

Voting Patterns in Mexico

One well-known fact about Mexican electoral behavior is the high percentage of votes obtained by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). In presidential elections, for example, there have been only two occasions since the PRI's founding in 1929 that the opposition has gained even 25% of ballots cast.

In five of the ten last presidential elections, the PRI won 90% or more of the votes cast; in 1946, 1964, and 1970, it received over 75%. Only in two elections were the figures lower: 74% in 1952 and 71% in 1982.

High abstentionism rates is another feature of Mexican elections. Eligible voters fail to register; registered voters do not attend polls. This second kind of abstentionism has become more important in

recent years. In the 1952 presidential elections, the percentage of registered voters who did not cast ballots was 26%. This figure rose to 28% in 1958, to 30.6% in 1964, and to 35% in 1970. It went down again in 1976 and 1982, however, when abstentionism rates of 31% and 25.2%, respectively, were registered.

These aspects of electoral behavior are not uniform throughout the country. While at a national level the PRI's strength is overwhelming, opposition parties are in some cases important at the state level. By the same token, abstentionism also varies among the 31 states making up the Mexican federation.

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