

Made in Mexico: Party Political Survival at the National and Local level

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Abstract: During the long Mexican transition to democracy most of the analyses about the fate of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) were pessimistic about its survival after democratization. Other studies pointed out that the Party's vast machinery, control of the corporatist organizations and majority of executive posts at local and municipal level will guarantee its political future and perhaps its comeback (Estevez et. al. 2007). According to the theory the PRI either will collapse or reconstitute as the Communist Parties in Eastern Europe. Nonetheless, none of these hypotheses have yet materialized. Rather, the PRI still remains a strong political force at the national and local level. This paper examines the role of the PRI elites during the transition to democracy and the strategies they adopted for their political survival. Although, most of the literature attributes its survival to the Party's electoral strength at the local level, this paper argues that this claim is not enough to understand its political continuity and analyses the variation of the Party's power across regions.