of the presidential campaign in 2006 was political advertising and political marketing, with the purpose of highlighting the candidates' attributes and political platforms. The mass media—especially television—are perceived by candidates as well as their political marketers as the meeting place with voters. That is, candidates no longer meet voters at campaign events. Now, the media are acting as a bridge of communication between candidates and voters. Traditionally, television newscasts have been candidates' targets for exposure. But in the 2006 election, television commercial spots were a presidential candidate's main concern. It seems that politicians', as well as political marketers', preference for spots over news stories has to do with their repetition characteristic. Politicians also have greater control over the content of the advertising spots, whereas they do not control the newscast. The ability to replicate a political message as many times per day as they want plays an important role in sending their message out to voters. Nevertheless, voters could eventually become tired of being exposed to political advertisements over and over again. Overexposure of a candidate, via campaign commercials, could also work against the candidate because voters could favor another candidate who did not bother them as much during their favorite shows.

Tom Bowers (1977) explored the relationship between political advertisements and news stories. He observed that a critical political communication characteristic for political ads is that the political candidate has direct control over the content of his/her advertising message. In

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<sup>2</sup> 11.77 Mexican pesos = \$1 U.S. dollar



contrast, candidates have only indirect control of the kind of content reporters are going to use to write their stories. A candidate can only hope that his or her campaign activities will be reported in the news, but the candidate is uncertain about how that person's message would come across in the news. It is up to the reporter to select a particular sound bite from the candidate to incorporate (or not) in his or her story. The journalist controls the opportunities that candidates have to "speak" directly to voters by selecting a sound bite. Alternatively, a journalist can choose to just "talk" over the candidate's video, letting viewers know the reporter's interpretation of a candidate's main message for the day. Clearly, in the 2006 election, television commercial spots were the 2006 presidential candidates' top priority, along with other political placements in high-rated programs to expose and disseminate the candidate's own personal agenda among voters. During the first month of the campaign—January 2006—the majority of the presidential candidates broadcast television ads informing voters about their political platform and professional as well as personal attributes. However, that apparent positive and democratic environment was drastically changed by three main politicians: Felipe Calderón, Elba Esther Gordillo, and Vicente Fox.

#### AMLO Is Dangerous for Mexico

In early March, Felipe Calderón began a negative TV advertising campaign against Andrés Manuel López Obrador (also known as AMLO). His negative spots strategy, known as "*Guerra Sucia*" (Dirty War), was suggested by American political marketer Dick Morris as a line of attack to lower AMLO's popularity in the public opinion polls. López Obrador had been leading the polls for several months since the primary until the beginning of the campaign period. The PAN presidential candidate decided to implement a moral fear campaign to persuade Mexican voters. Jean-Pierre Dupuy (1999) in his book *El Pánico* established that panic as an object does

not exist; it only exists in social imaginary beliefs. The feeling of panic is present during situations of extreme tension. Nevertheless, such situations can be fabricated, as Calderón did with his negative campaign against López Obrador, labeling him as dangerous for Mexico. The power of this feeling relies on the fact that in the face of panic, voters weaken their critical thinking capacity to comprehend the election. *El Colegio de México* researcher Lorenzo Meyer (2007) pointed out that “a democracy constructed on the base of fear, is nothing more than fear for democracy” (p. 1). Meyer believes that the result of the 2006 election is that Mexico did not advance into a democratic political transformation because the political right sector worked to prevent the left’s victory.

This type of negative political campaigning is not new in Mexico. The innovation is that this negative political strategy was used in the general election and not during the PRI internal election process to elect its presidential candidate. Usually, around the time when the president had to choose the PRI presidential candidate, this type of hate campaigning took place because elite groups were fighting among themselves to defend their “candidates.” Nevertheless, if an enemy of the “revolutionary family” (PRI-government) arose during a presidential period, the government hate strategy was automatically activated.

We cannot overlook the fact that negative advertising generates high ratings and profit. The media played a crucial role as journalist Jenaro Villamil (2007) recalls:

Televisa had an essential role along with radio concessionaries and newspaper owners. The government threatens them by removing their licenses if they did not respond to the government’s script; in the case of the press media, the government controlled and distributed the paper and the state advertising. When those control mechanisms failed, the government found an alternative repression method to silence the critic media. (p. 66)

After the second Clinton presidency, Dick Morris started to look for new opportunities in Latin America. He worked as a political consultant in Mexico for Vicente Fox, and in Argentina for former president Fernando De la Rúa. The interesting fact is that De la Rúa was not able to maintain a position of power and was removed 2 years after he won the election; and Calderón had trouble consolidating his political power. Up to a point in terms of the political media image, Mexico currently has three unofficial presidents and one official president; Calderon (<http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/>), AMLO (<http://www.amlo.org.mx>), FOX (<http://www.centrofox.org.mx>), and *Subcomandante Marcos* (<http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/> and <http://zeztainternazional.ezln.org.mx>). All of them have an impressive political communication plan on their webpage; each one of the sites presents him as president. That person's agenda, events, press releases, photos, among other things, are posted there. As a matter of fact, Vicente Fox likes to be called "president" and not "former president."

In any case, Morris' strategy consisted of four major components: focus groups, public opinion polls, political ads, and the transformation of the electoral campaign into a battleground; according to Villamil (2006), Morris' purpose is to reduce politics to celebrities with high quantities of money to buy political advertisements in order to influence voters. For Morris, Villamil continues, it is irrelevant for candidates to appear on the news; "in a modern democracy the only thing that works are spots with an emotional connection" (p. 75). Therefore, candidates should put aside their doctrines and ideologies to convert themselves into pragmatic contenders. In addition, a Spanish political consultant who usually works with *Partido Popular*, Antonio Solá, advised Calderón. The participation of Morris and Solá in the PAN presidential campaign violated the Electoral Law, which prohibits the participation of foreign citizens in the electoral process or a candidate's campaign. Nevertheless, IFE applied only a modest fine to PAN, and

*Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación* TEPJF (Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary) stated that the court did not have a scientific study or other measurement tool that could measure the impact of the negative campaign on voters; therefore, PAN was only subject to a warning. In addition, Calderon's campaign violated the Electoral Law for accepting economic donations from businesses corporations because "our legislation does not permit the economic support of industry, much less from international conglomerates" (Garduño, 2006, p. 1). The penalty varies from the loss of the political party's registration to an election's annulment. However, TEPJF did not act against PAN or Calderón regarding this violation.

The goal of the negative campaigning was to induce fear in voters and the general population. The political message did not inform citizens; on the contrary, it was completely emotional, alerting citizens to act against an upcoming threat. Historian Lorenzo Meyer (2006) believes that PAN's electoral success was based on its decision not to disseminate its own political platform because the platform was only popular in right wing circles. Therefore, all PAN's energy was focused on its PRD opponent. The phrase "AMLO is dangerous for Mexico" that PAN attributed to the PRD presidential candidate was based on false argumentations, but was the foundation of López Obrador's negative image. The interesting fact is that campaigns based on fear are seeking a leader who will bring order and peace into a chaotic situation. It is not a coincidence that one of Calderón's slogans was *Mano Dura* (strong hand), referring to his capacity to bring order in the country in front of the warning that AMLO would convert Mexico into a new Venezuela.

For journalist and writer Carlos Monsiváis (2006), PAN's campaign based on hate more than fear was something to be concerned about, because it predicts the intention to govern under those terms. The negative ad campaign denotes the political right's (PAN) immense lack of

ideology, which instead bases its political campaign on the manipulation of the voter's sentiments. López Obrador (2006) explained that those spots suggested, "I am Mexico's danger." This concept was also suggested by Salinas during a meeting with Televisa in 2003. Furthermore, AMLO declared that former president Salinas de Gortari, Televisa's owner Emilio Azcárraga Jean, and banker Roberto Hernández agreed to create a "Dirty War" with the purpose of stopping AMLO from gaining the next presidency in Mexico. Openly, AMLO accused Salinas of submitting money to Televisa to produce spots that portrayed him as an authoritarian and intolerant politician in addition to comparing him with Venezuela's president Hugo Chávez (Lizárraga, 2006). AMLO continued, "They have distorted public opinion polls, the PAN candidate has been told to say that he poses the same popularity as me" (Lizárraga, 2006, p. 1).

In 2006, Mitofsky Director Roy Campos commented in a radio interview with Joaquín López Dóriga that AMLO's drop in voters' preferences was a direct consequence of López Obrador's critique against Fox (Lizárraga, 2006, p. 1). Mitofsky was contracted by Televisa to conduct surveys on presidential candidates. However, *Consultores en Información y Análisis de Medios* CIAM representative finds it interesting that when everybody was looking at the controversial PAN spot about the AMLO's link with Chávez, Televisa's survey company announced that AMLO's error was criticizing the president (Lizárraga, 2006, p. 1). The only problem with the connection that PAN was constructing in its political advertisement about AMLO and Chavez was that López Obrador rarely discussed foreign dealings. As MIT political science professor Chappell Lawson (2006) noted,

The quote "right-wing" candidate is a Mexican nationalist who favors expanding ties with the rest of Latin America and continuing to negotiate free trade agreements with countries other than the United States, and who is likely to normalize relationships with

Cuba. The supposedly left-wing candidate doesn't use anti-American discourse, unlike virtually every other Mexican leftist, and has almost no interest in foreign affairs.

(Schorow, 2006, p. 1)

AMLO's public issues position primarily included matters on Mexico's national agenda.

However, Calderon commented, "We are telling people what the López Obrador alternative represents, and what it represents is a danger for Mexico, because he is intolerant" (Vergara, 2006a, p. 1). For example, Calderón explained, the economic aspects of AMLO's proposal do represent a risk for the country, because it is a project that would direct Mexico into bankruptcy by excessively increasing governmental assistance and creating an economic crisis. Just like Chavez, AMLO has an emotional hatred against bankers and businessmen, according to Calderón.

In a press release, the *Banco Nacional de México* Banamex (National Bank of Mexico) stated that the institution never provided financial resources to Calderón's campaign, or to any other political candidate or political party. Banamex is aware that the Electoral Law prohibits this kind of activity as well as the bank's internal policy (Proceso, 2006a). PAN spokesperson César Nava Vázquez (2006) commented that the whole situation is a joke. For him, it is clear that AMLO was desperate because his popularity in opinion polls was decreasing, so it's natural that López Obrador uses this type of strategy to generate attention (Proceso, 2006a). Nava considers that his party would never exploit the dirty war, a complete lie, because everything that has been presented in its spots are true facts (Proceso, 2006a).

During his campaign meetings, AMLO frequently asked his followers not to believe PAN's televised spots because it was part of a campaign to destroy his reputation. López Obrador declared that his strategy to combat the dirty war via misinformed spots was with word-

of-mouth communication, not with money or television spots (Lizárraga, 2006, p. 1). All the controversy about the presidential election captured the attention of Mexican award-winning filmmaker Luis Mandoki, who decided to produce a documentary entitled *¿Quién es el Señor López?* (Who Is Mr. Lopez?), which presented a profile on Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Beginning in 2005, Mandoki commenced documenting Mexican political behavior during AMLO's *desafuero* (legislative process by which a public servant lost constitutional immunity), when he observed the high amount of resistance against the politician who was, for a long time, the voter favorite as presidential candidate for the 2006 election. Mandoki's original plan was to present his work after Election Day. However, he decided to show his documentary earlier in order to fight back PAN's negative campaign against AMLO (Televisa, (2006b). Mandoki introduced his documentary via national television through *La Otra Versión* (AMLO's TV program discussed below). In addition, the film director released a copy of his documentary in DVD, registering high sales according to the *Cámara Nacional de la Industria Cinematográfica del Videograma-CANACINE*. Their first idea was to produce 100,000 copies; but the distributors told Mandoki that if a documentary sold 20,000 copies, it was considered a success. The negotiation closed on 40,000 copies, but that initial order sold out 24 hours after the DVD sale began. This number does not include the pirated copies sold on the street. By June 9, 2006, the registered vending was 950,000 DVD copies (Notimex, 2006a). The film director donated his DVD earnings to charity. After Election Day, the film director declared that in Mexico, there is no democracy, and without democracy, the country cannot advance (Imagen Latente, 2007).

Overall, PAN's spots, which present López Obrador as a danger for Mexico, do break the Electoral Law according to IFE, because those spots exceed the freedom of expression limitation by making personal accusations that slander López Obrador (Flores, 2006). In the case of the

AMLO-Chávez spot, IFE argues that PAN was using the image of the Venezuelan president for free and without any justification for violating Constitutional Bill 33, which states that no foreign citizen can participate in Mexico's electoral process. Nevertheless, IFE noted PRD concerns about the possibility that PAN's political advertisement spots created a negative effect on voters, but the fact could not be confirmed because of a lack of evidence for such media effects (Flores, 2006). Unfortunately, the order to remove those spots came out late in the electoral process, weakening IFE's image in terms of its capability to observe the election from a neutral perspective and the ability of immediately reacting against any type of violation to the Electoral Law.

The controversy arises because Mexico does not have legal regulations or even a definition of negative campaigning. The federal constitution identifies several freedom of speech limitations, such as moral harassment, third party rights, and the perturbation of public order. The Electoral Law recognizes the same limits as the constitution. However, those limits do not acknowledge negative criticism. It is imperative that the IFE *council*, the highest election authority, define the characteristics of a negative campaign. Ideally, it would be better to present an initiative about negative campaigning before Congress to be incorporated into the current Electoral Law. Nevertheless, on September 5, 2006, TEPJF declared Felipe Calderón president-elect of Mexico, winning with a small difference of 0.56% of the national vote over Andrés Manuel López Obrador. The jury ruled that it was unable to determine the effect of the negative campaign on voters caused by Calderón's "Dirty War" against AMLO; therefore, it could not void the election (TEPJF, 2006).

#### Gordillo's Revenge Plan



While Calderón's negative ad campaign was taking place, Elba Esther "the teacher" Gordillo, head of the National Education Worker's Union-SNTE, initiated her own negative advertising television campaign against PRI candidate, Roberto Madrazo Pintado. In a 30-second TV spot, Gordillo (in a medium shot looking at the camera) asked the audience, "Do you believe Madrazo?," and then a quote of Madrazo was inserted on the screen. After a small pause, she answered, "I don't either!" In late 2005, Gordillo publicly threatened Madrazo, pointing out that she would do everything within her power to prevent him from winning the election. Gordillo was PRI's General Secretary at the National Executive Council—the second most important ranking position within the party—at the same time Madrazo was party president. On September 20, 2005, Gordillo resigned from her position after an unresolved 2-year conflict with Madrazo. Her conflict started in 2003, at a time when Gordillo acted as head of the PRI faction in the Chamber of Deputies. The teacher strongly supported several economic reform initiatives, such as tax increases on several foods and medicines. The authorship of those economic reform proposals was initially attributed to President Fox and later to Treasury Secretary Francisco Gil Díaz along with former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari. The controversy began when PRI legislators denied support to Gordillos' reforms. The deputies argued that there was a lack of communication between them and their Chamber's leader, as well as a lack of legislative agreement among them regarding Gordillo's economic initiatives. When this conflict was taken to their party's president, Madrazo supported the PRI legislators, not Gordillo. The teacher became furious with Madrazo for his lack of cooperation (Mendez, 2006a, p. 1).

Political analysts and political journalists have frequently pointed out that Gordillo intensely worked on her political revenge against Madrazo. On July 8, just 6 days after Election Day, during one of the PRD public assemblies held at Zócalo, AMLO's campaign coordinator

Jesús Ortega played the recording of the phone conversation between Gordillo and Tamaulipas State Governor Eugenio Hernández Flores-PRI. Gordillo was negotiating with Tamaulipas to vote in favor of Calderón. On Election Day, Gordillo called Hernández Flores to inform him that preliminary results of her national survey data from 6,000 respondents (14,000 questionnaires were distributed) indicated that 34.1% of voters preferred PAN, 22.96% supported PRI, and 36.98% were for PRD. Gordillo knew that traditionally Tamaulipas and Coahuila favored PRI. Gordillo explained to Hernández Flores that her results indicated that PRI would have no chance of winning the election. Gordillo suggested that the governor change his state preference to favor PAN, because she knew that Calderón would win the election. Gordillo went further by suggesting Hernández Flores call Calderón to express his support (La Jornada, 2006a). Tamaulipas' governor fulfilled Gordillo's request, and his state results were, 41.29% PAN, 25.93% PRI, 26.47% PRD, 2.04% Convergencia, 1.01% New Alliance, 1.29 not registered, and 1.97% void (IFE, 2006a). Remarkably, results from Coahuila, a neighboring state of Tamaulipas, also showed a clear tendency in PAN's favor: 43% PAN, 26.45% PRI, 24.21% PRD, 2.84% Convergencia, 0.90% New Alliance, .88% not registered, and 1.60 void (IFE, 2006b). Governor Hernández Flores declared that it was his duty to answer calls from people of all kinds of political ideologies, that he had nothing to hide, and that the phone conversation with Gordillo has only been partially interpreted (Sánchez Treviño, 2006). At the end of the day, the teacher's effort paid off, and Calderón won the election.

On July 13, 2006, just 11 days after Election Day, Gordillo was expelled from the PRI party via PRI's National Justice Commission that ruled against "the teacher" for promoting the formation of an antagonist political party such as the New Alliance Party and supporting candidates from other political parties such as Felipe Calderón (Mendez, 2006). Also, Madrazo

in his new book *La Traición* (The Treason, 2007) accused Gordillo of negotiating the election with PAN. In contrast, TEPJF ruled that Gordillo's participation had no influence in the process of the 2006 electoral results.

Perhaps, PRI's commission forgot to mention "the teacher's" intervention in the selection of her union's political party presidential candidate. The "teacher" assisted in the creation of a political party to neutralize Madrazo's chance of winning the 2006 election. Although, on several occasions, she denied participation in the formation of the New Alliance party, it was not difficult to link her persona to this political party. The New Alliance party was founded on January 30, 2005, by the National Education Worker's Union-SNTE, a union organization that Gordillo manages. Roberto Campa Cifrián became known in the press as the "Cinderella representative," after *El Universal* published a story providing details concerning New Alliance's presidential candidate selection process (Samaniego, 2006). According to the newspaper, right before New Year's Day, Campa received an invitation to become the presidential candidate. He requested a few days to think it over. A few days after he received the invitation, Campa and Gordillo met for lunch. Throughout their conversation, "the teacher" encouraged him to accept New Alliance's offer; and so he did. On January 8, 2006, the party announced Campa as its presidential candidate. The 2006 election was the New Alliance party's first appearance on the presidential ballot.

Campa was the former co-head of the PRI faction in the Chamber of Deputies under Gordillo's leadership. He was one of the few legislators who supported "the teacher" when she was removed from her Chamber of Deputies position. During the primaries, he supported PRI's Arturo Montiel Rojas's precandidacy and became a member and spokesperson for the *TUCOM* group, a political group united against Roberto Madrazo; this group was also known as *Unidad*

*Democrática* (Democratic Unity). On October 20, 2005, Montiel announced he would turn down his opportunity at candidacy after he had been severely questioned by the media and his political party in relation to his personal and his family's wealth (El Porvenir, 2005). He asserted that all those corruption accusations were nothing more than a political plan to weaken his candidacy along with his political party (Noticieros Televisa, 2005a). Later, Montiel accused Madrazo of being the mastermind behind the corruption attacks against him and his son. Madrazo denied his participation, requesting Montiel to prove his accusation (Coca, 2005) in a national television interview with Joaquín López Dóriga on Televisa (Noticieros Televisa, 2005b). Shortly after Montiel dropped his PRI primaries candidacy, Campa (on November 7, 2005) walked out of the PRI after 28 years of political membership. Campa determined that he could not support Madrazo's imminent presidential candidacy and decided to leave the PRI. Campa declared that PRI could lose, once again, the presidential seat, in addition to an important number of seats in Congress (Infosel, 2005).

Six months later, Madrazo suffered a sort of Montiel boomerang effect, on April 25, 2006, when the first presidential debate took place; the New Alliance's presidential candidate distributed a 21-page document to the press denouncing Madrazo's fiscal evasion from 2003 to 2005. The following day, Madrazo sued Campa for disseminating his personal fiscal information that was supposed to prove Madrazo's owed back taxes. Madrazo argued that by law, only official tax collector authorities have the right to use this type of information (El Universal, 2006a). A few days later, on May 3, the national newspaper, *Reforma*, published that it had a copy of the tax report stating that between December 27, 2005, and January 27, 2006, Roberto Madrazo sorted out his fiscal situation for 2003, 2004, and part of 2005 (Reforma, 2006a). Therefore, Madrazo was telling the truth during the debate when he assured voters that he was

up-to-date on his taxes. On the other hand, in a radio dialogue, Campa declared that if he had to face a sanction or even some jail time for denouncing a possible tax evader, it would be worth it (El Universal, 2006b).

### Vicente Fox's Revenge Strategy

In order to understand the 2006 election, it is important to consider the events that took place 3 years earlier when Andrés Manuel López Obrador was Mexico City's head of government. It seemed that since the middle of his presidential period, Fox had a personal dispute with the left-wing parties. Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, cofounder of the PRD, claimed that "since 2003, all the energy emanating from *Los Pinos* [the presidential residency] had one objective: To prevent at all cost the leftist triumph" (Meyer, 2006, p. 1). Some journalists have pointed out that the Fox/AMLO's problem had more to do with Fox's egocentric personality than anything else. The only visible politician who possessed the same level of Vicente Fox's magnetism was AMLO. Apparently, Fox's popularity was extremely high, above any other politician until 2003, when public opinion polls indicated that López Obrador ranked at the top in Mexicans' preference for the most appealing presidential candidate. The president's confrontation with Andrés Manuel López Obrador— Mexico City's head of government at the time—started right after two consecutive incidents: the videos-scandal and *the desafuero* process.

When Fox realized that AMLO had the potential to eventually become PRD's presidential candidate, he tried to leave him out of the political game by setting up a negative campaign known as "Carlos Ahumada's video scandals" that exposed AMLO's key staff members in corrupt acts. Journalist Carmen Aristegui presented a video of Argentinean businessman Carlos Ahumada, where Ahumada admitted to the premeditated recording of several AMLO's aides, such as Mexico City's former private secretary René Bejarano and

former student movement leader Carlos Imaz, receiving large quantities of money from him (El Universal, 2006c). In addition, former Mexico City Treasury Secretary Gustavo Ponce was caught gambling a considerable amount of money in Las Vegas. Ahumada taped those videos to protect himself from a 31 million-dollar fraud accusation. He used those videos to negotiate with the federal government and other key politicians, such as former PAN Senator Diego Fernández de Cevallos, former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and former Attorney General Rafael Macedo de la Concha, in order to gain protection from a fraud charge. Ahumada also acknowledged that his videos were used to stop AMLO from becoming a presidential candidate. On May 9, 2007, Carlos Ahumada was released from prison two months after Judge Manuel Horacio Cavazos López was replaced by Judge Alberto Ruvalcaba Ramírez, who ruled in Ahumada's favor. "Ahumada's liberation is a new political punch against the Aztec sun [PRD] organized by PAN's Diego Fernández de Cevallos and former president Carlos Salinas" (Verara, 2007, p. 1) declared PRD's General Secretary, Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo (2007). "Justice has many holes for criminals to obtain their freedom" (Verara, p. 1). Nevertheless, Mexico City's head of government was able to prove that he was not connected or involved with those illegal activities in any way. The video-scandals did not damage AMLO's image and popularity; therefore, Fox and his group put into practice another strategy, the *desafuero*.

López Obrador ordered the construction of a roadway on *El Encino* property to access a hospital. When the construction was at its beginning stage, the property owners sued the Mexico City government. A judge ruled in their favor and ordered the city government to stop the construction immediately. AMLO disobeyed the ruling and continued the construction. López Obrador's behavior caused him to face his *desafuero* process. On April 7, 2005, in an address to the Chamber of Deputies, AMLO accused Vicente Fox of promoting his *desafuero*, and in the

same session legislators voted (360 favor and 127 against) to remove AMLO's *fuero*. His *desafuero* process caused several forms of protest, such as rallies in Mexico City. On April 24, an unprecedented event occurred. A crowd of more than 1 million people congregated at the Zócalo plaza to protest against AMLO's *desfuero*. As a response to the protest, 5 days later on April 29, the president transmitted a message to the nation announcing the removal of Attorney General Rafael Macedo de la Concha (AMLO's *desafuero* major promoter), the revision of the López Obrador case, and an initiative that ensured the political rights of citizens under legal process (La Jornada, 2005).

The newly appointed Attorney General Carlos Abascal Carranza announced on May 4, 2005, that the government would drop charges based on a legal technicality. He stated that AMLO was guilty, but his position as Mexico City's head of government was of recent creation and had not been incorporated in all legal procedures, that at the time included governors and municipal presidents. Therefore, there was no law that could be used to continue AMLO's case. Several months later, Mariano Azuela Guitrón (2007), Chief Supreme Justice, claimed that neither the president nor Congress could close AMLO's *desafuero* process for political reasons, citing this action as highly irregular. The entire *desafuero* operation became a titanic political mistake for Fox (Albarrán, 2007). The whole process was not only an excessive and absurd use of power, but created a great amount of uncertainty among Mexicans. Azuela Guitrón continued explaining Fox's behavior, "The political elite in power sent the message that they will stay in power at any cost and would use any type of method to keep it" (Albarrán, 2007, p. 24). The *desafuero* created a strong polarization between the federal government and the Mexico City government. Journalist Delgado (2006) wrote, "The presidency of the republic knew that the decision of the majority of Mexican citizen would not correspond to Felipe Calderón" (p. 1).

President Vicente Fox unofficially entered the presidential race via spots and news coverage, and political science researcher Juan Francisco Escobedo (2006) observed, “Nobody told Fox that there was an enormous difference between being a candidate and being the president of the republic. And, if someone did, no one helped him understand the differences among both roles” (Escobedo, 2006, p. 69). As a consequence of Fox’s behavior, the election was labeled as the “State Media Election” because the presidency used its entire communication infrastructure to favor one political party—PAN—as well as its presidential candidate—Felipe Calderón. This directly violated IFE’s *Acuerdo para la Neutralidad Democrática* (Neutral Democratic Agreement<sup>3</sup>), that prohibited the president, governors, and majors from directly participating in any political campaign, including delivering speeches in the media or elsewhere expressing support for a political party, and the creation of a political advertising campaign to promote government achievements or public servant personal image. Also, José de Jesús Gudiño Pelayo (2006), Supreme Court Judge, ordered on February 28 the immediate removal of all presidential advertising materials as well as material that included Fox’s image (Zárate, 2006a). Nevertheless, Fox paid no attention to IFE’s agreement and the Supreme Court from January to mid-April of 2006. The federal government aired 456,137 spots to promote the Fox government’s accomplishments, spending 1.7 million pesos (Reforma, 2006b). In addition, Fox traveled more frequently to the interior of Mexico. From January to April 2006, the president scheduled 72 visits, approximately a 62% increase in relation to the previous year. In 2005, during that same time period, Fox traveled 42 times to promote his government (Reforma, 2006b).

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<sup>3</sup> The agreement was signed on February 19, 2006. For more information, visit [http://www.ife.org.mx/documentos/cncs/anexos\\_boletin\\_73](http://www.ife.org.mx/documentos/cncs/anexos_boletin_73)



Fox criticized populism, the PRD presidential candidate, and supported Felipe Calderón almost every day at any public event he had scheduled, regardless of the purpose of the public event. Fox incorporated into his speeches phrases that were part of his advertising campaign that the Supreme Court prohibited him from using (Infosel, 2006a). The president's open support for Calderón irritated political parties and presidential candidates. AMLO nicknamed Fox *chachalaca*, a type of bird that never stops singing. PRD candidate López Obrador's most controversial phrase was the one he used to tell Fox to stay out of the presidential race "*Callate Chachalaca*" (shut up, chachalaca!), but the president continued acting as a candidate. At various points of the campaign period, Fox and López Obrador dominated the television electoral coverage. It seemed as though Vicente Fox was running again for the presidential seat against AMLO. Roberto Campa called Fox "Calderón's jilguero," meaning a chameleon, because it is unfair to use public money to finance a "Dirty War." Roberto Madrazo asked Fox "to promote the dialog and stop confrontation" (El Universal, 2006a). Ten months after Election Day, Madrazo ensured that the 2006 election would not be repealed because of Vicente Fox's intervention (Infosel, 2006b). Madrazo did not reject the electoral result, because he knew that the 11 million people who voted for him would protest on the street next to AMLO's supporters, and together they could force IFE and the Federal Electoral Tribunal to open all the ballots and recount the election. However, he explained, "I did not want to play that game" (Gil Olmos, 2007a, p. 1) because it could lead the country to complete chaos, a situation with a lack of governance.

In addition, several governors denounced Fox's unethical behavior during their 2006 National Governors Conference (Zárate, 2006b). Political parties also protested Fox's actions. PRI Deputy Jorge Estefan Chidiac accused Fox of being the intellectual author of the dirty

campaign against AMLO (Cervantes, 2007a). Even so, it took 5 months for IFE to notice and take action. On May 26, IFE's president asked Fox to stay away from the electoral process because his presidential status required him to be neutral (Zárate, 2006c). The president decided to follow IFE's recommendation. He stopped his national broadcast program *Fox Contigo*, and he cancelled all official visits with any of the presidential candidates. Even so, Fox's revenge against AMLO was a rumor until 18 months after López Obrador's *desfuero* process. On February 1, 2007, Fox declared in Washington, D.C., that his revenge against López Obrador was fulfilled because his candidate won the election. Fox declared himself to be the only person elected twice as president of Mexico in 2000 and 2006 (Carreño Carlón, 2007). PRI party president Mariano Palacios Alcocer along with PRI Senate Head Manlio Fabio Beltrones concurred that Fox's affirmations were out of place, irrelevant, and damaged IFE's credibility and Calderón's image (Teherán, Saúl, & Reséndiz, 2007). AMLO refused to declare anything and remained silent regarding Fox's affirmations of revenge.

According to writer Lorenzo Meyer (2006), one of the direct consequences of Fox's behavior was that the left party questioned the election procedures. Fox's behavior created a political polarization in the nation, and this political situation was a major threat for Mexico. Nevertheless, similar to Gordillo's case, TPFJ ruled that Fox's intrusion was risky for the validation of the electoral process. However, because his interference was weakened, his actions did not represent major evidence to void the final result (TEPJF, 2006).

It seemed that it was more important for the major political actors to execute their own personal vengeance than to discuss important political matters. The negative political environment that took place early in the election set the tone for the entire campaign. In addition, narrowing the political advertising to a candidate's attributes limited the opportunity to learn

about the candidate's position on public issues. In this election, the discussion of political platforms, issue positions, and political ideology in television advertisements were almost nonexistent. Democracy is based on an informed voter, a voter who must be aware of the main national problems and a candidate's solutions for those problems. Unfortunately, in this case, political advertisements focused on a sort of "political show" more than anything else.

#### IFE's Media Watch

IFE contracted two companies, *IBOPE AGM Mexico* and *Sigma Dos*, to monitor and count promotional spots for the candidates and to monitor newscasts for news stories about candidates. The Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics IBOPE was founded in 1942 in São Paulo, Brazil, by Auricélio Penteadó with offices in 12 Latin American countries. IBOPE-Mexico (<http://www.ibope.com.mx>) was established in 1991, offering media research and audience measurement services. Sigma Dos-Mexico (<http://www.sigmados.com.mx>) is a Spanish company founded in 1982 that specializes in marketing and public opinion research with offices in more than 10 countries in Latin America. With IBOPE, IFE had two contracts to monitor and count promotional spots for a total of 54.5 million pesos. With Sigma Dos, IFE had one contract for 5.4 million pesos (Herrera, 2007a). IFE's Fiscal Representative Fernando Agís (2007) asserted that its monitoring system is the best of the best.

[IFE] has the most complete monitoring system in the history of the Federal Electoral Institute. It's a monitoring system that summarizes a large number of cities, stations, and frequencies; for the first time, radio and billboards are included. We have practically covered all the press in the national territory because we have done it with our own resources throughout our district and local offices across the country. (Herrera, 2007a, p.

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IFE released results from IBOFE and Sigma Dos in two different reports: one for promotional spots *Reporte final de los monitoreos de promocionales: Periodo del 19 de enero al 28 de junio de 2006* and other for news coverage *Análisis general de los resultados del monitoreo de noticias del 19 de enero al 30 de junio del 2006*. IFE's official report on monitoring promotional spots indicated that a total of 704,502 spots were aired on 240 radio and 150 television stations. Television alone broadcast 142,358 spots of which 28% [40,305] concerned the presidential candidates, distributed as follows: *Coalición por el Bien de Todos* 16,316; PAN 11,904; *Alianza por México* 10,425; *Nueva Alianza* 1,454; and *Alternativa* 206 spots (IFE, 2006c). Month-by-month data indicated an increase in AMLO's TV promotion near the end of the campaign period during the months of May and June. It is interesting to observe that PAN was at the top of the IBOPE political advertisement list during the months of March and April, precisely the time when the defamatory spots against AMLO began. PRI always placed third each month (IFE, 2006c). The presidential candidate who spent the highest amount of money on mass media was Roberto Madrazo-PRI with 445 million pesos; followed by Andrés Manuel López Obrador-PRD 384 million pesos; and Felipe Calderón-PAN invested the least amount, 250 million pesos. In terms of television, Madrazo-PRI was still at the top with 295 million pesos; followed by AMLO-PRD with 268 million; and Calderón-PAN with 127 million pesos (IFE, 2006c).

Contrary to IFE's numbers, two days before the end of the campaign period, *El Universal*<sup>4</sup> reported a projected cost of what each presidential candidate invested in political advertisements, and the PAN presidential candidate was the spending leader. *El Universal* indicated that Calderón spent 574,455,824 pesos; Madrazo spent 384,634,875 pesos; López

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<sup>4</sup> El Universal contracted the company Verificación y Monitoreo to monitor Mexican mass media and reported its findings in the paper.

Obrador spent 242,478,634 pesos; Patricia Mercado spent 42,375,399 pesos; and Roberto Campa spent 28,578,875 pesos (Morales, 2006). IFE's president Ugalde acknowledges that IBOFE's monitoring system does not represent the total amount of promotional spots (Aristegui, 2007). IBOFE's sample covered 90% of the spots that were broadcast in 20 major cities.<sup>5</sup>

Confusion surrounding the monitoring results motivated political parties to take a hard look at IFE's report. On April 23, all eight political parties registered in the Mexican electoral system found a minimum of 10 significant errors in IFE's promotional spots monitoring report. For them, the report was unreliable. Examples of the "miscalculations" include: (1) spots paid for by IFE directly to promote the election, (2) spots of municipal elections were incorporated, (3) double counting of spots, and (4) nonsense registration of broadcast time like 25:00 hours, when a full day only has 24:00 hours, among other discrepancies (Herrera, 2007b). However, IFE council members argue that there is not a margin of error in the database.

#### Penalties

The problem between the political parties and IFE was not only about agreement on the number of spots aired, but also economic penalties. The base criteria to allocate penalties to political parties were established by IFE's results from the promotional spots monitoring report. IFE's Fiscal Representative Fernando Agíss (2006) justified the logic for this procedure by saying:

The major investment of political parties during the campaign is in the mass media. Radio, television, press, and billboards generate a very considerable investment in relation to the total. I could guess that around 65%, 70% up to 75% of the campaign's total budget. Therefore, if we have control of those disbursements, you would have taxed

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<sup>5</sup> Those cities were: Acapulco, Ciudad Juárez, Culiacán, Distrito Federal, Guadalajara, Hermosillo, León, Mérida, Mexicali, Monterrey, Morelia, Puebla, Querétaro, San Luis, Tijuana, Toluca, Torreón, Veracruz y Villahermosa.

the major part of the parties' budget, and this is an expense that can be compared with something that took place in reality. (Herrera, 2006a, p. 1).

Based on their own report, on May 23, 2007, IFE announced that the political party penalties for the 2005-2006 electoral process totaled 99 million pesos [8 million dollars]. PRI received the highest penalty of 37 million pesos; followed by PAN with 17 million pesos; PRD with 15 million pesos; PVEM with 14 million pesos; Convergencia with 5.6 million pesos; New Alliance with 4 million pesos; and Alternativa received the lowest penalty of 262 thousand pesos. At the end of the session, IFE explained that those penalties are not final. IFE's president, Luis Carlos Ugalde, claimed to possess evidence to prove that a total of 757,000 commercial spots were paid for by political parties during the 2006 election, from which 281,000 were not reported to IFE. The electoral agency subsequently conducted research to find out who paid for those 281,000 spots (Villamil, 2007a).

Indeed, on August 31, IFE announced, after its investigations, the total amount of the new fines was 107 million pesos: PRD and PAN 32 million pesos; PRI and New Alternative 15 million pesos; finally, Convergencia 13 million pesos. In addition, IFE said it had opened 26 legal investigations to find out the origin and destination of other monetary sources that political parties have not reported. From the 26 legal inquiries, 8 focus on PRI, 6 on PRD, 4 on New Alliance, 3 to PAN and Alternative, as well as 2 on Convergencia (Villamil, 2007c). The next day, PRD Communication and Propaganda Secretary Gerardo Fernández Noroña (2007) presented TEPJF documentation to refute IFE's fines. He considered this act to be a political revenge against his party for promoting Ugalde's dismissal from office in Congress (Vergara, 2007b). Four political parties that determined that IFE's penalties were not reasonable presented

their claim to TEPJF. They argued that those fines were based on incompetent results from promotional spots monitoring.

However, PAN Representative Dora Alicia Martínez (2007) was confident that her party would not receive additional fines. She stated that the cost of each spot aired in television and radio that promoted Felipe Calderon were the cheapest in comparison with those paid by PRD and PRI (Villamil, 2007a). Nevertheless, the political negotiation that each party does with a particular mass media outlet is what could set the price range for political advertising. As Professor Raúl Trejo Delabre (2006) explained,

In Mexico frequently the major radio and television networks offer political parties additional spaces than those they contracted for electoral propaganda, such as candidate interviews in their newscasts, favorable comments about candidates by newscasts' main anchors, and favorable treatment in discussion and opinion programming; among other things are components of their negotiation deal. (p. 1)

In regard to IFE's investigation of the 281,026 radio and television spots that were not reported to IFE, the institution declared that its investigation period will expand to 1 year because of the complex process that is involved. In the first phase, IFE made around 600 to 700 information solicitations to several radio and television stations. The second phase involved the right of political parties to request an audience with IFE. The third phase involved IFE's production of the final report. Finally, the fourth phase involved IFE's announcement of fines to political parties. As of September 15, 2007, IFE reported that the first phase of its investigation had not been accomplished (Martínez, 2007).

#### Spotgate

Meanwhile, a new electoral controversy referred to as “spotgate” arose because of a contradiction of information regarding the number of presidential campaign spots that Calderon aired. The estimate is that the PAN’s presidential candidate could exceed IFE’s advertising expenditure limit of 651 million pesos by 244 million pesos. That is, PAN’s final disbursement might be 895 million pesos. On May 28, 2007, PRD representative Horacio Duarte presented an *Apelación* (legal resource to request a superior court to review the sentence) against IFE’s 15 million pesos penalty. PRD argued that IFE’s spots monitor database is erroneous. He confirmed that in the case of his presidential candidate, AMLO, there was a discrepancy with the IBOFE (company that conducted IFE’s media watch study) of 384,000 spots contracted by his political party in radio and television, but the IBOFE’s database does not contain that information. Furthermore, PRD presented documents illustrating that the IBOFE database does not contain the spots that were paid by third parties in favor of Calderon. This omission represents a capital expenditure of 244,340,000 pesos. According to PRD, third parties paid the following amounts to promote Calderon’s candidacy: *Consejo Cordinador Empresarial* - 136,476,000 pesos; *Asociación Ármate de Valor y Vota* - 30,663,000 pesos; *Jugomex S.A de C.V.* - 13,143,000 pesos; and *Sabritas* - 16,496,000 pesos (Villamil, 2007a). PRD argues that the cost of those spots should be added to Calderon’s advertisement budget and that IBOFE should have registered them in the first place.

PRD’s arguments mostly are based on two legal documents. The first is IFE’s Fiscal Commission Agreement created on June 23, 2006, establishing that any kind of promotional material that spreads images, voices, slogans, names, last names, or nick names (verbal or in writing) concerning any candidate will be considered in the advertising budget limit for candidates that those spots are endorsing. Second, PRD recognized that on September 5, 2006,



TPJF acknowledged in its verdict that those spots paid for by outsiders labeled as *Guerra Sucia* (Dirty War) commercial spots created to defame AMLO's public image and promote Calderon's candidacy.

IBOFE-Mexico's president, Rubén Jara (2007), explained in a press conference that the *Guerra Sucia* spots are not included in its company's database. He clarified that it was IFE's own responsibility and that it had nothing to do with the methodology used to collect the data (Villamil, 2007b). IFE's president Ugalde affirmed that the *Guerra Sucia* spots could not be counted as part of IFE's advertisement budget limit because a political party or political association did not pay for those spots. However, PRD insists that those spots should be counted as part of the PAN budget.

Perhaps future research to document and demonstrate effectiveness of such an expensive electoral campaign could solve this controversy regarding the use of political advertising. Furthermore, during the postelectoral conflict, PRD presented to TEPJF an initiative to cancel the elections because the *Guerra Sucia* spots disturbed its presidential candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador's, public image. The supreme electoral court turned down its petition, stating that it was not aware of a technique to measure media effects on voters. This study will further the understanding of the relationship dynamics between the national television media and political candidates by presenting the effectiveness of an election based on political advertising spots.

On a broader note, this research project will contribute to the analysis and discussion of how globalization is changing political dynamics by replacing the news story with the promotional spot. Political marketers use advertising as their major vehicle of promotion to voters. However, critics state that political marketers' strategy is dangerously changing a politician's images from a person to a commodity, from a politician to an entertainment celebrity.

As a result, political candidates focus their attention on highlighting personal attributes more than their stance on public issues. This attitude offends some voters who believe politicians should pay more attention to basic social problems than their ego. This dynamic of profiling politicians as celebrities has created a very close competition. In the 21st century, presidential elections (Italy, United States, Mexico, Argentina) yield very close results, and Mexico is not the exception. Could this phenomenon be the new global political tendency?

Television political advertising establishes the tone of the campaign and has a strong possibility to set the media's agenda. Political promotion in television holds a high social value in Mexican society. Television commercial spots are the presidential candidates' top priority. Felipe Calderón expended the highest amount of pesos in political promotion followed by Roberto Madrazo, AMLO, and Patricia Mercado. Roberto Campa spent the smallest amount of money on television political ads. The idea that high volumes of commercial spots would generate the maximum quantity of votes was political marketers' main strategy. IFE also considered that the influence of political advertisement was significant on voters. Therefore, IFE monitors television political ads and allocates economic penalties to political parties based on their counts of promotional spots. Such a criterion implied that IFE at some point did consider that the media's agenda could be set by television political ads. Nevertheless, IFE did not monitor television political entertainment products that tended to present presidential candidates as goods for sale.

## Chapter 5

### Political Campaigns as Entertainment:

#### The Commodification of the Presidential Candidates

Mexican television audiences saw a new form of political advertisement during the 2006 presidential election campaign. Television audiences were accustomed to seeing their favorite telenovela (Latin American soap opera) character drinking soft beverages, eating chips, or wearing designer apparel. The new advertising strategy was to sell a new commodity—a presidential candidate. The telenovela *Lety, La Fea más Bella* (Lety, The Prettiest Ugly Girl) produced by Televisa, registered one of its highest ratings (24.5 points) of the year 2007, increasing the cost of the advertising spot broadcast during the telenovela. A public advertising rate list estimated that a 20-second spot rate was 359,300 pesos (Gil Olmos, 2007c). How much would it cost to place a product—the presidential candidate—in the telenovela drama? Usually, a lot more. When the advertised product is a presidential candidate, however, it is difficult to estimate the economic, social, and political cost of the commodification of a political candidate.

In 1999, the Colombian network RCN produced the telenovela *Yo soy Betty, la Fea* (I Am Ugly Betty), written by Fernando Gaitán. The story featured as its main character an extremely unattractive, intelligent, but poor girl who became more attractive throughout the course of its melodramatic series. She was also on a quest for the love of her life—her boss. In 2002, *Yo soy Betty, La Fea* won *Mejor Telenovela* (best telenovela) at the *TP de Oro* awards (Gil Olmos, 2007c). In 2006, two other countries remade the telenovela. In the United States, Touchstone Television produced “Ugly Betty.” The show won two Golden Globe awards the year it premiered. In Mexico, Televisa produced the telenovela under the name *Lety, La Fea Más Bella*. Palmira Olguín adapted the story for a Mexican audience. The majority of the cast members were Mexican actors. The Mexican version of the telenovela added an innovative touch to the melodrama—political advertisement. The telenovela could also be classified as *infomercial*, paid advertisement to support and promote politicians. In previous political campaigns, it was normal for a politician to pay newspapers and newscasts for news stories to maintain their positive image. Now, that practice moved to entertainment television. Near the end of the 2006 presidential campaign period, PAN candidate Felipe Calderón paid Televisa to incorporate his name in several scripts on the telenovela *Lety, La Fea Más Bella*. It was the first time that this kind of personal political marketing practice occurred in Mexico.

The Salinas de Gortari presidency supported Televisa’s 1995 production of a historical telenovela *El Vuelo del Águila*. The telenovela featured the life of Porfirio Díaz (1830-1915), the absolute ruler of Mexico for 35 years. During the Porfiriato dictatorship, Mexico followed the liberal economic model, which was very similar to the neoliberal economic model that President Carlos Salinas de Gortari tried to incorporate in Mexico. At the time, the president was negotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and the United

States; he faced opposition and resistance to his free trade idea. Therefore, Salinas de Gortari decided to support production of *El Vuelo del Águila*, which portrayed Díaz's life and the "positive effects" that the liberal economic policy had on Mexico's economy during the dictatorship. For that reason, *El Vuelo del Águila* indirectly supported Salinas de Gortari's economic proposal: the neoliberal economic model. However, his image was never part of a shoot nor was he part of the scripted dialog. However, Calderón, who was just a presidential candidate, not the president like Salinas de Gortari, used the telenovela *Lety, La Fea Más Bella* to directly advertise himself. The placement of a political candidate in the scene was like placing a merchandise product in the scene. Furthermore, José Natividad González Parás—PRI Governor of the northern state of Nuevo León—and his wife—Cristina Maíz de Parás—appeared in several episodes of the melodrama, because the governor covered the cost of a 1-month production in order to publicize himself and his state in the melodrama. Their collaboration included the telenovela's final episode that was broadcast live from Monterrey, Nuevo León's capital, on February 25, 2007. The ratings for that night reached a record number of 44 points. The appearance of a real-life politician in a melodrama was unprecedented and ushered in Televisa's productions and its relationship with political power. Slowly but surely, Mexican politicians shifted their public image from people into products. Politicians became the products as they marketed themselves to voters through television programs. While this merchandise was not available for retail purchase, it could be acquired through the viewer's vote at the polls.

#### Political Entertainment in 2000 Election

Television news remained the primary source of information for Mexican voters during the 2000 election (Bruhn, 2004). During the electoral campaign, several political parties introduced a sort of political entertainment outlets, comic books, and telenovela. The comic book came in two

versions: one of the PAN and another for the PRI. The PAN comic book was *Fox del Pueblo* that described Fox's personal history. All the characters in the book were drawings except Fox whose photograph was inserted in the strip. Several segments of his comic book adventures were incorporated in the celebrity magazine *TV Notas* as two-page ads.

Politics became political entertainment in 1999, when a political telenovela *El Candidato* (The Candidate) was aired on TV Azteca until June 18, 2000, just a few days before Election Day (July 2). The telenovela was produced by Zuma, a company owned by actor Humberto Zurita and his wife actress Christian Bach. Zurita (2000) explained,

Nobody likes politics, it's something very difficult to understand, but I believe that we should not be anti-political. Through this telenovela, every day, I have become more interested in politics, in our government, and our political parties. We [citizens] must vote and decide whom we want to govern us, in our telenovela [*El Candidato*] we are not trying to support any specific political party. (p. 1)

If *El Candidato* inspired voters who stopped participating in previous election to go out and vote on Election Day (2000 election) for actor and producer Humberto Zurita, his telenovela had a positive effect on their viewing audience.

The story was an original idea of José Ignacio Suárez Vázquez; Jorge Patiño made the adaptation for television; and the script editors were Gerardo Sánchez Luna as well as Gabriela Pérez Lau. The interesting fact was that this telenovela offered insight into current political events, such as the 2000 election. *El Candidato's* script was based on the classic love triangle conflict between Ignacio Santoscoy and the Marquez sisters, Marycarmen (his wife) and Beatriz (his love for life); intermixed with actual 2000 presidential campaign events. Usually the telenovela presented political events with a 1-week delay; therefore, the main news of the

previous week was featured in the telenovela 8 days later. Zurita was the main character on *El Candidato*. Ignacio Santoscoy (Zurita) was a politician who at the peak of his professional career when he became the presidential nominee of Mexico's most powerful political party and personal life with a family thanks to an arranged marriage with Maricarmen Manríquez, who was the daughter of Juventino Manriquez, an influential politician. The political power that Ignacio Santoscoy poses has been given by his father-in-law, who persuaded Santoscoy to chair the Popular Alliance Party as its General Secretary, making Santoscoy one of the most important political figures of the year 2000. At some point, Santoscoy decided to run for president and begin his campaign almost at the same time that real-life presidential candidates did in mid-January of 2000.

It is not unusual that telenovelas portray political events in their drama. There are many examples as in historical telenovelas, such as *Senda de Gloria* (Mexican post revolutionary), *El Carruaje* (Benito Juárez), *La Anorcha Encendida* (Mexico's independence), and many others often produced by Televisa. The difference is that those events were presented on a telenovela many years after the actual event took place. For example, *Senda de Gloria* was produced in the mid-1980s when the real events that the telenovela portrayals took place 50 years before its production. Until *El Candidato*, Mexican audiences had never seen a telenovela that featured current political events. Zurita (2000) commented that *El Candidato* never received any kind of censorship from the Attorney General's office or from TV Azteca board of directors. On the contrary, our own production company was the ones trying to censor us, because it was never our intention at Zuma productions to create a political program. *El Candidato* is just a melodrama. Zedillo's government and TV Azteca owners were supporting the production of the political entertainment; *El Candidato* marked the starting point of portraying current political events via a

melodramatic genre. In terms of its effects, the author of this dissertation was not able to find any studies documenting such effect on Mexican voters. Political entertainment in the 2006 election expanded to political, parody/comedy and musical telenovela *El Privilegio de Mandar*, comic show *¡Qué Madre, tan Padre!*, and political party paid program *La Otra Versión*.

### ¡Qué Madre, Tan Padre!

Televisa's weekly sitcom *¡Qué Madre, tan Padre!* was also contracted by Calderón to promote his candidacy. The television series aired nationwide on Saturdays from 7:30 to 8:00 PM on Televisa's main channel—*Canal de las Estrellas*. The program storyline was about a Mexico City family that faces a crisis when the father loses his job, and his wife decides to go back to work in a high-paying professional position. The family is turned upside down by reversed parental roles. The mother became responsible for supporting the household, and the father became the homemaker, Mr. Mom. The change in family dynamics also created frustration between the grandparents and their grandchildren Andrés, Sebastián, Jessica, and the twins Luz and Liz. The sitcom consisted of 22 episodes broadcast from early January to late June, just days before Election Day. The television series was produced by well-known comedian and director Jorge Ortiz de Pinedo.

The main characters in the series were Maribel Galicia (Maribel Guardia), and Mauricio Hernández (Mauricio Castillo). Maribel, a marketing professional who specialized in sales and dressed very sexy in the office, positioned her desk to face the main entrance to the office. Behind her desk was a window that allowed the viewer to see a billboard outside that featured Calderón's advertising posted on it. Therefore, every time that she sat at her desk, the audience could see Calderón's image. This show did not include any dialog about the presidential election or the PAN candidate. The advertising placement took place at the visual level only.



Nevertheless, this was something unprecedented in Mexico's national television entertainment programming. Televisa's comic programming aired during primetime and registered the highest rating for that time slot; each commercial spot reached about 1 billion 637 million worldwide viewers ages 26 to 49 years old. Those ratings were only surpassed by certain special events such as the FIFA World Cup championship (Televisa, 2006c).

### El Privilegio de Mandar

Televisa also created a telenovela committed to representing the 2006 electoral process, *El Privilegio de Mandar* (The Privilege to Rule). It was a political, parody/comedy and musical telenovela devoted to the portrayal of the 2006 electoral process focusing on the conflicts between the candidates as well as major political scandals. Televisa broadcast the program for 78 consecutive weeks from January 3, 2005 (18 months before Election Day) to July 9, 2006 (1 week after Election Day). *El Privilegio de Mandar* aired weekly nationwide every Monday night right after the telenovela *Lety, La Fea más Bella* and before *El Noticiero con Joaquín López Doriga*. In early 2005, *El Privilegio de Mandar* registered high ratings, 24.6, ranking as Televisa's prime time top-rated program. By mid-2005, according to IBOPE México, the telenovela obtained a 24.2 rating on top of the two main national television newscasts—*El Noticiero de Joaquín López Doriga* (20.8) and *Hechos de la Noche* de Javier Alatorre (11) (Ortega, 2005). *El Prilegio de Mandar* was another illustration of how entertainment could be used to disseminate a political message. Voter preference for television genre was also reflected in a national opinion poll (Parametría, 2005) that indicated 7 of 10 Mexicans have viewed the telenovela, 66% liked the program, and 9% did not like it. However, 75% of participants considered the show as a source of information about politics (Ortega, 2005). In 2005, César González and Manuel Rodríguez received the *Antena CIRT* award, the most important medal of

the National Radio and Television Industry Association, for obtaining the highest ratings in a comedy show (Presidencia de la República, 2005). However, those ratings contrast with the Mexico 2006 Panel Study. The respondents to the question, “Aside from newscasts, do you watch a political satire program on television?,” indicated that only 8.2% of survey respondents watched *El Privilegio de Mandar*. The highest number of respondents indicated that they did not watch the satire television program (Lawson, et. al. 2007).

Through *El Privilegio de Mandar*, politicians became celebrities. Telenovela characters were unique in the sense that each one of them was a parody of real-life major politicians. Personal characteristics of each presidential candidate, along with some other politicians, were carefully analyzed by the creative crew and then a stereotype was shaped. In addition, characters keep the same names as the real-life politicians. For example, one telenovela mimicked Andres Manuel López Obrador’s speech pattern. He tends to speak slowly, so that whenever the AMLO character spoke, he stopped abruptly in the middle of his dialogue. The audience would hear a ticking clock sound effect, indicating the passage of time. Then, after another character in the scene snapped his/her fingers, then the AMLO character immediately continued with his dialogue. In addition, the AMLO character frequently used the ‘j’ instead of the ‘c’ sound to reflect a regional language accent. The AMLO character pronounced *polícia* (police) as ‘*polijia*,’ just like the real politician.

Even key political figures, such as PRD founder Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, pointed out his admiration for the show’s actors. He congratulated actor Arath de la Torre, who played “Cuauhtémoc” in the telenovela, for his characterization. The actor commented, “Cárdenas invited me to meet him for lunch. During our conversation, I discovered that he likes comedy. Generally, we have a cold image about the left, but he is a very likeable person” (Televisa,

2005a, p. 1). Telenovela writers created a fictional neighborhood “*El Relaxo with x*” that represents Mexico. In the show, every political party was represented as community organizer or city block chief. The *Relaxo* neighborhood that symbolizes Mexican society was represented by three major sectors: the people sector by Mary (actress Angélica Vale, who also portrayed the main character of *Lety, la fea más bella*), a house cleaner, and *Canti* (actor Carlos Espejel), a laborer. The political sector was represented by *Chente* (nickname for Vicente Fox’s character) and his close collaborator Santiago Creel, and the presidential candidates. Public servants represented the third sector, such as senators, deputies, state governors, and political party heads, among others political leaders.

Manuel Rodríguez Ajenjo, Cesar González, Sergio Adrián Sánchez, and Claudio Herrera wrote the screen play of the show. The telenovela’s script was based on real-life weekly political events. The fundamental source of inspiration for the telenovela writers was the national media, and politicians’ speeches and their public behavior. Scriptwriters portrayed the actual political context from a humorous and entertaining approach; in a newspaper article, scriptwriter Manuel Rodríguez Ajenjo (2005) said, “Their goal is [was] to entertain and have good ratings. If they [viewers] would like political analysis, there are other programs devoted to that task,” (Molina Ramírez, 2005, p. 1). In addition, Rodríguez Ajenjo commented, “I do not believe that people would decide their vote by watching the program. What we tried to emphasize is the fact that we expose politicians at a level that generally they are not known” (Molina Ramírez, p. 1). For scriptwriter César González (2005), the program was designed for viewers to turn their attention to politics from a nonpartisan point of view (Molina Ramírez). The show producers expressed that the telenovela does not provide any form of political analysis, but because of their work,

more viewers were interested in politics because their representations on the program shifted from boring political matters into diverse situation comedy (López Cortés, 2005).

In the past, the presidential administrations did not permit this type of content on the air. Both the government censorship and the media's auto-censorship did not consent to formulate a sketch comedy about politicians or the nation's political life. In Televisa, back "when Emilio Azcárraga Milmo was the company's president, political topics were forbidden," said Ajenjo (2005); "no one could dream about producing a show with political content" (p. 1). Nevertheless, now under the leadership of Azcárraga Milmo's son, Emilio Azcárraga Jean, political topics are permitted. Producer Reynaldo López (2005) explained, "Times have changed and currently it is possible to produce a parody about our political and social situation" (EFE, 2005b, p. 1). Actors believe that this content can be aired because Mexican media censorship has diminished. "The difference is the freedom of speech; today, in a moment of change we [media] have it" (Televisa, 2006a, p. 1). For other journalists, such as cartoonist José Hernández (2005), the historical moment that marked the change was the 2000 election. According to a statement by Hernández in a newspaper article, "Before you [journalist/media] needed to be brave to criticize the president, today [Fox's presidency] you [journalist/media] need to be brave to defend him" (Molina Ramírez, 2005, p. 1). For him this program arrived with a 30-year delay, "Today does not represent a challenge to face up to politicians. Currently [Fox's presidency], the untouchables, those who exercise power, are the businessmen and large media companies, whom the program leaves in peace" (Molina Ramírez, 2005, p. 1). Furthermore, cartoonist Hernández felt that it makes no sense to make fun of the president or any other politician. "You cannot just criticize politics, because the power relies on others that *Privilegio* does not touch" (Molina Ramírez, p. 1). Furthermore, cartoonist Hernández pointed out, "Sometimes politicians provide

us with a complete sketch; for instance, during the primaries. Santiago Creel's father declared that Felipe Calderón's campaign team was better than his son's; that is a complete scene" (Molina Ramírez, p. 1).

Televisa's telenovela *El Privilegio de Mandar* does not inform; but it does provoke a laugh, according to media analyst Florence Toussaint (2005) in a newspaper article,

The criticism occurred at a superficial level, it [the telenovela] points out candidates' private matters such as figure of speech or their dress style instead of [presenting] important matters. It is terrible that people said that the show informs. What could be their expectation if people believe that private chitchat, and not national topics, are informing? (Molina Ramírez, 2005, p. 1).

In contrast, producer Reynaldo López (2005) stated that the goal of the show was to entertain and inform at the same time (Televisa, 2005a). According to López Obrador, the purpose of the show was to destroy his reputation as a politician, especially after AMLO called Salinas and Fox *chachalacas* in several of his campaign meetings (Lizárraga, 2006). Communication Professor Salvador Guerrero (2005), made a case that cynicism had been an exclusive territory of the political class, but there was no reason for the media, more precisely Televisa, to transfer that sentiment to one of their telenovelas and present it as a cultural political product that could be sold like a commodity. *El Privilegio de Mandar* represented an appealing television format for an audience who shares, despite politics, a need to understand the political power dispute. "I would not be surprised if this program had effective influence on the 2006 election," commented Guerrero (Guerrero, 2005, p. 1).

Monterrey Tech graduate students María de Dolores Morín Lara, and Citlalli Sánchez Hernández (2006) conducted a content analysis using a qualitative method of *El Privilegio de*

*Mandar* that focused on the representation of the political context. Their results indicated two major findings:

(1) The change in the Mexican democratic context presented the opportunity for the media to criticize politicians and represents a lucrative business for media owners through a rentable TV format such as the political/comic telenovela. Further, their concern was that in Mexico's emerging democracy, citizens do not care very much about politics and television shows such as this telenovela do not present opportunities for citizens to develop critical thinking regarding presidential candidates and their political platform.

The telenovela represents three sources of income revenue for Televisa: advertisers that want to contract spots, ratings, and politicians who want to pay to "look good/good press" on the show. Clearly, *El Privilegio de Mandar* provoked emotions and laughs for its audiences, but by no means did the program provide critical analysis of the presidential election.

(2) In addition, results by Morín Lara and Sánchez Hernández indicated that *El Privilegio de Mandar* portrayed election news that was humorous and controversial with information that criticized candidates, not news stories about public issues. Therefore, "The program does not induce audiences on what topics to consider, certainly the program does establish a list of topics in which the audience thinks about most" (Morín Lara & Sánchez Hernández, 2006, p. 4). That is, in agenda-setting terms, the show concentrates only on the second level of agenda-setting by representing candidates based on their attributes more than on their positions on public issues. The show, in a way, presented presidential candidates along with other influential politicians as celebrities more than politicians. The difference lies in the characteristics selected to represent a presidential candidate. The celebrity format was based on candidates' attributes and scandals. On the contrary, politicians should be represented according to their standpoint on public issues.

*El Privilegio de Mandar* ended on July 9, 2006 (7 days after Election Day). On the last episode, Ugalde declared Felipe Calderón to be the winner of “*El Relaxo*” neighborhood electoral process, and coincidentally, Calderón’s speech was almost identical to the one the PAN candidate gave late at night on Election Day. The telenovela ended with *Canti*, the character who represented the people’s consciousness delivering a monologue with a clear recriminatory message to AMLO. *Canti* told López Obrador to accept the election results without challenging IFE’s credibility, because those attitudes would lead AMLO to lose his reputation and credibility with voters. In addition, *Canti* challenged López Obrador to present proof of election fraud or accept the election result, because in Mexico, “the people are the only ones who have the privilege to rule” (El Universal, 2006f, p. 1). *Canti* asked AMLO to continue defending and working for Mexico from his position as a PRD member and citizen. Televisa delivered its point of view through a telenovela character *Canti*, and declared Felipe Calderón president-elect during a time when the postelectoral turmoil was at its highest point. That is, the television corporation expressed to AMLO its perspective regarding the electoral process and the kind of news coverage that he received. In this respect, the telenovela suggested how the audience should think about Calderón’s victory as president without question. Televisa used the *Canti* character to represent its favoritism for Calderón. Televisa expressed its political agenda through its entertainment programs, but not through its newscasts.

Perhaps, Televisa's favoritism toward Calderón could be understood as the network’s fear of potentially losing its business via nationalization decree. Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2007) wrote in his book *La Mafía nos Robó la Presidencia* (The Mafia Steals Our Presidency), that 2 days before election day, he had lunch with Televisa's president Emilio Azcárraga Jean and Televisa's vice-president Bernardo Gómez. The purpose of the meeting was to question

AMLO about his intention to appropriate Televisa; the PRD candidate was surprised by the news and responded that he had no such objective. Immediately after hearing his answer, Azcárraga Jean showed AMLO an appropriate decree draft document against Televisa he supposedly was planning to introduce to Congress on December 2, 2006 (1 day after AMLO's official inauguration ceremony). The PRD presidential candidate pointed out that either Calderón's, Fox's, or *Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional*-Cisen's staff could be responsible for drafting the decree to create distrust between AMLO and Televisa (Monge, 2007). Moreover, AMLO stated:

They [Televisa executives] knew that I do not agree with monopoly political power which operates on top of the legal and legitimate constitutive powers [Legislative and Judicial branches]. I am not in favor of the republic of television [*videocracia*, *mediocracia*, media democracy]. However, I had never thought that the path to democratize the mass media and guarantee the right to information could be to expropriate Televisa" (Monge, 2007, p. 1).

### The Other Campaign

Typically, indigenous communities are trapped between two kinds of fears: economic and repression. The *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN) (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) began as a social movement to defend Mexico's indigenous population back in the 1900s, but over time, its purpose expanded to defend other kinds of marginal people for their economic condition, sexual preferences, and gender. While other major candidates were featured on television and radio, parallel candidate *Subcomandante* Marcos relied on Zapatista community radio, *Radio Rebelde*, to present his political platform. On Christmas Day of 2005, Zapatista's ski-masked leader *Subcomandante* Marcos (also known as *Delegado Cero-Zero*



Delegate) announced the launch of his own political campaign crusade, known as *La Otra Campaña* (The Other Campaign). His *Sexta Declaración de la Selva La Candoná* (Selva La Candoná Sixth Declaration) document was EZLN's political platform as well as a general invitation to participate in the cause. Marcos traveled the country on a motorcycle promoting a parallel political campaign during the 2006 election. The *Delegado Cero* insisted that his political campaign would be conducted in a very simple way without excessive spending; however, it would be open to dialog and ready to hear the voices of the minority population.

Marcos commented that the purpose of EZLN's peaceful civic campaign was to construct a leftist national front of battle against capitalism and formulate a new political constitution (Zermeño, 2006). The *Subcomandante* stated that his enemy was not a certain political party, but the political system. The Zapatistas did not plan to divide the country into pieces; rather, EZLN members joined the movement from the very bottom layer of society: the poor (Bellinghausen, 2006h). On the contrary, this social movement disseminated its own political agenda. Moreover, the *Delegado Cero* said that the people who supported *La otra campaña* were persons who did not sell themselves, who had not given up. In contrast, political party members were individuals who sold themselves and gave up. Therefore, this was the best way to define the 2006 presidential candidates (Bellinghausen, 2006c). Marcos said, "Political parties are no good for the people-anymore. They only use and divide us; once they are in power, all of them are the same; political parties abuse and support the militarization of the indigenous territories. Therefore, our fight is against the political parties who are supporting the capitalist system" (Bellinghausen, 2006p, p. 1).

For Professor Neil Harvery (2006), Marco's campaign plan consisted of three main points: (1) dialog as an ethical principle, (2) the search for new ways of participation and

interaction, and (3) the collective responsibility to achieve campaign success (Bellinghausen, 2006p). The *Subcomandante*, during his public presentations, criticized all presidential candidates. However, Professor José Antonio Crespo (2006) argued that perhaps Marcos' criticism of López Obrador could in fact help him in the long run, because voters would understand that AMLO's point of view was not as radical as voters might think. Since there was another person, *Subcomandante Marcos*, whose point of view about Mexican politics and public issues was in fact extreme, potentially, this situation could attract undecided voters who feared radicalism, but who did not tolerate PRI or PAN any longer (De Buen, 2006). Another possibility could be what journalist Néstor de Buen (2006) perceived that Marcos felt he had been away from the spotlight and wanted attention (De Buen).

PRI also agreed with this viewpoint. PRI spokesperson Eduardo Andrade Sánchez (2006) declared that his party would not enter any type of controversies with the *Subcomandante*, because all he wanted was press coverage (Velasco & Méndez, 2006a). In a gathering, Marcos invited voters to send "PRI to hell" and pointed out Madrazo's negative attributes. PRI Deputy spokesperson Miguel Lucero Palma (2006) commented that the call of the masked man, known as *Subcomandante Marcos* or *Delegado Cero*, would not affect the PRI party (Velasco & Méndez, 2006a). In addition, the *Subcomandante* denounced the PAN party, and said all the governments emerged from this political party for authoritarian and their fascist tendencies. He called attention to Guanajuato Governor Juan Carlos Romero Hicks as well as *El Yunque* (The Anvil)—an ultra right wing secret organization—and "Mexico's vice president" Ramón Muñoz for actively promoting the ultra-right ideology in Mexico (Bellinghausen, 2006i). In President Fox's home state, Guanajuato, the *Subcomandante* again accused PAN and *El Yunque* of classifying marginal people as a hindrance in their plan to take possession of Mexico

(Bellinghausen, 2006e). Furthermore, the *Delegado Cero* declared that the political party in power (PAN) and Mexican executives could not fool voters with their electoral circus. “They are mistaken if they believe that we are going to be sitting down waiting for them to kill us, destroy our land, and sell our country” (Bellinghausen, 2006e, p. 1). In addition, Marcos announced that “the teacher,” Gordillo, was forcing teachers and union leaders to become members of the New Alliance party, under the threat that if they did not join, their salaries would suffer the consequences (Bellinghausen, 2006c).

Nonetheless, philosopher Enrique Dussel (2006) insisted that AMLO was the candidate that PAN and the business elite wanted to defeat. That is, the elite planned to divide the left into two: the first campaign, where the leftist youth should be the propaganda element and the other campaign where the leftist youth should not participate in the first campaign. Therefore, their effort to influence the population not to vote was a fundamental tactic objective for the elite in power (Dussel). In other words, it was just like the popular saying, “My enemy’s enemy is my ally!” Journalist John Ross (2006), “The Other Campaign was an anti-electorate crusade designed to bring together underclass struggle groups into a new left alliance” (p. 1). Perhaps, this was the reason PRD never became directly involved with EZLN. PRD president Leonel Cota (2006) stated that his party would not interfere in *Subcomandante* Marcos’ campaign. PRD would be respectful of the EZLN agenda. “It is better to facilitate the opportunity of political competition” (Herrera, 2006, p. 1).

The Zero Delegate (2006) made clear that for a matter of dignity, *La Otra Campaña* could not support PRD; “the political party that brought suffering to EZLN members: *Subcomandante* understands that this matter could be difficult for politicians to understand because our movement has strong principles” (Bellinghausen, 2006c, p. 1). During a meeting in

the Hidalgo state, Marcos stated that his campaign was accused of taking voters away from AMLO. However, he explained that his movement was not responsible for that action. PRD state officials were to blame: for example, Tulancingo City Mayor ordered his local police to surround an EZLN gathering by constructing a perimeter with police dogs and armed police officers to make sure the meeting did not speak negatively about AMLO (Bellinghausen, 2006c). Zapatista member Sergio Rodríguez Lascano (2006) stated that from the beginning, the discussion about the Zapatista initiative has been viewed by PRD party members in accordance with its purposes and its mechanism to achieve it; that is, if you are not with me (PRD-López Obrador), you are supporting the ultra right (Bellinghausen, 2006a). The *Delegado Zero* supposed that his keeping a distance from PRD might signify less press coverage,

We are closing the door to massive meetings, huge compliments, as well as front-page coverage, but I do not care, our movement has dignity. . . . Furthermore, we could talk about PRI or PAN and the media do not report on it, but if we speak about PRD then the media reports on it. . . . The main difference is that López Obrador wants to be president, and I do not; I just want to be your brother.

(Bellinghausen, 2006a, p. 1)

EZLN was convinced that none of the political parties and presidential candidates represented a respectable government. As a result, the *Subcomandante Marcos* campaign promoted abstentions, or no votes. However, its major spokesperson expressed the same ideas but used different terminology. The Zero Delegate explained that *La Otra Campaña* (name of *Subcomandante's* campaign) was not promoting abstentions among voters; but suggesting voters to look at alternative forms of government (Bellinghausen, 2006d). A set of political beliefs that Arturo Ramos (2006), Chapingo University professor and

Zapatista scholar explained, democracy is incompatible with capitalism (Bellinghausen, 2006d). Therefore, governments that promote a capitalistic economic model are not good for democracy. Nevertheless, Marcos contradicted himself by proposing to block, in a civil and pacifistic mode, the electoral process on July 2 (Election Day) (Bellinghausen, 2006j). On several occasions, the *Subcomandante* was questioned regarding the 2006 electoral process. The *Subcomandante* opposed the election because to him the problem with political parties and their candidates was the lack of new proposals to govern; people should not be conforming to those governmental options. *Subcomandante* Marcos explained that the other campaign was not an electoral campaign, but a movement to encourage the use of reason and to analyze “other” political options, such as EZLN anticapitalism political ideology (Henriquez, & Boffil Gómez, 2006). Marcos said,

The only thing that is going to change in this election is the name of the person who is going to take us into custody, who would order the soldiers to fire at us, who would order to raise the price of food, who is going to sign a decree to strip us from our lands.

(Mariscal y Bellinghausen, 2006, p. 1)

For *Subcomandante*, the current political definition of democracy for EZLN members meant the freedom to elect EZLN’s tyrant; “Zapatistas stop! No more! The tyrant politics of the exercise of power to gain money must convert into a different kind of politics, into a different government system” (Henriquez, 2006, p. 1).

The *Delegado Cero* crusade around Mexico was frequently reported in alternative media, but rarely in the mainstream media. The Zapatistas believed that Mexican mainstream mass media only served the government and national as well as international corporations, not the indigenous communities. *Oventic Caracol*’s representative commented that the media never tell

the truth, they only disseminate ideas, thoughts, the interests, and lies of the bad government along with wealthy people in order to control communities from a political, ideological, and economic perspective (Mariscal & Bellinghausen, 2007). In response, *Libertas Anticorp* delegate Yazmín Núñez suggested that a project of Television via Internet could be the solution to the problem, because every *Caracol* (group/region) could upload videos and information for all of those interested in exposing themselves to a free television (Mariscal & Bellinghausen, 2007). There are several Internet hot spots along the indigenous territory equipped with technology such as computers with Internet access, video cameras, and printers that Zapatistas used to stay in touch with the rest of the world. For EZLN Lieutenant Colonel Moisés (2007), to be an outsider, to resist the current capitalistic government was not only about not receiving any governmental economic support. EZLN had to overcome many threats as well as political and ideological bullets sent via the mass media (Bellinghausen, 2007a).

Two months before Election Day, held on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006, *Subcomandante* Marcos gave an interview on Televisa that startled Mexican politicians when he declared that the presidential candidates were “mediocrities” because they viewed the presidency as a business and not as a leadership position. For Marcos, elections in Mexico were always the same, “There is going to be a bit of hope for a change in the government, then after a while the disillusion sentiment is going to come and that is when we need another thing” (Reforma, 2006c, p. 1). For *Subcomandante*, all candidates were the same because they did not propose a different political point of view—an alternative political ideology other than capitalism. When asked who he thought would win the election, Marcos suggested Andrés Manuel López Obrador because Calderón signified the continuation of a political profile of a president who was not a good administrator and wanted to rule the country with the use of military force (Reforma). Although

some intellectuals believed that Marcos' endorsement played to the detriment of AMLO's candidacy.

The *Delegado Cero* arrival in Mexico City at the end of April placed him in the national spotlight once again. Nevertheless, his press coverage was limited and his marches were small until late May, when the *San Salvador Atenco* (a village located just outside of Mexico City) confrontation took place. A group of farmers affiliated with the other campaign fought against its own local, state, and federal authorities for 2 consecutive days. The confrontation between citizens and police officers was cruel and brutal, which resulted in hundreds of arrests, rapes of women and prisoners, and countless human rights violations. Marcos threatened the Fox administration by stating that if the government did not free 27 political prisoners arrested during the *Atenco* confrontation, he would alter the peace and tranquility of the remaining electoral campaign period which was about 29 days (León Zaragoza, 2006a). National security authorities Eduardo Medina Mora and Daniel Cabeza de Vaca considered that Marcos' message did not contain evidence for the crime of sedition; he was simply expressing his viewpoint (León Zaragoza, 2006a). Therefore, they could not reactivate the *Subcomandante* order of apprehension. Moreover, the Amnesty Law benefited EZLN active members. The Zero Delegate organized two street protest marches to show their support to the families of the victims and political prisoners arrested during the *Atenco* conflict. Until then, Marcos had not authorized any interviews with the media. However, after the *Atenco* event, he changed his mind.

For the *Subcomandante*, the *Atenco* violence event was created by the party in power to hit AMLO, and it was far from signifying a victory to the government over the repression, imprisonment, and death of the rebellion. What the government had achieved was a national destabilization context during electoral times. Ultimately, Mexico could potentially face

elections conducted under the scrutiny of the military and police at the polling sites. Marcos had two predictions: (1) that if Calderón won the election, there was a possibility of more social rebellion. If he came to power, he would use the military to provoke fear and repression. (2) If López Obrador won, he would reconstruct the national state to support a new administration, but *La Otra Campaña* thought that AMLO did not present an effective alternative proposal for governing. (Bellinghausen, 2006q).

Five days after Election Day, July 7, 2006, right in the middle of the postelectoral aftermath dispute, Marcos endorsed the PRD candidate fraud argument and declared that from his point of view, Andrés Manuel López Obrador won the election. “The political system is in crisis [democracy was not consolidated], because a fraud operation was promoted by federal highest authority [President Fox] along with PAN leadership (Bellinghausen, 2006l). According to his data, IFE’s voter registration had some “extra voters,” including 5 million individuals who did not vote, 2 million dead people, and about 3 million people who were overseas. Altogether, 10 million votes were Calderón’s backup. On the afternoon of July 2, 2006, Fox ordered Ugalde to “administrate” PREP entries by authorizing access to the database to only those voting pools where Calderón won in order to make time to adapt the “backup votes” into IFE’s PREP (Bellinghausen, 2006l). Allegations of fraud were everywhere in Mexico and in many voters’ minds. Members of the other campaign believed that without liberty and justice, democracy could exist; therefore, democracy did not exist in Mexico. Apparently, the EZLN was living proof that its definition of democracy did not exist. “Our ideas of justice and liberty do not fit the voting polls” (Bellinghausen, 2006f, p. 1)

After the postelectoral discord, Marcos (2006) declared that Calderón’s inauguration ceremony (December 1) marked the starting point of the end of the political system established



after the Mexican revolution, and Calderón would begin to come down on his first day as president! (Bellinghausen, 2006f). He made it clear that EZLN did not recognize the official president (Calderón) and the legitimate president (López Obrador). The *Subcomandante* thought that Mexico was on the eve of a civil war; and EZLN would wipe out the entire political class, including leftist politicians when this uprising took place (Bellinghausen, 2006l).

*La Otra Campaña* highlighted that Mexico was living in a period of political crisis, because the political class did not respect Mexican institutions; the right and ultra right were pursuing a denationalization project. Therefore, members of the Zapatista organization decided to combat capitalism, because Calderón's government had two characteristics: [1] to serve its owner and [2] to compromise the security policy that was designed by the United States (Bellinghausen, 2006b). The relationship between Calderón and the EZLN was cold because the new government did not possess the political will to analyze the case of nine indigenous people incarcerated for a federal felony and four more imprisoned in Tapachula for protests against the increased cost of electricity since the electric company is owned by the government. PRD Deputy Fernel Gálvez (2007) invited both parties to a dialog. The problem was that official authorities did not listen to community complaints regarding the electricity. Instead, the authority subsidized electricity bills with 50 pesos, a mere pittance since electrical bills were up to 2,000 pesos (Méndez, 2007a).

### Summary

The 2006 election had five presidential candidates registered with IFE: Calderón-PAN, Madrazo-PRI, López Obrador-PRD, Campa-New Alliance, and Mercado-Alternative. Mexico's electoral law did not recognize the independent presidential candidate figure. The concept of independent candidates does not exist in Mexican politics. However, in terms of the national television

journalistic coverage of presidential candidates, it is important to add two other presidential candidates who ran their own parallel presidential campaigns: Vicente Fox and *Subcomandante Marcos*. Both of them were never stopped by IFE. Moreover, TEPJF ruled that Fox's intervention in the electoral process put the election certification in danger. Nevertheless, all seven candidates received some television news coverage. The *Delegado Cero* was the only one who did not purchase any political spots on any electronic media, except on his own indigenous radio station—*Radio Rebelde*.

In 2006, Mexican television audiences witnessed first-hand how the election marked the initiation of an unprecedented innovative political communication age. The innovation consisted of the introduction of a new advertising commodity: the presidential candidate. The innovation was the introduction of a new advertising commodity, the presidential candidate as product placement in an entertainment medium. In U.S. and Mexican movies and television series, it is a common practice to place commercial products as part of their programs in order to create profitable, and generate alternative revenue. In this case, the product to be sold was a presidential candidate: Calderón. He employed a telenovela—*Lety, La Fea más Bella*—and a comic program—*Qué Madre, tan Padre!*—to promote himself. In the telenovela, Calderón's name along with several positive comments was incorporated into the script. As a consequence, several of the telenovela's key characters were seen and heard by viewers making positive references about the PAN candidate. On the comic show, Calderón's image was part of the background scenery in the show. Characters did not directly make a reference in favor of the PAN candidate. However, audiences saw a replica of Calderón's billboard political advertising as part of the show's decorations. In both cases, Calderón placed his image as a commercial product placement to be sold to audiences. This new political communication approach was risky, because it is

shifting the presidential candidate image from a politician into an entertainment commodity, from a person to a product. As a result, the majority of the political advertising messages concentrated on the candidate's attributes and attacks, limiting the exposure of the candidate's political platform. The political candidates as product placement strategy restricted their ability to set an agenda of public issues in the entertainment media such as the telenovela. All the exposure that Calderón received in the entertainment media, as political product placement, was not counted by IFE. IFE's authorities were only prepared to monitor newscasts and political commercial spots, not political placement publicity on entertainment. Moreover, there was no electoral law to regulate this new type of political exposure. As a result, the PAN presidential candidate had more opportunities of representation without suffering any IFE penalties.

Televisa also had the opportunity to incorporate a new cultural product such as the political satire telenovela into their programming. *El Privilegio de Mandar* illustrated how an entire entertainment show can be based on a current national event such as the election. The satire telenovela based its script and characterization on election key players. Mostly concentrating on the portrayal of candidate's attributes than on the discussion of the candidate's public issues; once again the television drama series limited the chance for voters to be exposed to a contender's proposals for developing a better country.

Another interesting political communication plan observed in the 2006 election was the expansion of the candidate's public relations responsibilities with the creation of a television series to directly inform voters about the PRD candidate's activities and scheduled events. AMLO's staff did not wait around to be covered by the news reporters. On the contrary, they took control of the political communication situation by creating their very own television program, *The Other Version*. It was just like those paid product informational programs that are very

common on television. AMLO produced his own informational show to keep voters informed. In this case, López Obrador had total control over the information that was disseminated to viewers. In contrast, AMLO had no control over how a journalist was going to write/produce his/her news story.

Finally, *Subcomandante* Marcos'—parallel presidential candidate—campaign was mainly covered by a *Zapatista* niche media outlet, *Radio Rebelde*. The novelty in this case was that a particular media outlet concentrated its reporting according to its listeners' preferences, yet limiting the exposure of all other candidates who do not fulfill its audience's preferences. That was, *Radio Rebelde's* news coverage favored *the Subcomandante campaign*. As a result, reporters mostly covered *Subcomandante's* activities, a particular medium that serves a very segmented audience niche focused on the political figure that was very sympathetic to its audience preferences instead of presenting information about all candidates running for president in order to keep its audience informed about the complete electoral dynamics. This chapter illustrates the innovative political form of advertisement used during the election campaign. Mexican television audiences were used to seeing the traditional television political television spot included in a commercial break. However, in the 2006 political process, the political advertisement opportunities were expanded like never before. This context could bring more opportunities to generate a strong political effect on voters and limit the national television newscast's power to set the media's agenda. This new political communication environment developed in the absence of a clear and specific electoral law or regulation. This situation provoked what some politicians considered to be unfair political communication practices that turned out to be the main reason for revision of Mexico's Electoral Law. The following chapter presents the evolution of the

Electoral Law up to its last reform on October 2007 that seriously restricts political candidate exposure in the media.

## Chapter 6

### Electoral Law: From 1824 to 2000

Events in society often precede the necessity for law; sometimes tragic, sad, painful, and violent events mark a historical moment that provokes the change and creation of legal norms. The law establishes a set of rules and regulations that must be observed by citizens; in the case of misreading, the citizen breaks the law and faces consequences that are determined by a code of law. However, there is another possibility: the no law situation. What happens when there is no law to regulate an unprecedented event? The 2006 Mexican presidential election provides an excellent example of events that had no legal precedence. Unlike American election policies, in which political advertising is highly regulated, the Mexican government did not have regulations governing media advertising during election campaigns. This chapter provides a brief review of the history of the Mexican electoral law until 2000.

The Republic of Mexico created its first election regulations on May 21, 1823, with the decree *Ley de Elecciones*. Those regulations established selection of a constituent Congress that would be in charge of writing the 1824 constitution. Each group of 50,000 people should have a deputy; the representative would be at least 18 years of age and be a resident of the territory. On October 4, 1824, a first Constitution of Mexico was signed. Mexico adopted the republic system and established the offices of president and vice president. In addition, the supreme justice court president was established as the third person in line to act as president in the event that the

president and vice president could not conduct the business of the country. The 1824 constitution prohibited an immediate reelection for a president or vice president; 4 years needed to pass after the term expired in order to be reelected. The electoral system of 1824 established the indirect vote for the election of federal and state deputies. Citizens were not allowed to vote. As Gustavo Emmerich (1985) stated, “The role of the electoral citizenship finished; president, vice-president, senators, and high magistrates were elected by the State’s Congress” (p. 9). The Chamber of Deputies had the constitutional duty to supervise the electoral process; that is, congressional members were the only citizens allowed to vote. On July 12, 1830, the document, “Rules for the Election of Deputies and Mexico City’s City Council and Territories of the Republic”—a set of 64 rules—was published. Rule 56 established the second round: In the event that no candidates collected the absolute popular vote during the first round, a second round should take place between the two candidates who obtained the highest numbers of voters on the first round (García Orozco, 1989). The people who were not permitted to vote were the women, convicted criminals, and the clergy. Rule 34 stated who was eligible to vote: males who were 21 years old or 18 if married and made their living from officially permitted job or industry (González García, 1999).

The indirect procedures continued to remain active until 1835 when a new constitution, known as *Las Siete Leyes* (The Seven Laws), was written. These laws developed new requirements for political candidates. Those were: minimal income; in the case of a deputy the requirement was 1,500 pesos annually and an age of 30 years or over. For a senator 2,500 pesos per year were required and an age of 35 years or over (González García, 1999). In addition, the document recognized a minimum annual salary of \$100 pesos in order to have access to vote. The Fourth Law ordered the *Junta de Ministros* (Ministry meeting) as the committee in charge of

electing the president and the qualification of the election by the Chamber of Deputies. The presidential period was 8 years with a reelection possibility. The president was in charge of appointing state governors.

Eight years later, in 1843, a new constitution was created: the *Bases Orgánicas de la República Mexicana* (Organic Base for the Mexican Republic). This document increased the minimum annual salary to \$200 pesos in order to have access to vote, reduced the presidential term of office to 5 years, established an electoral college, divided the population into segments of 500 people, ordered the elaboration of a census every 6 years, and departmental assemblies were in charge of electing the president. Those elections were coordinated by the Chamber of Deputies; Congressman Mariano Otero (1847) proposed that Congress modify the 1824 constitution because all citizens should have the equal right to vote regardless of their personal annual income (González García, 1999). Congress approved his proposal—*Actas de Reforma*—in 1847; finally, all male citizens with 21 years old or 18 if married apart from their personal income were allowed to participate in the elections.

Fourteen years later, in 1857, Congress wrote a new constitution. The presidential period was once again reduced to 4 years with a reelection option. As in 1824, the supreme justice court president was the third in line to be president in the event that the president and vice president were absent. The election rules changed; 1 week after the constitution became active, February 12, the new *Ley Orgánica Electoral* (Electoral Organic Law) became active. The law consisted of 63 bills; it established the first mechanism that required voters to register in order to vote, and the Orozco proposal became law. In addition, the Chamber of Deputies had the power to convert itself into an electoral college during the presidential elections. The Chamber was in charge of

counting votes and declared which candidate won the election. Also, the document described a series of events that eventually could cancel the election.

The electoral process became a national problem during the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship, which lasted for 35 years. Díaz was elected president twice. His first term was from 1876 to 1880, and his second term was from 1884 to 1911. At the beginning of his dictatorship, Díaz was considered a liberal—meaning that he supported the ideal of abolishing the presidential reelection clause from the constitution. Back in those days, Mexico was ruled under the 1857 Constitution. The document limited the presidential period to 4 years with the right to be reelected. Later in his presidency, Díaz changed his position, stating that no one else was ready to take his place as president. In his eyes there were no others prepared to lead the country as well as he was. However, when economic elites began to shrink, the electoral problem reached a critical point.

The revolutionary movement of 1920 was motivated by two points of view. The first was the confrontation between the Porfiriato's Mexican upper class, *Los Científicos* (the Scientists) group, and the “left out” group, who were angry because *Los Científicos* left them out from what they considered to be a high profit juicy business. At this time, some of the elite members were persuaded by the philosophy of positivism. The group that promoted this ideology was known as *Los Científicos*. They wanted to offer a strong economic foundation for Mexico through following the guidance of science; their argument was that the only true knowledge was that which could be proved (Mancisidor, 1973).

*Los Científicos* was the most aggressive opponent of church doctrine and the philosophy of metaphysics. Education was the main weapon used to keep the nation divided and the positivists (*Los Científicos*) group in power. As long as the general population did not possess



the required cultural knowledge, *Los Científicos* were the country's most educated men, and thus the most suited to determine the country's political and economic development. Francisco I. Madero was a member of a wealthy Porfiriato family and was well educated. He studied in France and the United States. This exposure to different ideological, cultural, and political contexts inspired Madero. He presented his proposal for change in 1908 in his book *La Sucesión Presidencial en 1910*. Madero stated that if the no-reelection rule became active, no political or economic group would have the possibility of running the country; because after each election, those groups would have to change members, providing the ideal conditions for promoting business opportunities for every elite member.

The second condition that motivated the revolution was journalist Ricardo Flores Magón's influence regarding workers' rights. He wanted a change but believed it needed to come through total transformation of the political and economic system. Flores Magón was an anarchist communist whose radical newspaper *Regeneración* began the process of national consciousness-raising with a focus on the social reality of Mexican workers. According to historian Fernando Zertuche Muñoz (1995), Flores Magón was the first person to address the needs for social reforms that could help change labor conditions in Mexico.

Flores Magón and Madero had such an impact on Mexico that the Mexican Constitution of 1917 summarized their main arguments. Contemporary Mexico is still governed under this constitution, which is considered the strongest legacy of the revolution. The constitution prohibited the reelection, eliminated the vice president position, established the election victory by means of a majority of votes, and in the event of definitive absence of the president, Congress would transform itself into an electoral college in charge of electing a substitute president and call for new elections. Ten years later, in 1927, Congress modified Bill 83 to permit the

president's reelection, but President Alvaro Obregón's assassination motivated Congress to rescind the bill in 1928, once again prohibiting reelection. On July 17, 1928, in Mexico City, during a celebratory banquet in the restaurant *La Bombilla* to honor Obregón's reelection victory, he was shot dead by José de León Toral, a Catholic fanatic who opposed Obregón's views on religious matters.

Until then, Mexico never had an electoral law. In 1946, during the Miguel Alemán Valdés presidency (1946-1952), Congress wrote the first *Ley Federal Electoral* (Federal Electoral Law) that established for the first time the *Derecho Electoral Mexicano* (Mexican Electoral Right) and an institution, the *Comisión Federal de Vigilancia Electoral* (Federal Electoral Vigilance Commission), in charge of supervising the electoral process and part of the general attorney's office. The electoral law was created with the purpose of centralizing and organizing the elections. Its highest point was the regulation of political parties. That is, in order for a political group to gain political party status, it must complete all the requirements indicated in the electoral law. Otherwise, that particular group could not obtain recognition and, as a consequence, could not participate in the electoral process. In addition, the voter registration activity was delegated to a federal agency, *Consejo del Padrón Electoral*, which reassigned the task of voter registration from the states to the federal agency. Several commissions were instituted, such as the *Comisiones Locales Electorales* (Local Electoral Vigilance Commissions), *Comités de Distrito* (District Committees), *Junta Computadora* (Computation Supervisors), *Mesas de Casilla* (Voting Site Supervisors), and the Supreme Court of Justice, which had the authority to arbitrate in any electoral conflicts. In December 1946, the Senate Chamber approved a reform on Bill 115 that for the first time permits women voters to exercise their rights as citizens; however, their participation was restricted to municipal elections.

In 1949, another electoral reform was needed in order to define in more detail specific matters regarding organization and management of the election. The reform restricted the participation of the Supreme Court of Justice in the electoral process, transferring all its responsibilities to the General Attorney office. Later on during the Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952-1958) era, the agency *Comisión Federal Electoral* (Federal Electoral Commission) was created to be in charge of supervising the deputies' election and oversee the observation of the electoral law. In 1951, another electoral reform was implemented. The changes were:

1. Reduction of the number of executive power representatives in the Federal Electoral Commission from two to one,
2. Increased political party delegates from two to three,
3. Transformation of the *Consejo del Padrón Electoral* into *Registro Nacional de Electores* (National Voters Register), and
4. Provide equal responsibility to oversee the electoral process to the state, registered political parties, and Mexican citizens.

In 1954, a new electoral reform was necessary because of the large number of registered political parties. Therefore, a limited number of political members were required to create and register a political party; the minimum number of national affiliate members was elevated from 30,000 to 75,000 citizens.

In 1954, Mexico had its first female Federal Deputy, Aurora Jiménez de Palacios from Baja California State. In 1955, Congress authorized women to vote on federal deputy elections, and in 1958 on presidential elections. During the epoch of President Adolfo López Mateos (1958-1964), a new electoral reform in 1963 created the political party representative deputies in Congress with the purpose of providing more participation to opposition parties. During the 1964

election, the presence of the opposition parties in the Chamber of Deputies increased from 3% to 15% (Museo Legislativo, 2006). One direct consequence of the October 2, 1968, violent conflict among students and the government at the *Tres Culturas* plaza resulting in a large number of deaths and injuries, led President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970) to support an electoral reform that would grant political rights allowing youth to vote on their 18th birthday.

### 1976 Election

It is important to explain that at the beginning of the PRI regimen, the political party won many real votes, but over time, it became difficult to differentiate between the voluntary voters vs. the involuntary voters. The establishment of social control by means of effective leadership meant for PRI not only political control, but democratic control as well. Historian Enrique Krauze (2003) believed that PRI functioned like an employment agency at the municipal, state, and federal level; and this political party every 6 years provided the technology and the electoral voting machine that Mexico required to have elections. In addition, those leaders had to produce large numbers of votes.

As political researcher José Antonio Crespo (2003) pointed out, the PRI developed a clientele system. This client system was not necessarily incompatible with a democratic regimen since it translated into large numbers of votes in favor of PRI. This procedure ensured an electoral machine that was used in every political election. Economist and diplomat Daniel Cosío Villegas (1972) defined Mexico's political system as an absolute monarchy that lasted 6 years. The president was the ultimate and absolute king. This kind of power was known as *presidencialismo*. This means that the executive branch governed over the legislative and judicial branches. In the constitution, of course, all three branches were equal, but in practice, the president represented absolute power. This *presidencialismo* power structure produced

individuals who kept their political power beyond their presidential period. That is, the president had the right to choose the next PRI presidential candidate who would most likely become the next president. The voting machinery of the PRI controlled the voting polls, but the president himself controlled the presidential candidate.

Unions were known for the labor work to ensure votes in PRI favor; many of them guided or even threatened their members in order to get them to vote for PRI. Another interesting characteristic were the colors that PRI used in its logo—green, white, and red—mirroring Mexico’s flag. Some intellectuals pointed out that the sector of the population that did not speak Spanish as its first language, and those who were not literate in Spanish, used the party’s logo color to guide their vote because they were familiar with those colors. PRI had an advantage because its logo colors are the same as Mexico’s national flag. Therefore, voters could get confused by the similarity between the PRI logo and the flag. What was important was to accumulate the maximum number of votes, because the constitution established that the numbers of voters determine who is the winner of the electoral race. That is, in Mexico, the popular vote dictated which presidential candidate was elected.

The PRI voting machine faced a very difficult situation at the end of Echeverría’s presidency (1970-1976). Only one presidential candidate was registered for the 1976 election: José López Portillo for the PRI. In a television interview, López Portillo (2003) recalled how President Luis Echeverría asked him to be the PRI candidate:

On a Friday, the President invited me to meet with him at *Los Pinos*, in his office he asked me if I would like to be in charge of all this, his finger was rotating and pointing to our national patriotic symbols, I answer yes. Then, he told me to come back to *Los Pinos* on Monday, because the PRI party will officially ask me if I

would like to be their candidate. That Monday, I became PRI presidential candidate. (López Portillo, 2003, 3:56)

PRI's major competing party, PAN, did not register a candidate, because it considered the political game unfair. PAN politician Diego Fernández de Cevallos declared in 1976 that the PRI regimen wants the opposition only for the political game, but not because the government was willing to respect the electoral game and the law. Nobody wanted to participate in the election, because it was not considered a noteworthy effort: All Mexican citizens knew that PRI would win the election as usual.

Even though López Portillo was the only presidential candidate, he conducted a countrywide campaign tour. During a press conference, northern Mexico radio and television journalist Héctor Benavides asked López Portillo a tricky question, "Who do you think rules Mexico?" López Portillo answered, "It just depends on how you form your criteria; it could be the president. However, I do not know how many married women are in this country, perhaps here we will find the secret of who truly rules the republic" (Benavides, 2005, p. 179).

Writer Carlos Fuentes (2003) recalled that in the late 1970s, the PRI was decadent. The attorney general Jesús Reyes Heróles understood the complexity of the political situation and proposed laws that permitted further representation of all political parties in Congress. During the López Portillo presidency, Reyes Heróles was the leader of the discussion that created the new electoral law known as *Ley Federal de Organizaciones Políticas y Procesos Electorales*—LOPE. On December 6, 1977, the new electoral law was approved. The major changes in the law were:

1. The political parties became political institutions;
2. New requirements were made to create a political party;

3. A new system to elect the representatives was instituted.

These changes were classified as a peaceful political revolution through the political institutions and procedures (Noticieros Televisa, 2003). The new electoral rules were the supreme rules of the next presidential election.

Leftist politician Jorge Alcocer (2003) explained that the left-wing parties were unsure about the new law during that time. The discussion was centered on the idea that it could be a trap. Nevertheless, left-wing politicians were conscious about the necessity that its party had to adapt to the electoral process. For leftist politician Gilberto Rincón Gallardo (2003), the leftist party was able to register, and LOPE opened the way for a real political opposition. Their uncertainty was based on no guarantees to prevent electoral fraud, because the electoral agency was the party of the government and not an independent agency.

#### 1988 Election

In 1988, Mexico had one of its most controversial elections in recent history. The postelectoral conflict resulted in an ungovernable situation that arose from the lack of confidence in the electoral agency. As usual, PRI won the election. However, all the opposition parties signed a lack of confidence agreement on the election results. It is important to remember that on July 6, 1988—*se cayó el sistema*—the electoral computer system failed, and it was out for several hours. This was a very important historical moment that highlighted a very serious crack in the PRI electoral system.

The presidential candidates were: Carlos Salinas de Gortari—PRI; Cuauthémoc Cárdenas—Frente Cardenista; Manuel “Maquío” Clouthier—PAN; and for the first time in history, a female contender Rosario Ibarra—PT. PRI’s main political opposition reacted very differently to this crisis. After election day, Cárdenas challenged the election results, claiming in

a large mass meeting at *Zócalo* plaza, in the heart of Mexico City, that PRI stole the election since he believed he obtained 32% of the total vote count. Cárdenas had no authority or institution with which to file his complaint; therefore, he organized a massive civic protest. A large crowd of Mexicans joined him in walking the streets of Mexico City. In Mexico, the elections were insufficiently free and fair, and therefore the opposition quite understandably took to the streets and the back rooms to overturn the official results (Domínguez & McCann, 1996). Nevertheless, not everything was bad news for Mexican democracy. Up to this time, no gubernatorial candidate who emerged from the opposition parties had ever won an election. Moreover, Congress had always been in control of the PRI party until 1988. During this election, representation in Congress changed. The PRI opposition parties won 48% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, something never before imagined. Cárdenas always referred to Salinas as the usurper president throughout Salinas' term of office.

Presidential campaigns were based on political ideology, not public issues or candidate's attributes. As political researchers Jorge Domínguez and James McCann (1996) observed, "Politicians chose to frame their message ideologically even though the Mexican public did not demand consistent, cross-issue ideologies" (p. 9). That is, for voters their position on one issue did not control their views on another issue. There were some other psychological mechanisms in place, such as the idea that a change of political party in power could signify a change in the country's economic system.

Many Mexicans believed in popular wisdom concepts that were spread in the population by a figure of speech. Obviously, there was one about change that basically said: "*Más vale malo por conocido, que bueno por conocer*" ("It is better to stay with what you know, rather than



going on adventure to the unknown.”) Domínguez and McCann have an explanation for Mexican voter behavior:

The attitudes of Mexican voters are best understood in terms of a two-step model. Voters decide, first, on their view of the ruling party. For those open to the possibility of being governed by another party, but only for them, there is a second step. (1996, p. 11)

For years, PRI was able to hold votes based on the sentiment of fair to change, and in addition, to lack of political interest. Cultural traditional wisdom prevented opposition parties from gaining voters. However, something happened during the 1988 electoral process that changed voters' perspectives, turning their fear into great courage:

In 1988, the principal effect of the entry of *Cardenismo* was to reshuffle the voters among existing parties, not to mobilize the previously immobilized or to shift the underlying partisan allegiance of demographic or economic groups or sectors. The new opposition failed organizationally to activate the new portion of the electorate, while the long-existing PAN opposition filed to develop a refurbished organizational capacity.

(Domínguez & McCann, 1996, p. 11)

In contrast, the PAN decided to negotiate, not to confront the Salinas presidency like Cárdenas did. The circumstances indicated that Salinas would be president no matter what, as Manuel Clouthier Carrillo (2003), Maquío's son, commented in a television interview: “We decided to change the purpose of our fight. We had to focus on establishing new rules for the electoral game” (8:09). Therefore, as Professor José Antonio Crespo (2003) observed, PAN established an agreement with the Salinas government to support his neo-liberal economic policy that coincided with PAN's economic viewpoint and to receive several political advantages such as the recognition of PAN's electoral triumph at the state level. PAN's political negotiations paid

off in 1989 for the first time in Mexican history when a gubernatorial election was won by a political party other than PRI; Ernesto Ruffo Appel, former governor of Baja California Norte state (1989-1995), became the first PAN governor in the country.

However, on the same election date, another state held gubernatorial elections as well. In Michoacán state, the Frente Cardenista won, but its triumph was not recognized by the national electoral agency. As PRD party president (1996-1999), Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2003) explained in an interview what was the political game of the time, “It was very easy to understand, if a political party negotiated with the government winning could be a possibility” (9:45). Many believed that this lack of democracy, this lack of recognition was based on the party reaction regarding the 1988 election. The *Frente Cardenista* decided to confront the Salinas presidency through institutions. This political party questioned Salinas’ rise to power. PRD believed that it won the 1988 election, but the electoral authorities never recognized their triumph. The *Frente Cardenista* started reconstructing and reorganizing the leftist political arena. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas called all left political parties to unite, and created a new political party. In May 1989, a new political party was born, known as *Frente Democrático Nacional-PRD*. It emerged from the diverse political forces that united to support Cárdenas’ presidential candidacy in 1988. The Salinas government persecuted PRD’s members. As Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (2003) recalled, “During the year of 1991 the government was trying to kill the PRD. It was a very difficult time; about 400 PRD members were murdered. Those crimes are still unsolved until this day” (18:04).

All this conflict led Salinas de Gortari and De la Madrid to a complex inauguration ceremony. On December 1, 1988, members of Congress who supported Cárdenas’ accusation of fraud, who were already inside of the Chamber, left the room when President Miguel de la

Madrid arrived in order to express their protest by not participating in the presidential inaugural ceremony. In addition, PAN congressional representatives turned their backs to the podium and held up signs that referred to election fraud. However, none of these events were broadcast on television, because the cameras and microphones were shooting the podium without showing the audience. Not a word of the protest was mentioned on Televisa or Imevisión (the state channel newscast).

Nevertheless, Carlos Salinas de Gortari during his inauguration speech announced two important aspects of his presidency: (1) the *Solidaridad* program, and (2) his desire to reform the electoral law with the assistance of all the political parties. The *Solidaridad* program functioned as a permanent political communication campaign to obtain voters' approval and reinforce Salinas' soft public image (Reyes Heróles, 2003). Salinas' campaign included radio, television, and music. The most well-known signers of the time united to sing along with the *Solidaridad* song and record its video clip. The official radio and television advertisement was heard everywhere several times a day, everyday. The *Solidaridad* song was the example of how entertainment could serve to disseminate and reinforce a political message.

Televisa was in charge of producing the music and the video clip. The official slogan of the *Solidaridad* campaign was: *Unidos para Progresar* (United to progress). A side of Salinas' political campaign, the other factor that influenced his political image, was the arrest of Pemex's Union Leader, Joaquín Hernández Galicia (alias *La Quina*). He was accused of weapons' possessions in his house located in Ciudad Madero, Tamaulipas. Writer Carlos Fuentes (2003) explained, *La Quina's* arrest sent a message of authority to Mexicans: Salinas de Gortari showed that he was president, the ruler, an authority.

In terms of his second goal, a reform of the electoral laws, the 1998 postelectoral conflict sent a message about political immaturity to the international community. As Krauze (2003) clearly explained, in the globalized world with globalized communication, an electoral fraud was seen as something pathetic, ridiculous, something to feel ashamed of. Therefore, the next day, on December 2, 1988, President Salinas met at *Los Pinos* with representatives of several opposition parties to begin the discussion of a new electoral reform with the aim of reinforcing Mexico's democracy. The new electoral law known as *Código Federal de Instituciones y Procesos Electorales* (COFIPE) was approved by the legislative body in 1990 and had four main resolutions: First, the creation of the *Instituto Federal Electoral* (IFE), an agency to oversee the election procedures, process, and vote count; second, the *Tribunal Federal Electoral* was established as the highest court for electoral claims; third, the creation of a new voter registration list; and fourth, the creation of the *credencial para votar* (voter identification card) that included a voter's photo. This *credencial para votar* is the most important identification document in Mexico (Salinas de Gortari, 2003).

Nevertheless, the PRD legislative representatives voted against this new electoral law. Former Head of Mexico City Government (1988-1993) Manuel Camacho Solís (2003) expressed that to him, those reforms were created to stop the *Frente Democrático Nacional*. It established several locks to prevent the center left from winning in the future. For example, this law prohibited the coalitions that had a common political candidate. In addition, the IFE administration did not change; it did not become autonomous. For Jorge Alcocer (2003), representative of three leftist parties—PRD, *Partido Mexicano Socialista* (PMS), and CFE—explained in an interview why PRD voted against the electoral law, “The major point why PRD voted against was that the IFE still had a dominant influence of the government in their

procedures and the PRI” (28:57). Perhaps the appreciation of the PRD representatives was correct. Krauze agrees with Alcocer, the IFE needed to be autonomous:

The Salinas regime was contradictory because it chose for a great economic modernization, but it did not give sufficient attention to political modernization. Because [this regimen] failed to provide for the continuation and maturity of Mexican democracy, during this presidency there were electoral problems everywhere at all levels—states and municipalities” (Krauze, 2003, 43:45).

On November 1, 1992, during the address to the nation, President Salinas de Gortari proposed a new electoral reform that would concentrate on three major themes: first, to make transparent the origin of the political party finances; second, to cap the financial budgets for electoral campaigns; and third, to regulate the mass media during elections.

The electoral law reforms were implemented a year later in 1993. The new reforms established monetary limitations for election campaigns. They prohibited acceptance of money from the international companies, international investors, religion, and businesses. In addition, the composition of Senate members was modified. Political parties could only have a maximum of 315 representatives, the election committees for senators and deputies disappeared, and the IFE was in charge of overseeing elections. The IFE was the only agency that could present the official winner’s credential letter. *The Tribunal Federal Electoral* faculties were elevated; now this court had the power to penalize political parties with the loss of their party registration. The court was reorganized into two hearing courts. The first task was to resolve any electoral claims of the five *Salas Regionales* (regional electoral courts), and the second option was the *Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación* (TEPJF) (Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary). Each of those regional electoral courts represents circumscription of congressional

elections in which Mexico's judicial system is organized. Each regional court consists of three judges who are temporary in nature; sitting when federal elections take place. The five cities where the regional courts are based are: *Guadalajara, Monterrey, Mexico City, Toluca, and Xalapa*. The Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary was a permanent superior chamber located in Mexico City. It consists of seven members and is a branch of the judicial system that specializes in resolving federal election disputes and certifies the validity of the election. The seven magistrates who served during the 2006 election were: Leonel Castillo González (president), J de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Alfonsina Berta Navarro Hidalgo, José Alejandro Luna Ramos, Mauro Miguel Reyes Zapata, J Fernando Ojesto Martínez Porcayo, and Eloy Fuentes Cerda.

The electoral reforms also created the Electoral Observatory. For the first time, national and international electoral observers were allowed to participate in an electoral process. There are two kinds of electoral observers: the international and national. For the 2006 electoral process, IFE counsel Alejandra Latapi indicated that her institution had accredited a total of 357 international observers representing 41 countries; 47% were United States, 21% European Union, 7.3% Canada, and 7.3% Argentina (Herrera, 2006). As of June 12, 2006, the IFE general counsel informed that a total of 9,014 national observers were certified by IFE (IFEg, 2006).

Another major change was that public opinion polls were permitted as an electoral tool. IFE created a set of regulations regarding technical matters such as methodology that all public opinion companies had to follow. For the 2006 election, a total of 12 public opinion companies and two media corporations conducted 66 polls between October 20, 2005, and June 18, 2006. The polling companies were: El Universal, Parmetría, GEA-ISA, Reforma, Consulta Mitofsky, Demotecnia, BGC, Indermec Arcop Zobgy, Marketing Político, Covarrubias, and PISOS-

BIMSA y DATA-OPM (Reséndiz, 2006). Public opinion polls are essential for contemporary political communication changes and presented opportunities for the application of Agenda-Setting theory to the Mexican political process.

The reforms also established the preliminary statistics based on a ballot sample. The PRD party voted against the 1993 electoral reforms because this reform failed to address the most important electoral matter, IFE's autonomy. PRD National Adviser (1993-1996) Pablo Gómez Alvarez (2003) in an interview pointed out,

Those reforms did not resolve the problem. Those were cosmetic reforms only. What was the fundamental issue? It was that the government still controlled IFE. As long as this situation continued there was no guarantee that the election results were authentic.

(47:55)

In the 1994 election year, on January 27, another round of reforms was presented to Congress as a result of the demands of the Chiapas guerrilla uprising—*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN) (Zapatista Army of National Liberation). Attorney General Jorge Carpizo announced the new electoral legal initiatives:

1. All parties would have full access to the country's electoral registrar database.
2. The state media would produce fair cover of all political parties and their candidates.
3. Public resources could not be used during the campaign to support a candidate.

By February 28, 1994, Carpizo communicated another set of electoral agreements:

1. Creation of a judicial office to persecute electoral crimes;
2. Increase of state funding to political parties;
3. Universities and private firms should conduct an independent external audit of the electoral registry;

4. An external counsel should be created to supervise the external audit;
5. To establish a set of minimal requirements for Mexican citizen observers as well as their responsibilities and activities;
6. Modify the voting ballot to achieve more accurate monitoring;
7. Homogenize the protocol and procedure for the presentation of candidate.

In terms of the mass media, the rules were: political advertising was prohibited on electronic media 10 days before election day and on radio as well. Parties had the authorization to use 60 minutes of state time on weekdays and 3 hours on the Sunday prior to election day.

#### 1994 Election

The 1993 electoral reform was the last one before the next presidential election. The reform improved the conditions for this presidential race, but Mexico's full democratic transition that started back in the late 1980s with the creation of the COFIPE was not completed. In addition, the economic situation in Mexico was politically stable for the first time in years. During the last four elections—1970, 1976, 1982, and 1988—every presidential election was surrounded by an economic crisis. Salinas de Gortari throughout his term worked to construct a solid economic base to prevent an economic crisis in the election year. It was important for Mexico to guarantee a clean and transparent election to ensure credibility, trust, and confidence in the election results. Otherwise, the voters would always suspect election fraud. For decades, Mexico experienced suspicious election results. Until the reforms, there was a traditional political cultural saying, *piensa mal y acertarás* (think the worst and you would be right). The shadow of fraud was always present in voter's minds.

On November 28, 1993, Salinas de Gortari presented PRI Head Luis Donaldo Colosio as his choice for presidential candidate. PRI's internal primary procedure was known as *dedazo*



(*heavy finger*); that is the party does not hold an internal primary election. Instead, the maximum authority of the country selects the PRI nominee. In 1994, there were three main presidential candidates: Diego Fernández de Cevallos-PAN, Cuauthémoc Cárdenas-PRD, and Luis Donaldo Colosio-PRI. On May 23, the PRI presidential candidate was murdered in Baja California State. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León took his place, and the PRI won the election. General Secretary of the PRI José Francisco Ruíz Massu was murdered as well, and the investigation pointed to PRI's leadership; Raúl Salinas—brother of President Carlos Salinas—was arrested for this crime. The government accused him as the intellectual author of Colosio's murder. Following the murders, President Zedillo distanced himself from PRI.

The televised presidential debate was introduced during that election. Almost all presidential candidates agreed to participate. The debate procedure divided political parties into two groups. The first group consisted of the so-called “small parties” that hold a debate. In the second group, on May 12, 1994, the “major parties” participated in the debate. PAN's candidate who was articulate, impressive, and well prepared to discuss won the debate; a national newspaper *Reforma* reported that during the election 41% of voters favored Zedillo, followed by Fernández de Cevallos with 29% and Cárdenas with 9% (*Reforma*, 1994). Cárdenas condemned mass media for its powerfully pro-PRI support, especially television newscasts such as Televisa's *24 Horas* and TV Azteca's *Hechos*. Candidate Manuel “Maquío” Clouthier started a boycott against Televisa's main national newscast *24 Horas*. He appeared in campaign meetings with a cover over his mouth and a sign denouncing Televisa's censorship and disproportionate media access.

The electoral theme during this presidential campaign was the inequality in media access and campaign finances. Zedillo publicly recognized those inequalities and focused to eliminate

those conditions. Zedillo criticized the media inequality. He said that it was a clean election, but inequitable. He took democracy as the central point of his regimen. On January 17, 1995, President Zedillo and the major representatives of each political party signed an agreement of political cooperation to discuss a new electoral reform. In August 1996, the electoral reforms were approved. This time the IFE became an autonomous government agency; this was considered by many to be a major step forward into a democratic life. José Antonio Crespo (2003) considered that the government was left out of IFE, and all the politicians interpreted this action as a clear step forward from a noncompetitive system to a competitive system. PRD president Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2003) commented in an interview, “It was important because it integrated the figure of an independent electoral advisory, and this was an essential contribution to the change in 2000” (47:11). Each one of the members of the electoral advisories was elected by the legislature.

In addition, the 1996 electoral reforms created IFE’s financial division, a branch in charge of overseeing the finances of each political party and each municipal, state, and federal political campaign. The anonymous campaign contributions were prohibited, and taxable persons had a limited contribution amount to political parties and campaigns. For the first time, the mass media was included in the reforms. Bill 42 established the responsibilities of the mass media to guarantee political parties more access to radio and television free times during electoral periods. This law also established IFE’s responsibility to monitor how the mass media covered elections. The rules of the political game for the first election of the new millennium were set.

#### 2000 Election

Francisco Labastida-PRI, Cuauthémoc Cárdenas-PRD, and Vicente Fox-PAN were the major candidates for the 2000 presidential election. This election marked a change of PRI’s internal

election procedure to select its presidential candidate; president Zedillo did not implement the traditional *dedazo*. He rejected this tradition supporting the idea of internal PRI primary election known as *Consulta a las Bases* (internal consult) in which all registered PRI members could take part in the primary internal process. Primary candidates who emerged from that *consulta* were Francisco Labastida Ochoa, Roberto Madrazo Pintado, José Antonio Fernández González, Manuel Barlett Díaz, and Humberto Roque Villanueva. Labastida Ochoa won the PRI primary race. The fact that Zedillo broke PRI's *dedazo* tradition by refusing to pick PRI's presidential candidate gave him the label of "the man with four fingers." That is, hypothetically, he is missing one finger because he refused to use it for the *dedazo* exercise.

In terms of public issues, Cárdenas (2000) made a case that there wasn't a peso's worth of difference between presidential candidates Labastida and Fox. Both men, he insisted in a newspaper article,

Would continue Zedillo's program that (1) favored tight monetary and fiscal policy over the social spending needed to uplift 50 million impoverished Mexicans, (2) stressed global trade over developing domestic resources, and (3) threatened state-ownership of *Petróleos Mexicanos* [Pemex], and the *Comisión Federal de Electricidad* [CFE], respectively the nation's giant, over staffed oil and electricity companies. (Grayson, 2000, p. 6)

The top public issues of the election were: economy 45.2%, crime 31.5%, political 10.9%, development 6.5%, other 5.9% (Magaloni & Poiré, 2004, p. 301). Early on in the election, Fox was able to recognize that Mexico's top priority was its need for a political change. Nevertheless, as in the Mexican context, change could signify many things; therefore, Beatriz Magaloni and Alejandro Poiré remarked on what that change meant:

Mexico's pre-2000 part system encompassed two main dimensions. The first was a political-institutional one, where at the right-most extreme lay staunch conservatives, accepting all features of the political status quo, and thereby of the existing style of authoritarian rule by the PRI, and with the left-most extreme anchored by rapid and thorough political transformers often lingering with anti-systemic strategies. Political reformists of different degrees lay in between. The second dimension was the conventional left-right divide, with neoclassical economic perspectives on the right and Keynesian ones on the left. (p. 294)

Fox symbolized a change, but during the campaign he rarely specified to what end of the spectrum. Instead, he continuously accused PRI of corruption, incompetence, affiliation with drug cartels, and insecurity.

However, there were three main ideas that Fox continually repeated over and over again. Those were: the possible legalization of Mexicans living in the United States, the possibility for those living overseas to vote, and the 15 minutes as a maximum time line to resolve the Zapatista guerrilla problem. Fox also changed all protocols and the politician's public image for the first time in many years; Mexican voters were observing a candidate who dressed like a cowboy wearing his characteristic FOX silver belt buckle. Fox used popular sayings and vernacular rather than the refined speech that reflected his educational background. Nevertheless, best of all, Fox could deliver a message in 30 seconds. In other words, he was the master of the news "sound bite," and that handy skill gave him the opportunity to frequently be used as a source in news stories. Even the American press was fascinated by Fox because he could speak English well, exude confidence, and promise to change Mexico's political system. As Professor Raúl Trejo Delabre (2000) observed,

Fox has exceptional media and public appeal. He always smiles for the television camera and has an immediate response to news reporters' questions. He has garnered the affection of the media because of his public speaking abilities. (p. 1)-

Nevertheless, based on Fox's personal political style, he was called in the media "the clutch," because first he pushed his foot in it and then he shifted to make the change. On July 1, 2000, the previous day before Election Day (July 2, 2000), President Zedillo was worried as his private secretary Liebano Saenz Ortiz (2003) remembered during an interview that democracy means uncertainty: "We had another group of people who believed that a president who came from the PRI will never recognize PRI's defeat. The president went to sleep worried because the public opinion polls did not indicate an absolute winner" (5:08). Even though Mexico had solid procedures to count votes, the idea of fraud was in the mind of PAN candidate Vicente Fox (2003) as he clearly stated to the media, "The fact that we now had a very confident institution such as IFE, it is very difficult to expect that after 71 years of practice the "*mapaches*" and "*vote's thief*" will completely disappear. I was worried!" (5:08). The PRD candidate also expressed some irregularities that happen to his party representatives. Cárdenas reported that several presidential voting stations received the wrong names of his party representatives. Consequently, PRD representatives could not participate in those voting stations. He expressed that the whole process was dirty.

On July 2, 2000, in the morning, the voters favored the PRI. Around 1:30PM, the statistics begin to balance out. PAN led the election from around 3:00PM until the close of the election. All the participants were respectful to each other and to the institutions. At 11:00PM, IFE President José Woldenberg announced PAN's victory. Immediately after his announcement, President Zedillo (2000) spoke through radio and television to the nation, announcing the

magnificent work that IFE had done and Fox's victory: "Today, we were able to verify that our democracy is mature with solid and trustable [electoral] institutions and with a citizenship of high civic responsibility. The next president of Mexico will be Vicente Fox Quesada" (14:50).

In addition, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Francisco Labastida recognized Fox's victory that same night. For the first time in Mexico, its president emerged from another political force that was not the PRI. The electoral controversy focused not on the election's results but on campaign finances for PRI and PAN, the *Pemex Gate*, and the *Amigos de Fox* cases. After IFE's investigation of both cases, on March 14, 2003, the IFE fined PRI with 1 billion pesos for the *Pemex Gate* case. On October 10, 2003, the IFE fined PAN with 360 million pesos and the *Partido Verde Ecologista PV* (Green Party) with 184 million pesos for the *Amigos de Fox* case (IFE, 2000). The political scandal over those two cases indicated that more legislation was required to regulate candidate finances.

The 2000 election marked the end of 71 years of PRI rule; this election marked the end of the PRI regime. Fox's triumph signified the consolidation of Mexico's democratic transition that started during the 1988 election. It represented almost 20 years of intensive political negotiation that modified the election law without a violent upheaval. The PAN triumph signaled the opportunity for future democratic changes in Mexico. PRD Politician Porfirio Muñoz Ledo (2003) explained to the electronic media that

Fox's triumph symbolized Mexico's culmination of the democratic transition's highest point. So we have [three phases of the Mexican democratic transition] [1] the pre-transition era 1990 and 1996 were the electoral reforms took place. [2] The transition era which is Fox's victory and Fox's presidency. [3] What is next? Is it the consolidation of

democracy or not? We don't know what could happen in the future 2006 elections.

(102:53)

His point of view coincided with leftist politician José Agustín Ortiz (2003), who also believed that the 2006 election was a crucial test for Mexico's emerging democracy. Because citizens were not sure if the Mexican democratic system would remain, it could regress to authoritarianism, especially if there were an economic collapse. For Ortiz, a postelectoral conflict during the 2006 election would be an indicator of a democratic regression or a democratic consolidation. Just like journalist Sergio Aguayo (2003) suggested, all the electoral reforms were nothing more than rules for the electoral game, now [the 2006 election] was the time to start playing the game. Politicians have constructed agreements on methods to change government. Now [the 2006 election] they have to make democracy function to resolve the people's problems in Congress. In order for democracy to exist, all legislative branches should learn to work together around a particular agenda. Politicians should learn to negotiate in order embrace and flourish democracy. Mexico must keep working on improving the electoral law.

PRI President (2002-2004) Roberto Madrazo (2003) commented that for him, it was important to respect and reinforce our institutions. It was very important not to weaken them. Intellectuals Federico Reyes Heróles and Carlos Fuentes (2003) concluded that it was necessary to implement the second round of candidates during presidential elections. Under the new political arena, President Fox had many challenges ahead. For example, he did not have majority representation at any governmental level—Senate, Chamber of Deputies, state, and municipalities. This context was part of the democratic era that Mexico was experiencing. Therefore, to govern was going to be more challenging because it required political negotiations at all levels. The democratic political system that permits diverse political representation also

involves a high quantity of political negotiations to reach agreement and keep the democracy moving forward. If these political negotiations were not possible, the country remained deadlocked.

There was constant discord between Vicente Fox and the Congress during his presidency. PRD Congressman Jesús Ortega (2003) observed that Fox or any other political figure did not understand that the Congress served to control the president. When Congress said “No” to the president, the people felt that Congress was misbehaving. In the absence of previous parliamentary experience, actions of the Congress were considered inappropriate. Mexico needed to create an agency that could facilitate communication between Congress and the president. Fox’s rise to power also signified the end of the *presidencialismo* style of governance that PRI presidents had enforced for numerous years; this new political arena created conflicts and misunderstanding among members of the political class. Therefore, all three federal governmental branches—executive, judicial, and legislative—needed to find a new way to coexist, work together, and collaborate. Nevertheless, Fox created for the first time the President Spokesperson position as a link for communication between him and the nation. The only disadvantage was that most of the time both of them—the spokesperson Alfonso Durazo (2000 to 2004) and Rúbén Aguilar (2004 to 2006) and the president disseminated different messages, sometimes opposite to each other.

Vicente Fox acknowledges that his victory against the PRI was thanks to the support of the *paisanos* (Mexican migrants living in the United States) that he called “the truth heroes.” As a sign of gratitude to *paisanos*, Fox promised to send to congress an overseas vote initiative. It took him 3 years to fulfill his promise. In 2004, the president submitted an initiative to reform the COFIPE to Congress. Fox declared that his overseas initiative was the result of 14 proposals



presented by several political parties, such as PRI, PAN, PRD, and the Green Party, to recognize the rights of those Mexicans living abroad. Fox's plan was to provide *paisanos* voter access to participate in the 2006 election. The first phase was to create a registration list of voters who were abroad. The second phase suggested that their vote should be submitted to IFE via electronic/internet, mail, and directly in the polls. Nevertheless, candidates could not organize campaign events or purchase political advertisements abroad (Pérez Silva, 2004). Fox requested that all *paisanos* withdraw from IFE's voter registration list. However, PRI Senator Sadot Sánchez (2004) stated that Fox's request sounded like an impossible mission, because many of the *paisanos* decided to travel to the United States in a short period of time. Consequently, IFE could not ask them to provide their permanent residence and get themselves withdrawn from their original voting districts (Nájar, 2004a). A group of approximately 310 Mexican citizens who lived overseas mostly in the United States, had been lobbying the Mexican Congress to pass an "Overseas Vote Bill" for 9 years. In 1996, Congress approved the dual nationality policy. That is, in the event a Mexican was born out of the country, they were no longer required to choose one nationality when they became 18 years of age. Many Mexicans lost their citizenship by choosing another nationality. Furthermore, for the first time in years, Mexicans living abroad and descendents of Mexicans could claim their nationality to exercise their rights as citizens, including their right to vote.

At first, *paisanos* wanted to participate in municipal, state, and presidential elections, but in 2004 they agreed to participate in the 2006 presidential elections only. IFE President Luis Carlos Ugalde as well as Secretary of the Exterior Luis Ernesto Derbez were against the *paisanos'* plan. For them, the plan would be too expensive for their institutions to execute. According to their information, only 10% of the overseas voters went to the polls (Nájar, 2005).

Derbez indicated that the overseas vote was risky business for *paisanos* because their voter registration database could be used by the *migra* (U.S. border patrol) to hunt down illegal immigrants. The other problem was a matter of document functions. Derbez observed that the *matrícula consular* (consulate ID) has been used as an official document for identification purposes, and this same function was attributed to the *credencial para votar* (voting credential); therefore, the purposes of both documents would overlap.

Moreover, it involves an economic matter. If *paisanos* began applying for their voting credentials, they would no longer need the consulate identification card, because both of them serve as official identification for the Mexican government. As a result, the secretary of the exterior would stop receiving an income of 12 million dollars a year that is generated by the consulate identification processing. For Derbez to organize an electoral process without the appropriate juridical, logistical, and monetary conditions would signify a high risk for consolidation of Mexico's democracy (Cano, 2005).

*Paisano* lobbyist and journalist Raúl Ross (2005) was annoyed with Ugalde and Derbez comments for their lack of support and the placing of Fox in an opportunistic position with the *paisano* community (Cano, 2005). Subsecretary of the Exterior Gerónimo Gutiérrez (2005) answered Ross, explaining that the Fox administration was supporting their cause, and that this was not a political piñata situation. On the contrary, he should stop pretending because Ross knew the level of complication that his plan involved (Cano, 2005). It was very difficult to know how the *paisano* community would vote. Congress had fear. What was sad is to see how the Mexican Congress still looked down on migrants. They did not like us, said Ross to the Mexican press (Balboa, 2005). Mexico's first migrant legislator in the Michoacán state, José Luis Martínez (2005), stated that it would carry severe consequences for Mexico if the *paisanos'* right

to vote was not approved. The consequences would arise at the economic level as an international lack of confidence in Mexican democracy (Balboa, 2005). Migrants were fighting for a more democratic political system similar to other democratic countries like the United States.

Perhaps, he was right. PRD Deputy Juan José García Ochoa (2004) declared that PRI deputies feared that the Mexicans overseas would not support their presidential candidate. The Fox initiative made it clear that all immigrants should cancel their affiliation with the electoral districts where they were registered as voters, and PRI recognized that it was difficult to win the *paisanos* trust (Nájjar, 2004). Nevertheless, the bottom line of the controversy was the political cost the vote abroad plan could bring to political parties and their 2006 candidates. PRI Head Madrazo (2004) asked the *paisanos*' lobbyist if there was going to be a punishment vote. That is, if *paisanos* voted against PRI for lack of support on their electoral reform. Ross answered that the behavior of the voters abroad should mirror voters in Mexican territory. The presidential candidate's political platform that reflects the migrant's social agenda could win the election, because he/she will receive our support, said Ross (Nájjar, 2004b).

On February 22, 2005, the Chamber of Deputies approved the electoral reform with 391 votes in favor, zero against, and 22 abstentions. Deputies authorized presidential candidates to organize campaign events outside of Mexico. Conversely, candidates could not purchase political propaganda in the U.S. media. For deputies, the overseas voting procedure should be organized by IFE and should provide citizens with voting polls to cast their vote. A voting poll would be installed in cities with populations of more than 750 Mexican citizens. IFE needed to create a voter registration list of Mexicans living abroad in order to allow them access to vote in the 2006 election. Perhaps, the logistical problem with the abroad registration list was that those

citizens should be erased from the national voters' registration list in order to prevent double voting. In addition, legislators authorized a budget of 200 million pesos to support the operation and promotion of the abroad vote. Such an amount, however, was under budget, considering that IFE estimated 6 billion pesos as their minimum to operate an overseas election (Garduño & Méndez, 2005a). However, several deputies were not pleased with the mechanics of how the overseas voting procedure would operate. Legislators from the *Partido del Trabajo* (Work Party) declared that they decided to abstain from voting, because for them the practical logistics of the voting overseas electoral reform would be disorganized as a result of the lack of time for planning. For them, this act could be understood as a Fox and PAN strategic setup to gain more voters for the 2006 election (Garduño & Méndez, 2005a). The Chamber of Deputies had to create a different document regarding electoral reform from Fox's proposition. Then the Senate Chamber created another version of the proposal. In order to participate in the 2006 election, the Senate needed to approve the proposal before June 30, 2005.

On June 28, 2005, the Senate Chamber voted 91 in favor, 2 against, and 1 abstention on the vote abroad proposal. However, the COFIPE prohibited candidates from organizing campaign events outside of Mexican borders. Mexicans who already had their voting credentials were the only ones eligible to vote. According to the Secretary of the Exterior, their estimates were that only 4 million Mexicans who lived in the United States had their voting credentials with them (EFE, 2005a). The overseas voting procedure was that between October 1, 2005, and January 15, 2006, Mexicans who wished to participate in the 2006 election needed to complete an electoral form, provide a photocopy of their voting identification card, and show proof of address in the United States, put all that information in an IFE's envelope and send it to IFE

Mexico via Mexican Consulate private mail. The registration process could also be completed on the Internet at the IFE website.

After IFE created a voting registration list of the abroad vote, the institution mailed the 2006 election ballot to those Mexican citizens who fulfilled all IFE's requirements. The plan required that ballots voting be received by IFE no later than June 29, 2006; it was just 3 days before election day in Mexico. The Senate Chamber rejected the PRD senators' proposal about the possibility to generate a voting credential reposition program and the certification of voting ballots. Head of the Senate Exterior Relations Commission Senator Silvia Hernández-PRI (2005) stated there was no point for the presidential candidates to travel to the United States since voters there could follow up the election via the mass media. *Paisanos* had television channels in Spanish and read newspapers; therefore, they were informed citizens. They could, consequently, cast their vote even though the campaign meetings in the overseas were forbidden (EFE, 2005a). President Fox congratulated Congress for passing an electoral reform that would provide access to Mexicans abroad to participate in the 2006 elections. He estimated that *paisanos* had access to international information and the Mexican channels (Notimex, 2005). Several cable companies around the United States carry the signal of several Mexican channels. In addition, dish companies do have a special additional package that users could purchase in order to have access to the signal of several Latin American channels.

Even though *paisanos* had to rely on U.S. Latino major television newscasts such as Univisión, Azteca América, and Telemundo to remain informed. In addition, *paisanos* had to face many administrative obstacles in the Mexican consulates in order to be registered. Austin's Mexican Consulate intern Amanda Dávila (2006) explained that there was no formal training about the registration procedure. There was misinformation and confusion about the paperwork

that a citizen should fill out (M. Flores, personal communication, March 4, 2006). Perhaps, the difficulty was the double task that Secretary of the Exterior personnel had since the functions of this agency and IFE are completely different.

A research organization in the United States conducted a public opinion poll with Mexican citizens living in the United States to identify their opinions regarding the 2006 election and their opportunity to vote. The Pew Research Center national telephone survey of Mexicans living in the United States on Absentee Voting in Mexican Elections in a sample of 987 participants found *paisanos* favored PAN by 36%, followed by PRD and PRI with 14% each (Suro & Escobar, 2006). Pew predictions were correct. According with IFE, *paisanos* supported the PAN candidate. From a total of 33,131 abroad votes, 57.40% (19,016) favored PAN; 33.47% (11,088) PRD; 4.10% (1,360) PRI; 2.68% (887) Convergencia; and 0.39% (128) New Alliance (Dirección Ejecutiva de Organización Electoral IFE, 2006). The numbers indicate that the overseas participation was respectable taking into consideration all the difficulties that IFE, the secretary of exterior, and *paisanos* had to overcome. The postelectoral conflict was not centered on the abroad vote; apparently, it was not a critical topic. The aftermath disagreement center of attention was the lack of a set of laws to regulate the political advertising and the role of the media during electoral periods. The following chapter presents a detailed overview of the 2007 Mexican electoral reform with a focus on the regulation of private and public radio and television stations as well as advertising during election primaries and general campaign periods. The 2007 electoral reform began a very restrictive political communication policy by prohibiting candidates from advertising their image and drastically reducing candidates' time exposure on electronic media outlets.

Clearly, the 2006 election aftermath marked a historical moment in Mexican history. The high point in the electoral dynamic was the use of negative political advertisement. However, Mexico had no law to regulate such an unprecedented development. Mexico had regulated elections for 183 years, since the writing of the 1824 constitution. The electoral law has focused its attention on the media after the 1994 election. Before 1994, there was not a clear set of rules and regulations for the media, with the exception of newspapers, which are regulated by the *Ley de Imprenta*. However, many of those laws are not up to date with the current technology. The 2006 election brought to the table the discussion of electoral advertisements in the media as well as media's electoral coverage. Unlike all previous elections in Mexico, presidential candidates devoted most of their budget to political advertisement, especially television. This fact denoted a high interest of presidential candidates in the media. But did their investment provide them with the return that they were expecting? This study measures the intermedia agenda-setting effect of television news stories and political ads, pointing out their interplay during each month of the presidential campaign.

## Methodology

The research discussed here focused broadly on the intermedia agenda setting effects between national television news programs and between these programs and political television advertising by presidential candidates. Intermedia agenda setting effects are understood as the dynamic process in which one medium of communication strongly influences the agenda of other media by suggesting which topics are important to cover (McCombs, 2004).

News organizations have a practice of reading, listening, and viewing other media outlets to compare news coverage of events, topics, and breaking news covered by other news organizations. By comparing news coverage, news organizations ensure comprehensive coverage of important as well as mundane news events. They gain also a sense of validation for their news judgment. Consequently, intermedia agenda setting seeks to determine which media garners an elite position among all media. More broadly, the key question that establishes the intermedia agenda setting assessment is “Who sets the media’s agenda?” McCombs (2004) stated that are three possible answers to this question: first, journalistic news norms; second, other news media outlets; and third, external news sources. In the case of the 2006 Mexican election, the intermedia agenda-setting question was answered in terms of all three of the possible answers as McCombs suggested. Comparison of news content on Televisa and TV Azteca was used to address, the “news norms.” Analysis of the intermedia agenda setting effect between presidential candidates’ political television advertising and television news media addressed the “other news media.” Spearman’s Rho correlations were calculated between political advertising and television news to evaluate the “news sources” approach by measuring the *caudillismo* cultural attribute.



## Research Hypotheses

Six hypotheses guided this research on agenda setting. Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 of this study address the “news norms” perspective. Hypothesis 4 discusses “news sources.” Hypotheses 5 and 6 focus on “other news media,” that is, intermedia agenda-setting.

H1. Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts presented the same election campaign issues agenda to their viewers during the 2006 presidential election.

H2. Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts presented the same presidential candidate attribute agenda to their viewers during the 2006 presidential election.

H3. Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts favored a particular presidential candidate through their non-election coverage of public issues during the 2006 election.

H4. Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s *caudillismo* cultural attribute prevailed over Felipe Calderón’s *caudillismo* cultural attribute in political advertising and television news.

H5. Television news coverage of a presidential candidate’s issue platform and personal attributes is similar to coverage those presented in presidential candidates’ television advertising.

H6. Television news influenced television political advertising during the 2006 presidential election.

## Method

This study used content analysis as its primary method of analysis. Two distinct content analysis data sets were necessary for this research: one for television newscasts, and another for political advertisements. The content analyses were conducted by American and Mexican researchers who combined their investigative skills in the Mexico 2006 Panel Study led by political science professor Chappell Lawson of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

The Mexico 2006 Panel Study, *Television Content Analysis*, research team included: Chappell Lawson (Principal Investigator), José Carlos Lozano, María de los Angeles Flores, and Maxwell McCombs. Funding for the study was provided by the National Science Foundation (SES-0517971), the University of Texas at Austin, St. Edward's University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and The Center for Communication and Information Research at the *Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey* (Monterrey Tech).

The television content analysis data set came from a systematic random sample of Mexican prime time television news programs broadcast during the official *Instituto Federal Electoral's* (Federal Electoral Institute) presidential campaign period that ran from January 19 to June 28, 2006. The Mexican television newscasts analyzed were: Televisa's *El Noticiero con Joaquín López Dóriga* that aired from 10:30 to 11:15PM (Central Mexican Time) on Channel 2, and TV Azteca's *Hechos de la Noche* that aired at the same time on Channel 7. Both newscasts were broadcast nationwide from Monday to Friday.

This systematic random sample was structured on the basis of a constructed week taken from each three week interval from January 19 to June 28. The constructed week included only weekdays; weekends were omitted from this analysis. Each three-week periods contains 15 weekdays and using a skip-interval of three days results in each of the five weekdays falling into the sample once (i.e., a constructed week). The specific dates coded were January 19, 25, 31; February 6, 10, 16, 22, 28; March 6, 10, 16, 22, 28; April 3, 7, 13, 19, 25; May 1, 5, 11, 17, 23, 29; and June 2, 8, 11, 20, 26. That is, a total of 29 days per network, for a total of 58 newscasts. This yielded a total of 1,348 news stories: 812 (60%) by Televisa, and 536 (40%) by TV Azteca. Both networks combined aired 222 election news stories, representing 16% of their total news

content. Televisa aired 123 stories that represented 15% of its newscast content, and TV Azteca broadcast 99 news stories that represented 18% of its news coverage.

McCombs, Flores, and Lawson developed the codebook “News” (Appendix A) for the project. Lozano reviewed the codebook and made suggestions for revisions. The unit of analysis was each news story broadcast during Televisa’s and TV Azteca’s newscasts. Several restrictions were imposed on the unit of analysis in order to balance the analysis in terms of content such as the different forms of editorial formats (humorous as well as commentary). Sports and celebrity news were omitted because both networks did not regularly offer those stories in their daily newscasts. For example, Televisa broadcast a comical editorial segment only on Fridays. The constructed week design minimized the opportunities to code all newscasts aired on Fridays; therefore, the editorial section was excluded from the coding.

Three unprecedented events occurred during the newscasts data collection period. Those events were the immigration reform issue in the United States, the new Federal Radio and Television Law of Mexico that peaked in March, and the 2006 Soccer World Cup celebrated in Germany during the month of June. The results most likely resulted in a significant increase of news coverage on those topics during the months of March and June. The use of a constructed week minimized the impact of those unprecedented events, because each event had an average of one-month duration.

Communication master’s students<sup>6</sup> who worked as research assistants in the Center for Communication and Information Research at the *Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey* coded the Televisa and TV Azteca main newscasts. Flores trained the coders and

conducted weekly conference call meetings with them along with weekly calibration testing. The calibration testing required that the entire group code 10 minutes of the same newscast to compare results. Lozano supervised the coders in Monterrey. Spanish was the coders' primary language. Therefore, the codebook and the data enter web site were in Spanish. The PHP surveyor software was used to collect the data generated by coders for submission online.

Intercoder reliability was measured using the coefficient of reliability. Because of the complexity of this content analysis, coders were divided into teams. Each team was in charge of a specific network. An intercoder reliability test was conducted for each team. However, all coders were tested on the same newscasts dates. For example, if March 1 was assigned to be the intercoder test day, all coders analyzed this newscast date, but according to their own network assignment. All teams had an intercoder test each month. Some of the newscasts used for this purpose were actual coding dates, and some others were not. All teams obtained an average 94% Coefficient of Reliability (Poindexter & McCombs, 2000).

The television content analysis data was the primary data set for this study. The Mexico 2006 Panel Study also conducted the political advertising content analysis (Appendix B). MIT political science doctoral student Rachel Gisselquist and MIT professor Chappell Lawson produced this dataset. They conducted a census of all the political spots that the three main presidential candidates aired on Televisa and TV Azteca during the official IFE campaign period. This data set consisted of a total of 97 television political spots, including Felipe Calderón-PAN (55), Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO)-PRD (27), and Roberto Madrazo-PRI (16). Data was not weighted; that is, all ads were treated equally as if they were new ads each time a new

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<sup>6</sup> Special thanks to Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey students, Citlalli Sánchez Hernández, Esmeralda González Coronado, Eduardo García Reyes, Andrea Menchaca Trillo, and Paola Gabriela

spot version was aired (Gisselquist & Lawson, 2006). Rachel Gisselquist and Ariel Ivanier—both doctoral students—were the coders for the television political ads study. In order to test the intercoder reliability, both coders conducted a content analysis of eight ads. The correlation coefficient was  $+0.73$ .

H1: Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts presented the same election campaign issues agenda to their viewers during the 2006 presidential election.

The operational definition of “election campaign issues agenda” was all news stories that reported on the presidential race and were broadcast during the IFE’s election campaign period. The list of topics that television journalists covered in election news was labeled as the TV news agenda. The SPSS statistical software was used to conduct all data analyses. Election campaign news was analyzed with a cross tabulation between the variable “television network” and the variable “news story main topic.” The table produced a list of news topics that each television network aired. After carefully reviewing the list, themes relating to the election were identified and organized into the category “election news,” which consisted of 44 topics; sub-categorizations were created to group similar themes. Nine subcategories were generated: (1) Hugo Chavez, (2) PAN campaign strategy, (3) IFE, (4) democracy, (5) voting, (6) debates, (7) public opinion polls, (8) candidate negative attributes, and (9) issues. This list of topics is the election campaign issue agenda.

The subcategory of “candidate negative attributes” encompassed news stories that highlighted negative attributes of a candidate. “Issues” news was stories in which a candidate addressed a particular public issue during his or her campaign meeting. “PAN campaign strategy” referred to news stories about the PAN political advertising campaign. The “public

opinion polls” subcategory referred to those stories that presented the survey results on the attitude of Mexican voters toward the electoral process. “Debates” included stories about the organization, location, expectations, and aftermath of each debate. There were two presidential debates in 2006: the first on April 25, and the second on May 23. The subcategory “voting” addressed news that focused on the voters and different forms of voting such as the overseas vote, the hard vote, and the useful vote among others. “Democracy” was defined as stories about Mexico’s state of democracy, and “IFE” news included any information that featured IFE as the primary source of information, communication, or reports about IFE assemblies, as well as IFE press releases. After the results were obtained, the percentages were rank ordered, and a Spearman’s Rho correlation was calculated. Table 3, which is presented in the next chapter, was created to represent Televisa’s and TV Azteca’s election campaign issue agenda.

To measure the flow of intermedia influence of the election campaign issues agenda between Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts during the 2006 Mexican election campaign period, three cross-lagged correlation analyses were conducted. In these analyses, two opposing hypotheses about the time order of influence are juxtaposed. The first cross-lagged correlation analysis corresponds to a 3-month period. That is, the total presidential campaign timeframe of 6 months was divided into 3-month periods that compared the news content of Televisa and TV Azteca. Time 1 represents the news content aired during the months of January, February, and March; and time 2 represents the months of April, May, and June.

The second set of cross-lagged correlations are comparisons of each 2-month period. Therefore, time 1 corresponds to the content presented by Televisa and TV Azteca during the months of January and February. Time 2 represents the news content aired during the months of March and April; and time 3 represents the months of May and June.

The third set of cross-lagged correlations was conducted to observe the intermedia flow between the television networks in the greatest detail. Therefore, each of the periods corresponds to a constructed week. Constructed week 1 corresponds to newscasts aired on January 19, 25, 31; February 6 and 10. Constructed week 2 corresponds to newscasts aired on February 16, 22, 28; March 6 and 10. Constructed week 3 corresponds to newscasts aired on March 16, 22, 28; April 3 and 7. Constructed week 4 corresponds to newscasts aired on April 13, 19, and 25; May 1 and 5. Constructed week 5 corresponds to newscasts aired on May 11, 17, 23, 29; and June 2. Constructed week 6 corresponds to newscasts aired on June 8, 11, 20, and 26. Five of the six constructed weeks consist of five newscasts. The last constructed week consists of 4 newscasts. In all three sets of analyses, the differences between each pair of correlations were analyzed by comparison with the Rozelle-Campbell baseline, a statistic that indicates the value expected by chance alone. The purpose of these cross-lag correlations was to explore all the alternatives in the flow of communication between television news and candidate's television political spots. The aim was to scrutinize several periods in order to examine the influence from a general perspective (3 months or 2 months) into a specific (month by month) perspective.

H2: Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts presented the same presidential candidate attribute agenda to their viewers during the 2006 presidential election.

The operational definition for "presidential candidate attribute agenda" was the list of presidential candidates' personal characteristics portrayed on news stories broadcast by Televisa and TV Azteca. The codebook presented two variables per candidate to measure each presidential candidate attributes, one variable for the positive and another one for the negative.

The positive candidate attributes consisted of leadership, experience, personality, intellectual capacity for position, strong moral values, eloquent, trust, interest in population's

well being, military experience, ability to work with Congress, ability to fight crime, ability to administer the economy, ability to fight corruption, support for democracy, honesty. The negative attributes for candidates were the following: lack of leadership, lack of experience, lack of charisma, without strong moral values, lack of public speaking ability, lack of military experience, lack of credibility, inability to work with Congress, inability to fight crime, inability to fight corruption, inability to manage the economy, does not support democracy, corrupt, lack of intellectual capacity for the position.

Two tables present the descriptive results for the presidential candidates' positive and negative attributes on the Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts. Table 4 reports the positive and negative presidential candidate attributes presented by Televisa. Table 5 illustrates the same results for TV Azteca. Two independent Spearman's Rho correlations comparing Televisa and TV Azteca were calculated; one for the positive attributes and the other for the negative attributes.

To sort out the flow of intermedia influence for the positive and negative presidential candidates attribute agendas between Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts during the 2006 Mexican election campaign period, three cross-lagged correlation analyses were conducted. The design of these three cross-lagged correlation analyses used to test H2 regarding the attribute agenda were identical to the cross-lagged correlation analyses used to test H1 regarding the issue agenda.

H3: Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts favored a particular presidential candidate through their non-election coverage of public issues during the 2006 election.

The concept of the fairness doctrine of equal time coverage for presidential candidates is new to election news coverage in Mexico. It is imperative to find out what each television



network's favored tendency was during the 2006 election and whom the networks indirectly supported through their non-election coverage of public issues. The operational definition for "non-election coverage of public issues" was defined as all news stories that did not explicitly cover the presidential election. That is, their main topic of the report was something other than the 2006 election, such as the economy, crime, environment, and politics, among other things. The purpose of this analysis was to identify coverage that could indirectly favor a particular presidential candidate.

An initial analysis of the variable "news story main topic" produced a list of 182 issues. Those topics were recoded into 16 general categories: (1) economy, (2) election, (3) FIFA 2006, (4) politics, (5) immigration, (6) crime, (7) health, (8) war, (9) EZLN, (10) environment, (11) culture, (12) education, (13) human rights, (14) religion, (15) media, and (16) other. Additional analysis produced a list of coverage topics per television network. Table 6 presents these non-election issues for Televisa and TV Azteca, and a Spearman's Rho correlation was calculated.

Following this analysis, a comparison was made between each of the television agendas and each candidate's political platform. In order to determine the candidate's political platform, the author reviewed his or her official proposals presented to IFE in order to fulfill the requirements for registration as a presidential candidate. IFE posted those political platforms on their website ([www.ife.com](http://www.ife.com)). Political platforms were evaluated to identify key issues presented by candidates; then an agenda of public issues was constructed (see Tables 8-12).

Each candidate's agenda was correlated with the television agenda in order to identify which contender was indirectly favored by non-election news. After the results were obtained using the frequency of appearance analysis, Table 7 was constructed to illustrate the comparison between the television agenda and each candidate's agenda. The "other" category was created in

order to produce a more accurate comparison between the television and candidates agendas. The category of the candidate agenda included the following topics: justice system, housing, family, foreign relations, military, poverty, infrastructure, and gender equity.

Andrés Manuel López Obrador-PRD (2006) presented his agenda in *50 Compromisos para Recuperar El Orgullo Nacional*. AMLO's agenda, the 50 commitments, were merged into 12 categories. The highest attention of AMLO's 50 issues agenda was place on the economy, followed by education, political system, culture, and infrastructure. For the purpose of comparison between the AMLO's agenda and the television's agenda and to ensure that the agendas were balanced, the "other" category of AMLO's agenda does include the following topics: infrastructure, poverty, military, and foreign relations.

When Patricia Mercado officially registered to IFE as part of her registration process, she presented her political proposal in writing, based on her 113-page document *Plataforma Electoral 2006*. Mercado presented a 14-category agenda; economy and education were her top priority issues, as Table 8 illustrates. Mercado believes that education is the motor of development. A total of five public issues were competing for the third place in Mercado's agenda: (1) health, (2) culture, (3) foreign relations, (4) political system, and (5) human rights. Mercado was the only candidate who had the mass media on her agenda. She acknowledges that the media have a fundamental role in the consolidation of democracy, because an informed citizen has more possibilities to vote.

Roberto Madrazo's agenda was constructed from the *Coalición Alianza por México Plataforma Electoral*, the document submitted when he registered with IFE as PRI's presidential candidate. The *Alianza por México* proposal was divided into three major sections—the country that we want, the society we desire, and the government we require. His agenda consisted of 15

public issues. Economy ranked at the top of his list. The two public issues that ranked in second place in Madrazo's agenda were political system and environment.

New Alliance candidate Roberto Campa presented a 33-page election agenda, *Plataforma Electoral Partido Nueva Alianza Elección Federal 2006*. At the top of his agenda was the political system issue; the second issue on Campa's agenda was the economy. The third issue on Campa's agenda was education. The New Alliance candidate introduced a new topic into the presidential competition, which was immigration. Campa considers that a regulated agreement between the United States and Mexico should be created in order to administer the flow of immigrants and avoid frictions between both countries' authorities.

PAN candidate Felipe Calderón also included immigration as a topic on his agenda. For him, to defend Mexican immigrant rights abroad was crucial. In addition, Mexico should insist on finding a permanent solution to the immigration issue. However, the immigration issue was not at the top of his agenda. Like the other presidential candidates in early January, Calderón presented a 60-page political agenda titled *Plataforma Política del Partido Acción Nacional*. His agenda consisted of 15 public issues. The top priority on Calderón's agenda was the economy. Education was the second item on Calderón's agenda. The third public issue for the PAN candidate was human rights.

H4: Andrés Manuel López Obrador's *caudillo* cultural attribute prevailed over Felipe Calderón's *caudillo* cultural attribute in political advertising and television news.

The operational definition for *caudillo* was how effective presidential candidates were in presenting themselves as a public opinion leader. In Mexican culture, *caudillo* is considered to be a personal attribute of strong man, somebody who possesses leadership charisma. That is, a person who has the power to listen to voters and solve their problems. This *caudillo* attribute is a

“must have” personal attribute for Mexican politicians because voters are not loyal to a particular political party. As a rule of thumb for politicians and voters alike, a candidate’s leadership charisma was more important than loyalty to a particular political party. The great majority of Mexican voters are not loyal to a certain political party unless they are obligated by economic pressure from their employers. Voters favor the candidates who possess a leadership charisma, a candidate who voters consider to possess a *caudillo* personal attribute. In history, caudillos are social leaders who were viewed as strongmen, role models, and person in charge.

In this study, for a candidate to possess the *caudillo* personal attribute, she/he should be frequently present in the media, because the constant participation of candidates as news sources improves their image in society. Candidates have two opportunities to build up their *caudillo* characteristic. One of them is through the news media, by being constantly cited by journalists. In this context, candidates do not have the control. Another opportunity to build up the *caudillo* characteristic is by the candidate’s controlled exposure in political advertisements. In this context, each candidate had the power to choose to directly speak for themselves to voters via sound bite or to just use a voice over in their political spot.

It just as agenda setting theory suggests that frequent news coverage of a particular public issue raises its importance to the public (McCombs, 2004). The same effect can be observed for candidates. That is, the more frequently a particular candidate appears on the news as a source, the greater the importance of the candidate. Therefore, in order for a presidential candidate to become a social leader or *caudillo*, he or she should be frequently presented in the media. Frequent visibility of candidates as news sources improves their image in two directions: first, by obtaining the opportunity to directly speak to voters; and second, by positioning in the voter’s mind the idea of the candidate’s leadership role. The same logic was applied to each candidate’s

television spots. Each candidate, as well as his or her political party, had the opportunity to closely supervise the production of each political spot. The candidates had the power to choose to directly speak for themselves to voters via sound bite or to just use a voice over in their spot.

The analysis was performed in two phases. The first was to measure the candidate's participation in television newscasts, and the second was to measure the candidate's appearance in his or her own political advertisement television spots. Analysis of the television newscasts began by calculating the frequency of appearance for each candidate in news stories by each television network. After the results were obtained, Table 13 was created to illustrate the number of news stories about presidential candidates broadcast on each network.

Comparison of the prominence of the candidates' participation was necessary, so an analysis was conducted for up to nine news sources per story was required. Table 14 was created to show the frequency of news sources by network. Table 15 illustrates the frequency by which presidential candidates appeared on news stories and the frequency count of the sources. The results obtained were used to determine the number of times a presidential candidate appeared in a news story as a news source and then contrasted with the total number of stories that television newscast aired on each candidate. The findings indicated the number of times presidential candidates only appeared as an image and the actual percentage of time that each candidate spoke to voters. The candidate with the highest rank was considered the *caudillo* in the newscast.

The political advertising data set also was used to identify the *caudillo*. First an analysis determined the total number of political spots aired on television. Then, a frequency count analysis identified which political party purchased the highest number of political advertisements. Finally, another analysis determined which candidate devoted more time to "speak" to voters. That is, identifying which candidate included the greatest number of personal

sound bites in his or her television spots determined *caudillo* in the political spots. After the results were obtained, Table 15 presented the frequency with which each candidate participated as a source on his or her television political ads.

H5. Television news coverage of a presidential candidate's issue platform and personal attributes is similar to coverage presented in presidential candidates' television ads.

The operational definitions for the candidate issue platform as well as candidate attributes are explained for previous hypotheses (H1 and H2). H1 explains the public issues, and H2 identifies the presidential candidates' attributes. In addition, the results for both hypotheses provide the television news issues agenda and the television news presidential candidate attributes agenda. As a consequence, the analysis focused on identifying the ads' issues and presidential candidates attributes agendas. The ads data set contained information on the major three candidates: Calderón, Madrazo, and López Obrador. An analysis identified the list of issues that were presented on television political ads. After the results were obtained and put in rank order, the ads issue agenda was created, as Table 17 illustrates. To balance the ads and news categories of each agenda for a comparison, three categories from the television news agenda were merged, because in the TV ads agenda the category public services included three categories from the TV news agenda. The categories of education, environment, and health were combined into one broader category. Another category that had to be modified was the "other" category of the TV news agenda. The "other" category incorporated the following categories—immigration, war, EZLN, FIFA Germany 2006, media, and human rights—in order to make these similar to the advertising agenda. Regarding the advertising agenda, the "other" category included the following categories: infrastructure, family, nationalism, and social groups. A series

of Spearman's Rho correlations were calculated between the television news issue agenda and the ads issue agenda (Tables 18-21).

The next step was to determine the advertising attribute agenda for the personal characteristics of Calderón, López Obrador, and Madrazo. Table 22 illustrates each of the candidate's lists of attributes. Then, a series of Spearman's Rho correlations were calculated between the television news presidential candidates attribute agenda and the ads presidential candidates attribute agenda (Tables 23-27).

H6: Television news influenced television political advertising during the 2006 presidential election.

Previous agenda-setting research has documented that in U.S. elections, the effect of political advertisements is generally low when compared to news (Zhao & Chaffee, 1995). Could Mexico be following a similar pattern? Cross-lag comparisons were used to determine the pattern influence between television news and television political ads. Therefore, based on IFE's official campaign period, which was 6 months in duration, the author divided those months into two groups. All television news as well as television political ads aired during the first 3 months — January, February, March — of the campaign period were “time one.” News and ads broadcast later on—April, May, and June—during the campaign were “time two.” Tables 28 and 29 illustrate each of the time periods along with the list of topics aired per television network. Next, a cross-lagged correlation analysis demonstrated the flow of the television news and television ads influence. The purpose of these cross-lag correlations is to explore all the possible alternatives in the flow of communication process between television news and a candidate's television political spots. The aim was to scrutinize several periods in order to examine the

influence from a general perspective (3 months or 2 months) into a specific (month by month) perspective.

This chapter presented the measurement procedures used to test the hypotheses about television news and political ads. This contributes to the agenda setting body of research because traditionally agenda setting studies have focused mainly on news or advertising, but rarely on both. The following chapter presents the results for these hypotheses.

## Chapter 8

### Television News vs. Television Political Advertising



Current conventional attitudes held by many political consultants, political marketers, and politicians are that news coverage has no effect on political elections. The intent of this research was to investigate the relationship between national television news and television political advertising during the 2006 Mexican presidential election. This investigation expands upon the body of agenda setting theory by documenting the intermedia agenda setting relationship between news and advertising in an international setting.

The results are presented in this chapter according to the order of the hypotheses. Six hypotheses guided this research on intermedia agenda setting. The fundamental question about the intermedia agenda setting effect is: “Who sets the media agenda?” This question could be answered from three perspectives: news norms, news sources, and other news media. Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 of this study address the “news norms” perspective. Hypothesis 4 discusses “news sources.” Hypotheses 5 and 6 focus on “other news media outlets.”

H1: Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts presented the same election campaign issues agenda to their viewers during the 2006 presidential election

The results presented in Table 3 confirm the intermedia agenda setting effect of election campaign issues agenda between both television networks as predicted by H1 and were significant ( $\rho = +.742$ ); the Spearman’s Rho test indicated that each television network essentially presented to its viewers the same election news campaign issues. Televisa devoted 23% of its total news content to coverage of the electoral campaign, and TV Azteca dedicated 18% of its total content to election news. As Table 3 shows, the topics that ranked at the top of Televisa’s agenda were: (1) candidate negative attributes, (2) issues, and (3) debates. TV Azteca’s agenda included: (1) issues, (2) candidate negative attribute, and (3) PAN campaign strategy. The two top public issues on both networks agenda were practically the same.

Table 3: Intermedia Agenda Setting Effect Televisa and TV Azteca—Election Issues

Issues	Televisa n=187			TV Azteca n=93		
	#stories	%	rank	#stories	%	rank
Public Opinion Polls	3	2	(7)	4	4	(5)
Debates	16	9	(3)	5	5	(4)
Vote	0	0	(9)	1	1	(8.5)
Democracy	2	1	(8)	3	3	(6.5)
IFE	15	8	(4)	3	3	(6.5)
Negative Attribute	74	39	(1)	31	34	(2)
PAN Campaign Strategy	11	6	(5.5)	7	8	(3)
Hugo Chavez	11	6	(5.5)	1	1	(8.5)
Issues	55	29	(2)	38	41	(1)
Total		100%			100%	

Spearman's Rho correlation = +.742

After the intermedia agenda-setting effect between Televisa and TV Azteca was confirmed at a general level, analysis that is more detailed was needed to determine the causality behind this effect. To sort out the flow of intermedia influence of the election campaign issues agendas between the television networks newscasts during the 2006 Mexican election campaign period, three cross-lagged correlation analyses were conducted. The first cross-lagged correlation corresponds to a 3-month period. As Figure 1 illustrates, the correlation between Televisa at time 1 and TV Azteca at time 2 ( $\rho = +.82$ ) is stronger than the correlation between TV Azteca at time 1 and Televisa at time 2 ( $\rho = +.66$ ) with a Rozelle-Campbell baseline of .67. The results specify that Televisa strongly influenced TV Azteca's agenda in a 3-month scale analysis.

Another cross-lagged correlation was conducted using a 2-month period scale. As Figure 2 shows, during time 1 (January/February) and time 2 (March/April), the cross-lagged correlation of TV Azteca at time 1 and Televisa at time 2 ( $\rho = +.52$ ) was stronger than the other way around ( $\rho = +.49$ ). The Rozelle-Campbell baseline was +.39. There is little difference in the two correlations, and both exceeded the baseline. In contrast, the cross-lagged correlation between time 2 and time 3 (May/June) indicated a stronger influence of Televisa over TV Azteca's agenda. The cross-lagged correlation between Televisa at time 2 and TV Azteca at

time 3 ( $\rho = +.88$ ) was considerably stronger than the other way around ( $\rho = +.57$ ). The Rozelle-Campbell baseline for time 2 and time 3 was  $+.56$ .

To zoom into greater detail, as Figure 3 shows, a cross-lagged analysis of each constructed week was conducted. The study sample had a total of 6 constructed weeks; each of those constructed weeks represents one time period of the cross-lag analysis. During the analysis of the first and second time period, the cross-lagged correlation between Televisa at time 1 and TV Azteca at time 2 ( $\rho = +.79$ ) was stronger than the other way around ( $\rho = +.64$ ). The Rozelle Campbell baseline was  $.61$ . As a consequence, Televisa strongly influenced TV Azteca presidential candidates' negative attribute agenda. The same pattern was observed between time 2 and time 3. The cross-lagged correlation between Televisa at time 2 and TV Azteca at time 3 ( $\rho = +.80$ ) was stronger than TV Azteca at time 2 and Televisa at time 3 ( $\rho = +.58$ ). The Rozelle Campbell baseline was  $.60$ . In contrast, an opposite pattern was observed during time 3 and time 4. The cross-lag correlation between TV Azteca at time 3 and Televisa at time 4 ( $\rho = +.86$ ) was stronger than the other way around ( $\rho = +.69$ ). The Rozelle Campbell baseline was  $.59$ . For the period of time 4 and time 5 a reverse result was observed. The cross-lagged correlation between Televisa at time 4 and TV Azteca at time 5 ( $\rho = +.97$ ) was stronger than TV Azteca at time 4 and Televisa at time 5 ( $\rho = +.54$ ). The Rozelle Campbell baseline was  $.61$ . This pattern of flow reversed for the last period. The period of time 5 and time 6: the cross-lag correlation between TV Azteca at time 5 and Televisa at time 6 ( $\rho = +1$ ) was perfect, and a tiny bit stronger than Televisa at time 5 and TV Azteca at time 6 ( $\rho = +.96$ ). There is little difference in the two correlations, and both exceeded the baseline. The Rozelle Campbell baseline was  $.96$ . Overall, Televisa strongly influenced TV Azteca's election campaign issue agenda 3 constructed weeks, and TV Azteca strongly influenced Televisa during 2 constructed

weeks. As a consequence, we can conclude that Televisa set TV Azteca's election campaign issue agenda.

To summarize the results in Figure 3, three of the five analyses indicate a reciprocal relationship between Televisa and TV Azteca. However, in two of the time periods, the second and the fourth, there is evidence that Televisa's election issue agenda influenced TV Azteca. At the general level, the flow of communication analysis provides evidence of how Televisa influenced TV Azteca. This result was expected because Televisa is the major television network in the country. Nevertheless, it is crucial to investigate the flow of communication in detail in order to deeply understand the influence dynamic between both television networks. In the two months breakdown it is surprising to detect how in the first half of the presidential campaign period TV Azteca clearly influenced Televisa's news content. This means that we should be careful not to overlook TV Azteca's news reporting. Sometimes due to the fact that TV Azteca at the corporate level (commercialization, profit, ratings) is located below Televisa we have the tendency to think that it should be the same case for news content. In contrast, this study clearly shows that in terms of news content, the corporate pattern is not followed because for three consecutive months TV Azteca dictated what news in Mexico was. For the second half of the presidential campaign period, Televisa set the national television agenda.

The month by month breakdown analysis clearly shows evidence that during the two most crucial moments of the election campaign TV Azteca influenced Televisa. Those were: (1) during the third month of the campaign when the Televisa's law was discussed in congress and (2) during the last month when the post second debate controversy took place after AMLO accused Calderon of having a brother in law in charge of creating IFE's software that would be used to count the votes on election day. This event was the starting point of Calderon's downhill

popularity which eventually leads him to a limited vote turnout. Again, during the most critical moments of the election campaign TV Azteca was the media agenda setter for national television news. Overall, it is important to be the news leader, but to be the news chief during crucial times adds up to a tremendous amount of social, civic, democratic responsibility and love for their country to those persons in charge of TV Azteca news.

This study is one of the few which investigates the national television networks relationship across the election campaign. This study shows that ratings and content leadership are not the same and are not directly related to each other. Ratings are good for sales, but content leadership is directly related with the duty that the media has to keep voters informed. Content leadership is directly related to democracy, to make an effort to construct a more democratic nation. This practice of constructing a more democratic nation is necessary for young democracies like Mexico. The democratic practice of television election journalism in Mexico was the main difference between Televisa and TV Azteca. As Table 3 illustrates, Televisa chose to concentrate their efforts on reporting about the negative attribute television ads campaign and presidential candidate's reactions, which is a good strategy if ratings were the news executives' priority. In contrast, TV Azteca devoted their efforts to report on public issues that perhaps sacrificed ratings – which their news executives are aware are not always at the top – for content leadership which leads to a more democratic election news coverage. Nevertheless, Televisa produced a higher amount of election news stories (187) than TV Azteca (93) and the intermedia agenda setting effect between both networks was significant ( $\rho = +.742$ ). As the flow of communication indicated, TV Azteca produced a higher democratic value news content than Televisa did. To conclude, do not assume that the leader network is necessarily the network that

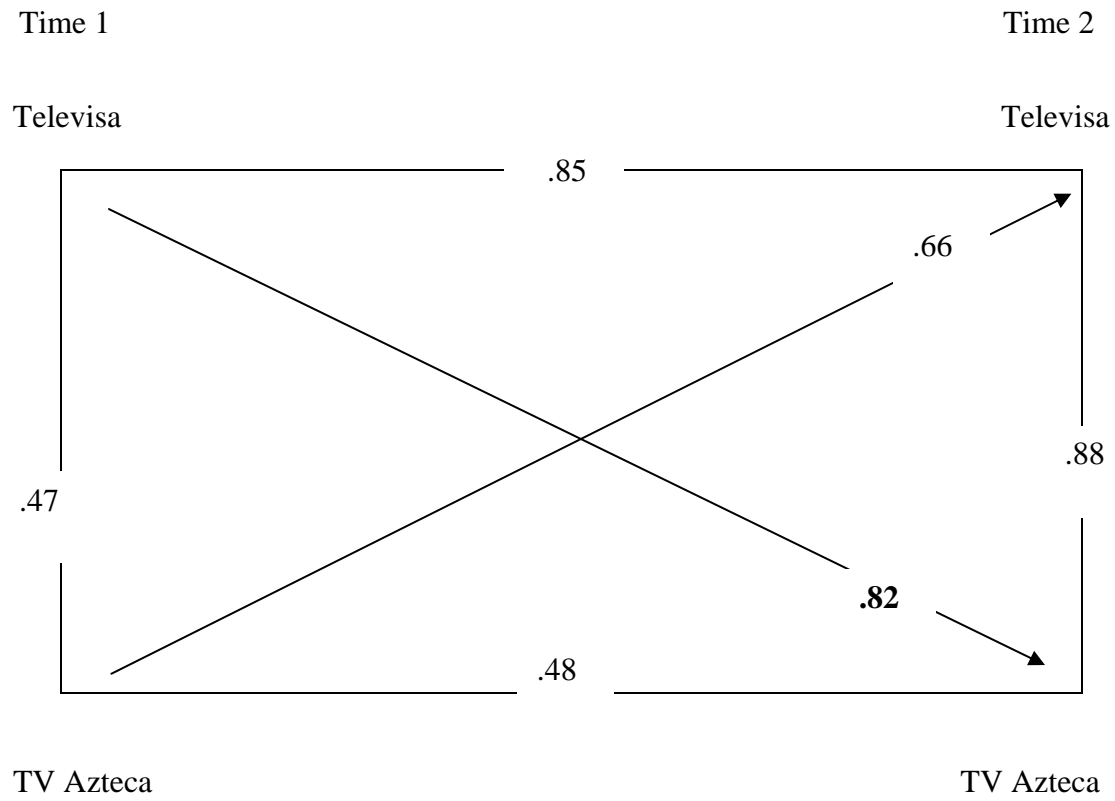
presents to voters the most democratic election news content, watch out for the second place news organization which has less to lose and more freedom to try out innovative news content.

H2: Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts presented the same presidential candidate attribute agenda to their viewers during the 2006 presidential election.

Candidates' attribute news coverage is fundamental for Mexican democracy. Voters are not loyal to political parties. Voters have the tendency to favor strong and charismatic leaders. Therefore, the way that journalists portray presidential candidate is important in Mexican election journalism. This hypothesis was answered from two perspectives: the negative and positive candidate attribute agendas. In terms of the overall negative candidate attributes agenda, the hypothesis was confirmed. Televisa and TV Azteca had a perfect Spearman's Rho correlation of  $\rho = +1$ . In the presentation of negative attributes (Tables 4 and 5), both television stations ranked the presidential candidates exactly in the same order: (1) AMLO, (2) Calderón, (3) Madrazo, and (4) Mercado and Campa.

Nevertheless, the results indicate that Televisa concentrated the majority of its negative comments on one presidential candidate: AMLO. The outcome showed that the percentage difference in candidates' negative attributes between the top runners was large. As Table 4 illustrates, AMLO received the largest number of negative attributes mentions—70%—in news stories on Televisa. Felipe Calderón received 23% of the negative attributes, and Madrazo received 7% negative attributes. Neither Mercado nor Campa received any negative attributes on Televisa. These results show a difference of 47% between both AMLO and Calderón. This

Figure 1: Election Campaign Issues Agenda: Three Months Cross-Lagged Correlation of Televisa (upper) and TV Azteca (lower).



Rozelle-Campbell baseline =  $.67$

Figure 2: Election Campaign Issues Agenda: Two Months Cross-Lagged Correlation of Televisa (upper) and TV Azteca (lower).

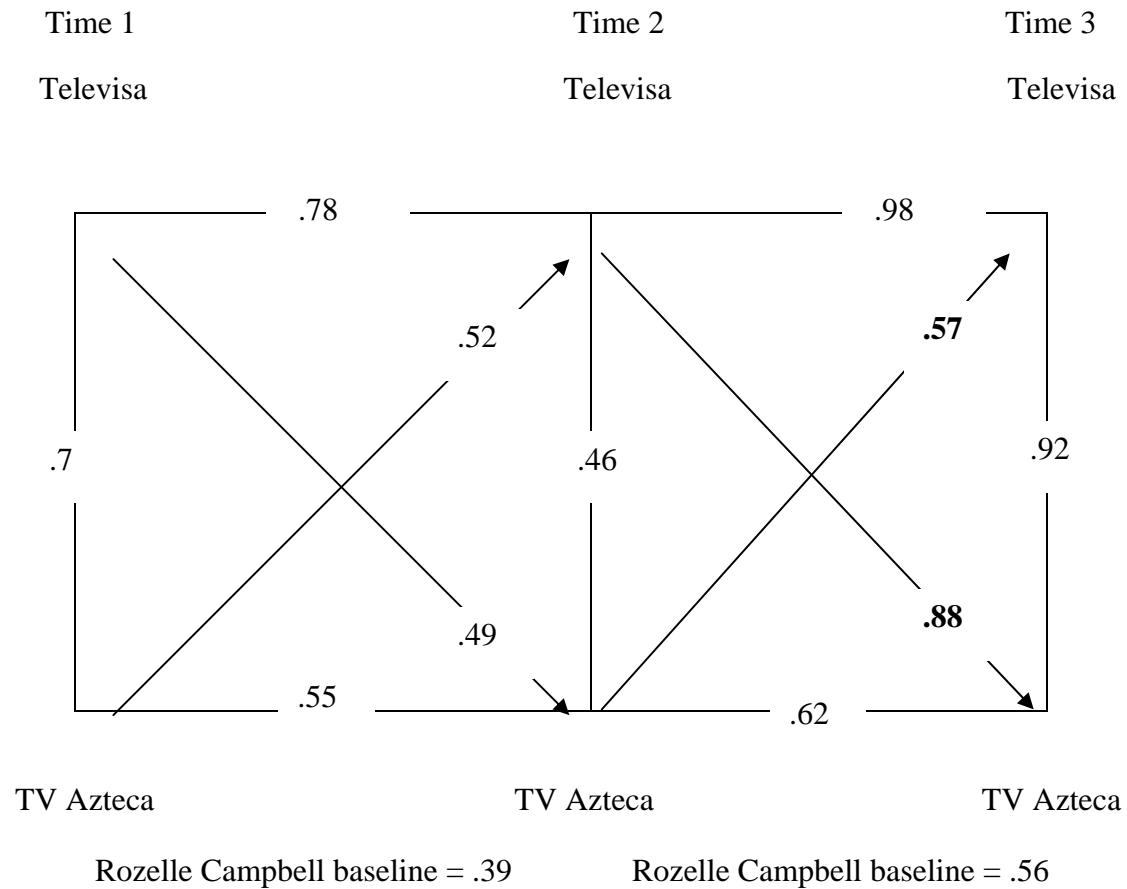
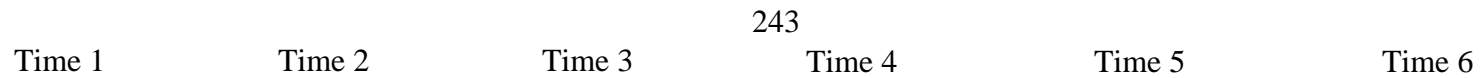
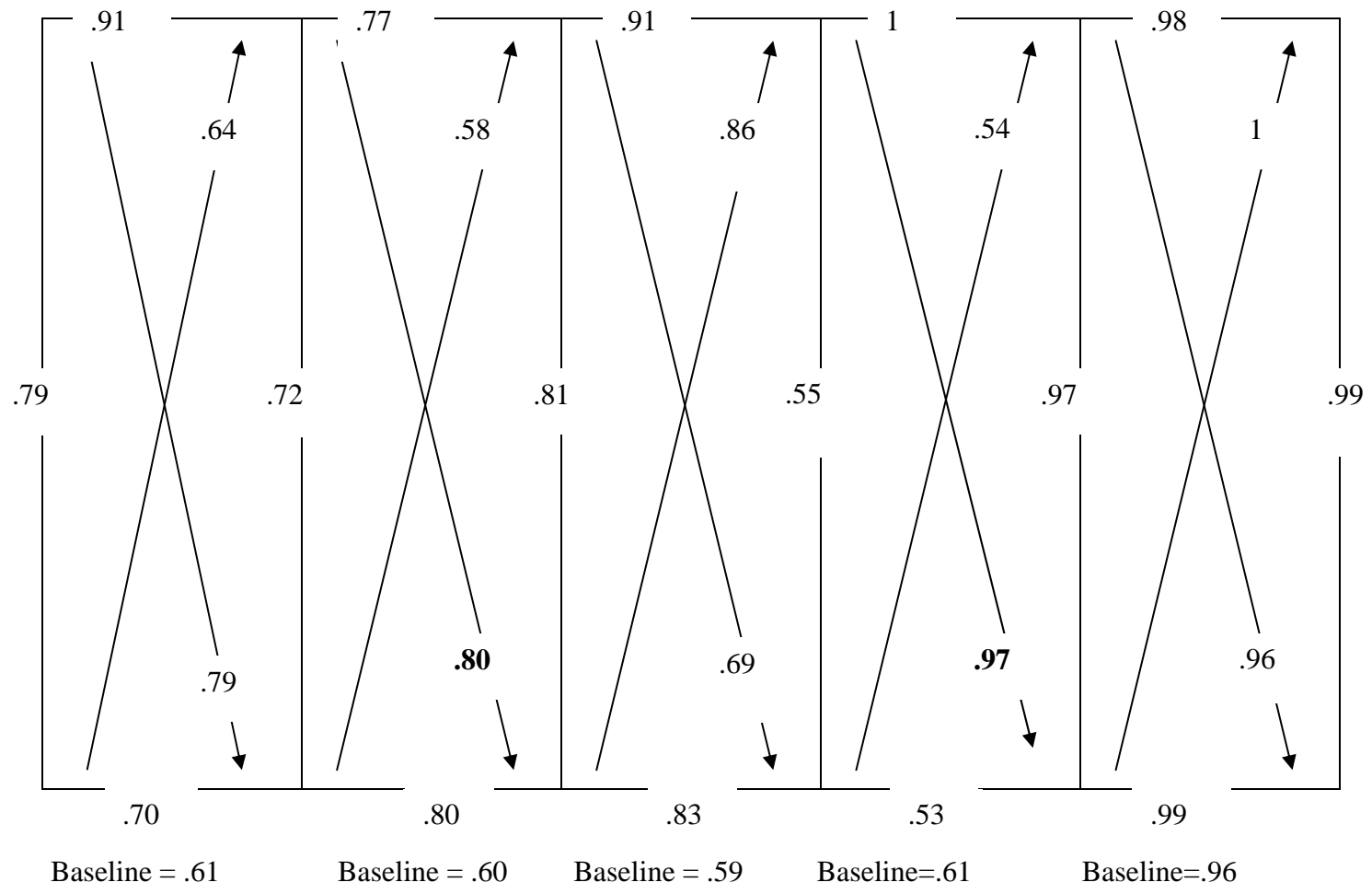


Figure 3: Election Campaign Issues Agenda: Cross-Lagged Correlation of Televisa (upper) and TV Azteca (lower).







means that AMLO obtained 3 times as many negative mentions as Calderón and 10 times more negative mentions than Madrazo. The main negative attributes for each candidate were for AMLO— inability to fight corruption, for Calderón—lack of credibility and corruption, and for Madrazo—corruption, as well as a lack of credibility. The fact that Televisa centers its negative attribute reporting in the direction of one presidential candidate and the differences with the other candidates is significant indicates a clear tendency to damage AMLO's personal image. However, this tendency could take place without being purposely planned by the network news executives. Although the fact that the percentage difference between the first (AMLO) and second (Calderon) is enormous does implicate an unequal election coverage that severely damaged AMLO's image. Sadly, this unequal reporting is not leading to a democratic journalism. In addition, it is violating Televisa's civic duty to keep their viewers informed by presenting a clear negative tendency in their news content. Therefore it represents a huge step back for Televisa in their social responsibility as a media outlet to contribute to the democratization of Mexico. The election journalism tendency in Mexico is changing. In the past, political candidates from opposition parties were absent from the national television media. They were practically invisible, but the 2006 election marks a new trend in election journalism to over emphasize negative candidate attributes in order to eliminate the opposition candidates by portraying them as outrageous persons. This kind of election journalism is preventing Mexico from moving forward into a developed democratic society. The media has an enormous responsibility in assist society by keeping their citizens informed and presenting a sense of balance to voters.

Table 4: Presidential Candidate Attribute Agenda—Televisa

Candidate	Positive			Negative		
	Mentions	%	rank	Mentions	%	rank
Felipe Calderón	31	24	(3)	7	23	(2)
Roberto Madrazo	38	29	(2)	2	7	(3)
Andrés M. López Obrador	44	34	(1)	21	70	(1)
Patricia Mercado	7	5	(5)	0	0	(4.5)
Roberto Campa	11	8	(4)	0	0	(4.5)
Total	131	100		30	100	

Negative Candidate Attribute Spearman's Rho correlation + 1  
 Positive Candidate Attribute Spearman's Rho correlation + .675

Table 5: Presidential Candidate Attribute Agenda—TV Azteca

Candidate	Positive			Negative		
	Mentions	%	rank	Mentions	%	rank
Felipe Calderón	37	27	(1)	16	32	(2)
Roberto Madrazo	26	19	(3)	12	24	(3)
Andrés M. López Obrador	36	26	(2)	18	36	(1)
Patricia Mercado	20	14	(4.5)	2	4	(4.5)
Roberto Campa	19	14	(4.5)	2	4	(4.5)
Total	138	100		50	100	

In contrast, TV Azteca presented more equivalent portrayals of the candidates' negative attributes in its news coverage of the main three contenders—Calderón, Madrazo, and López Obrador. TV Azteca presented the same order of ranking that Televisa did, resulting in a perfect correlation. The difference between the networks is the percentages of negative coverage devoted to each candidate. As Table 5 illustrates, in TV Azteca, AMLO ranked on top (36%), followed by Calderón (32%) and Madrazo (24%). The two candidates who received fewer negative attributes in their news reports were Campa and Mercado (4%). This means that the percentage difference between candidates was smaller than in Televisa. The percentage difference between AMLO and Calderón was only four points. Furthermore, the variation between Calderón and Madrazo was eight points. Both candidates of the smaller parties—Mercado and Campa—had the same percentages (4%), which was a 32-percentage difference

with the leader AMLO. To sum up, in TV Azteca there was not a clear tendency to hold back a particular candidate with its news reporting as Televisa did with AMLO. This characteristic of TV Azteca's election journalism presented a more balance news content for voters. Although the difference between the three major runners and the two presidential candidates of the small parities is vast, the fact that all five candidates received coverage is a good step forward in the history of Mexican election journalism.

In terms of the second perspective to answer this hypothesis, the positive candidate attributes, the hypothesis also was confirmed. The intermedia agenda setting effect was more moderate,  $\rho = +.675$ . Interestingly, AMLO ranked at the top for both positive and negative attributes on Televisa. However, the data indicated that in the positive candidate attributes coverage, AMLO had 44%, in comparison to 70% that he obtained on the negative candidate attributes coverage; that is a 26% discrepancy between the positive and negative candidate attributes. As Table 4 shows, in Televisa, AMLO (34%) ranked on the top followed by Madrazo (29%), Calderón (24%), Campa (8%), and Mercado (5%). These results indicated that AMLO received 5% more positive coverage than Madrazo did. The PRI candidate was just 5% over Felipe Calderón. Regarding the small parties' candidates, Campa received 3% more positive coverage than Mercado did. On Televisa, the main positive attributes of each candidate were for AMLO—population well-being, Calderón—honesty, Madrazo—support to democracy and respect to law, Campa—honesty as well as support for democracy, and Mercado—well skilled for the position. The positive candidates' attribute news coverage presented more balanced reporting between presidential candidates. In addition, the two candidates from the “small” parties received some positive attribute coverage and were invisible in the negative attribute coverage. Televisa did elevate their quality of election

reporting on their positive attribute coverage more than they did on the negative attribute coverage. The major Mexican network constructed democratic coverage by reporting on each one of the presidential candidates and by keeping their frequency of coverage of candidates relatively close to each other, which limits the possibility of favoring or hurting any one candidate. This quality of election coverage represents a huge positive step for Televisa and Mexican election reporting. Also, TV Azteca presented high quality election reporting by keeping their percentage difference between candidates small. As a consequence, the possibility of favoring a candidate was low. In this case, Calderon (27%) received the highest amount of positive coverage on TV Azteca followed by AMLO (26%), Madrazo (19%), Mercado (14%) and Campa (14%). The coverage of small candidates was also higher in TV Azteca than in Televisa. Like in the case of the public issues, TV Azteca's positive candidates' attributes news reporting directly contributed to the construction of democracy. This fact represents another good step forward to help mature Mexico's young democracy.

Although Televisa and TV Azteca presented the same presidential candidate negative attribute agenda to their viewers by obtaining a perfect ( $\rho = +1$ ) Spearman's Rho correlation, a more detailed analysis of causation was required. To sort out the flow of intermedia influence of the presidential candidates' negative attribute agenda between Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts during the 2006 Mexican election campaign period, three cross-lagged correlation analyses were conducted. The first cross-lagged correlation corresponds to a 3-month period. As Figure 4 illustrates, the cross-lagged correlation between Televisa at time 1 and TV Azteca at time 2 ( $\rho = +.80$ ) was stronger than the other way around ( $\rho = +.71$ ), but both exceed the Rozelle-Campbell baseline of .67.

Another cross-lag analysis (see Figure 5) was conducted with a 2-month scale. The cross-lag correlation of time 1 and time 2 indicated that the stronger correlation was between Televisa at time 1 and TV Azteca at time 2 ( $\rho = +.55$ ), not the other way around ( $\rho = +.45$ ). However, both of these results were above the expected value of chance alone indicated by a Rozelle-Campbell baseline of .41. However, this pattern changes over time. The cross-lag correlation between TV Azteca at time 2 and Televisa at time 3 ( $\rho = +.92$ ) was stronger than the other way around ( $\rho = +.80$ ). The cross-lag correlation between Televisa at time 2 and TV Azteca at time 3 falls below the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .82. Overall, the results indicated a reciprocal relationship during the first half of the campaign period, but that during the second half of the presidential election TV Azteca strongly influenced Televisa's presidential candidates' negative attribute agenda.

To zoom in to a detailed analysis, as Figure 6 shows, a cross-lagged correlation of each constructed week was conducted. During the first and second time period, the cross-lagged correlation between Televisa at time 1 and TV Azteca at time 2 ( $\rho = +.50$ ) indicated a stronger influence than the other way around ( $\rho = +.38$ ). The correlation between TV Azteca at time 1 and Televisa at time 2 falls below the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .47. The same pattern of influence was observed in the second constructed week. The cross-lagged correlation between Televisa at time 2 and TV Azteca at time 3 ( $\rho = +.48$ ) was stronger than TV Azteca at time 2 and Televisa at time 3 ( $\rho = +.40$ ). The second correlation falls below the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .41. Again, the same pattern of influence was observed for time 3 and time 4. The cross-lag correlation between Televisa at time 3 and TV Azteca at time 4 ( $\rho = +.60$ ) was stronger than the other way around ( $\rho = +.40$ ). Once again, the second correlation falls under the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .46. The same pattern of communication flow

continued for the period of time 4 and time 5. The cross-lagged correlation between Televisa at time 4 and TV Azteca at time 5 ( $\rho = +.80$ ) was stronger than TV Azteca at time 4 and Televisa at time 5 ( $\rho = +.60$ ). Both of these results were above the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .47. Nevertheless, the flow of communication between the television networks reversed for the last period. The cross-lag correlation between TV Azteca at time 5 and Televisa at time 6 ( $\rho = +.85$ ) was stronger than Televisa at time 5 and TV Azteca at time 6 ( $\rho = +.53$ ). Both of these results were above the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .29. Overall, the results show that in 4 out of 5 cross-lag correlations, the pattern of influence was the same. That is, Televisa strongly influenced the TV Azteca presidential candidates' negative attribute agenda. However, the most vulnerable time of the 2006 presidential campaign period was the second debate aftermath when the national television agenda was strongly influenced by TV Azteca. This last period illustrated the most crucial moment of the election—the last month before election day.

These series of cross-lag correlations serve the purpose of analyzing the flow of communication and providing scientific evidence to point out which network was influencing the other one and the exact periods of such effect. Again, as we discussed before, ratings are not the same as news content quality. Overall, Televisa strongly influenced TV Azteca as it was predicted because Televisa is the major television network in Mexico. However, like in the case of public issues, TV Azteca influenced Televisa during one of the most critical period during the six months of election campaign. In terms of negative candidates' attributes, TV Azteca dominated the flow of communication over Televisa during the last three months of the campaign right before election day. Moreover, during the month by month analysis, the results showed that in the month previous to casting the ballots TV Azteca influenced Televisa. These results raise the question of media leadership. How useful could it be to be the dominate

television media if by the climax of the election campaign the tendency of media direction shifts around completely? In terms of agenda setting theory, the present study serves as an example to comprehend the importance of finding not just evidence of the presence or not of the agenda setting effect in a particular context, but to point out the magnitude that the effect takes by analyzing the flow of communication. The cross lag correlations show scientific evidence to understand which media outlet initiated the influence over the other media outlet(s) which answer the core question of media agenda setting that is: Who sets the media's agenda?

In terms of presidential candidates' positive attributes, the intermedia agenda-setting effect was confirmed, and analysis of its causality was needed. To sort out the flow of influence between Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts during the 2006 Mexican election campaign period, the same three cross-lagged correlation analyses were conducted again. The first cross-lagged correlation corresponds to a 3-month period. As Figure 7 illustrates, the cross-lagged analysis results fall below the Rozelle-Campbell baseline of 1. As a consequence, the causality relationship of the 3-month period turns out to be nonsignificant.

The second cross-lagged analysis corresponds to a 2-month period. The cross-lag correlation between time 1 and time 2 was below the Rozelle-Campbell baseline of .17; this first half of the presidential campaign period turns out to be nonsignificant. However, the second half indicated a strong influence of Televisa at time 2 over TV Azteca at time 3 ( $\rho = +.87$ ). In contrast, the result of the cross-lag correlation between TV Azteca at time 2 and Televisa at time 3 ( $\rho = +.42$ ) turns out to be equal to the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .42. Overall, the results point out that Televisa influenced TV Azteca.

To zoom in to a detailed analysis, as Figure 10 shows, a cross-lagged correlation of each constructed week was conducted. The cross-lag correlation between TV Azteca at time 1



and Televisa at time 2 ( $\rho = +.80$ ) was stronger than Televisa at time 1 and TV Azteca at time 2 ( $\rho = +.50$ ). Both of these results were above the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .58. In contrast, the cross-lag correlation between Televisa at time 2 and TV Azteca at time 3 ( $\rho = +.88$ ) was stronger than the other way around ( $\rho = +.68$ ). The second correlation falls under the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .71. Nevertheless, the results shifted again for the time 3 and time 4. The cross-lag correlation between TV Azteca at time 3 and Televisa at time 4 ( $\rho = +.68$ ) was stronger than the other way around ( $\rho = +.15$ ). The last correlation falls under the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .25. For the next time period of time 4 and time 5, the results shifted again favoring Televisa. The cross-lag correlation between Televisa at time 4 and TV Azteca at time 5 ( $\rho = +.80$ ) was stronger than TV Azteca at time 4 and Televisa at time 5 ( $\rho = +.38$ ); both results were over the Rozelle Campbell baseline of .23. This same pattern of influence was observed for the last constructed week. The cross-lag correlation between Televisa at time 5 and TV Azteca at time 6 ( $\rho = +.88$ ) was stronger than TV Azteca at time 5 and Televisa at time 6 ( $\rho = +.53$ ); the Rozelle Campbell baseline was .66. Overall, TV Azteca influenced Televisa's presidential candidates' positive attributes agenda during the 2006 presidential election. After obtaining evidence of a moderate agenda setting effect ( $\rho = +.675$ ), the need to understand the causality of the flow of communication became necessary. Televisa clearly influenced TV Azteca's news content. The month by month analysis indicated that TV Azteca's flow of communication over Televisa occurred only during the first and third month of the campaign period. The third month was when the Televisas law was being discussed in congress. It's surprising to observe that during this crucial time Televisa was not influencing TV Azteca, if in real life events all the news was about Televisa's piece of legislation.

To summarize, in regard to the candidates' negative attributes, Figure 6 shows a detailed analysis of causation of the flow of intermedia influence. Four of the five analyses indicate a reciprocal relationship between Televisa and TV Azteca. However, in the last time period, there is evidence that TV Azteca's agenda influenced Televisa when it came to the negative attributes of the candidates.

As for the candidate's positive attributes, Figure 9 shows a detailed analysis in regard to the causation of the intermedia influence. Three of the five analyses indicate a reciprocal relationship between Televisa and TV Azteca. However, in two of the time periods, the first and the third, there is evidence that TV Azteca's agenda influenced Televisa when it came to a candidate's positive attributes.

Scholars Laura Islas Reyes and Luis Miguel Carriedo argued that television networks indirectly and directly favor a particular presidential candidate. From their view, Televisa supported Calderon and TV Azteca supported AMLO. This research provides scientific data to prove that in terms of the presidential negative attributes their appreciation about Televisa were correct because the network focus their attention on one candidate. In order for a country to develop a strong democracy their media needs to stop practicing this favoritism type of journalism practice to concentrate on presenting a more balanced exposure of all presidential candidates with reports written from a neutral prospective. The scholars appreciation regarding TV Azteca is not accurate because the network presented a more balance negative attribute coverage. That is, the different in the percentages between presidential candidates was too close to each other to observe a tendency in favor or against a specific candidate. In regards to the positive candidates' attribute television coverage both networks presented reasonable journalistic coverage, minimizing the tendencies to favor a particular presidential candidate.

Figure 4: Candidates' Negative Attributes: Three months Cross-Lagged Correlation of Televisa (upper) and TV Azteca (lower).

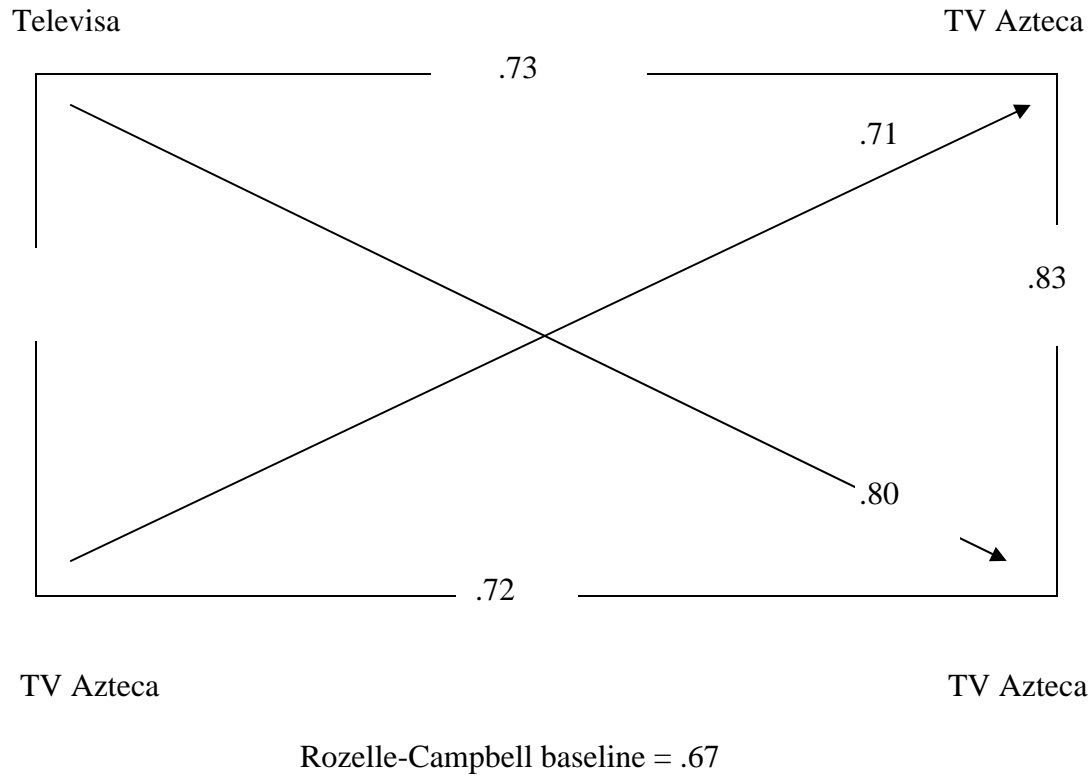


Figure 5: Candidates' Negative Attributes: Two Months Cross-Lagged Correlation of Televisa (upper) and TV Azteca (lower).

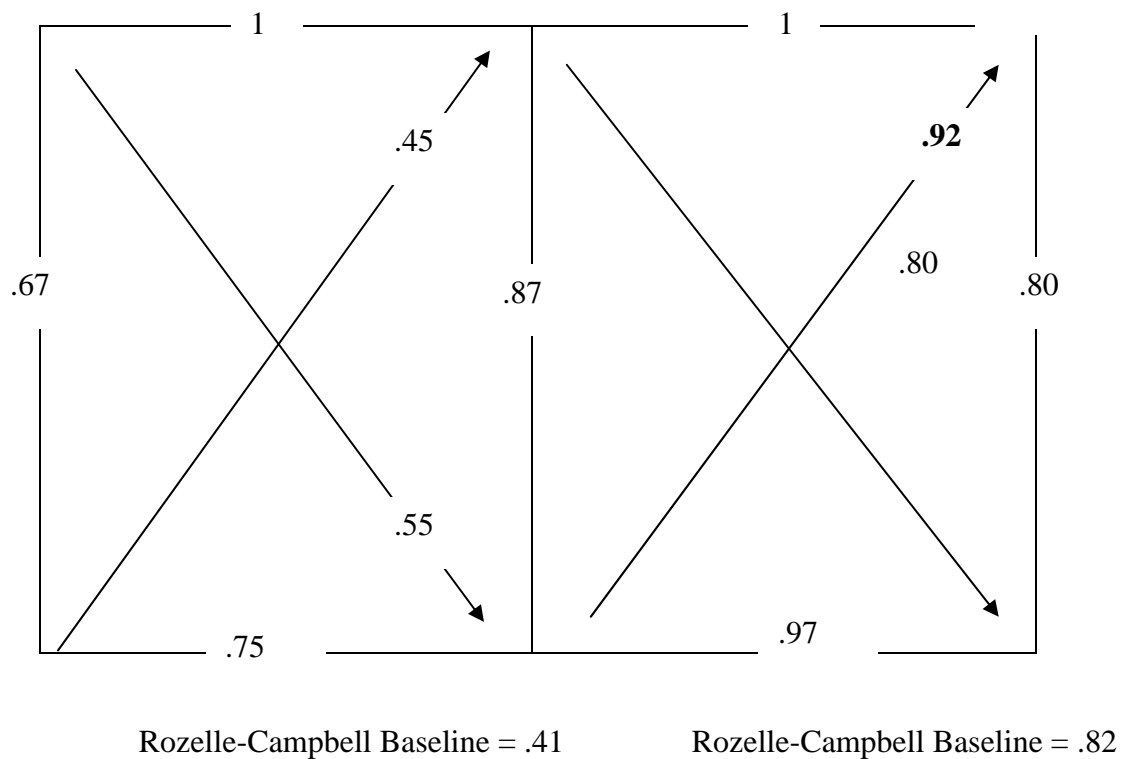


Figure 6: Candidates' Negative Attributes: Constructed Week Cross-Lagged Correlation of Televisa (upper) and TV Azteca (lower).

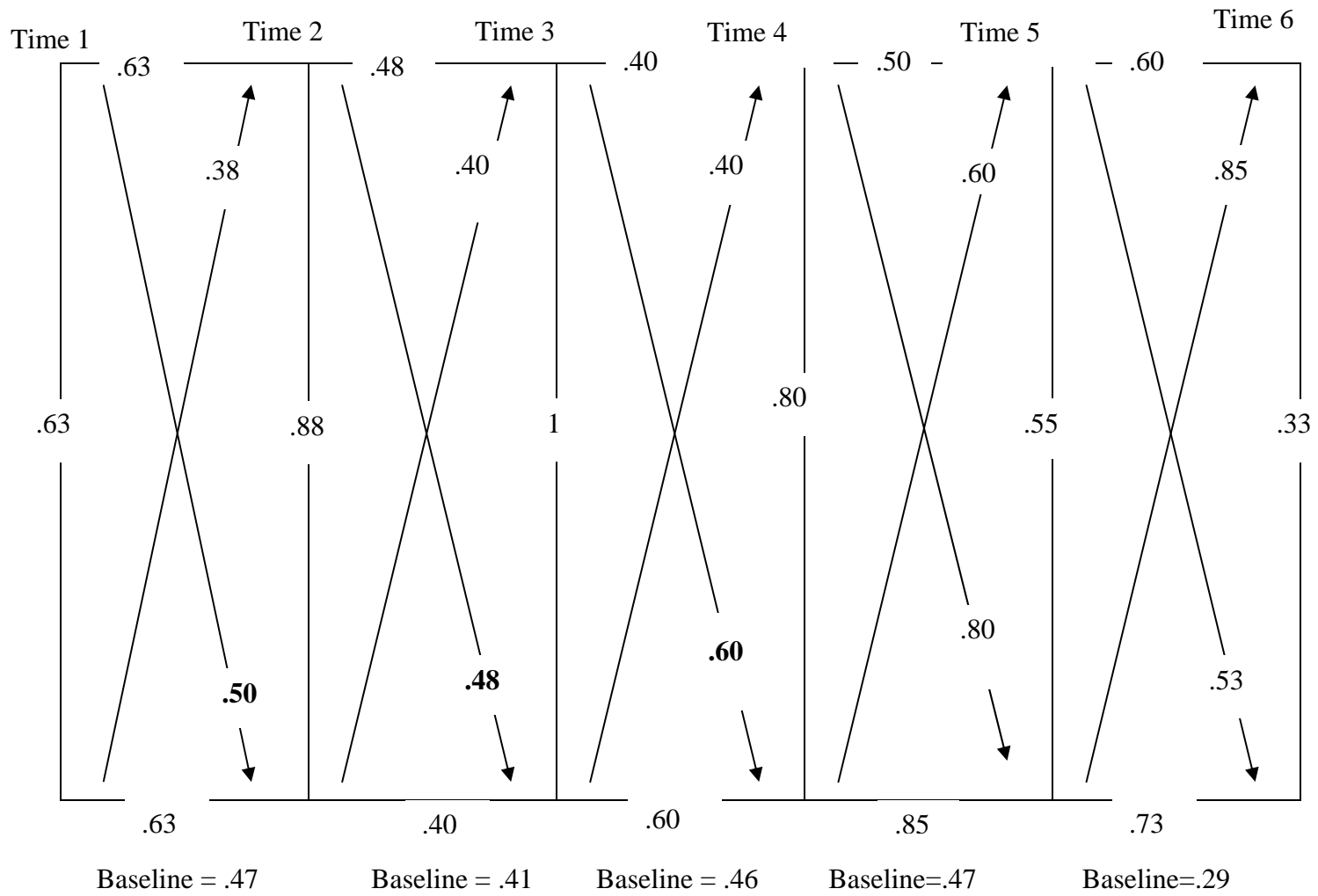


Figure 7: Candidates' Positive Attributes: Three months Cross-Lagged Correlation of Televisa (upper) and TV Azteca (lower).

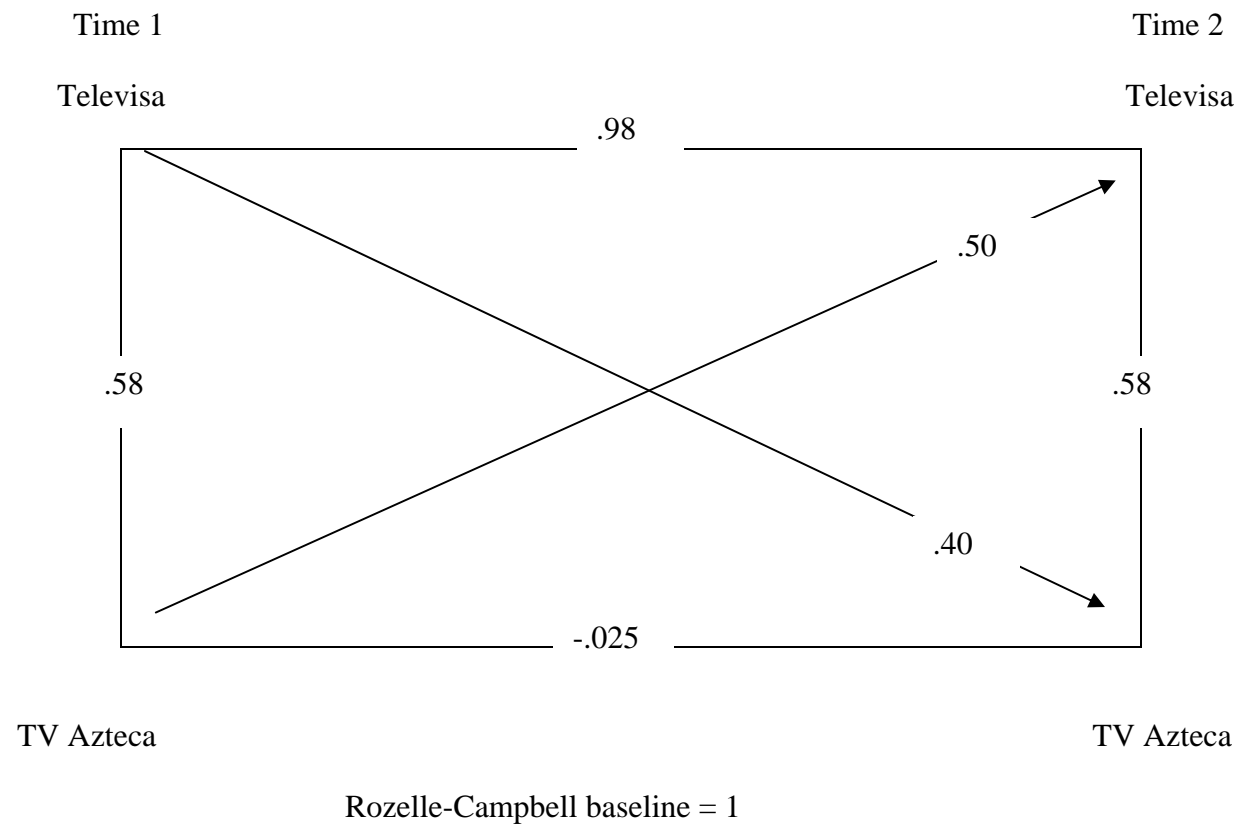


Figure 8: Candidates' Positive Attributes: Two months Cross-Lagged Correlation of Televisa (upper) and TV Azteca (lower).

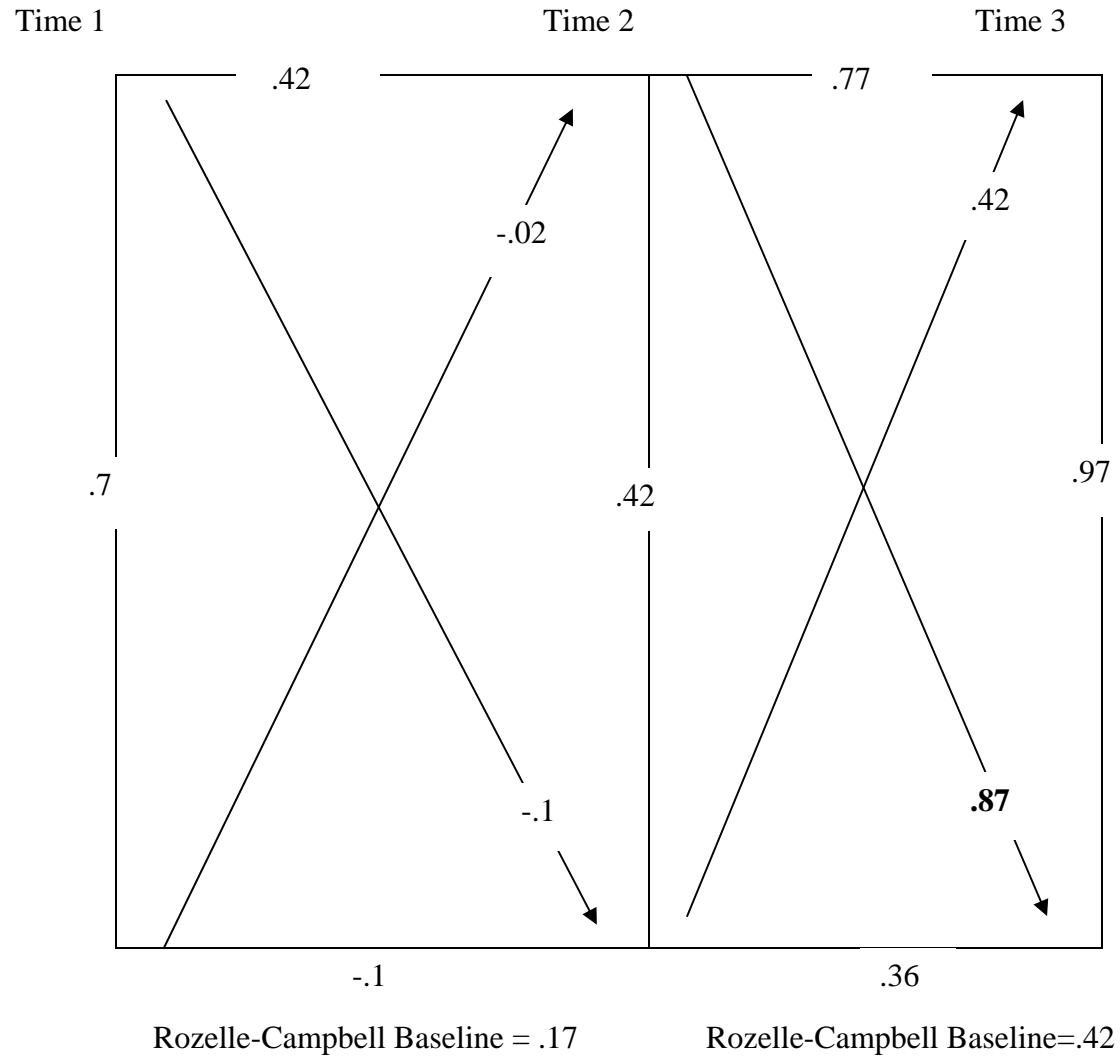
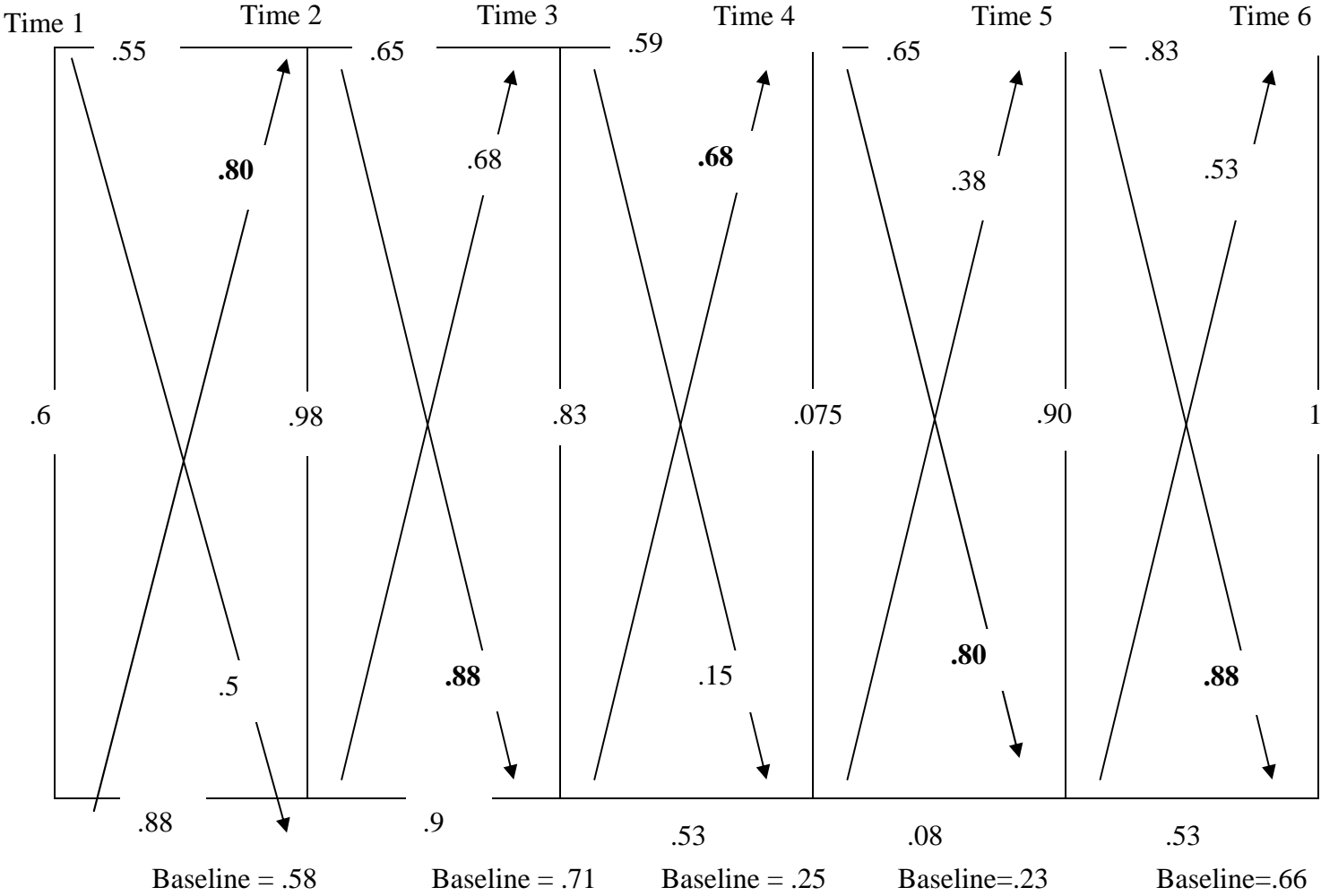


Figure 9: Candidates' Positive Attributes: Constructed Week Cross-Lagged Correlation of Televisa (upper) and TV Azteca (lower).





H3: Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts favored a particular presidential candidate through their nonelection coverage of public issues during the 2006 election

This hypothesis was confirmed. However, the degree of indirect support that each candidate received from the newscast's nonelection coverage varies according to each candidate's personal political agenda. Different from expected outcomes, the candidate who received the highest indirect support from national television networks agenda was a candidate who emerged from a small party: Roberto Campa. AMLO was very close to Campa. Roberto Madrazo, and Felipe Calderón registered nonsignificant correlations. The contender who obtained the lowest indirect support was Patricia Mercado.

The nonelection news content that Televisa and TV Azteca presented to their viewers was basically an identical public issues agenda, as Table 6 illustrates. The intermedia agenda setting effect between both television networks was strong ( $\rho = +.93$ ). The strong Spearman's Rho correlation indicates that both networks presented almost the same type of information and in the same rank of importance to their viewers. Televisa and TV Azteca aired a total of 1,335 news stories during the presidential campaign period. Televisa broadcast the highest amount of news (61% = 808 stories), while TV Azteca produced the lowest number of reports (39% = 527 stories). The public issues that ranked at the top of both networks' agenda were: (1) crime, (2) the election, (3) the economy, and (4) politics. The difference between the election and politics categories was that election news presented a topic explicitly about the election, and politics stories covered political matters that were not related to the election process.

Crime was the most important problem of concern in Mexico presented to those voters who chose either Televisa or TV Azteca newscasts as their source of information. This topic

directly relates to Calderón’s crime-fighting campaign slogan, *Mano Dura* (strong hand). The fact that both television newscasts presented an “unsafe reality” could create the appropriate psychological environment for people to quickly and easily respond positively to a candidate who promised voters to protect them from danger. Calderón focused his attention on reinforcing the judiciary system to protect citizens and prevent crime. In addition, the use of fear arousal to bolster news ratings could have been as much a factor in generating public concerns about crime as any presidential campaign.

Table 6: Intermedia Agenda Setting Effect of Televisa and TV Azteca—Issues

Issues	Televisa n=808			TV Azteca n=527		
	#stories	-%-	rank	#stories	-%-	rank
Economy	115	14	(3)	79	15	(3)
Election	187	23	(2)	93	18	(2)
FIFA Germany 2006	10	1	(13.5)	9	2	(10)
Politics	64	8	(4)	41	8	(4)
Immigration	42	5	(6)	33	6	(6)
Crime	216	27	(1)	156	30	(1)
Health	13	2	(10.5)	20	4	(8)
War	16	2	(10.5)	8	2	(10)
EZLN	2	.2	(15)	2	.4	(13.5)
Environment	39	5	(6)	28	5	(7)
Education and Culture	39	5	(6)	36	7	(5)
Human Rights	20	2	(10.5)	8	2	(10)
Religion	16	2	(10.5)	2	.4	(13.5)
Media	21	3	(8)	9	2	(9.5)
Other	8	1	(13.5)	3	.6	(12)
Total		100%			100%	

Televisa and TV Azteca Spearman’s Rho correlation = + .93

In order to find out which candidate was indirectly favored by the combined Televisa and TV Azteca agenda, a Spearman’s Rho correlation between the television agenda (Televisa + TV Azteca) and each candidate’s political agenda was calculated. The results indicated that Campa (rho = +.48) had the strongest correlation followed by AMLO (rho = +.45), Madrazo

(rho= +.34), and Calderón (rho = +.28). Mercado (rho = +.0) received the weakest correlation. The details of each comparison are presented in Tables 8 – 12.

However, comparison of the candidates' agenda with the television's agenda indicated an inconsistency in the level of importance that the networks assigned to public issues listed on each candidate agenda. For example, as Table 5 illustrates, the highest-ranking public issues categories on both television stations were: (1) crime, (2) election news, (3) economy, and (4) politics. The variation on the television agenda began only at the fifth position. In contrast, on the candidates' agenda, crime was at the lower end of their list of items. As a matter of fact, only three candidates –AMLO, Madrazo, and Mercado—had crime on their agenda. Another example is the second topic on the television agenda—the economy. This issue ranked at the top on all the candidates' agendas. Consequently, the economy was a topic that was crucial on both agendas, and therefore, television reporting on the economy favored all five candidates. Economy was the number one agenda item for AMLO, Calderón, Madrazo, and Mercado. For Campa, the economy was the second issue on his agenda.

In addition, coverage about the state of the Mexican political system indirectly favored all candidates. For Campa, the political system was the top priority on his agenda. As Table 1 illustrates, the political system ranked second for Madrazo, third for AMLO, fourth in Calderón's agenda, and at the middle in Mercado's agenda.

Table 7: A Comparison of the Issues on Television's Agenda vs. Candidate's Agenda

Issues	TV Agenda			Candidates' Agenda		
	#	%	rank	#	%	rank
Economy	194	15	(3)	63	27	(1)
Election	280	21	(2)	*	0	(13.5)
FIFA Germany 2006	19	1	(11.5)	*	0	(13.5)
Politics	105	8	(4)	24	10	(4)
Immigration	75	6	(5)	5	2	(9.5)
Crime	372	28	(1)	5	2	(9.5)
Health	33	2	(10)	9	4	(8)
War	24	2	(10)	*	0	(13.5)
EZLN	4	.3	(14)	*	0	(13.5)
Environment	67	5	(6)	13	6	(5.5)
Culture	37.5	3	(7.5)	12	5	(7)
Education	37.5	3	(7.5)	29	12	(3)
Human Rights	28	2	(9.5)	14	6	(5.5)
Religion	18	1	(11.5)	1	.4	(12)
Media	30	2	(10)	2	1	(11)
Other	11	.8	(13)	56	24	(2)
Total	1335			233		

\* Topics silent on candidates' agenda

Spearman's Rho correlation = +.40

Table 8: Television's Agenda vs. AMLO's Agenda

Issues	TV Agenda			AMLO		
	#	%	rank	#	%	rank
Economy	194	15	(3)	20	40	(1)
Election	280	21	(2)	**	0	(12)
FIFA Germany 2006	19	1	(11.5)	**	0	(12)
Politics	105	8	(4)	5	10	(4)
Immigration	75	6	(5)	**	0	(12)
Crime	372	28	(1)	2	4	(7)
Health	33	2	(8.5)	2	4	(7)
War	24	2	(8.5)	**	0	(12)
EZLN	4	.3	(14)	**	0	(12)
Environment	67	5	(6)	2	4	(7)
Culture	37.5	3	(7.5)	3	6	(5)
Education	37.5	3	(7.5)	7	14	(3)
Human Rights	28	2	(9.5)	**	0	(12)
Religion	18	1	(11.5)	1	2	(9)
Media	30	2	(9.5)	**	0	(12)
Other	11	.8	(13)	8	16	(2)
Total	1335			50		

\*\* Topics silent on AMLO's agenda Spearman's Rho correlation = +.45

As Table 7 shows comparing the television agenda with the combined candidate agendas, the results indicated a weak Spearman's Rho correlation (+. 40). The comparisons

with the individual candidate agendas reported above are more revealing. The top priority of the PRD candidate was the economy followed by education. In contrast, crime ranked as the top issue with television newscasts followed by general election coverage. The public issues which the AMLO candidate and television newscasts agree with the most were politics, health, the environment and the FIFA 2006 World Cup in Germany. The biggest disparities between the priorities of the AMLO candidate and television newscast agendas were in crime, education and other.

Table 9: Television's Agenda vs. Mercado's Agenda

Issues	TV Agenda			Mercado's Agenda		
	#	%	rank	#	%	rank
Economy	194	15	(3)	11	19	(2)
Election	280	21	(2)	*	0	(13.5)
FIFA Germany 2006	19	1	(11.5)	*	0	(13.5)
Politics	105	8	(4)	3	6	(7.5)
Immigration	75	6	(5)	*	0	(13.5)
Crime	372	28	(1)	2	4	(9.5)
Health	33	2	(9.5)	4	7	(5)
War	24	2	(9.5)	*	0	(13.5)
EZLN	4	.3	(14)	*	0	(13.5)
Environment	67	5	(6)	3	6	(7.5)
Culture	37.5	3	(7.5)	4	7	(5)
Education	37.5	3	(7.5)	9	17	(3)
Human Rights	28	2	(9.5)	4	7	(5)
Religion	18	1	(11.5)	*	0	(13.5)
Media	30	2	(9.5)	2	4	(9.5)
Other	11	.8	(13)	12	22	(1)
Total	1335			54		

\* Topics silent on Mercado's agenda

Spearman's Rho correlation = .00

The public issues which Patricia Mercado and the television newscasts agreed with the most were the economy, EZLN, the environment and the media. Mercado's top priority was other followed by the economy and education. The television newscasts ranked crime at the top followed by general election coverage. The biggest disparities between Mercado and the television newscasts agendas were in crime, health, and other.

Table 10: Television's Agenda vs. Madrazo's Agenda

Issues	TV Agenda			Madrazo's Agenda		
	#	%	rank	#	%	rank
Economy	194	15	(3)	10	21	(2)
Election	280	21	(2)	**	0	(13)
FIFA Germany 2006	19	1	(11.5)	**	0	(13)
Politics	105	8	(4)	5	11	(3.5)
Immigration	75	6	(5)	**	0	(13)
Crime	372	28	(1)	1	3	(8.5)
Health	33	2	(8.5)	1	3	(8.5)
War	24	2	(8.5)	**	0	(13)
EZLN	4	.3	(14)	**	0	(13)
Environment	67	5	(6)	5	11	(3.5)
Culture	37.5	3	(7.5)	2	4	(7)
Education	37.5	3	(7.5)	3	6	(5.5)
Human Rights	28	2	(9.5)	3	6	(5.5)
Religion	18	1	(11.5)	**	0	(13)
Media	30	2	(9.5)	**	0	(13)
Other	11	.8	(13)	17	36	(1)
Total	1335			47		

\*\* Topics silent on Madrazo's agenda Spearman's Rho correlation = +.34

Madrazo's top priority was other followed by the economy, the environment, and politics. Television newscasts ranked crime at the top followed by general election coverage. The public issues which Madrazo and television newscasts agreed with the most were the economy, politics, health, EZLN, education, religion, and culture. In contrast, they disagreed on immigration, crime, the war on terror, human rights, the media, and the environment.

The top priority of the New Alliance candidate was politics followed by the economy and education. In contrast, television newscasts ranked crime at the top followed by general election coverage. Roberto Campa and television newscasts agreed the most on economy, immigration, health, the war on terror, the environment and religion. The biggest disparities were in politics, crime, education, and other.

Table 11: Television's Agenda vs. Campa's Agenda

Issues	TV Agenda			Campa's Agenda		
	#	%	rank	#	%	rank
Economy	194	15	(3)	4	25	(2)
Election	280	21	(2)	*	0	(11.5)

Table 11, cont.

FIFA Germany 2006	19	1	(11.5)	*	0	(11.5)
Politics	105	8	(4)	6	38	(1)
Immigration	75	6	(5)	1	6	(5.5)
Crime	372	28	(1)	*	0	(11.5)
Health	33	2	(9.5)	*	0	(11.5)
War	24	2	(9.5)	*	0	(11.5)
EZLN	4	.3	(14)	*	0	(11.5)
Environment	67	5	(6)	1	6	(5.5)
Culture	37.5	3	(7.5)	*	0	(11.5)
Education	37.5	3	(7.5)	2	13	(3.5)
Human Rights	28	2	(9.5)	*	0	(11.5)
Religion	18	1	(11.5)	*	0	(11.5)
Media	30	2	(9.5)	*	0	(11.5)
Other	11	.8	(13)	2	13	(3.5)
Total	1335			16		

- Topics silent on Campa's agenda. Spearman's Rho correlation = +.48

The public issues which Felipe Calderón and television newscasts agreed on were the economy, politics, immigration, health, EZLN and culture. Calderón's agenda differs with the newscasts agenda on crime, the war on terror, education, religion, the media, human rights and other. Calderón's top priority was the economy followed by education. Television newscasts ranked crime at the top followed by general election coverage.

In summary, this analysis indicates that for Televisa and TV Azteca, crime was the most important problem that the country faced during the election campaign period, which coincided with Calderón's crime-fighting campaign slogan, *Mano Dura* (strong hand). However, Televisa and TV Azteca's non-election news coverage favored Roberto Campa during the 2006 election, an unanticipated result. Campa was followed by the AMLO candidate by the slight difference of 0.3 decimals. A comparison between each presidential candidate's agenda and the networks' agenda revealed the contrast in the importance of public issues. At the top of the television's agenda was crime, while four out of the five candidates ranked economy at the top. Nonelection news coverage analysis is rare in agenda setting effect studies. The majority of the previous research focuses on election news (direct support) not on nonelection news (indirect support). However, for this election the Mexican media were

constantly monitored by IFE. In the event that any of the two major television network wanted to help a specific presidential candidate it was going to be difficult, but nonelection news were not monitored by IFE. Therefore, this kind of reporting offered a new opportunity to express support from the television media to presidential candidates.

This hypothesis illustrates how useful agenda setting theory could be in identifying indirect support that presidential candidates could receive from news organizations. The study of the 2006 Mexican election dynamic shows that agenda setting researchers should not focus their attention on the major candidates because a bigger picture could be missing. In this case, one of the small party’s candidates received the highest amount of nonelection coverage. In addition, this hypothesis establishes the magnitude of the impact that nonelection news can have on voters and its decisive role in election journalism. This finding is great contribution to election studies in Mexico because for many years only the official PRI candidate agenda was supported by Televisa’s newscasts. After the 2006 election, researchers now must keep close attention on all candidates. On the whole, the results point out a strong agenda setting effect ( $\rho=+.93$ ) between Televisa and TV Azteca, but after analyzing each candidate in particular it was easy to observe a clear tendency to favor Campa. This result has no direct relationship with any of the previous hypotheses. Campa did not appear as a main player on any of them.

Table 12: Television’s Agenda vs. Calderón’s Agenda

Issues	TV Agenda			Calderón’s Agenda		
	#	%	<i>rank</i>	#	%	<i>rank</i>
Economy	194	15	(3)	18	27	(1)
Election	280	21	(2)	**	0	(13)



Table 12, cont.

FIFA Germany 2006	19	1	(11.5)	**	0	(13)
Politics	105	8	(4)	5	7	(5)
Immigration	75	6	(5)	4	6	(6)
Crime	372	28	(1)	**	0	(13)
Health	33	2	(8.5)	2	3	(8.5)
War	24	2	(8.5)	**	0	(13)
EZLN	4	.3	(14)	**	0	(13)
Environment	67	5	(6)	2	3	(8.5)
Culture	37.5	3	(7.5)	3	5	(7)
Education	37.5	3	(7.5)	8	12	(3)
Human Rights	28	2	(9.5)	7	10	(4)
Religion	18	1	(11.5)	**	0	(13)
Media	30	2	(9.5)	**	0	(13)
Other	11	.8	(13)	17	26	(2)
Total	1335			66		

\*\* Topics silent on Calderón's agenda Spearman's Rho correlation = +.28.

H4: Andrés Manuel López Obrador's *caudillismo* cultural attribute prevailed over Felipe Calderón's *caudillismo* cultural attribute in political advertising and television news.

H4 in terms of political advertising was rejected, because PRI candidate Roberto Madrazo had the highest frequency of participation as a source in his political ads in contrast to Calderón and AMLO who preferred to use a male voiceover as the primary speaker in their television commercial spots. H4 concerning television news was also rejected. In the news, Felipe Calderón had more opportunities to directly speak to voters by means of a direct statement than any other presidential candidate. In addition, Calderón was frequently mentioned in election news stories aired by Televisa and TV Azteca.

The results for both television networks were similar, as Table 13 illustrates. A total of 227 election stories was aired between the two networks— 122 on Televisa and 105 on TV Azteca. Felipe Calderón (26%) captured the most television news media attention on both networks, closely followed by Roberto Madrazo (25%) and AMLO (25%). Mercado (11%)

received the least attention from the media among presidential candidates. However, she received relatively more coverage on TV Azteca (14%) than on Televisa (8%). Roberto Campa (13%) also obtained more coverage from TV Azteca (17%) over Televisa’s (10%). These results indicate that TV Azteca devoted more time to the small parties’ candidates than Televisa did.

Table 13: Frequency of Presidential Candidates Appearance on Election News

Candidate	Televisa		TV Azteca		Both networks	
	Mentions	%	Mentions	%	Mentions	%
Felipe Calderón	34	28	26	25	60	26
Roberto Madrazo	33	27	23	22	56	25
AMLO	33	27	23	22	56	25
Patricia Mercado	10	8	15	14	25	11
Roberto Campa	12	10	18	17	30	13
Total	122	100	105	100	227	100

The table 13 shows the number of stories in which a presidential candidate appeared, but does not indicate if the candidate had an opportunity to speak or was quoted by the reporter. News source was also analyzed to determine the number of times a candidate’s sound bite occurred in a news story. The order of occurrence of the sound bite was also considered. Table 14 illustrates the order of source appearance in news stories by television network. Televisa broadcast a total of 812 election news stories, and 15% (124 stories) of the stories incorporated candidates’ sound bites. This was the same percentage as TV Azteca. Of the 536 reports aired on TV Azteca, 15% also featured a presidential candidate as the news source. Moreover, as Table 14 illustrates, Televisa frequently used a single source in the majority of its reports, and TV Azteca aired more news stories that used two sources. As a consequence, candidates had more opportunity to “speak to voters” on TV Azteca than they did on Televisa.

Perhaps, the difference in sources used could rise from the election coverage strategy that TV Azteca implemented, which was to produce a daily 2-minute package report on all five presidential candidates, according to former TV Azteca, *Hechos de la Noche*, news director Oscar Salcedo (M. Flores, personal interview, May 4, 2006). The content analysis revealed that TV Azteca kept the presidential candidates in the news election package regardless of the candidate's topic of the day. As Salcedo explained, in the event that a particular candidate had no public event scheduled on a particular date, the television report on TV Azteca should mention that the candidate had private agenda activities (M. Flores, personal interview, May 4, 2006). News coverage of presidential candidates during newscasts was a major step forward for political communication in Mexico. However, the frequency analysis results (see Table 15) indicated that both networks devoted more broadcast time to the campaigns of major candidates than the small party candidates.

Table 14: Frequency of Networks and News Stories Sources

Source	Televisa		TV Azteca		Both Networks	
	Mentions	%	Mentions	%	Mentions	%
1 <sup>st</sup>	72	58	27	33	99	49
2 <sup>nd</sup>	29	23	35	43	64	31
3 <sup>th</sup>	8	6	7	9	15	7
4 <sup>th</sup>	7	6	9	11	16	8
5 <sup>th</sup>	4	3	1	1	5	2
6 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	1	1	2	1
7 <sup>th</sup>	2	2	0	0	2	1
8 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	2	2	2	1
9 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	0	0	1	0
Total	124	100	82	100	206	100

Nevertheless, the 2006 election represents a step forward in terms fairness of television coverage for all presidential candidates because for the first time all contenders received coverage. This was an important accomplishment in the Mexican political communication

arena. The next step is to concentrate on the development of a higher quality of candidates' exposure on election news. Perhaps, the fairness doctrine is not quite defined in the sense that it does not represent the same journalist value to all media outlets and reporters. It is imperative that Mexican media unite their efforts with a clear and specific definition of electoral coverage. Perhaps, for television networks as well as reporters, the fact of presenting a visual image of presidential candidates was their definition of fair electoral coverage.

Table 15: Frequency of Presidential Candidates on Television Election News as Sources

Sources	Calderón		AMLO		Madrazo		Mercado		Campa	
	Mentions	%	Mentions	%	Mentions	%	Mentions	%	Mentions	%
1 <sup>st</sup>	30	46	26	48	27	46	7	59	9	52
2 <sup>nd</sup>	21	33	13	24	22	37	4	33	4	24
3 <sup>th</sup>	4	6	4	7	7	12	0	0	0	0
4 <sup>th</sup>	4	6	8	15	2	3	1	8	1	6
5 <sup>th</sup>	3	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	6
6 <sup>th</sup>	1	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 <sup>th</sup>	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
8 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	0	0	0
9 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
Total	64	100	54	100	59	100	12	100	17	100

An analysis also was conducted on the frequency of candidate appearance as a news source in election news in order to understand direct exposure in newscasts to voters. As Table 15 indicates, out of the 206 sound bites that both networks included in their news packages, Calderón (31%) received the highest frequency of news source participation followed by Madrazo (29%), AMLO (26%), Campa (8%), and Mercado (6%). Therefore, Calderón was the presidential candidate who had more opportunities to directly speak to voters in television election news. The frequency of participation and the order of participation do create an impact on voter perception of a candidate's social leadership. The fact that Calderón was quoted more frequently than AMLO did give him the title of television news media's *caudillo* and not to

AMLO, as the hypothesis stated. Calderón participated as a news source 64 times; he was frequently presented as a first (46%) and second (33%) news source. Madrazo was a news source 59 times, usually as first source (46%) of a news story. AMLO participated 54 times in news stories, 48% as first source. Campa appeared 17 times in a news story, about 52% as first source. Finally, Mercado had a say in 12 news stories, 59% as first source. She was the presidential candidate who had fewer opportunities to speak directly to voters.

Nevertheless, the next step into the fairness doctrine is to offer all contenders the same amount of time to directly speak with voters. That is, the same number of sound bites should be made for each candidate; then a complete state of fairness doctrine would be reached. The fact that a candidate has the chance to participate as source in a news story means that he/she had the opportunity to speak for himself/herself directly to voters; and the frequency that those candidates participate in news stories as source does create an impact on society about the important role that the candidate has in his or her community.

In terms of the television political spots, the hypothesis also was rejected. A frequency analysis of the “main speaker” in the television political advertisements indicated that the television political advertisement’s *caudillo* was Roberto Madrazo (41%). The other two presidential contenders (Calderón 29% and AMLO 15%) had limited participation as sources in their commercial spots, as Table 15 indicates. Instead of directly speaking to voters, Calderón and AMLO used a male voiceover in their advertising spots. In political advertising, candidates paid for their messages and had the advantage of full control over the information disseminated to voters. It is interesting to observe that PAN and PRD candidates decided to minimize their opportunity to directly speak to voters.

Table 16: Frequency of Television Political Advertising's Main Speaker

Main Speaker	Calderón		López Obrador		Madrazo	
	Mentions	%	Mentions	%	Mentions	%
Candidate	19	29	5	15	14	41
Other candidate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supporter	1	2	1	3	0	0
Public figure	9	14	2	6	0	0
Character in ad	2	3	6	18	4	12
Anonymous male voice	21	32	10	29	13	38
Anonymous female voice	5	8	2	6	0	0
Other	8	12	8	23	3	9
Total	65	100	34	100	34	100

H5: Television news coverage of presidential candidates' issue platform and personal attributes are similar to those presented in presidential candidates' television ads.

The answer to this hypothesis is presented from two perspectives: (1) a comparison between the public issues agenda presented on television news and the candidate political television spots, (2) a comparison between the candidate's attributes agenda presented on television news and television ads, and (3) the qualitative evaluation of the infotainment "news" that candidates bought on TV, an innovative approach in the practice of political communication in Mexico.

In terms of public issues agenda, the hypothesis was rejected because the Spearman's Rho correlation between the television news public issue agenda and the television ads public issue agenda was weak ( $\rho = +.09$ ). This means that the public issues information presented on television news consisted of a completely different list of items than those represented on the candidates' political television spots. The television news coverage of public issues and presidential candidates' personal attributes were previously discussed. The frequency of public issue appearance was based on "first issue mentioned" to obtain the list of issues that each candidate promoted in his or her television spots. As Table 17 illustrates, a total of 10 categories comprised the advertising issue agenda. Those were: (1) political system, (2) crime,

(3) economy, (4) public services, (5) energy, (6) social groups, (7) nationalism, (8) cultural themes, (9) external policy, and (10) campaign. The contenders had five out of the 10 issues in common. These were: economy, social group, nationalism, family, and moral values. The three major themes on Calderón’s ads were: social groups, cultural themes, and nationalism. AMLO’s were the political system, economy, and social group. Madrazo’s three top issues were crime, social groups, and family. Crime was a top issue for Madrazo as well as for the networks.

Table 17: Public Issues Portrayed on Television Political Spots

Issues	Calderón		López Obrador		Madrazo	
	Mentions	%	Mentions	%	Mentions	%
Political system	42	8	31	14	*	0
Crime	31	6	*	0	46	23
Economy	46	9	31	14	25	13
Public Services	*	0	14	7	*	0
Social Groups	98	20	30	14	40	20
Nationalism	80	16	18	9	21	11
Cultural Themes	83	17	*	0	*	0
Campaign	29	6	*	0	*	0
Moral Values	55	11	29	14	17	9
Family	31	6	15	7	31	16
Infrastructure	*	0	23	11	*	0
Other	*	0	20	9	16	8
Total	495	100	211	100	196	100

Table 18: Public Issues Presented on Television Political Spots and Television News

Ads Issues	Ads Issue Agenda			TV Issues Agenda		
	#	%	rank	#	%	rank
Political system	73	8	(6)	105	8	(6)
Crime	77	9	(4.5)	372	28	(1)
Economy	102	11	(2.5)	194	15	(3)

Table 18, cont.

Public Services	14	2	(8)	137.5	10	(5)
Cultural Themes	83	9	(4.5)	37.5	3	(7)
Campaign	29	3	(7)	280	21	(2)
Moral Values	101	11	(2.5)	18	1	(8)
Other	423	47	(1)	191	14	(4)
Total	902			1335		

Spearman's Rho correlation = +.09

Table 19 : Public Issues Presented on Calderón's Political Spots and Television News

Ads Issues	Calderón Ads Agenda			TV Issues Agenda		
	#	%	rank	#	%	rank
Political system	42	8	(5)	105	8	(6)
Crime	31	6	(6.5)	372	28	(1)
Economy	46	9	(4)	194	15	(3)
Public Services	0	0	(8)	137.5	10	(5)
Cultural Themes	83	17	(2)	37.5	3	(7)
Campaign	29	6	(6.5)	280	21	(2)
Moral Values	55	11	(3)	18	1	(8)
Other	209	43	(1)	191	14	(4)
Total	495	100		1335		

Spearman's Rho correlation -.43

Table 20: Public Issues Presented on AMLO's Political Spots and Television News

Ads Issues	AMLO Ads Agenda			TV Issues Agenda		
	#	%	rank	#	%	rank
Political system	31	15	(2.5)	105	8	(6)
Crime	0	0	(7)	372	28	(1)
Economy	31	15	(2.5)	194	15	(3)
Public Services	14	7	(5)	137.5	10	(5)
Cultural Themes	0	0	(7)	37.5	3	(7)
Campaign	0	0	(7)	280	21	(2)
Moral Values	29	13	(4)	18	1	(8)
Other	106	50	(1)	191	14	(4)
Total	211	100		1335		

Spearman's Rho correlation -.17

The Spearman's Rho correlation between the combined issue agendas of TV ads and TV news was very weak (rho = +.09). The analysis indicated that on the TV news agenda crime was the top priority, but on the TV ads agenda crime ranked in the middle. A more



detailed analysis between each of the three main presidential candidate’s public issues agenda presented on television political spots and the television news issues agenda was conducted. The results indicated (see Tables 19 to 21) that Roberto Madrazo ( $\rho = +.42$ ) had the strongest correlation while the correlations were negative for Andrés Manuel López Obrador ( $\rho = -.17$ ) and Felipe Calderón ( $\rho = -.43$ ).

Table 21: Public Issues Presented on Madrazo’s Political Spots and Television News

Ads Issues	Madrazo Ads Agenda			TV Issues Agenda		
	#	%	<i>rank</i>	#	%	<i>rank</i>
Political system	0	0	(6.5)	105	8	(6)
Crime	46	23	(2)	372	28	(1)
Economy	25	13	(3)	194	15	(3)
Public Services	0	0	(6.5)	137.5	10	(5)
Cultural Themes	0	0	(6.5)	37.5	3	(7)
Campaign	0	0	(6.5)	280	21	(2)
Moral Values	17	9	(4)	18	1	(8)
Other	108	55	(1)	191	14	(4)
Total	196	100		1335		
Spearman’s Rho correlation $+ .42$						

#### Candidates’ Attribute Agenda

The second perspective measured candidate’s attributes agendas between television news and political television spots was accepted, because the Spearman’s Rho correlation was moderate ( $\rho = +.54$ ). This result indicated that the portrayal of presidential candidates attributes was somewhat similar on television news and on political television spots. As Table 22 illustrates, the ads candidate attributes agenda consisted of 14 personal characteristics. Those were: character, honesty, popular support, capacity, ability to create jobs, ability to reduce poverty, ability to reduce crime, ability in economic policy, knowledge, experience, empathy, family personal values, nationalism, and other. The top three attributes in the Calderón ads were popular support, honesty, and experience. AMLO’s political ads portrayed him as honest, well

prepared for the position, and an experienced politician. Madrazo was represented by his political ads as compassionate, knowledgeable, and an honest politician. The sum of each candidate’s personal attributes created the political ads attribute agenda.

Table 22: Candidates Attributes Presented on Television Political Ads

Attributes	Calderón		López Obrador		Madrazo	
	Mentions	%	Mentions	%	Mentions	%
Character	0	0	13	5	22	11
Honesty	78	13	45	17	30	15
Popular Support	220	35	34	13	17	9
Capacity	0	0	31	12	0	0
Ability to create jobs	32	5	0	0	10	5
Ability to reduce poverty	0	0	13	5	0	0
Ability to reduce crime	0	0	0	0	18	9
Ability in economic	51	8	18	7	0	0
Knowledge	49	8	41	15	34	17
Experience	83	13	34	13	28	14
Empathy	56	9	37	13	35	17
Family personal values	42	7	0	0	0	0
Nationalism	10	2	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	9	3
Total	621	100	266	100	203	100

The correlation between the television ads presidential candidates attributes agenda and the television news presidential candidates attributes agenda was moderate ( $\rho = +.54$ ). In the television political ads agenda, the top three categories of the candidates’ personal characteristics were: popularity, other, and honesty. The news presidential candidates attribute agenda showed very similar results; other, honesty, popularity, and ability to develop the economy ranked at the top of the agenda.

Table 23: Television News Candidate Attributes Agenda

Attribute	Madrazo		Calderón		AMLO		Mercado		Campa	
	Men	%	Men	%	Men	%	Men	%	Men	%
Popularity	10	15	9	9	6	9	3	11	0	0
Personality	3	5	2	2	1	2	2	7	0	0
experience	3	5	5	5	3	5	0	0	0	0
Knowledge	4	6	4	4	1	2	2	7	1	4
Family	1	2	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0

Table 23, cont.

Societal wellbeing	4	6	6	6	9	15	5	19	2	7
Eloquent	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	4	0	0
Prod roots	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ability congress	0	0	2	2	1	2	1	4	0	0
Ability combat crime	4	6	4	4	0	0	0	0	1	4
Ability combat poverty	4	6	10	10	4	6	1	4	2	7
Ability economy	6	9	10	10	9	15	0	0	2	7
Ability corruption	0	0	4	4	3	5	3	11	0	0
Support democracy	7	11	4	4	6	9	3	11	5	19
Respect law	6	9	7	7	4	6	2	7	1	4
Honest	2	3	16	16	6	9	2	7	4	15
other	9	13	12	12	7	11	2	7	9	33
Total	65	100	99	100	62	100	27	100	27	100

Table 24: Candidate's Attributes Television Political Ads vs. News

Attributes	Ads Agenda			News Agenda		
	Mentions	%	(rank)	Mentions	%	(rank)
Character	35	3	(8)	8	3	(9.5)
Honesty	153	14	(3)	30	11	(2)
Popularity	271	25	(1)	28	10	(3.5)
Ability reduce poverty	13	1	(10.5)	21	8	(6)
Ability reduce crime	18	2	(9)	9	3	(9.5)
Ability economic	69	6	(6)	27	10	(3.5)
Knowledge	124	11	(5)	12	4	(7.5)
Experience	145	13	(4)	11	4	(7.5)
Family	42	4	(7)	6	2	(11)
Nationalism	10	1	(10.5)	25	9	(5)
Other	210	19	(2)	103	37	(1)
Total	1090			280		

Spearman's Rho correlation = +.54

These results indicated that the content presented in the political ads was similar to the content portrayed in the news stories. None of the categories obtained the same rank order. The "other" category of the television news candidate's attribute agenda encompassed the following categories: respect law, ability to work with Congress, eloquent, society well-being, and ability to combat corruption. The "other" category of the television political ads presidential candidate attributes agenda included empathy, ability to create jobs, and capacity for the position. As Tables 25 to 27 demonstrate, each one of the main presidential candidates'

personal attributes agenda was correlated with the news candidates attributes agenda. The results show that AMLO ( $\rho = +.69$ ) had the strongest correlation, followed by Calderón ( $\rho = +.58$ ) and Madrazo ( $\rho = +.28$ ). This means that AMLO’s political television spots were more similar in representation of his attributes to those presented in the news agenda. As a consequence, the agenda setting effect was stronger between AMLO and television news agenda. The fact that AMLO obtain the highest correlation indicated that his campaign was paying close attention to election news reports aired on television.

Table 25: Calderón’s Attributes Television Political Ads vs. News Attributes Agenda

Attributes	Calderón Ads Agenda			News Agenda		
	Mentions	%	(rank)	Mentions	%	(rank)
Character	0	0	(9)	8	3	(9.5)
Honesty	78	13	(3.5)	30	11	(2)
Popularity	220	35	(1)	28	10	(3.5)
Ability reduce poverty	0	0	(9)	21	8	(6)
Ability reduce crime	0	0	(9)	9	3	(9.5)
Ability economic	51	8	(5.5)	27	10	(3.5)
Knowledge	49	8	(5.5)	12	4	(7.5)
Experience	83	13	(3.5)	11	4	(7.5)
Family	42	7	(7)	6	2	(11)
Nationalism	10	2	(8)	25	9	(5)
Other	88	14	(2)	103	37	(1)
Total	621	100		280	100	

Spearman’s Rho correlation  $+0.58$

Table 26: AMLO’s Attributes Television Political Ads vs. News Attributes Agenda

Attributes	AMLO Ads Agenda			News Agenda		
	Mentions	%	(rank)	Mentions	%	(rank)
Character	13	5	(7.5)	8	3	(9.5)
Honesty	45	17	(2)	30	11	(2)
Popularity	34	13	(4.5)	28	10	(3.5)
Ability reduce poverty	13	5	(7.5)	21	8	(6)
Ability reduce crime	0	0	(10)	9	3	(9.5)
Ability economic	18	7	(6)	27	10	(3.5)
Knowledge	41	15	(3)	12	4	(7.5)
Experience	34	13	(4.5)	11	4	(7.5)
Family	0	0	(10)	6	2	(11)
Nationalism	0	0	(10)	25	9	(5)
Other	68	25	(1)	103	37	(1)
Total	266	100		280	100	

Spearman's Rho correlation +.69

Table 27: Madrazo's Attributes Television Political Ads vs. News Attributes Agenda

Attributes	Madrazo Ads Agenda			News Agenda		
	Mentions	%	(rank)	Mentions	%	(rank)
Character	22	11	(5)	8	3	(9.5)
Honesty	30	15	(3)	30	11	(2)
Popularity	17	8	(7)	28	10	(3.5)
Ability reduce poverty	0	0	(9.5)	21	8	(6)
Ability reduce crime	18	9	(6)	9	3	(9.5)
Ability economic	0	0	(9.5)	27	10	(3.5)
Knowledge	34	17	(2)	12	4	(7.5)
Experience	28	14	(4)	11	4	(7.5)
Family	0	0	(9.5)	6	2	(11)
Nationalism	0	0	(9.5)	25	9	(5)
Other	54	27	(1)	103	37	(1)
Total	203	100		280	100	

Spearman's Rho correlation +.28

#### The infotainment "news"

When Andrés Manuel López Obrador was head of Mexico City government, he scheduled a press conference every weekday very early in the morning at 6:00, as part of his strategy to set the media's agenda. Typically, press conferences were scheduled between 9 in the morning and noon. His strategy was that in order for him to establish the media's agenda, he should be the first politician to speak with the media and establish the most important topic of the day, at least in Mexico City, and ensure a story in the national, regional, and local newscasts. In other words, journalists who attended the press conference in the morning were able to turn in their story early. This strategy to set the news media agenda made sense not only because reporters were able to start their day early, but because AMLO established himself as a public opinion leader, guaranteeing press coverage for him every day. The result was that most of the reporters, after getting AMLO's point of view, went to look for a reactionary or endorsement voice; therefore, AMLO was the one calling the shots because he was not only setting the

media's agenda, but the policymakers' agenda as well. AMLO's media communication strategy worked so well that he became the most popular politician in public opinion polls in 2003, even above President Fox. According to newspaper journalist Denise Dresser (2003), López Obrador became the most popular politician in the country. His public works projects, fundraising, and strategic alliance with powerful businesspersons such as Carlos Slim [one of Mexico's richest men] helped demonstrate López Obrador's ability to govern (Gaddis Smith, 2003). Moreover, Mexico expert Jorge Buendía of the Autonomous National Technological Institute (ITAM) said that in a nationwide telephone poll on a theoretical 2006 race for president, "López Obrador has the highest name recognition among presidential contenders: 84 percent. That number also was matched by Fox's wife, Martha Sahagún, who some have suggested should run for president. His positive rating was 57 percent, while hers was 59 percent" (Gaddis Smith, 2003, p. 1). For some experts, this was the starting point of the AMLO/FOX conflict, because Fox could not accept that someone else was more popular than him.

The PRD campaign team wanted to replicate AMLO's success on setting the agenda for the media and politicians. They produced the television program *La Otra Versión* (The Other Version) expressly for that purpose. TV Azteca broadcast nationwide a 30-minute program via Channel 13 for 23 consecutive weeks. *La Otra Versión* aired Monday through Friday at 6:00 AM. The PRD presidential candidate contracted 115 episodes of a 30-minute program with TV Azteca network. The political party paid 20 million pesos for the airtime; that is, 137,000 pesos per episode (Notimex, 2006b). *La Otra Versión* was produced live by *Detrás de la Noticia*, a communication business owned by journalist Ricardo Rocha. In 1997, he created the journalistic concept of *Detrás de la Noticia*. After leaving Televisa in 1999, Rocha converted

his concept into a news agency. The television program content was presented in a news magazine format hosted by Martha Zamarripa, a television journalist from Monterrey, Nuevo León. The show content included news reports about AMLO's campaign activities, guest interviews, and a twice-a-week interview with Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Zamarripa (2006) explained that the media presented the PRD candidate painted in many different colors; and in doing so, they distorted his image delivering misinformation. Therefore, AMLO wanted to address voters and say to voters that there was another version of the facts; allowing voters to decide what they want to believe (Saúl, 2006, p. 1).

For López Obrador, *La Otra Versión* represented a new and creative political communication strategy for disseminating his *50 compromisos* (50 commitments), which were his main political platform,

For a long time the mass media was used to selling any kind of product.

Therefore, if sales went down, the solution was to invest more on advertising.

That is, more spots and more money did the trick and the product would be in demand again. This type of thinking was transferred into politics, so now politics is about spots and money. The political message is not important in advertising; this is the key difference between advertising and propaganda.

Propaganda must have a clear political message, because in propaganda you are selling ideas. The purpose of [*La Otra Versión*] the television program is to disseminate our political platform and speak directly to voters, because sometimes I am presented [in the media] incorrectly. (El Universal, 2006e, p. 1)

AMLO has a point; the media constantly reported that he hated wealthy people and that for him, the needs of poor people were his top priority. López Obrador said that he was

misunderstood, that “he is not against some man that as a product of his hard work and observation of Mexican Laws builds up a patrimony; on the contrary, the person who invests and generates employment deserves support and protection” (El Universal, 2006e, p. 1).

AMLO was concerned with the 20 million people who live on with 20 pesos (20 cents) per day, and the needs of the poor were his top priority. Nevertheless, he was against those people who took their wealth outside of the country and “those are the same people who are supporting a negative campaign against my persona” (El Universal, 2006e, p. 1).

For the first time in Mexico’s political communication history, an opposition candidate had his own television program. Not long ago media access was extremely difficult for an opposition candidate. The situation was that generally only the PRI presidential candidate received coverage by mainstream media. In the 2000 election, this changed a little bit, but the change came more from Fox’s personality than from following the idea of journalistic ethics of equal candidate coverage, or by an official mandate. Since Fox had knowledge of marketing and advertising techniques, along with his own personal nontraditional political way of speaking, it made reporters’ work easier. As a consequence, he was able to have the opportunity to speak for himself to voters, because usually reporters included sound bites of him in their stories. Fox’s media accomplishment was historical.

In 2006, López Obrador created his own media space to disseminate his political platform to voters. Nevertheless, the PRD candidate was not the only one who implemented new political communication strategies. According to journalist Salvador García Soto (2006), it was Ricardo Salinas Pliego, TV Azteca owner, who proposed to AMLO the idea of a daily program on his main national channel with the purpose of presenting, with liberty, his political



platform (García Soto, 2006). By this time, Televisa had shown sympathy for the PAN candidate. After a few days, López Obrador accepted Salinas Pliego's proposal.

The challenges faced by AMLO as mayor of Mexico City during his morning press conference were very different from those he faced with *La Otra Versión*. Journalist Ricardo Alemán (2006) noted that *La Otra Versión* worked from a setting that lacked political power. "There is no doubt that the television program could be successful, but never in the same scale that the early press conference did. A head of state's opinion affects everyone; in contrast, a presidential candidate's opinion does not affect all citizens" (p. 1). He had a point; perhaps, the morning press conference political communication plan is a correct approach, but the change in AMLO's political status could affect his level of influence. However, no one at this point of the election knew what the effect could be—negative or positive. Besides, previous public opinion surveys indicated that López Obrador was the favored presidential candidate. Therefore, the PRD candidate had a great potential for being heard by citizens. "I am not running this presidential election with a thought about winning, that is not the most important thing, but to transform the country. It is not the power for its own sake, the state office position is to historically transcend" (Notimex, 2006c, p. 1). Consequently, *La Otra Versión* was AMLO's attempt to disseminate his proposal of how to politically transform Mexico.

In summary, even if on the surface it appeared as if mass media products could construct a presidential candidate's image, make him or her popular and victorious, the truth is that the mass media cannot substitute for the essence of a good politician, which is a candidate's political ideology as well as that person's position on public issues. Perhaps a candidate could win the election, but it would be very difficult for him or her to maintain popularity and leadership among citizens.

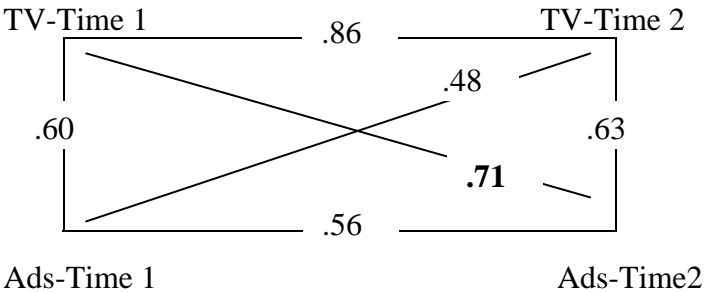
#### H6: Television news influenced television political advertising during the 2006 presidential election

The previous hypothesis established an agenda setting relationship between television news and presidential candidates political ads. Therefore, the next step was to figure out the flow of communication between both of them. It is important to understand which political communication element caused the agenda setting effect. From a general perspective, a cross-lag analysis between television news and television political ads indicated that the cross-lagged correlation between news at time one (TV time 1) and political advertising at time two (Ads time 2) was stronger ( $\rho = +.71$ ) than the other way around ( $\rho = +.48$ ). However, both correlations were above the Rozelle-Campbell baseline (.45). Therefore, from a general point of view television news had an agenda setting effect on candidates' political spots. Nevertheless in order to identify which network caused the effect during the crucial times of the election campaign a more detailed cross-lag analysis is needed.

As figure 11 shows, the second cross-lagged analysis corresponds to a 2-month period. The cross-lag correlation between news at time 1 and ads at time 2 was stronger ( $\rho = .68$ ) than the other way around ( $\rho = .03$ ). The cross-lag correlation between ads at time 1 and news at time 2 was below the Rozelle-Campbell baseline of .27. For this first half of the presidential campaign, clearly news influenced television political ads. However, a reciprocal pattern of influence was observed for the second half of the presidential campaign period. The cross-lag correlation between news at time 2 and ads at time 3 ( $\rho = .63$ ) was very similar to the correlation between ads at time 2 and news at time 3 ( $\rho = .61$ ); both correlations were above the Rozelle-Campbell baseline of .50.

To zoom in to an even more detailed analysis, as Figure 12 shows, a cross-lagged correlation of each constructed week was conducted. Across these five time intervals, the relationship between the news agenda and the political advertising agenda is very mixed. At the beginning and end of the presidential campaign, their relationship is reciprocal. However, in the early phases of the campaign, late winter and early spring (Times 2 to 3 and 3 to 4) the analysis indicates that the news agenda influenced the advertising agenda (rho = +.63 and +.81, respectively). Moving on toward Election Day, the advertising agenda influenced the news agenda from Time 4 to 5 (rho = +.82).

Figure 10: Cross-lagged Correlations of Television News and Television Political Ads



Rozelle-Campbell baseline = .45

Table 28: Television News Agenda at Time One

Issues	January	February	March	News Time 1 Mentions	%	(rank)
Economy	26	36	36	98	15	(3)
Election	39	44	44	127	20	(2)
Politics	11	28	21	60	9	(4)
Immigration	8	9	10	27	4	(5)
Crime	43	105	62	210	33	(1)
Health	4	8	9	21	3	(6.5)
War	6	0	4	10	2	(10)
EZLN	0	0	1	1	0	(15)
Environment	8	9	3	20	3	(6.5)
Culture	4.5	6	4.5	15	2	(10)
Education	4.5	6	4.5	15	2	(10)

Human Rights	0	11	3	14	2	(10)
Religion	1	2	1	4	1	(13.5)
Media	1	7	6	14	2	(10)
Other	3	3	1	7	1	(13.5)
Total	159	274	210	643		

Table 29: Television News Agenda at Time Two

Issues	April	May	June	News Time 2		(rank)
				Mentions	%	
Economy	15	46	35	96	15	(3)
Election	42	57	54	153	22	(2)
FIFA 2006	0	0	19	19	3	(8)
Politics	14	16	15	45	7	(5)
Immigration	9	27	12	48	7	(5)
Crime	61	56	45	162	23	(1)
Health	4	1	7	12	2	(12)
War	1	6	7	14	2	(12)
EZLN	0	3	0	3	0	(16)
Environment	5	23	19	47	7	(5)
Culture	5.5	10	7	22.5	3	(8)
Education	5.5	10	7	22.5	3	(8)
Human Rights	4	3	7	14	2	(12)
Religion	13	1	0	14	2	(12)
Media	6	8	2	16	2	(12)
Other	2	1	1	4	1	(16)
Total	187	268	237	692		

Table 30: Television Ads Issue Agenda at Time One

Issues	January	February	March	Ads Time 1		(rank)
				Mentions	%	
Political system	0	0	0	0	0	(9.5)
Crime	1	0	4	5	28	(1.5)
Economy	0	1	2	3	17	(3)
Public Services	0	0	0	0	0	(9.5)
Social Groups	0	0	0	0	0	(9.5)
Nationalism	0	0	0	0	0	(9.5)
Cultural Themes	0	0	0	0	0	(9.5)
Campaign	0	0	5	5	28	(1.5)
Moral Values	1	0	0	1	6	(6)
Family	2	0	0	2	11	(4.5)
Infrastructure	0	1	1	2	11	(4.5)
Other	0	0	0	0	0	(9.5)

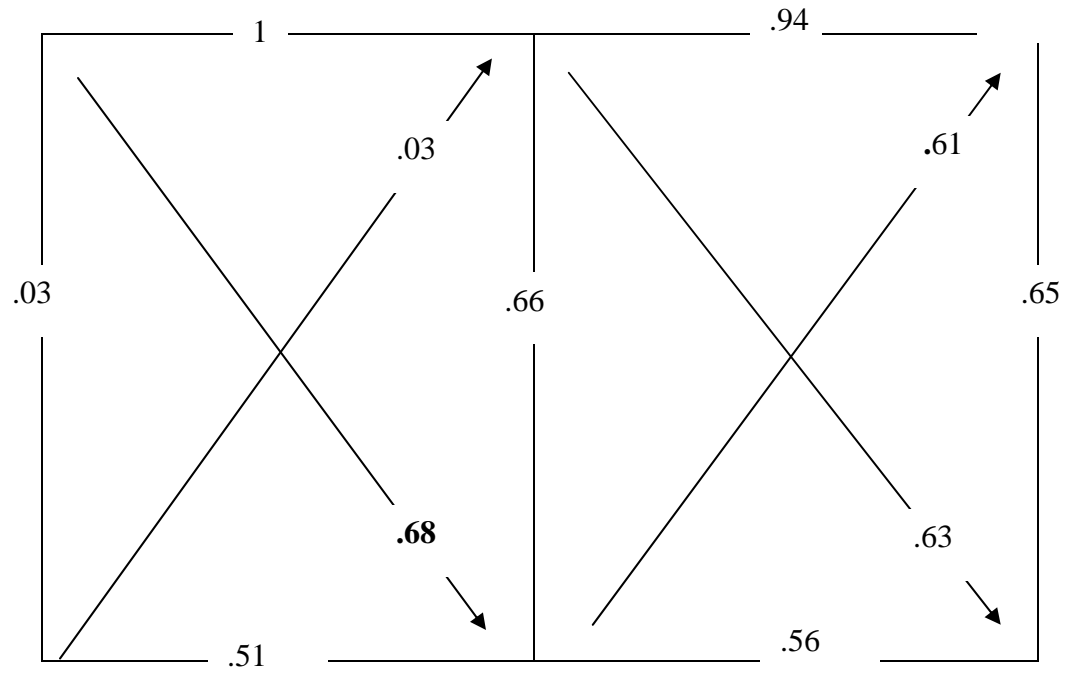
Table 30, cont.

Total	4	2	12	18
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Table 31: Television Ads Issue Agenda at Time Two

Issues	April	May	June	Ads Time 2		
				Mentions	%	(rank)
Political system	0	0	1	1	2	(7.5)
Crime	3	4	3	10	15	(3)
Economy	3	11	9	23	35	(1)
Public Services	1	5	0	6	9	(4)
Social Groups	0	0	0	0	0	(10.5)
Nationalism	0	3	0	3	5	(5)
Cultural Themes	0	0	0	0	0	(10.5)
Campaign	1	7	12	20	30	(2)
Moral Values	0	0	0	0	0	(10.5)
Family	0	0	2	2	3	(6)
Infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	(10.5)
Other	0	0	1	1	2	(7.5)
Total	8	30	28	66		

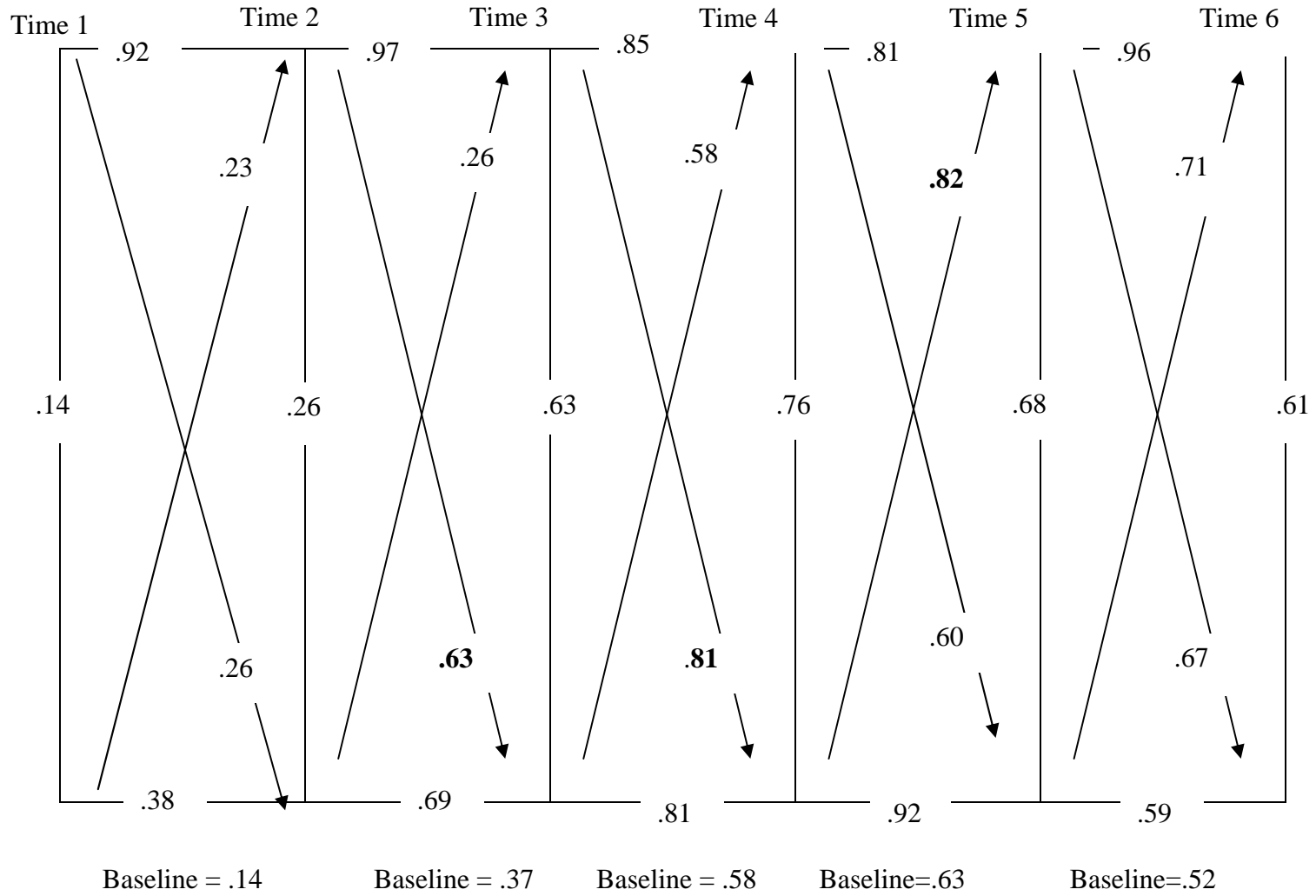
Figure 11: News vs. Ads: Two Months Cross-Lagged Correlation of News (upper) and Advertising (lower).



Rozelle-Campbell Baseline = .27

Rozelle-Campbell Baseline = .50

Figure 12: News vs. Advertisement: Constructed Week Cross-Lagged Correlation of News (upper) and TV Ads (lower).



In summary, this chapter answered the question: Who set the intermedia agenda during the 2006 election? This question was addressed from three standpoints: the “news norms,” “other news media,” and “news sources.” The first three hypotheses focused on the “news norms” perspective. From the results of those hypotheses, the intermedia agenda setting effect on election news between Televisa and TV Azteca was significant ( $\rho = +.71$ ). Televisa aired a higher number of election news (187) stories than TV Azteca (93); the content of those news stories were similar. However, TV Azteca’s priority was to report on election issues more than candidates’ negative attributes. Televisa focused its attention on candidates’ negative attributes more than public issues. In terms of candidate personal attributes, the intermedia agenda was set by the negative attributes, not the positive attributes. A perfect Spearman’s Rho correlation was registered for the negative candidate attributes, meaning that both networks negatively portrayed the presidential candidates the same way. Television news nonelection coverage favored Roberto Campa ( $\rho = +.57$ ), who obtained the highest correlation between his agenda and the networks’ agenda. That is, the intermedia agenda of the networks indirectly favored Campa. The candidate who obtained the lowest indirect support was Patricia Mercado ( $\rho = +.34$ ). The candidates of the three major political parties were at the midpoint.

Moving on to the next intermedia agenda setting perspective, Hypothesis 4 focused on “news sources.” The results obtained pointed out that between television news and television political ads, television news set the intermedia agenda during the 2006 election. The candidate who had the maximum opportunity to directly speak to voters in the news was Felipe Calderón, and in the political ads was Roberto Madrazo. Hypotheses 5 and 6 focused on “other news media,” news and political ads, presented similar information ( $\rho = +.53$ ) describing candidates’ attributes rather than presenting the same public issues ( $\rho = +.09$ ). The last chapter presents a



discussion about the importance of the journalistic role during the 2006 election and what this finding signifies for Mexican political communication and news election coverage.

Presidential candidates' political communication strategy was based on one element, political advertisement. However, larger quantities of political spots in the media do not necessarily cause a strong influence on Televisa and TV Azteca news coverage. Several candidates invested a high amount of economic resources to purchase political advertising in television. However, this study illustrates that such a high investment did not pay off for presidential candidates. Advertisement has the advantage of the frequency factor that news do not have. In contrast, television newscasts have two or three (morning, noon, and evening) broadcast per day. Voters and journalists alike were exposed to high amounts of television political advertising but those messages did not influence the journalist's agenda. Scholar Raul Trejo Delabre (2007) pointed out that politicians have stopped making politics by assuming that the mass media is their only possible space to expose their campaigns to voters. This research indicated that these assumptions do not reflect social reality in the case in Mexico. Culture is an important factor in political dynamics.

The effect that political television ads produced in United States' voters does not replicate on Mexican voters. A political culture and an advertisement culture is the fundamental factor which makes the difference. In consumerism societies such as the U.S., voters/citizens are used to being exposed to advertisements 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; in the U.S. political context negative campaigning is a very common element.. In Mexico, voters/citizens do not possess the same consumerism experience. The main political marketing consultants that some candidates followed are Americans and European. This means that perhaps this negative strategy does work in their countries, but this practice does not produce the same effects in other

countries. As communication scholar Juan Francisco Escobedo (2006a) stated, negative political campaigning does not work in Mexico. In the case of the Mexican election, the candidates' political marketing strategy fail to create a context of acceptance, trust, respect, favorable voter turnout, and freedom of speech. The lack of these elements during the campaign period is the evidence of the failure of their political marketing strategy.

The results show that there is a misunderstanding of the role that political marketing has within the political communication arena. Political marketing is only one aspect of political communication that has been in fashion as a direct consequence of the current economic model of globalization. Globalization can be understood as a series of modifications in international economic practice that tend to create a single world market (Berger, 2000). Today's world is experiencing a sort of commercial evangelization through the electronic media. Television is the main instrument of globalization. The fact that political marketing is in fashion does not necessarily imply that this political communication element works the same way in all countries.

In the case of Mexico, negative advertisements did not work. This type of political communication generated a context of confusion and uncertainty for voters. Never before had the citizen seen a political campaign waged to this extent in the Mexican media. The country became divided, disintegrating into political chaos before and after election day. The political polarization was the origin of a very serious post electoral conflict that still exists. Another signal of negative advertisement failure was voter turnout. In 2000, Fox's media's campaign was highly successful, but 6 years later, Calderón's was not. Fox (42.52%) won with a 6.41 percentage difference over the second place Francisco Labastida-PRI (36.11%) (IFE, 2000). In contrast, Calderón was very close (less than 1%) to AMLO-PRD (IFE, 2006). In addition, Calderón faced vote fraud accusations and Fox received admiration for stopping 71 years of PRI rule.

Calderon had invested a high amount of money on electronic media political spots under the understanding that a greater amount of political advertising leads to victory. How does a political communication campaign so carefully designed end up in the middle of a fraud accusation? If Calderon followed each step of the political marketing recipe to victory, it just does not make sense to commit vote fraud. Nevertheless, why was the PRD vote fraud accusation so strong in society? The answer is the failures of negative advertisements which created a context of uncertainty and distrust.

Why was the negative campaign effect in Mexico so quick to show up? There are three possible scenarios: (1) the second presidential debate aftermath, (2) IFE's slow reaction to stop the presidential candidates' negative campaign in the media as well as the voter-counting software scandal, and (3) President Vicente Fox's public unconditional support for Felipe Calderón. All of those circumstances together created a context of distrust for Mexican voters.

## Chapter 9

### Discussion

This study of the 2006 Mexican presidential election expands the observation and measurement of intermedia agenda-setting effects beyond the U.S. context. This effort to internationalize intermedia agenda-setting theory allowed us to encounter new political, social, and cultural dynamics characteristics of the Mexican young democracy. This research continues the tradition of measuring and comparing the agenda-setting effects of national television news stories and national television political ads. Previous intermedia agenda-setting research (Bowers, 1977; Zhao & Chaffee, 1995; López-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, & Lennon, 1998; Lemert, Wanta, & Lee 1999; Takeshita, 2002) came to the same conclusion as this study that overall the news is more significant than political advertising.

At present in Mexico, there is a tendency to believe that the higher the financial investment candidates devote to their media campaign strategy, the easier it is for them to achieve election victory and voters' legitimacy. Raúl Trejo Delabre (2007) argued that politicians have stopped making politics by assuming that the mass media is their only possible space to expose themselves to voters. However, Director of the *Reforma* survey division Alejandro Moreno (2003) indicated that the number one influence on Mexican voters is their family and friends, not television. Furthermore, his study indicated that the trust that citizens have in their national television newscasts is low.

Political marketing is only one component of a political communication, not its core. Political communication is about creating a context of acceptance, trust, respect, legality, freedom of speech, and democracy. It seems as if political marketers are under the impression

that the audience will be persuaded to vote for a particular candidate by exposing the nominee as many times as they can in the media via political advertisements. However, the reality is that voters understand the content of political advertisement according to their own personal filters—experience, system of beliefs, political ideology, family. Political advertising does not function as a great persuasive power working under the assumption that voters are tremendously susceptible to political spots. The use of negative campaigns during the 2006 election created uncertainty on the Mexican voters' minds. According to communication scholar Juan Francisco Escobedo (2006a), negative political campaigning does not work in Mexico.

The neoliberal economy has transformed the identity of the Aztec nation. The social focus has shifted from collective to individualistic goals; money is the basis for social reward as well as recognition and efficiency as the main human characteristic. The globalization dynamic involves drastic changes in economy, culture, symbolic products, and lifestyle. In terms of politics, the globalization era has demonstrated a tendency to shift political ideology to the right, also known as neoliberalism. In the globalized world, the key characteristic of the economic model is to sell a standardized product to all possible consumers around the globe. As a result, advertising is the central instrument of globalization, because it exposes products to potential consumers.

Under this line of reasoning, a candidate is not looking for voters, but for a place of preference in a market that is interested in buying his or her attributes. As a consequence, a candidate's top priority is to gain advantage over "other political products," not necessarily to expose their political platform. If a candidate presents his/her issue position, it could work in his/her favor, but also in his/her disadvantage; however, if a political candidate presents his/her personal attributes, the candidate puts himself/herself on safer ground. Therefore, political image

specialists work to ensure the presidential candidate's hair, clothing, teeth, glasses, even makeup are perfect in order to make it just the "right look for selling." With the appropriate political image and a strong political marketing strategy, a candidate is ready to be in demand, to become a "hot commodity" for consumers; in other words, to be very much a candidate in demand by voters.

The study did have limitations. During the data collection period, a series of three events could have influenced the regular news agenda of Televisa and TV Azteca newscasts. The first of these events was the immigration reform issue in the United States in March, 2006. Congress was discussing an immigration reform package that could have allowed many undocumented people living in the U.S. to legitimize their immigration status. As a public petition to Congress to pass the reform, several Hispanic media outlets and Latino community leaders organized a mega march in major cities. On the same day, at the same time, millions of undocumented immigrants, as well as many legal citizens, walked downtown streets across the country. The Hispanic media was covering the event along with the international media. This event was a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence that tried to convince law makers about the urgent need for immigration reform. The Mexican television media covered the event, because many Mexicans and Mexican-Americans participated in it, generating a peak in their immigration reporting.

Turning to the second event, in that same month of March, the Mexican congress discussed the new Federal Radio and Television law, a major piece of legislation for the broadcast media industries. The new body of law regulates the conditions for broadcast media industries, how they operate, and renewing their licensees. This new law is also known as Ley Televisa, because several legislators pointed out that Televisa was the original author of this

legislative initiative. The congressmen who opposed this new law argued that such regulations damage cultural and communitarian radio and television stations.

One of the most noteworthy consequences of the 2006 election was the rise of the need for an immediate review of the Electoral Law. In particular the law needed to adopt an adequate legal framework to regulate political communication in an extremely competitive electoral context. As a consequence, the political advertisement dynamics drastically changed. Political candidates or their parties can no longer purchase political advertisements on regular programming. Each of them will receive an equal amount of time to disseminate their political message to voters. This is the second time that the congress created an electoral law that addressed the mass media role during the election season.

In the month of June 2006, a third event, The Soccer World Cup, was celebrated in Germany. Mexico's soccer team participated in this worldwide event. The team survived for several games until they lost to Argentina. The country was paralyzed every time the team played up to a point that presidential candidates were afraid of losing voter's attention in front of such a titanic distraction. Several candidates resolved to wear the national team uniform to show their appreciation to Mexico's soccer team as well as minimizing campaign activities on game days.

The coverage of all three of these events by the national television newscasts undoubtedly had some influence their regular news agenda. As a consequence, this study's content analysis results have some increment of news coverage on those topics during the months of March and June, a situation best regarded as measurement error affecting both Televisa and TV Azteca to an equal degree.

This study provides a launching-point for future investigations of agenda setting effects and political advertisements in Mexico. This area has been well documented in other countries of the world, but not in the Aztec nation, a country where each electoral year political candidates are increasing their political marketing budget under the assumption that high amount of political advertising automatically leads them to victory. Researchers must document those events in order to find out if the political candidates' monetary investment is working for them or not. Arguably, this research is suggesting that the political marketing dynamic in a third world county is completely different than in industrial societies.

It would be interesting to find out if this agenda setting effect follows the same pattern for both news and political advertisements in newspapers, political magazines, and entertainment products such as comics, telenovelas, and films. The audience's attention to news is decreasing, but audience attention to comedy shows that base their characters on political personalities are on the rise. Therefore, attention to political entertainment programming is a major area of research in political communication. In addition, it is important to explore the difference in effects in terms of local, regional, and national media. It is imperative to continue evaluating the social impact of political negative advertisements in Mexico and other third world countries. And, finally, it will be fascinating to compare Mexico with other Latin American countries.



## Appendix A

### 2006 Mexican Election Codebook

a02 “television network”

(5) Televisa, (6) TV Azteca

a3 “month in which the newscast was broadcast”

(1) January, (2) February, (3) March, (4) April, (5) May, (6) June

a14 “news story main topic”

(1) economy, (2) election, (3) FIFA Germany 2006, (4) politics, (5) immigration, (6) crime, (7) health, (8) war, (9) EZLN, (10) environment, (11) culture, (12) education, (13) human rights, (14) religion, (15) media, and (16) other.

b02 “Roberto Madrazo’s positive characteristics”

(1) leadership, (2) experience, (3) personality, (4) capacity, (5) credibility, (6) moral values, (7) military experience, (8) honesty, (9) respects law, (10) other

b03 “Felipe Calderón’s positive characteristics”

(1) leadership, (2) experience, (3) personality, (4) capacity, (5) credibility, (6) moral values, (7) military experience, (8) honesty, (9) respects law, (10) other

b04 “Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s positive characteristics”

(1) leadership, (2) experience, (3) personality, (4) capacity, (5) credibility, (6) moral values, (7) military experience, (8) honesty, (9) respects law, (10) other

b05 “Patricia Mercado’s positive characteristics”

(1) leadership, (2) experience, (3) personality, (4) capacity, (5) credibility, (6) moral values, (7) military experience, (8) honesty, (9) respects law, (10) other

b06 “Roberto Campa’s positive characteristics”

(1) leadership, (2) experience, (3) personality, (4) capacity, (5) credibility, (6) moral values, (7) military experience, (8) honesty, (9) respects law, (10) other

b07 “Roberto Madrazo’s negative characteristics”

(1) lack of leadership, (2) lack of experience, (3) lack of personality, (4) lack of capacity, (5) lack of credibility, (6) lack of moral values, (7) no military experience, (8) dishonest, (9) do not respect law, (10) other

b08 “Felipe Calderón’s positive negative characteristics”

(1) lack of leadership, (2) lack of experience, (3) lack of personality, (4) lack of capacity, (5) lack of credibility, (6) lack of moral values, (7) no military experience, (8) dishonest, (9) do not respect law, (10) other

b09 “Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s negative characteristics”

(1) lack of leadership, (2) lack of experience, (3) lack of personality, (4) lack of capacity, (5) lack of credibility, (6) lack of moral values, (7) no military experience, (8) dishonest, (9) do not respect law, (10) other

b10 “Patricia Mercado’s negative characteristics”

(1) lack of leadership, (2) lack of experience, (3) lack of personality, (4) lack of capacity, (5) lack of credibility, (6) lack of moral values, (7) no military experience, (8) dishonest, (9) do not respect law, (10) other

b11 “Roberto Campa’s negative characteristics”

(1) lack of leadership, (2) lack of experience, (3) lack of personality, (4) lack of capacity, (5) lack of credibility, (6) lack of moral values, (7) no military experience, (8) dishonest, (9) do not respect law, (10) other

c01 “which candidate appeared on the news story”

(1) Felipe Calderón, (2) AMLO, (3) Roberto Madrazo, (4) Patricia Mercado, (5) Roberto Campa

c02 “first source type”

(1) Felipe Calderón, (2) AMLO, (3) Roberto Madrazo, (4) Patricia Mercado, (5) Roberto Campa

c12 “second source type”

(1) Felipe Calderón, (2) AMLO, (3) Roberto Madrazo, (4) Patricia Mercado, (5) Roberto Campa

c22 “third source type”

(1) Felipe Calderón, (2) AMLO, (3) Roberto Madrazo, (4) Patricia Mercado, (5) Roberto Campa

c32 “fourth source type”

(1) Felipe Calderón, (2) AMLO, (3) Roberto Madrazo, (4) Patricia Mercado, (5) Roberto Campa

c42 “fifth source type”

(1) Felipe Calderón, (2) AMLO, (3) Roberto Madrazo, (4) Patricia Mercado, (5) Roberto Campa

c52 “sixth source type”

(1) Felipe Calderón, (2) AMLO, (3) Roberto Madrazo, (4) Patricia Mercado, (5) Roberto Campa

c62 “seventh source type”

(1) Felipe Calderón, (2) AMLO, (3) Roberto Madrazo, (4) Patricia Mercado, (5) Roberto Campa

c72 “eighth source type”

(1) Felipe Calderón, (2) AMLO, (3) Roberto Madrazo, (4) Patricia Mercado, (5) Roberto Campa

c82 “ninth source type”

(1) Felipe Calderón, (2) AMLO, (3) Roberto Madrazo, (4) Patricia Mercado, (5) Roberto Campa

d01 “recoded issues”

(1) economy, (2) election, (3) FIFA Germany 2006, (4) politics, (5) immigration, (6) crime, (7) health, (8) war, (9) EZLN, (10) environment, (11) culture, (12) education, (13) human rights, (14) religion, (15) media, and (16) other.

## Glossary

Acuerdo para la Neutralidad Democrática—Neutral Democratic Agreement

AMLO-Andrés Manuel López Obrador

Apelación—legal resource to request a superior court to review the sentence

Chachalaca—a type of bird that never stops singing

Desafuero—lost of legal immunity

EMP—Presidential military guard

IBOPE—Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics

IFE—Federal Electoral Institute

PAN—National Action Party

PRD—Revolutionary Democratic Party

PRI—Institutional Revolutionary Party

PVEM—Green Party

NA- New Alliance party

SNTE—National Education Worker's Union

TEPJF— Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary

TUCOM—an internal PRI political group formed to prevent Madrazo from becoming PRI presidential candidate

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## **Vita**

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