THE CAMARILLAS: A THEORETICAL AND COMPARATIVE EXAMINATION OF WHY THEY EXIST AND WHY THEY TAKE THE SPECIFIC FORM THEY DO
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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to answer two related questions: one, why do factions exist in the Mexican political system, and two, why are they structured in their present form, rather than in an alternative manner. Using a combination of the individual-centered approach and the comparative method, I will attempt to explain why individuals working in a system of high turnover in positions within the bureaucracy and dominant party form hierarchical-cooperative groups which last more than one presidential term. In the comparative section, the problem will be examined from a different angle: the Mexican political groups will be compared to Japanese factions and Brazilian friendship networks (during the authoritarian era) to understand why Mexican factions are not as institutionalized as the Japanese factional entities and why they are more long lasting and stable than the Brazilian bureaucratic networks.

Camarillas are groups of public employees and politicians working in the executive bureaucracy, PRI party posts and elected offices. These sub-groups within the official regime form and work primarily to advance the careers of their members. Camarillas can also be viewed as intra-regime factions, although many times they do not have specific ideological interests or goals. Each faction is led by a "jefe" and is made up of several members at different levels of the Party and bureaucratic hierarchy. These people are linked together by bonds of loyalty and ability. The fundamental nexus of the exchange relationship between jefe and members is as follows: the jefe delivers government positions, favors and monetary benefits to his people in return for loyalty (or the assurance that the subordinate will not work against the interests of his superior), discipline and information. Therefore, both leader and member benefit from the exchange. In an extremely uncertain political universe, the jefe can build up a reputation of leading an efficacious and loyal

1 In Elster's terminology, methodological individualism, meaning that actors try to maximize their ends, no matter how irrational these may be. For our purposes, it simply means that when trying to understand political phenomenon, we must start with the individual acting under constraints.

2 A question could be raised as to whether Mexican camarillas are actually factions, or better termed "currents" or "tendencies". In fact, although they are primarily based in the executive bureaucracy, I would term them factions. H. Lasswell defines factions as smaller groups within larger political entities that act in the interests of their particular members, rather than the whole. This is probably the most abstract definition possible. G. Zincone, in the Diccionario de Política, argues that factions are groups that organize autonomously within a party with the object of imposing their own political views on the whole, and/or to obtain a greater portion of public positions. A. Panebianco in Modelos de partido largely agrees with this definition, calling factions subdivisions of a party that are strongly organized. The camarillas are autonomously organized sub-groups working within the PRI and bureaucracy whose members work to advance their own careers. In this sense, I believe it safe to call camarillas a form of faction.
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group, which helps both himself and his people achieve better posts in a party and bureaucratic structure that experiences a rapid and thorough job turnover every 3 to 6 years.

We hypothesize that Mexican public officials join and form camarillas, despite the costs of such actions, in order to advance and protect their careers. In a sense, the paper is trying to take V. O. Key's central tenet one step farther. Instead of comparing different one-party systems which confront different levels of opposition, we first examine the individual's incentive structure given the set of political rules, both formal and informal, that he faces. Next, the paper compares the internal career-advancing groups of Japan, Mexico and Brazil to achieve two goals: the first is to strengthen the hypothesis of why individuals are involved in camarillas forwarded in the first section, and the second is to pinpoint the most important variable which drives political actors to participate in the internal groups. What we find in the comparative section is that the rule structure for choosing the successive President in each of the three political systems strongly influences the form the factions take.

Understanding why Mexican factions exist is important for two reasons: one, because factions play a large role in on-going political stability in Mexico, and two, because they influence (while not totally determining) policy outcomes. There are other ways of understanding why Mexican factions exist aside from the individual-centered and comparative approaches. Probably the most feasible alternative method would be a purely historical examination of why internal bureaucratic and Party factions grew out of Calles's call to institutionalization. Then one could trace how the factions changed roles and characteristics throughout the decades following 1929. In part, this has been done by Camp. This way of understanding factions is crucial, but not complete, because individual incentives as shaped by the set of rules in the Mexican political system are not fully taken into account.

Instead of a historical approach, this paper will use a new branch of recent work done in political economy which focuses on individuals cooperating in complex institutional environments in order to maximize their preferences. The central authors in this approach are Gary Miller (1992), D. North (1990), R. Bates (1992), D. Kreps (1990), and less centrally, D. Axelrod (1984) and M. Taylor (1976). These authors embark from a rational choice perspective and apply its insights to understand how individuals cooperate when confronted with a series of rules which constrain their actions, and in part, determine their preference ordering. A faction can be seen as a cooperative hierarchy in which individuals make commitments to work together to meet certain common goals, which are excludable from those outside the group. This paper will use their insights to understand why Mexican public officials in effect form mini-hierarchies to solve problems of advancement in the larger hierarchies, primarily the bureaucracy and dominant party in which they work.

3 See Roderic A. Camp for a discussion of the development of the Salinas faction and its roots in the Alemán and Cárdenas factions of the 1930s to 1950s.
To understand these issues, it will be necessary to simplify the Mexican political system to its basic components. To do this, the paper will examine the central political rules of the game, both formal and informal, the central actors and their preferences, and the different ways these actors can maximize their utility functions within the given set of constraints.

The comparative method is also necessary when studying factions, if only because some sort of internal group circulates in most governments. The purpose of comparison in this work is to refine what we have learned from the purely static micro approach by placing the Mexican camarillas next to Japanese factions on one side and Brazilian friendship networks on the other. The major difference between the three types of internal political groups is their level of institutionalization — in other words, how durable the groups are, how much they direct the actions of their members, and how high the costs of leaving one for another are. The comparison between Japanese, Mexican and Brazilian internal political groups is especially interesting because of the similarity in many of the three nations’ central political institutions. Even with these similarities, the type of internal career-advancing group differs. This allows us to better identify the causes of the differences in ‘types’ of groups.

The Japanese factions are extremely institutionalized, both in their durability, their roles and their membership — in fact, they act as mini-parties under the mantle of the dominant electoral force, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The Brazilian political groups within the bureaucracy during the authoritarian years (1964 to 1985) were not factions, but rather loose networks of friends and contacts which formed and dissolved quickly, and obviously did not enjoy long-term, stable memberships. The Mexican factions come between these two alternatives: they are not as institutionalized as the Japanese, yet not as nebulous as the Brazilian. This comparison of the Japanese, Mexican and Brazilian internal political groups will help us understand why Mexican factions take the specific form they do.

Part One:

Why Do Factions Exist in the Mexican System?

The Political Economy Approach

To understand how actors within a government behave, it is necessary to understand the role of hierarchies and the contractual-behavior problems they present. A government can be seen as a set of hierarchically organized institutions which make binding rules while offering services to those within a geographically bounded

4 The comparison of the three types of internal political groups will be informed by the political economy approach, but by necessity, will not go into such detail as is seen in the first part of the paper covering only Mexico.
area. This definition shares certain similarities with economic organizations and both can be studied using some of the same tools (while recognizing central differences).

To break down the term government into its component parts, we must examine the two terms institution and hierarchy. North (1990) defines institutions as humanly devised constraints that shape actors’ choices, preferences and actions, i.e., how actors interact and cooperate. They provide known rules of the game for the actors involved and thereby reduce uncertainty by shaping expectations as to others’ probable behavior in given situations which ex-ante may not be clear and certain.

Gary Miller (1992) defines a hierarchy as an asymmetric and incomplete authority of one actor to direct the activities of another within certain bounds. Both actors have certain rights which are spelled out both formally and informally in an agreement. In a hierarchy, the central relation is one of exchange: both the boss and the subordinate receive valuable goods from the other. Other institutions, such as the market and democratic voting procedures, also organize human activity, but the type of institution which interests us in the Mexican system, in terms of the internal structure of both the bureaucracy and dominant party, is hierarchical.

The issue of why hierarchies exist has been examined from both political and economic viewpoints, and both need to be reviewed and criticized. From an economic perspective, Ronald Coase first addressed why hierarchies may be more efficient than the market at ordering human interaction. Coase believes that firms, or hierarchical organizations, will spring up when it is costly to use the price mechanism, that is, when it is expensive to discover prices, write and enforce contracts. The normal problem is that there are too many possibilities for cheating which can be better solved through the use of one hierarchical contract instead of many one-shot exchanges among equals. The firm establishes one contract which gives the boss the right to direct activity within the limits set out in the agreement. More complete exchanges can be made because both parties are assured they will not be cheated. Long-term interactions make it in both parties’ interests not to cheat.

A second approach to hierarchies is more political and draws from the writings of Hobbes, specifically his Leviathan. In a stateless society, all must fight and cheat against all because the lack of any enforcement of contracts makes cheating endemic and cooperation impossible. It would be in the interest of all to cooperate, but no one can, so all find themselves worse off. Related to this fear of cooperating is the free rider problem: public goods (such as defense, a court system, roads) are resources or goods whose consumption by one individual does not diminish the utility derived from its consumption by another. Actors will not contribute to the provision of the good because they cannot be excluded from using it once it has been provided. Again, all fail to cooperate in paying for the good, so all are worse off.

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5 D. North, Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance, p. 3.
6 G. Miller, Managerial Dilemmas, p. 8.
Hobbes’ solution for both of these problems is simple: all must agree to place themselves under the authority of one leader and abide by his dictates (up to the point of death) even though these laws may hurt them in the short run. People will be forced to provide (usually by paying taxes) for their own long-term best interests.

The same idea is implied in both the economic and political views of the problem of cooperation in a hierarchical institution: individuals agree to enter into an authoritative relation, such as a firm or a state, because the institution forces them all to transcend perverse individual short-term incentives, so they can reach collectively and individually beneficial collective outcomes.

Following in the footsteps of Coase, other ‘new institutionalists’, such as Alchian and Demsetz, Fama, and Williamson all assume that hierarchical organizations (firms) arise because they lower the costs of transacting by allowing superiors to monitor and enforce agreements in ways that are superior to the market-court system. Bates points out the fundamental flaw with this reasoning: the functional logic; in other words, the need for the good does not provide the good. The new institutionalism school states that firms emerge because transaction costs could be lowered this way, but they do not explain why individuals would agree to cooperate to provide the public good (the collective action problem), or how they could overcome obstacles to cooperation.

The second difficulty with new institutionalism is that the grave problems of information asymmetry, monitoring and enforcement still exist within the firm or organization which supposedly sprang up to solve these very problems. Individuals continue to have incentives to cheat and are in fact still capable of doing so in an authoritative exchange relation. The problems of overcoming the likelihood of cheating must still be solved in order for individuals to be able to cooperate and thus derive collective benefits. In the Mexican case, the bureaucracy exists, but camarillas are formed (I hypothesize) to solve problems of advancement in a system where cooperation is difficult.

A strictly “new institutionalist” explanation of Mexican camarillas would probably look as follows: groups form to lower costs of information gathering and the costs of job search in a highly uncertain environment. Superiors can better monitor their subordinates if a smaller hierarchy is formed within the larger bureaucracy. This control is crucial during the succession process. In a sense, this explanation helps us, but it is incomplete, mainly because we cannot know why individuals were able to overcome the collection action problem, nor how they were able to overcome the obstacles to cooperation in order to form the sub-hierarchies that are camarillas. The following section is an attempt to find an individually-based explanation to augment the more functionalist logic of the ‘new institutionalists’.

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8 See Elster, especially *Ulysses and the Sirens*, for more on explanation.
9 See Miller, *op. cit.*, chapter 1, for more on the problems of new institutionalism.
Cooperation Under Hierarchies

One can look at the problem of coordination and cooperation in a hierarchy in two ways: from the superior’s point of view, and from the subordinate’s. Both under normal, short-term conditions, have incentives to cheat — the boss to encourage the subordinate to reveal his preferences and other important information and then not reward him as promised for performance, and the subordinate, who would prefer to shirk, or not work as hard as he had promised to do.

Let’s consider the most simple political hierarchy: the dictatorship. If a dictator is presiding over a bureaucracy, we should have no problems aggregating individual preferences, since the only preferences that matter are his. He simply needs to direct people to carry out his demands and enforce his dictates. Yet even in this situation, outcomes are difficult to predict. The dictator cannot know and do everything, so he must obtain information from subordinates to make decisions and be able to direct every action they take when carrying these decisions out. Subordinates build up stores of specialized knowledge and skills, and the dictator must be able to control those who know more than he. Furthermore, it is difficult to know if these employees are performing their jobs as the dictator wishes or if they are pursuing their own ends. Thus, even in the simplest case, one sees the problems of coordination within hierarchical institutions.

In the real world bureaucracy, there are additional problems: adverse selection, team production, and sub-unit autonomy. To try and limit egoistic behavior, one can attempt to hire only those who share similar preferences and goals. Yet, it is difficult to know ex-ante a subordinate’s true preferences as no one would reveal their private desires if they differed from those of the boss. The second problem is team production. Often, it is more efficient to work in teams because of the gains of specialization, but it is difficult to know each individual’s input. If each team member knows this, he will have the incentive to shirk, and production will fall, making all worse off. The third hierarchical problem is sub-unit autonomy, which was explored by Sen. He states that any organization that delegates decision-making to more than one group will have incoherent outcomes for some individual preference orderings. Sub-groups within the same organization will pursue their own interests over those of the overall entity, which can lead to tribal warfare. Instead of cooperating with the other sub-units, they compete, which leads to sub-optimal outcomes at the level of the organization.\(^\text{10}\)

The preceding problems of cooperation within a hierarchy stem from subordinates cheating on their superiors. But the reverse problem — that bosses in effect cheat on their subordinates — is also very possible, making the gains from cooperation difficult to achieve. The most likely method for the superior to cheat on a subordinate is to promise future benefits if the latter reveals his true preferences and

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\(^{10}\) Sen, in Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
delivers optimal performance, at which point, the boss extracts the gains from the cooperative behavior of his employee. The subordinate knows this possibility for extraction exists, and so he will not make cooperative moves and the possible gains from mutual, long-term cooperation are lost. Unless the superior can credibly demonstrate his willingness not to take advantage of his subordinate, no cooperation will take place, and both are worse off. 11

How to Solve the Problems of Cooperation in Hierarchies

It is often in the best interests of both parties to cooperate, as cooperation brings higher levels of production, better policy, and more efficient distribution of services. As we have seen, however, cooperation is often difficult to achieve, even if it would be in the best interests of both parties in a hierarchy to do so. How can a hierarchical authority relation change incentives or at least harness them so that both the superior and the subordinate can cooperate?

Game theorists, such as Axelrod, Hardin, and Taylor, can give us insight into this question. All agree that it is rational to cooperate in repeated play games if one has the assurance that other player will cooperate as well. The decision to begin cooperating requires that the pay-offs from future cheating cannot be higher than the income stream from future cooperation. This also means that the future must not be too highly discounted so that upcoming benefits have a chance to pay off. Both players in a game must want to obtain gains from cooperating and must be able to effectively communicate their desire to do so (Miller, p. 187). Each side must also be able to recognize when the other is cheating and be able to punish the defect strategy.

If benefits do accrue from cooperation, then each can build a reputation as one who will cooperate that holds tangible value over the course of repeated play. Expectations about the other's probable behavior in uncertain circumstances based on past play can be formed and strengthened. This is a reputation.

Cooperation Within Groups

Cooperation is more likely in small groups where it is less difficult to monitor behavior and easier to deliver selective benefits and punishments based on performance. Within vertically organized groups, long-term relationships are important, as is devising a variety of sanctions for those who stray from a cooperative strategy. Cooperation becomes rational because others within the group have a good

11 It is interesting to note that the new institutionalists seem to focus on subordinate defect strategies, while Miller states that, in a hierarchical situation, the superior is more likely to cheat and kill off the possibilities of cooperation.
idea of the likely behavior of the other members of the group. This promotes a culture of trust. Cooperation within a hierarchical setting revolves around the subordinate revealing private information about his preferences and work input with the explicit promise that the gains from his cooperation will not be extracted from him by the superior.\(^\text{12}\)

Still, even in the best situation, monitoring and enforcement can be costly and time consuming. To lower these costs, a leader can build up a culture around how things will be done in unforeseen circumstances. Kreps first wrote of the corporate culture, and he defines it as a general rule of how organizations will behave in these uncertain future situations and the method for communicating this rule.\(^\text{13}\) Thus the hierarchical culture can create common knowledge about how problems will be dealt with: it shapes expectations about the behavior of others, and makes reputations for cooperation valuable because it is transferable. To be effective, this culture of cooperation has to be used even if it imposes short-term costs because this would prove a long-term commitment to the subordinates and therefore generates long-term collective gains from cooperation. The leader must visibly tie his hands by delegating responsibilities and assets —this is his credible commitment—to autonomous work groups who take on the responsibility of setting their own work goals, enforcing their own quotas and sharing information among themselves.\(^\text{14}\)

*From the Theoretical Literature to the Mexican Factions*

With this overview of the study of cooperation under hierarchies, we can turn to the question: why do we see factions in the Mexican political system? This work will present a snapshot of why individuals join and form internal political groups.

First, let us examine two different ways of looking at factions. Gary Miller, in *Managerial Dilemmas*, gives us one clue as to why individuals in hierarchies would band together in an internal coalition. Since information is extremely valuable and scarce in policy-making hierarchies, individuals join in a coalition to pool, protect and use this commodity to their members' advantage. V. O. Key, in *Southern Politics*, offers a more institutionally centered explanation: in a political system characterized by a predominant party (like the Democratic Party in the South of the United States before the 1940s), factions form within the dominant party, often around charismatic personalities, in response to the presence or absence of opposition parties.

These two ways of explaining why factions form are incomplete for our purposes: the first because it ignores the overarching political institutions specific to

\(^\text{12}\) Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

\(^\text{13}\) Kreps, "Corporate Culture", in Alt and Shepsle, *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy*.

\(^\text{14}\) Kreps, *op. cit.*; and Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
any large organization or political regime (which it, of course, does not pretend to do), and the second because it does not focus on how individuals confront their environments. This section will take both perspectives into account — how individuals’ preferences are formed and constrained by participation in a specifically ordered set of rules such as those of the Mexican political system. In attempting to explain why individuals within the Mexican political system join and form factions, we will examine the preferences of the actors, the central explanatory political institutions, the hierarchical environment presented by the bureaucracy, the demands this environment places on individuals, and finally the alternatives to faction formation.

Preferences

We assume that individuals are rational in that they can order their goals and make reasonable judgments (given costly information and cognitive limits) on how best to obtain these goals. The goals of public officials in Mexico cannot be simply maximizing monetary benefits: bureaucrats in Mexico are some of the best educated individuals in the Nation, and they could certainly be making better salaries in the private sector, but still they choose to work for the government. (Although, by the time they reach the level of director general, their salaries and benefits can be quite impressive.)

Account has to be given to the desire for political power — the ability to make distribution decisions for millions of Mexicans. Because the system is relatively closed, the Cámara (Congress) and its elected representatives have little policy-making weight. The road to power is first through the bureaucracy and second through the high PRI posts. Furthermore, there is little circulation from private industry to public life — high ranking government officials make their entire careers inside the national bureaucracy.

Those who join the public sector want to advance their careers, which brings with them both larger salaries and more decision-making authority. Public officials without educational qualifications or ability generally want job security. Both kinds join factions, but this paper will deal with functionaries on the elite track — those who have or will have the chance to rise to the level of director general or higher. This is the elite of the Mexican political regime.

In the literature on bureaucracy and organization, other possible preferences of the public functionaries have been advanced. G. Allison, in his work on the American bureaucracy, believes most bureaucrats attempt to protect the institutional in-

\[15\] Therefore, the set of political institutions in Mexico will be taken and used as explanatory variables, even though they as well are created by human interaction and thus outcomes to be explained. However, in this work, we will take them as a given and examine what kind of influence and constraint they form on preference formation and behavior.
tegrity of their agencies. Niskenen argues for a similar bureaucratic preference — increasing the size of the specific agency’s budget. In the Mexican case, both of these suppositions are incorrect. The Mexican bureaucrat simply does not spend enough time in any one agency to warrant his life-long devotion to it. In other words, he cannot tie his individual advancement to the fortunes of a specific agency. Therefore, he has little incentive to spend energy or time protecting his ‘turf’, since in 3 to 6 years, his ‘turf’ will be elsewhere. Another possible preference is that of a bureaucrat or politician advancing a specific policy or development plan. In several interviews with public officials in Mexico, all stated that when the President was in favor of economic opening, so were they, and when he changed his mind, so would they. It seems that the average Mexican public official is highly pragmatic and what interests him far more than a specific type of development is advancing his career. If he should then attempt to advance a certain type of policy, he is more able to do so as a sub-secretary than as a lower-level bureaucrat.

The Central Political Institutions

This section will discuss the central political institutions in Mexico that affect how public officials behave in their quests to advance. The first set of formal and informal rules is presidential dominance over the entire political system, but most importantly over the legislative branch of government. Policy making is made in the bureaucracy, not the Congress. While the PRI as a party has always held sway in the Cámara, the President controls the PRI legislators through his nomination powers. The PRI itself is firmly under the control of the President as he appoints the top officials and distributes much of the Party’s funds. Votes have little political currency because the PRI has for the greater part of this century been the only party to win elections, and is able to exercise extreme fraud when necessary, as shown by the dubious victories in the 1988 presidential elections and the 1986 gubernatorial race in Chihuahua. The President holds office for one term of six years (the sexenio) which is a non-reelectable position. He has the discretionary authority to appoint or approve the appointments for every high and medium post in the bureaucracy, Party, and PRI elected positions (which are the great majority in Congress). He or his people place thousands of officials in their positions at the beginning and throughout the course of the sexenio.

Although the Presidency is a crucial position, there is no institutionalized way to lobby (even within the ruling coalition) or campaign for the chief executive post.

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16 It is important to reiterate that in the Mexican system, public officials do not often circulate from private business to public office. Entire careers are spent in the public sector, and if a bureaucrat does spend a time in private affairs, it is usually because he could not find a decent position in the public sector, and therefore had to wait out a term to try again.
The decision is made by the outgoing leader, sometimes in consultation with leaders of large PRI sectors and faction heads and sometimes without their participation. The PRI nominee for President holds a 100% chance of becoming the next President if past results are any indication of future outcomes. The nominee for the dominant party is traditionally a member of the President’s cabinet at the time of the succession. It is sometimes argued that building up a large political group within the bureaucracy and PRI will help the leader of the faction in his quest to replace the sitting President, although there are examples of Presidents, such as Luis Echeverría, who are thought to have won precisely because they had no faction and could therefore be controlled more easily by the outgoing President.

Career advancement is heavily tied to the presidential succession. First, if a public official is a close member of the President’s team, there is a good chance that he will get a cabinet-level position and thus be a possible ‘presidenciable’. Second, if a public official is the leader of a powerful group within the governing coalition, he has a greater probability of being nominated for a high-level post and thus be given the authority to place his people in good positions. Conversely, if one is not closely aligned with the President, or not the leader of a powerful faction, the chances of rising or even staying in one’s positions fall.

Finally, there is the issue of career mobility: a large number of public officials do not spend more than 3 to 6 years in the same position — they often jump from one job to another with regularity. Although the jumps may be within the same ministry, often times the bureaucrats change from one ministry to another within the same ‘sector’ of the bureaucracy, i.e., from Treasury to the Central Bank, which both belong to the financial wing of the bureaucracy. The mobility is caused by the President’s ability to remove people at the start of his term and the large turnover this causes.

The job-jumping often has the effect, especially at higher levels, of cutting off the bureaucrat (and top PRI leaders) from the agency for which he works. The agency is not the base from which one builds up a career or an attempt at the Presidency. However, the ‘sector’ of the bureaucracy to which one belongs can often have a crucial effect on how high one rises. Up until the Echeverría’s sexenio (1970-1976), most presidents had come from the Interior Ministry (Gobernación), which is a part of what Centeno calls the ‘control wing’ of the bureaucracy. Since 1976, Mexican leaders have come from Planning and Budget (SPP, which no longer exists as of January 1992), another ministry within the financial sector of the government.

17 This probability has dropped since the 1988 elections in which the opposition party’s candidate almost beat the PRI’s nominee, Carlos Salinas. The PRD has survived the sexenio, and along with the other opposition party, the PAN, is ready for the 1994 elections.
18 See Centeno, ‘The New Científicos’, unpublished Ph.D. diss., Yale, 1990, for more information and a description of the different types of bureaucrats and ministries within the Mexican system.
Overall, success depends on the contacts one has, not on the career one has made within a single ministry.

These are the institutions that are crucial for determining how an individual will advance. What are some of the most important environmental factors of a hierarchy which help explain how individuals can cooperate to advance their careers?

The Hierarchy

*Information Costs.* In any large organization, the information needed to do one’s job becomes difficult to obtain simply because other sub-units or agencies control or develop the required data-base of knowledge. The time and expense of finding the information, requesting it, and obtaining it can be great. If people realize the importance and value of their information, then they will not share it easily, unless the other actor with whom they are dealing agrees to reciprocate in some manner. This can establish a long-term cooperative relation between actors with the understanding that both will exchange valuable commodities. Groups that can monopolize strategic information are in a better position to influence policy or political outcomes.

Added to the problem of obtaining information is the opportunity for and motivation to ‘strategically misrepresent’ what one is doing or what type of data one has. This raises the costs of information gathering even higher. Information then becomes an extremely valuable commodity in any organization as it is scarce, in great demand, and can be used as a political weapon against other sub-units.

*Principal Agent Problems.* A second problem in any hierarchy is the nature of the relation between the principal (the superior) and the agent (the subordinate). The principal contracts the agent to work for his interests. The subordinate may have other goals or interests which conflict with those of the boss. Examples of these would be shirking, and selling information. The principal has to devise an incentive and monitoring structure so that is in the best interests of the subordinate to work well for his boss. One drastic way of achieving this end is to tie the survival of the subordinate to the survival of the boss. If the principal loses his job, there should be a high probability that the subordinate will as well. Obviously, few would enter into this sort of agreement unless it were for long periods of time and the subordinate’s efforts were well rewarded. Miller writes: “A person has the incentive to establish a long-term personal loyalty to a superior which makes her willing to take non-monitored, non-rewarded costly efforts as long as she has faith that these will be rewarded.”

19 Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

In a long-term exchange, where one person's career is tied to another's, the costs of monitoring and enforcing contracts falls because the boss can be assured of a best-faith effort from his subordinate. The subordinate has to be able to trust that the superior will not use him in the short-term and fail to deliver on future benefits.

Uncertainty in a Hierarchical Environment

In any working environment, there is a great deal of uncertainty over job security, but, in the Mexican situation, this uncertainty is extreme because of the six-year revolving door and consequent high turn-over of thousands of public officials. Unless one's knowledge is extremely specific, people from the level of area director on up can be expected to be replaced. Above the level of director general, even those with a specific asset, for example in macro-economic planning, will be replaced.

How does an agent deal with this enormous uncertainty, especially if there is little circulation between the private and public sector? Two separate but not mutually exclusive approaches are possible: work diligently to develop and nurture a wide array of contacts with whom one has a reciprocal exchange relation, or tie oneself to a specific group to whose fortune one's career is mortgaged. One can do both: link himself to a primary group while building a set of relationships outside it in case the first fails.

Asset Specificity. Asset specificity means placing a significant investment of time or money in an asset, either human or material, that cannot easily or cheaply be transferred to a second use. Those who enjoy a specific asset hold unique status because few others can replicate their knowledge, experience or training. Asset specificity usually leads to vertical integration between the buyer and the seller of the good. Both can cheat on the other — the seller can withheld the product demanding a higher price, and the producer can refuse the purchase, depending on circumstances. Thus, it can be in the interests of both to combine themselves into a hierarchical authority relation to preserve the interests of both parties. Each actor will have the assurance that the long-term relation will be more beneficial and less likely to fail because of the possibilities of using mutual defect strategies.

How does asset specificity relate to a bureaucracy? Specific assets can be information, economic policy-making experience, contacts, etc. To capture the possible gains of cooperation between the buyer and the holder of an asset, or to capture these assets and keep them out of the hands of a competitor, individuals find it bene-

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ficial to monopolize scarce resources and talent. One way of doing this is by forming a hierarchy inside another to control the scarce resources.

Individual Incentives and Mexican Institutions

How do individuals solve the problems of costly information, principal agency relations, asset specificity in a set of hierarchical institutions characterized by presidential dominance, a high turn-over in high- and mid-level positions, and few institutionalized routes to the executive office? Empirically, we see that many, if not most, Mexican bureaucrats, elected PRI officials and Party leaders join factional groups called camarillas. But why? And why don't they take alternative routes to career advancement within the governing coalition?

The public official has few alternatives to advance his career. Here, I will consider the two basic ones: to join a faction or not. (In the next section, I will consider other options: that of participating in a highly institutionalized faction or a loose network of contacts.\textsuperscript{13}) The two basic alternatives highlight the basic choice made by individuals in the Mexican public sector. Most, if not all, Mexican public functionaries choose to join factions, and many higher ranking members of the regime choose to form them. Why?

The simplest answer is that one's hopes of advancing one's career increase by joining and forming factions. The public official is doing two things: he is holding onto a job at the same time he is trying to get a better one. Profound turn-over at the arrival of the new President causes high mobility among public job holders and enormous uncertainty. The high mobility as we have seen lessens the agency's hold over the bureaucrat because he does not form a long-term base from which to jump to either the ministerial level or the Presidency. Heads of ministries often are brought in to lead from outside the agency.

High uncertainty because of the lack of job security forces public officials to look for other means (other than hard work and good performance, which are difficult to measure in the bureaucratic setting) to continue working and advancing in the bureaucracy. By entering a faction, one is basically entering into a risk-sharing agreement. One agrees to a long-term relation with one man who in turn is involved in the same sort of arrangement with a higher functionary, and so on up to the top reaches of government. A subordinate ties his career possibilities to a superior who has a wider set of contacts and a higher position which allows him to control and distribute more jobs to his followers. The underling is shifting the costs of the job search from himself to a superior who can better manage it.

\textsuperscript{13} This is the difference between the Japanese, Mexican and Brazilian career-advancing political groups.
Why the Subordinate Joins a Faction

The performance of a public official, be it good or poor, is difficult to measure in any concrete sense, because there are no market forces to give an objective indicator of output. One may have put in 12 hours a day, 6 days a week (which is common enough in the Mexican bureaucracy), but is the work good? Although some objective measure of input exist, it is difficult to build up a reputation for good performance outside one’s bureau or agency. The ambitious official cannot simply work his way up the ministry’s ladder because of the constant circulation among top people. Even if the bureaucrat is low enough not to be replaced, he will have to establish a new relation with every superior who revolves through, but this reputation will have little value unless it can be used, because appointment decisions are not being made by one’s immediate boss, but by the members of the President’s circle and other ministers.

The bureaucrat has to establish a long-term relation with someone who has the connections to those who do make appointment decisions. One has to be able to prove to the superior that one is capable and hardworking, and in turn the boss needs to prove to his subordinate that he will exchange positive performance with increasingly good positions.

By shifting search costs to the superior, the subordinate is increasing his chance of continuing in the constant climb to the top of the Mexican political system. The boss is responsible for finding, obtaining, and providing positions for ‘his people’: that is his end of the bargain, and it is an important one, since without him the lower-level official would have few avenues for signaling and proving his capabilities in a sprawling bureaucracy where jobs are shuffled every six years.

The arrangement between the superior and subordinate benefits the latter in clear ways, yet there are also costs, which at times can be as high as losing one’s future career possibilities because one’s boss chooses the wrong pre-candidate in the presidential race, or makes other grave mistakes, which freeze the superior out of career advancement. The subordinate therefore does not spread his risk by joining a faction, but rather he lowers his costs of job searching by delivering these responsibilities to another who is better able to take them on.

The subordinate can also form a loose, secondary network of friends, colleagues and associations, which serves as a shield should the faction fail. This secondary network does serve as a mechanism to spread risk, because even if the primary group fails to provide positions, the actor can fall back on the secondary group to find a job in the public sector. These sorts of jobs may not be as optimal as those found by the primary group, but they serve as waiting areas until something better comes up.

Interview, mid-level public functionary, September, 1991.
The above argument concerns why public officials would join groups, but why do their superiors form factions? What benefits do they derive from forming factions that allow them to advance their own careers in a system where the President chooses thousands of top posts and no institutionalized mechanisms exist for competing over the official Party's nomination for President?

The new President chooses his most important cabinet ministers from the closest members of his faction, and others ministers from among the leaders of the other important factions. These people, in turn, have the authority to place thousands of officials in positions (with the President's approval), both within their own ministry and in other ministries as well. Thus, to advance to the highest reaches of the bureaucracy (from which the next President will be chosen), the ambitious bureaucrat will either be a close member of the next President's faction or lead a strong group himself.

Added to the fact that the next President is chosen by the exiting President is the issue of circulation between the private and public sectors, especially at the top level. In Mexico, private businessmen, lawyers, or corporate officers do not step into a cabinet post for a presidential term, and return after it.

There is another angle of this same question: in this particular system, why does a superior become a patron who must turn hierarchical subordinates into clients? What does he need from them and why? In a system of constant job-switching, tied to high turnover at the top-level, a superior needs to be assured of well-trained, hardworking assistants, whose specialized assets of knowledge and experience allow the boss to perform well in a number of different policy arenas. But since he changes jobs frequently, the superior cannot make long lasting relations with his subordinates unless he takes them with him and places them in crucial posts in his new agency. If the boss can monopolize scarce talents, education, or knowledge by locking certain people into long-term exchange relations, then he has an advantage over his competitors, and a way of controlling valuable information at the same time.

Despite the constant circulation, the boss will be able to depend on certain individuals to work for the group's interests because if the group does well, so does the individual. But there is a collective action problem here — each actor will have the incentive to shirk, and since all would do the same, the group's possibilities would decline. A long-term, reciprocal relationship would have to be nurtured, which would make possible repeated games and future benefits, as well as a range of punishment options in the face of cheating on the agreement between subordinate and superior, such as not placing a subordinate in the best position possible, while not abandoning him altogether, make cooperation possible in the long run. A sense of trust between the boss and his people is built up over time as both sides play repeated series of games. The subordinate has to be wary of the boss's ability to cheat on the agreement as well: for example, if the subordinate works diligently, but the boss does not place him well over a period of time, then the jefe is abusing the trust of his worker, and the worker has to be able to punish his superior.
Loyalty and Discipline

In almost every interview with public functionaries, the terms discipline and loyalty come up repeatedly as the most important resources a subordinate can deliver to his superior, especially in a long-term political relationship. In the Mexican system, loyalty means not divulging information about one's boss, responding to his directives immediately, even at the cost of one's family life, and working extremely long hours if needed, in short, placing the interests of the boss before one's own short-term preferences. Discipline means incurring short-term costs, such as remaining in a sub-optimal position, if the faction's leader requests this, with the understanding that, in the long-term, this sacrifice will be repaid.

Obviously, for a subordinate to be willing to deliver these kinds of benefits to his superior and incur short-term penalties, he must expect future returns to be greater than the present costs. Therefore, to extract this kind of behavior from underlings in the present, the boss has to be able to commit and signal this commitment in a credible fashion to a long collaboration with his subordinate that will yield rewards for both. A boss's reputation for fair dealing with his people has great value, for without it he would be hard pressed to recruit more. This reputation value acts as a brake on his possible cheating strategy.

The Sexenio Pattern

The relation between superior and subordinate has to be strong enough to last longer than the six-year presidential term, when the temptation to cheat is the greatest. When pre-candidates are fighting over the PRI's official nomination, one factor in their possible success is sheer numbers of supporters inside the PRI and bureaucracy. This is when offers for future employment fly around the government corridors. For both the leader of a faction and a follower, there is a great temptation to leave one faction and align with another whose leader has a better chance of becoming the next leader of Mexico.

In this situation, discipline and loyalty meet their greatest test: will the subordinate take himself and his people off to another, better-placed faction? Will the superior find a new jefe himself, and not take his people with him to his new position? A public official has to be able to count on supporters under the most difficult circumstances which would be impossible to expect unless he had a long-term, informal contract with them.

The sexenio, which gives the chief executive enormous appointment and decision-making power, creates strong inducements for splitting off and re-forming alliances and coalitions with other groups within the regime. But to be an effective political bargainer, the high ranking political bureaucrat has to be assured that his people are firmly behind him. This creates strong inducements for tight factions in
which the leader can be assured of "his people" continuing in the group, despite the pressures to split off and perhaps capture a better deal elsewhere.

Breadth of Contacts

If an official wishes to advance his position in the succession shuffle, he must work for his chosen pre-candidate. The more services he can offer, the better his chances are for gaining the trust of the possible PRI candidate for President. These services include holding dinners, writing newspaper articles, staging study meetings, distributing posts, blocking rivals' policy advances — anything that makes the pre-candidate look more effective in the eyes of the sitting President. The effective pre-candidate will be able to harness the forces of many public officials spread across the different sectors of the bureaucracy and reach into the PRI hierarchy. In return for these services, positions are expected to be delivered.

A second reason why high-ranking leaders stretch their web of clients throughout the bureaucracy and Party is the need to gather, control, and protect valuable information about what one is doing, and disseminate damaging details about one's rival. In a system where every policy advance is a political instrument, successes and failures in the policy arena have immediate and sometimes long-lasting political ramifications. For example, when the Treasury Secretary made a speech about the "Comfortable Myths" of under- and unemployment in Mexico, he was considered burned (quemado) for his lack of political savvy. Functionaries in all societies have to stop damaging press and promote a good image, but in Mexico, the problem is more difficult: the elite circle is very small (the top-reaches of the bureaucracy and Party), and mistakes can be exposed and magnified quickly and cheaply.

Controlling the flow of information is crucial, but leakage is always a problem with bureaucratic underlings who may be offered enormous rewards for revealing damaging details about their superiors. How can a superior control his information while tapping into that of others? The superior has to offer 'his people' enough incentives to be discrete — to give the Party line to everyone except one's boss. By offering subordinates long-term agreements, the boss can stem a great deal of negative information, and by placing his own people throughout the bureaucracy and PRI, instead of concentrating them in one ministry, the leader is able to capture a wider array of tips, data, and gossip about his colleagues' background, group affiliation, support, policy advances, and alliance formation.

\[24\] The Mexicans have a term for this: "el rollo", which means, loosely, to talk a lot, with beautiful, heartfelt phrases, while revealing nothing of substance.
Part Two:  
A Comparison of Japanese, Mexican and Brazilian Factions

We have examined why individuals attempting to maximize their preferences under constraints have chosen to join and form political groups of factions inside the dominant party and bureaucracy of Mexico. In this section, a fuller explanation will be provided, along with a comparison of Japanese and Brazilian factions, to better understand why the Mexican factions take the specific form they do. We are not simply interested in why factions exist, but also how they differ and why. Mexican factions can be placed between the Japanese factions and Brazilian friendship networks in terms of their degree of institutionalization. One can determine the level of institutionalization of an internal political group by examining how long the groups last, what the penalties are for switching one’s affiliation, and the level of openness of membership identification.

All three types of political groups extend from the bureaucracy to the legislature to their respective party headquarters; all three have some contact with outside societal actors; all three influence policy-making in their regimes — yet all are different with regard to the measures of institutionalization.

This section is an attempt to give a finer texture to the picture of camarillas in the first part of the paper, and to guard against the criticism that factions or political groups exist in all political systems by examining what the differences are between three examples of internal career-advancing political groups. As in the first section, we are trying to understand how specific institutional constraints and opportunity structures create incentives which lead public functionaries to join and form specific types of internal political groupings. But in comparing the three cases, we can pinpoint which rules and problems cause open institutionalized factions and which simply lead to nebulous, short-lived friendship networks.

This section will be organized along the following lines: first, we will present an introductory description of the Mexican regime’s internal political factions. Then the Japanese factions will be examined and compared to the Mexican to explain why the camarillas are not as institutionalized as the Japanese political groups. Finally, the Brazilian bureaucratic friendship networks will be described and compared to the Mexican factions to understand why Mexican functionaries do not behave as the Brazilians did during the authoritarian era, given very similar political institutions.

The Structure of the Mexican Camarillas

The Mexican career-advancing political groups are not clearly identified political entities — no public official openly admits they exist, although the newspapers run genealogical data and flow charts which map out who is with whom. In interviews, most do not use the term camarilla, preferring “grupo político”, but
will readily admit long-term loyalty and association with "jefes" (leaders) and membership in the sub-Party groups these leaders form. With expenditure of time and effort, one can usually identify which minister or under-minister is connected with which group, but this type of information is usually whispered at meetings and conferences, except for the most obvious factional adherents. In fact, most of the "chisme político" (political gossip) that Mexicans delight in, revolves around 'who is with whom'. Except for the top-level lieutenants, no lists are published, and even when newspapers do announce a pre-candidate's closest people, it is speculative information, and not official data as in the Japanese case.

The Factions' Role in Elections

Elections play an odd role in Mexican political life. They take place at regular intervals and PRI candidates mostly win without much opposition or outright voting fraud. Very rarely does an opposition candidate, from either the National Action Party (PAN) or the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD), win an election above the level of mayor. Races for governor can be hotly contested and lead to extremely violent clashes between the PRI, PAN and PRD in certain states. Congressional seats are not valuable political commodities as neither the Senate or Congress has any policy-making or budget weight. The presidential battle, as we have seen, is usually a case of maneuvering within the top reaches of the bureaucracy to gain the sitting President's nod for the PRI nomination.

The camarillas play several roles in the overall electoral picture, with by far the most important being the struggle to gain the PRI's presidential bid. We will leave this for last and discuss how the factions influence governors' and legislators' careers. Governors of the 31 states of the Mexican Republic play an important role in Mexican politics (and one that is largely understudied). In many cases, governors are imposed from the PRI national leadership on reluctant states. These PRI politicians do not enjoy much stature in the state they lead, but they have been 'given' the position, either as a political reward, or because their careers are winding down, or because the regime leadership believes they can solve a specific problem.

Other candidates represent a traditional power-base in the state, such as the Figueroa clan in Guerrero, and are capable of keeping the state politically quiet. The President chooses governors from among his and other factions as a way of distributing political rewards. Because the governors begin their terms in staggered periods throughout the length of the sexenio and stay in power for six years, the President can use these appointments to in some way continue his tenure past the end of the sexenio. Governorships are virtually the only position in which the President can 'live on'. The Interior Minister (Gobernación) has also had a large role in choosing and placing governors. This strengthens his ability to control political activity at the state level if certain governors are beholden to him. It also enables him to keep his group's members satisfied. The leader of the CTM can place a certain
number of governors, as can the President of the PRI, in particular D. Colosio, who placed several during his tenure as leader of the PRI. Colosio has strengthened his run for the Presidency because of state level support offered by 'his governors'.

Camarillas play no official role in nominating the President's choice for his successor. Although the PRI's statutes call for the nominee to be chosen at the Party's National Assembly, in reality the next chief executive is picked by the outgoing President. The factions do try to influence the choice made in a number of ways: they can malign the name of other pre-candidates, press new policies through towards the end of the sexenio to emphasize their competence, make alliances with other groups to support their cause, and try to block other hopefuls' policy proposals. Thus, the camarillas are active during the succession period, but in no formal, rule-bound way.

The new President chooses his cabinet officers with an eye toward factional balance and places different men in positions based partly on their affiliation. It can be that he ignores this balance and appoints only his closest associates (as did de la Madrid) or mixes his choices up to include those outside his closest circle (as did Salinas).

Factional Hierarchy

Camarillas are hierarchically organized: the jefe delivers public positions in return for discipline, loyalty and information from his members. The members of a group are spread throughout the bureaucracy and Party, which enhances the ability of the leader to acquire information. Informal meetings take place to keep the group up to date. The President is almost always the leader of a camarilla and places some of his closest associates in important cabinet posts, such as Treasury and Commerce. These people in turn are leaders of their own sub-camarillas, and cabinet ministers have wide latitude in selecting their own lieutenants and placing other allies in ministries in which they do not directly participate. When the next succession process begins, these top level bureaucrats and their groups will swing into action.

The camarillas survive the shifts of personnel caused by the sexenio system, in particular, the single term system. If one faction backs the wrong 'horse' in the presidential nomination race, its members can still re-group in the next sexenio and try again. Those tied to the losing pre-candidate, providing that they do not 'burn' themselves politically (se quemen), are often allowed back into the political game (i.e., given political positions), sometimes at high levels.26


26 For example, Pedro Aspe was tied to David Ibarra, who lost out in the 1981-1982 succession. Aspe was pulled into SPP by Salinas, who was minister during de la Madrid's sexenio (1982-1988). Aspe is now Minister of the Treasury and a strong presidential possibility.
The Japanese Factions

The Japanese political system is based on a constitution which is a mix of British parliamentarianism and American political liberties. The party in power elects a Prime Minister (PM) who forms a cabinet and is responsible to the bicameral legislature, the Diet. The Lower House holds most of the decision-making power in the legislature as it is responsible for amending and passing budgets and treaties and can veto Upper House bills. Most Prime Ministers (PMs) and Cabinet Ministers come from the Lower House, and the great majority come from the Diet (very few ministers are brought in from outside the public sector). General elections are held when the PM dissolves the Diet or when a vote of no confidence brings the PM down. Because the PM can hold the party presidency for two consecutive two-year terms, most governments last four years, although the Dietmen of the Lower House face reelection every two years.

The role of the Diet tends toward ratifying policy instead of initiating it. The party in power from 1955 to 1993, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and the bureaucracy tend to predominate in the decision-making process over the legislature. Bills are usually hammered out in formal and informal talks between LDP leaders in the Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) and functionaries in the mid and high levels of the bureaucracy. New policy initiatives reach the Diet already agreed upon, leaving the LDP Dietmen little room for maneuver.

Japan’s electoral laws call for a mid-sized multi-member constituency system in which each voter has a single vote. There is no multiple or weighted voting. This of course leads to bitter fighting among LDP candidates for a certain pool of conservative voters. The House’s 511 seats are divided among 130 constituencies. Most districts have three, four or five seats. If a party endorses too many candidates per district, it splits the conservative vote and allows opposition parties to win a seat, so it is important that the LDP control the endorsement process and allow just the right number of candidates to run as party representatives. There is no primary system for deciding who will be the LDP’s official candidates — this is decided shortly before the election by party leaders in Tokyo. Those conservative candidates who do not win the LDP’s endorsement usually run as independents and often win. When they begin their legislative term, they immediately join the LDP ruling block.

The bureaucracy is led by the PM and his cabinet ministers who are in turn responsible to parliament through a possible no-confidence vote. The bureaucracy was famous for many years as a relatively autonomous, highly efficient, separate branch of government. This argument would certainly be overstated now as the

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28 Ibid., p. 39.
29 Sartori, Parties and Party Systems, p. 91.
30 Thayer, How the Conservatives Rule Japan, p. 139.
LDP’s PARC (the party’s policy making branch) consults, negotiates, and fights with the different ministries under its charge at almost every step of the policy process. Some former bureaucrats revolve into the legislative branch and through the PARC committees after retirement and thus add to party members’ knowledge and expertise in policy matters.

Elite bureaucrats are among the best educated in the nation. They enter through civil service exams, and once an official has entered a ministry he will spend his bureaucratic career in the same agency until he retires. Generations tend to advance together with three to four standouts who go on to reach the levels of top bureau chiefs and administrative vice ministers (the highest non-elected post in a ministry, directly under the Minister’s office). Once one of a generation reaches administrative vice minister, the rest of his entering class retires together, from anywhere between 45 to 55 years of age. The best of them then go on to run for elective office, particularly in the Diet.

Factional Structure

The LDP is a party made up of factions, whose interactions help determine who becomes PM, the nature of the cabinet, the holders of the highest party and PARC offices, and often the policies coming out of the bureaucracy. The factions form around personalities in the party and Diet, and they create a network of members at all level of the Diet, party and bureaucracy. The groups also have strong ties to business groups which fund their electoral activities. The factional groups are “formal political entities” with regular meetings, established headquarters, published membership lists, and clear hierarchical authority structures. The relations between leader and follower can last for over 30 years (the political life of a politician), and some have survived since the formation of the LDP in the 1950s. The leader and follower in these very institutionalized sub-party groups relate in a clear long-term exclusive exchange relation. The boss delivers political and financial resources needed by the rising politician to win elections, to gain party and cabinet seats, and along the way, to advance his career. In return for these crucial ‘favors’, the follower or client becomes an undisputed member of the faction where the number of members of a group determine its strength in the crucial vote for the President of the LDP, who then becomes (until 1993) the PM of Japan. We shall examine this relationship in greater detail to determine why individual politicians and bureaucrats join factions in the Japanese political system.

The leaders of the Japanese factions fight over the post of President of the party, who then becomes PM, chooses his cabinet, and runs the executive bureauc-

32 Thayer, op. cit., p. 15.
No faction has enough members to vote in their own leader because 500 votes are cast, so coalitional agreements are crucial to electing the LDP President. Bingham writes that Japanese politicians rise to the top of the political game through their ability to put together factional alliances. The factions raise and distribute campaign funds, and often one faction raises for its own purposes up to 1/3 the amount of money the LDP as a party controls. The faction helps get an aspiring politician an LDP endorsement. Once the faction's member has won his seat, the faction—not the party—distributes the resources which the politician uses in his district to assure his re-election.

The factions are responsible for distributing governmental posts — the PM fills his cabinet to maintain a delicate balance among the competing groups. Party leadership posts are also handed out with an eye toward placating or punishing factional leaders. The most important party policy-making body, the PARC, is filled by LDP Dietmen, and its leaders are also placed by factional struggles and agreements.

The factions also link the bureaucracy to the party leadership and Diet. Bureaucratic agencies depend on the party factions for political and legislative support in negotiating differences over the bureaucratic policy which is tossed back and forth between the PARC committees and the agency divisions, to be fully agreed on before it ever reaches the floor of the Diet for a vote.

Factions want and are able to get footholds in the agencies that are responsible for distributive, regulatory and extractive issues that can transfer resources to their voters and business supporters. Factional leaders cultivate relations with certain up-and-coming bureaucrats who are able to or will be able to push the faction's interest. On the party side, cabinet ministers and PARC leaders are able to help 'their people' in the bureaucracy stay on elite promotion tracks from which they can rise to positions in which they can aid the faction.

As the bureaucrats move up, they come into greater and more frequent contact with LDP and Diet members and begin to form factional ties. The mid- to upper-level bureaucrat chooses his political group with care, for if he should want to continue his career in the Diet, he must choose a faction that will support him well. When bureaucrats retire, the best and most successful of them who have formed these party/bureaucratic connections are encouraged to run for the Diet with the backing of 'their' faction. One-fourth to one-third of the Diet is made up of ex-bureaucrats and their presence is stronger in higher party offices. Former officials become conduits of information between their ex-ministry, the factions and the legislative or party committee for which they work.

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33 Bingham, op. cit., p. 10.
34 Thayer, op. cit., p. 17.
36 Park, op. cit.
37 Park, op. cit., p. 154.
Why Individuals Form and Join Institutionalized Factions in Japan

One has to examine this question in two ways: first, why do the leaders of factions demand such strict, long-term, open adherence to one faction and second, why would a fledgling politician agree to join such a strict system of factions? The factions become highly institutionalized under the Japanese political system primarily because of the manner in which LDP party presidents are chosen. We have already seen what a crucial position the LDP leader holds: he becomes PM, builds a cabinet, in some measure controls the bureaucracy, and names party leaders as well as PARC bosses. Becoming the leader of the country means one’s faction will have extra ability to forage for resources, and Dietmen who belong to the group and hold important posts will have fewer problems with reelection and more money to expand the faction.

Party presidents are chosen by majority vote every two years by 500 LDP Dietmen and state-level party leaders. Thayer notes that the best way for a politician to win this position is by appealing to as many of the 500 voters as possible. But appealing is not enough. To assure himself of a person’s vote, the factional leader can forge a relationship with him in which the leader delivers scarce and valuable resources that the other politician needs in order to survive and prosper in his political career: money, positions and party endorsement.

Even if the factional leader is not running for party President himself, his members, in coalition with the other faction, help win the vote because no one faction is large enough to carry the majority alone. The leading politician has to assure the other leader that he can deliver his peoples’ votes. In either case, the group’s leader has to be assured of a certain number of ballots placed how they should be. The actual voting is done semi-secretly: each of the 500 voters writes his candidate’s name on a blank ballot and then carries it to the box. This is an obstacle to monitoring supporters’ voting, but even this is often surmounted as underlings are instructed to bend their ballots in a specific way to prove how they voted.

The relation between leader and follower has to be long-term under this system because party presidents are chosen every two years, so they have to survive a long series of tests to be effective. If the members were not locked in to one faction, they could shop around during the pre-voting period to ascertain which of the candidates of the party presidency would offer them a better deal. Factional identification and reciprocal responsibility has to be strong enough to stop this kind of bargaining, otherwise members could sell their votes to the highest bidder. In this ‘lock-in’ factional system, the subordinates gain from voting correctly, especially if the faction wins the LDP presidency. Over long periods of time, the individual members gain more from participating in the faction than if they had sold their votes to the highest bidder at every election.

\[31\] Thayer, op. cit.
Instead of individuals shifting around their votes at every party leadership vote, the factions change alliance formation according to who offers the best possibilities for the faction. The internal political groups in Japan are not known for their ideological bases, so any group can support any other in potential alliances to win the presidency.

We now see why it would be in the interest of Japanese political leaders to lock in followers to long-term, openly identifiable relationships that can withstand consecutive two-year challenges to loyalty and discipline. But this does not explain why followers are willing to sell themselves into what amounts to factional bondage. Part of this question revolves around examining what the average politician needs to win elections and advance up the political ladder.

The Japanese electoral system is based on the multi-member, single vote system. Districts send usually between 3 to 5 deputies to the House of Representatives. In a district with three seats, the top three vote-getters are sent to the Diet. This means the LDP almost always runs more than one candidate in a district, and thus the battle over who of the hopefuls will win the party's endorsement is strong. This decision is made by the LDP leadership in Tokyo. But if the politician is new, how does he gain the attention of the national party headquarters? Often, the factional leader agrees to use his influence to gain the new candidate's endorsement.

Because the LDP runs more than one candidate in a given electoral district, political hopefuls have to concentrate against their own party brethren to capture the more or less stable number of conservative voters. Because the voters cast their ballots for a candidate's name, and not a party, the LDP identification matters less than what each politician has to offer, but if he is not an LDP politician, he will have less to offer in specific, district-wide benefits.

This leads to two resource problems for the potential Dietman, and those running for re-election. The first is that campaigns are expensive and few if any politicians can put up their own money. They are also barred from mass fund raising. This leaves the politician with two options: he can either turn to businessmen for contributions, or he can turn to political groups who have ready funds to distribute. Without these funds, there would be little hope for election. Most turn to the national level factions.

Once the politician is elected for a two year congressional term, the pressure for particularistic resources increases. Because the candidates are voted in as individuals and not so much as party members, they are forced to promise district-wide divisible goods and benefits. The politician fights in the legislature to channel public works projects into his electoral home, and at the same time, he must pay for a thousand smaller favors such as parties, religious festivals, mourning gifts, etc., that help remind his constituents that he is working for them. Again, he must turn to a national level group to deliver these funds.

To secure public works projects for his district, the LDP Dietman must secure party (especially in the PARC) and bureaucratic posts, such as minister or parliamentary vice minister (PVM), that allow him to direct resource allocation to his constitu-
ents. But to rise to this level depends on a relationship with the PM who distributes the top posts in the Diet, LDP and bureaucracy. Thus we return full circle to the election of the party President. If a politician helps his leader become the leader of the LDP, he himself will benefit in his own career.

We have examined how politically important players in the Japanese system advance their electoral and bureaucratic careers in a system without a primary system for nominating the dominant party's leader, where elections do matter, and LDP candidates fight with each other in electoral battles, in order to better understand why extremely institutionalized factions exist. These factions have taken over the roles of the party in electing candidates and in negotiating government policy. Thayer writes: "If the party really wants to eliminate the role of the faction, then it should do what the factions are doing. It should offer its endorsements early and then work on the candidates' behalf." Since party leadership posts are filled by factional leaders, this will never happen, and in fact the system functioned well until one LDP faction split away and helped form an opposition government in 1993.

The manner in which one chooses the leader of the government, together with the electoral rules, create an incentive structure in which those who wish to advance their careers find it advantageous to not only form and join factions, but to do so in an extremely institutionalized fashion, i.e., long-term, openly identifiable, hierarchically-based, internal career-advancing political groups.

Mexican Factions Compared to Japanese

We can see the fundamental differences between the Japanese and Mexican factions. The Mexican are less institutionalized in that they do not have openly known membership lists, and that the Japanese factional discipline in governing seems greater. In Mexico, one's affiliation is a closely guarded piece of information, and seasoned observers must guess at the perennial question: who is with whom? In policy disputes, it is also not clear whether battles are fought over ideas, over factional lines, or some combination of the two. Another important difference is that in Japan, the factions are primarily based in the party hierarchy, not the bureaucracy. The Dietmen (factional members) join the factions to promote their legislative careers, not long-term bureaucratic offices. Finally, although a dominant party has governed since 1955, elections are fair and opposition party candidates do get elected, at times at the expense of the LDP candidate. Despite these differences, the Japanese factions and the Mexican camarillas share several important similarities.

Each internal career-advancing group is characterized by a hierarchical exchange relation in which jobs and favors are given in return for reducing uncertainty: the

39 Thayer, op. cit., p. 139.
Langston / The Camarillas

boss can better predict how ‘his people’ will behave in any given situation because he has effectively built a long-term game in which actors’ (whose identities change infrequently) future benefits are tied to mutual cooperation. In both systems, public officials — both elected and appointed — rise to higher positions through a combination of proven competence and factional membership. So although in this section we will be examining how the two types of groups differ, we must also realize in how many ways they resemble each other. These similarities exist even though nominally the two political regimes are quite different (see above), which leads us to highlight the ways in which they are alike in terms of the variables that cause factions to exist: a dominant party system, a strong bureaucracy, and closed channels to legislative and bureaucratic decision-making power. Now we will turn to how the two systems differ to understand the variation in ‘type’ of faction.

Mexican government officials who wish to become governors or national legislators most often face their most difficult hurdle to gaining office in winning the PRI’s nomination, not in beating their opponents from opposition parties. As we have seen, a governor’s seat is a politically valuable commodity which is distributed by the President, sectorial leaders, party presidents, and the Interior Minister. The President of the Republic chooses which leader will be able to place his factional members. Here again, factional affiliation becomes one of the primary routes to top-flight public positions.

Furthermore, for the President, factions work; they lower information costs when choosing public officials and governors, and they enable him to control his elite at a lower cost in time and energy. The chief executive can play one group and his leader off against another, thereby neutralizing both. He in a sense has to deal with fewer actors, which lowers his costs of governing.

The question remains as to why the Mexican factions are not as institutionalized as the Japanese. What is it about the political institutions that structures incentives to form different kinds of factions? Probably the central answer in this puzzle is how the Japanese party members choose their leader. A clear decision rule governs the outcome of the LDP party President election: a majority of 500 must vote for the future leader. As we have seen, factional leaders need to ‘lock in’ followers to vote in masse, either for their factional boss, or for the man to whom their leader has promised the vote. This forces leaders into clear, open, long-term alliances with their followers — otherwise the solitary LDP Dietman would be happy to jump around, promising his vote to the highest bidder. Likewise, the Dietman agrees to this long-term, open affiliation because he must run an expensive election every two years with few fund-raising alternatives other than the party faction, and because of the multi-member district system, which leads to contests among candidates of the dominant party. It is clear membership in the faction that gets an LDP Dietman elected, not the party.

Thus, the issue of re-election is crucial to the specific formation and structure of Japanese factions compared to Mexican camarillas. It is interesting to ask how would the factional structure in Mexico look if representatives could be reelected: would this cause the camarillas to be more institutionalized, or would reelection
detract enough from presidential power to lessen the importance of the internal groups? Yet, as important as the issue of Diet reelection is, it seems that the rule structure for choosing the next executive affects the structure of the groups more.

In Mexico, the race for the Presidency has no clear institutionalized or formal rule procedure. The President chooses his successor, sometimes in consultation with powerful sectorial and factional groups, sometimes not. The pre-candidate’s groups, as we have seen, play important roles in supporting their candidate while trying to harm the image of their competitors. Factional groups lower the costs of these shadow campaigns. Because the campaign work is done under the table and behind closed doors, and because there is no democratic voting procedure, leaders do not need or necessarily want public functionaries who are openly ‘their people’ to be working for them. During the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, when the internal groups and associations within the governing coalition had some sort of veto power, group membership identification was more open. Once the presidents were able, over the course of several sexenios, to impose their absolute vote on the choice of the following President, open factional identification fell. Now, pre-candidates cannot afford to openly pressure the sitting President —this is often how they lose the nomination—, so it simply does not pay to force skittish followers to pledge public allegiance to one group.

The followers themselves can follow two non-mutually exclusive strategies: first, they can (and seemingly must) join the primarily exclusive factions; and second, they can at the same time form a wide net of friends and contacts, who are not in the same primary political group, but who do constitute a secondary level of connections that can be used should the primary group become frozen out of political action or burned by a political mistake. Thus, they have an option that their Japanese counterparts do not enjoy. But at the same time, since the factions do not seem to last as long, or hold on to members with such vigor, strict affiliation does not make as much political sense as it does in Japan. The ambitious Mexican official spreads his risks by participating in the network of friendships which allows him to ‘re-connect’ himself to the political game should his primary group fail him. Furthermore, he has few incentives to join an openly identifiable group, which holds dangers for his future career.

The Brazilian Factions

Now we turn to the Brazilian case to identify and examine the other end of the internal sub-party political group spectrum. Rather than institutionalized factions, Brazil’s internal political life during the authoritarian period from 1964 to 1985 was characterized by loose networks of friends, colleagues, and contacts, who helped each other gain better positions within the bureaucracy and publicly-owned enterprise sector. We shall examine these networks during authoritarianism to gain a clearer view of how they differed from the Mexican factions.
From the mid-1960s until the mid-1980s, Brazil’s political system shared many characteristics with the Mexican regime. Both the legislature and judicial branches were weak compared to executive power, the bureaucracy undertook the great bulk of decision-making responsibilities, and parties (lacking any mass following) were established by the State. The problem of presidential succession was also similar. Beginning in the early Seventies, the succession of military generals to the Presidency was a regular five-year event, and no sitting President could retain office for another term. Furthermore, the sitting chief executive chose his successor with an eye toward mediating disputes among competing military groups, but neither these military groups, nor their civilian, bureaucratic counterparts had any institutionalized, rule-bound way to nominate or elect the next President.

The Brazilian presidents were chosen from among the general staffs of the services, but the armed forces did not control the bulk of the decision- and policy-making institutions. Ben Schneider writes that while officers did work within the bureaucracy, they tended to act on policy questions as any civilian would, and more importantly, civilians ran most of the important bureaucratic agencies in charge of developmental planning, funding and implementation (Schneider, 1991).

The bureaucracy, which had grown enormously during the civilian governments of 1946-1964, was manned by both clientelistic public servants who had gotten jobs in return for political support for legislators, as well as by trained technocrats who were sealed off from the rest of the job and service machinery by successive presidents who were willing to protect their bureaucratic turf. When the military closed down Congress, much of the clientelistic hirings ended, but the military were reluctant to truly downsize the enormous number of institutions, agencies, and state-owned enterprises that made up the bureaucracy, so many pre-coup personnel stayed on and new technical administrators were brought in.

Because of the weakened state of the Congress even after it had been reopened, the political life of the elite was firmly entrenched in the bureaucracy. No civilian could become President, but they could nonetheless advance to the level of minister. Our central question is how the Brazilian governmental elite (made up of technocrats, ex-politicians, and military officers working in the bureaucracy) maneuvered in this system to advance their careers.

Schneider, in *Politics Within the State*, studies the career paths of different types of Brazilian public officials and how developmental policy was made in an authoritarian regime. He reports that the Brazilian military presidents had the authority to nominate functionaries to over 50,000 public positions, as had their civilian predecessors. Bureaucrats did not stay in any one position for more than five years. As in the Mexican bureaucracy, there were a core of lower level technicians who by and large stayed in their posts while the high-ranking decision makers were shuffled around the board at regular intervals.

After each presidential succession, most important functionaries left or lost their jobs, with the majority finding new posts within the government but in different agencies. The new military President took office, placed his military and civilian
collaborators in high office, and these new officials did the same, causing the government-wide job shuffle.

Policy making in the Brazilian regime has always been complicated because of the mix of presidentially protected agencies and clientelistic appointments. Several agencies had responsibilities over a single policy and, to push a new plan forward, a bureaucrat had to be able to side-step numerous obstacles and procedures. In essence, he had to make cross-agency alliances which followed no official flow chart to get the funding approved and the plan executed.

In order to be perceived as a capable bureaucrat, one had to be able to point to concrete policy successes, if not to actual results or changes wrought, at least in the development and construction of measurable outputs, such as new steel plants, foreign loan packages, dams or highways. Thus, the ambitious public official was faced with two problems in the road to career advancement: one, every five years, a new President stepped in and replaced all mid- and top-level officials; and two, policy making was difficult in an enormously unwieldy set of contradictory agencies all fighting over funding priorities and responsibilities.

Schneider's answer to this puzzle is simple: the bureaucrats formed and depended on loose alliances of widely distributed political allies, most of whom were politically savvy and technologically educated. Because the level of institutional mobility was high, one could not hope to build the base of a high-level career by staying in the same agency and working up within its ranks. To gain better appointments, officials relied on friends and contacts made throughout their careers. Because such a large number of agency personnel were removed, the new ministers had to quickly find replacements. They were able to bring in people they already knew and/or with whom they had already worked based on these networks.

Furthermore, in order to promote a development plan, cross-cutting agency alliances had to be formed among like-minded officials who could cut through the morass of bureaucratic procedure. Here again, the alliances were helpful. If one knew his counterpart in another agency with responsibility for program funding, then the possibilities for working together over the heads or around the backs of official channels was a prime way of assuring the success, at least at the planning stage, of a program. Schneider states that once in office, appointees could use their resources to promote and nurture new network and alliances if they should alienate their original supporter.

The fundamental nexus of exchange within these groups was loyalty and competence in return for positions. Leading bureaucrats built up several such ‘one on one’ contacts into a loose network. But Schneider denies that these alliances were patron-client groups, such as has been claimed of the Mexican factions. The relationships were not clientelistic, because the exchanges were specific, not general-

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40 B. Schneider, Politics Within the State, p. 70.
41 Schneider, op. cit., p. 76.
ized (one supposes this means they covered only job related benefits). Those involved were social equals, not what one finds in a normal patron-client bond such as between a landowner and peon. (They did seem, however, to be between hierarchic unequal, which is more the point than social inequality.)

Schneider’s most important point is that these professional alliances did not last long: they broke up at regular intervals and reformed with different members. Unfortunately, Schneider does not pursue this point much, but it is an important difference between both the Japanese and Mexican factions and the Brazilian career networks. Because individuals shift among the groups, no one group can hold a reputation for performance, nor can the individual be identified with one group rather than another.

The author gives two reasons why the Brazilian public officials did not form longer-term, more explicit factions. First, due to the authoritarianism, supporters could not build a long-term coalition out of its appointees because, in contrast to the clientelistic era (1945-1964), votes and numbers of supporter held no political value until 1985. Second, because none of the public officials knew who the next President would be, it was dangerous to support only one man, or in effect, belong to only one group. If the leader was not reappointed in the next term, or only held a second rate position, then his entire group would suffer. Therefore, it was better for each to spread the risk over a wide range of contacts, hoping that one of several contacts would land a good job and pull his "friends" in to work with him.

This is an important point for the Mexican case: why do Mexican political bureaucrats behave differently, given very similar constraints? We shall examine this question in the next section.

The Brazilian Comparison

As we look to the Brazilian case, the question revolves around why public officials take the risk of affiliating themselves with a group and its leader if they could find themselves without a job or politically congelados (frozen) when their leader has chosen the wrong "gallo" in the succession race? Schneider made his point clearly: during the authoritarian years, friendship networks that broke apart and reformed with no long lasting affiliation were the dominant form of getting ahead. One long-term group emerged around Delfim Netto, who managed to stay atop the financial wing of the bureaucracy during almost the entire length of the authoritarian era, but this was the exception, not the rule. Brazilian bureaucrats did not find it in their interests to place long-term loyalty in one group leader who would then be responsible for placing them in positions. Instead, they formed a wide network of friends, and depending on who became President, used their best-placed colleague and connection to find an appointment.

What Schneider does not discuss is why the highest bureaucrats did not want or could not coerce the officials into long-term commitments, like their Japanese
and Mexican counterparts. Part of the answer lies in how the Brazilian President was chosen. On the face of it, the Brazilian and Mexican successions seem similar: the sitting chief executive chooses his successor, in consultation with other important regime actors but without being bound to their preferences. But on closer examination, two differences emerge. First, the military President was chosen from among the military services, not from the entire bureaucratic elite, which would include civilians. Civilians could not become President, nor could they influence, in any meaningful fashion, the choice of one General as to his successor. The military generals chose their successors from among the factions (and Schneider does use this word to describe the groups active within the military) with little to no input from civilian leaders in the bureaucracy. Thus, if civilians could not use groups to advance their presidential candidates, there seems little reason to form or join long-term groups which could impede one’s career if the wrong presidential candidate were backed.

The second difference between the Mexican and Brazilian cases is the time horizon. During the authoritarian era, all actors knew that the military would eventually return power to a ‘reformed’ civilian government (which, of course, would include a good deal of military participation when necessary). Thus, there was a last play in the game which, as game theorists have recognized, causes cooperation to unravel. Because cooperation can no longer pay off in the last play, both actors have incentives to cheat, but since both know that each will cheat in the last stage, both will cheat in the second to last, and so on, until cooperation becomes impossible in the present. However, because the last play was never clear, cooperation was possible, but not in the long-term, exclusive way seen in the Japanese and Mexican cases. Compare this to the Mexican case in which presidents have been chosen in much the same way since the 1930s. In that case, long lasting group affiliation made sense as cooperation among the members of the same group assured future possibilities for influencing the presidential succession under relatively similar rules.

Conclusions

In this paper, we have examined two related questions: one, why cooperative, hierarchical, career advancing groups exist under the set of political rules and constraints in Mexico; and two, why they take the specific form they do. In the first section, factions were seen as a way in which individuals attempting to rise to positions of decision-making power cooperated given the constraints presented both by Mexico’s formal and informal political institutions and by the problems of any organization, namely high information costs and symmetries, as well as egoistic, self-interested behavior and the fear of being cheated upon.

In discussing why the factions exist, two options are posed from two perspectives: should the subordinate join an internal political group or not and should a superior form one or not. The costs and benefits of these options were measured (to
the best of our ability) and compared in order to understand why individuals within this specific system would join career-advancing political groups. What we discovered is that long-term cooperation is possible in these 'hierarchies within a hierarchy', enabling subordinates to spread their risks to those with more capacity and to lower their search costs for new positions. By simultaneously joining a faction and forming their own non-hierarchical networks of friends and contacts, the subordinates can lower the risk of political blockage caused by a superior's incorrect choice in the succession race or other political mistakes. Superiors gained by forming these support groups, lowering the costs of information gathering, monopolizing scarce technical and political talent, and protecting themselves against their subordinates' cheating strategies. All of these resources are important in both day-to-day policy work and the succession process.

Of course, when discussing the choice to join or form factions, the actors face more than this one option. The second section is an attempt to refine the first with a comparison of types of career-advancing groups in systems with similar political institutions. We identify why certain dominant party or military regimes produce open, long-term, internal political groups, more diffuse, less open, yet still long-term factions, or simple friendship networks (the Japanese, Mexican and Brazilian cases, respectively). Since probably all political systems have some type of career-advancing groups circulating within them, the comparison is meant to clarify the different options open to individuals. One of the most important factors leading to different outcomes in levels of institutionalization is how the next executive is chosen from within the dominant party or military group as in the Brazilian example. In all three cases, the competition for political power is not between opposition parties with clear policy alternatives, but among the single party or military caste. Yet the rules, formal or informal, that dictate how this choice for President is made lead individuals to form different kinds of groups.

In the Japanese case, the need to 'lock in' supporters in the quest for the votes needed to elect the LDP President every two years forces high-ranking leaders to enter into long-term exchange relations with LDP Dietmen who actually do the voting. These party subordinates agree to enter into the 'tight factions' because of their need for monetary resources in their electoral battles with other LDP candidates, whose benefits can also be augmented by earning positions in the top LDP hierarchy, the PARC, and the ministries.

During the authoritarian era of 1964-1985, Brazil was characterized by a closed elite of both military officers and bureaucratic civilians. The manner in which the executive was chosen helped determine the distinct shape of career-advancing groups. Because no civilian could hope to become President, and because of the knowledge that the military dictatorship could not last forever, long-term cooperative agreements were not as effective vehicles for rising within the bureaucratic hierarchy as were diffuse, short-term, broadly spread, non-binding friendship networks. The Japanese factions and the Brazilian networks stand on either side of the Mexican camarillas in their levels of institutionalization. The Mexican factions
are career-advancing groups whose actions matter most during the presidential selection process even though they are not able to participate in any formal, democratic, procedural manner. In most cases, groups last longer than the six-year presidential term, but their membership identification is far more difficult to pinpoint than in the Japanese case because of the high costs of making a mistake, and because the leaders do not need to ‘lock in’ their followers in order to win a formal vote. Yet, there are costs for individually jumping from one group to another based on who one believes to be the future President-to-be. Thus, the costs to exit are higher in the Mexican case than in the Brazilian.

When discussing Mexican factionalism, or the camarillas, it is not enough to simply speak of the institutions that most likely cause them. Both the micro-analytic and comparative views are necessary to gain a more complete picture of why they exist and why they structured in one way rather than in another.

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